

THE FALL OF BUDA (1686), THE NEAPOLITAN PUBLISHING AND THE *DIARY* OF CARLO PORSILE

Giovanni Lombardi

CNR - Institute of Studies on the Mediterranean (ISMED)

giovanni.lombardi@ismed.cnr.it

“La historia la escriben los vencedores a su manera. Cada país presenta a sus soldados bajo la luz más favorable, se ocultan los errores, se matiza la maldad y después de la batalla ganada todos son héroes” (Isabel Allende, *Mi país inventado*)

1. Introduction: the expectations and the context

In 1687, Carlo Porsile printed in Naples the *Diario de' Successi dell'Arme Cesaree*. The book appeared on the wave of a literary trend¹. The Hungary war campaigns (1684-87) echoed in the European and Mediterranean countries. And the news on the siege of Buda was closely followed by Naples. Expectations went up and down. That appears from commercial, political, and administrative documents, but even more from the chronicles of the time.

In the summer of 1686, announcements of victory and retractions followed one after the other until the beginning of September. The Viceroy started celebrations and gave countermands in a sort of stop-and-go effect between the emotion of the people and the apprehension of the political and mercantile elites. The early news about the fall of Buda arrived on 7th August from Rome. The Neapolitan gazettes recounted the word-of-mouth, the misunderstandings, and the incipient celebrations promoted by the Viceroy. Soon, it became clear that the Caesarean Army, led by the Duke of Lorraine, had only managed to breach amidst the high mortality rate of soldiers and commanders, while the Duke of Bavaria had captured a blockhouse. “Parturient montes et nascetur ridiculus mus”, some commentator mocked²! On the next 16th, a similar voice turned out to be a farce. Such a

¹ *Diario de' successi dell'armi Cesaree* 1687.

² NICOLINI 1930, 156.

vox populi had taken form among Roman couriers, taverns, lackeys, and soldiers looking for bribes among monasteries and noble houses³.

As is common in conflicts, trivial issues, randomness, and rumours fostered business, speculations, and political interests. But these cases revealed an atmosphere of expectation. According to a flirtatious pamphlet, the ‘beautiful Parthenope’ – a Siren, in Greek mythology, a synonym of Naples – was all eager for the glorious victory of Habsburgs, and nobles, citizens, patriots, foreigners, men, and women waiting anxiously ‘with the soul on the lips’⁴.

Many factors boosted the attention to these foreign events. The rapid circulation of news and culture was proverbial in this Mediterranean crossroad. Despite the fierce plague of 1656, Naples remained a lively capital, crucial for the polycentric Spanish geopolitical system. The demand for information was pressing. Secular and religious ambits fuelled an intense circulation of ideas and a large publishing. As a state in the state, with jurisdiction, diplomacy and richness, the Church moved thousands in information exchange in a time when news travelled with people. But there was also the port, the banks, the trades, and the financial activities. Flattering booklets, occasional literature, curiosities, vulgarizations, and re-editions went with or followed public events: a heterogeneous context for rising publishers⁵. Certainly, censorship did not stop the circulation of news out of control and forbidden texts.

Anyway, the courts were focused on international events, verifying the rumours in official and unofficial networks, up to the spying. The elites followed Hungarian campaigns for direct interests. The lobbies led the mainstream through celebrations and symbolism. In short, the Habsburg-Ottoman War lighted passions and changed political balances, while the comparison with the magmatic Ottoman world moulded perspectives, fears, and idealized visions. The *Diario* of Carlo Porsile had meaning in this scenario.

Looking back, when the Viceroy Gaspar Haro de Guzman learned of the rescue of Wien on 22nd September 1683, he received the homage of the nobility at the Palace and the Royal Collateral Council at once. So, he quickly ordered the Real Chapel in the symbol Church of Santa Maria del Carmine, in Market Square. There, three *Te Deum* resounded, involving the city representations. Gun saluted the *Te Deum*, the Blessed Sacrament exhibition, and the ritual parade of the Viceroy. The military performed in Market Square,

³ NICOLINI 1930, *Ibidem*.

⁴ BADIALE 1687.

⁵ BULIFON 1684; VELCHEREN 1684. The Viennese edition (1683) was donated by the Regent of the Royal Collateral Council, Diego Soria, Marquis of Crispiano, to the publisher Antonio Bulifon, who vulgarized and reprinted the book in Naples. The publisher dedicated the work to Domenico Orsini and Ippolita Tocco, members of the higher aristocracy and prominent feudal lords of the realm. Bulifon was bookseller of the Gravina’s Duke, Domenico Orsini. See also *Historica e succinta relatione* 1685 the report was dedicated to the Venetian ambassador in Naples, Antonio di Negri.

the symbolic place of life and death, peace and riots, well-being and gallows. Three days of illuminations and Viceroy's military reviews followed. The celebrations went on to the archbishopric, calculatedly. Merging secular and religious liturgies translated consonances in the symbolic background of the anti-Turkish action. Subtly and obliquely, all that sent studied messages to foreign representatives in the Reign. However, the Viceroy was former Spain's ambassador in Rome and had considerable diplomatic experience, according to a consolidated *cursus honorum*.

When the Marquis del Carpio, Haro de Guzman, received the umpteenth but definitive news from Rome upon Buda's fall of 2nd September 1686, such communication apparatus returned to action. Moreover, since his installation, the Viceroy had fostered an agenda of politicization of public celebrations and allegorical displays⁶. Royal Chapels started – the term referred, by extension, to both places and a ceremonial format – in the Carmine Church, as well as in those of San Paolo, San Giuseppe, Santa Maria La Nova, and Archbishopric, all emblems of socioreligious powers in the capital. The cannons of the four castles and the fleet flanked many *Te Deum*. Cavalcades and parades followed. Lancers attended the Marquis. The courts closed for nine days. Prisoners, both men and women, were pardoned. The guilds of wool and silk released their convicts. Three days of lights, fireworks, maypoles, wine fountains, chicken and food piles, and the serenade to the Royal Palace followed. Fierce and cathartic rituals appeared: simulating the conquest, people assaulted pyramids of bread, cheese and other food, fountains of wine, horses and men masqueraded like Turks⁷.

Acting out war episodes and repeating atavistic patterns worked as social glue against the common enemy. Through the mise-en-scene of the victory and the outburst of poverty and plunder, there was a controlled explosion of violence, a way in which the elites normalized the latent social conflicts, fostering elementary senses of aggregation. Besides, even though the capital was considered a backbone of the Spanish polycentric system of power – Naples was titled *Fidelissima*, very loyal – it was feared as capable of savage uprisings.

According to accounts, the authority built fifty stages for shows and choirs⁸. Similar schemes occurred, albeit in a minor key, upon capturing Seghedino (Szegedi) and Alba Reale (Székesfehérvár) in 1687 and 1688⁹.

⁶ GRIFFIN, BOSSA 1981.

⁷ ANTONELLI 2012, 394-395; NICOLINI 1930, 156-162. On the nexus among celebrations, participation and violence see GUARINO 2016, 7.

⁸ BADIALE 1687, 4 and *passim*.

⁹ ANTONELLI 2012, 450-451; NICOLINI 1930, 165.

2. Publishing as part of a public narrative

Naples excelled in the mentioned communication apparatus. It implied stage sets, ephemeral scenography, and processional scaffolding, namely money and skills. Handling emotions and baroque shows, the sector involved skilled artisans, specialists, and contractors under royal patrons and other sponsors.

Such events semanticized the places and the imaginary, displaying institutions and communities, guilds and brotherhoods, well-off people, delegates, agents, and religious as part of a mutual and collective recognitions: if vestments, dresses, and banners showed a social topography, priority and stage mirrored hierarchies and political weight¹⁰. The whole cleared roles and obligations. Without doubt, the meaning of everything went beyond Neapolitan boundaries, engaging nations, jurisdiction, and diplomacy.

The printers joined this. They arranged serial low-quality – but remunerative – printings like posters, holy cards stamped on paper or silk, leaflets and so forth. The gazetteers announced the events, flattering the audience and afterwards presenting a public and official version of the facts. The kind and the sequence of the news guided the participation. So, the narrative turned into action, favouring editorial projects too.

Such paraphernalia also embraced the anti-Ottoman epic and anti-Muslim rhetoric. In this context, ruling classes took up the news from Buda, fostering functional representation of the city, the kingdom and the political landscape. The whole of narrative forms reaffirmed social architectures and values. Even the Royal Chapels gathered a plurality of actors in a mutual recognition around the tribute to the Monarchy and the winners.

In this horizon, the war narration dealt with truth and things to keep quiet, mainstreams, illations, and misinformation. Hence, a pervasive control enveloped the booksellers, the printers, and all those involved. That fostered risks, monopolies and privileges, backroom deals and censorship-evading, grey zones, and manuscript circulation. Publishers and booksellers by back covered occurred, with reliable relationship and support.

But it would be improper to reduce these printer-authors to mere guardians of a mainstream. Through their works, moods, sources, and subliminal messages appeared. The writings reflected palimpsests of meaning. It is necessary to consider the reputational capital of these professionals, the backstories, and the context in which they ran.

¹⁰ MAURO 2020.

3. Carlo Porsile and the *Diario*: more than a typographer

After the pestilence of 1656, immigration refreshed the international nature of Neapolitan publishing. The typographer Carlo Porsile came out in the wave of this mobility, working, in the late 1660s, for other brands. From the 1670s, he printed for music and theatre, celebrations, nobles, layers, and religious, gaining an audience and approaching the vicerojal circles. It was also known as co-worker and brother-in-law of the royal printer, Salvatore Castaldo. When the latter died, Porsile took office on 15th September 1688¹¹: in short, when Porsile printed the *Diario*, a lot of the institutional press passed for his typography. Continuity meant loyalty. Years later, even the Spanish widow of Castaldo would have recalled the closeness between the two printers¹².

The Neapolitan revolt of 1647-48 and the epidemic of 1656 had set the role of the royal printer in the public arena, and it was consolidated when Porsile, *de facto*, began to work as such. Collecting and printing order volumes, dispatches, and what the courts required, he was a reference: skills and politics marked his career. Porsile influenced the life of the press and silk district. Even in 1693, as parish brotherhood's master, he checked the behaviours, the citizenship requirements, and the guarantees of merchants and entrepreneurs. Two years after, he was a constituent at Saint Blaise Church – religious, civil and guilds reference, a place for judgement and negotiation – working to the representative of the *Seggio del Popolo*, a pivotal political circumscription¹³. His printing house would have overcome political changes at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries.

The reputation of the typographer accompanied the circulation of the *Diario*, bringing a halo of approval to a text subject to public scrutiny and endorsed in a framework of surveillance. In this context, Carlo dedicated the work to the feudal lord Giovanni Pandone, highlighting his patronage, connection to the cultural elites, and family ties with the high magistrates of the kingdom. The tribute was signed in Naples on 10th February 1687. Far from the pressure of events and the early celebrations, war was still a matter of state.

The reported war campaigns are those of 1684, 1685 and 1687. The storytelling exalted the leadership of the Duke of Lorena, honoured characters and lineages, the partisanship for the Austrians and their allies, and the warrior values. This mood permeated

¹¹ On Neapolitan publishing, and Carlo Porsile, see LOMBARDI 2000.

¹² Archivio di Stato di Napoli (ASNa), Notai del Seicento, Nr D. Cavallo, ms. fs. 1347/3, *Declaratio et cessio per magnifico Carolo Porsile*, 7 June 1694.

¹³ See for example, Archivio Storico Diocesano di Napoli, Santa Visita del card. Giacomo Cantelmo, v. III, ff. 585-593; ASNa, Notai del Seicento, Nr D. Cavallo, 1347/4, *Nominatio procuratoris "Santa Visita del card. Giacomo Cantelmo" per ottina Divi Januarij ad ulmum*, ff. 50-51v, 19 April 1695.

episodes, feats of arms and examples of combat. The reports on the military corps and their leaders, the losses, and the skirmishes are detailed. The violence of captures and ransoms, the killing and the missions hit the imagination, drawing ardour and pathos in the reader. Manoeuvres, places, and fortifications gave descriptive power to the story. Enforcing the feeling of being inside a vivid narrative, the writer presented the text as the result of weekly reports, firsthand accounts and diaries. The witness-author of the events had been on the military field as a Great Prince's adventurer with the mission to relate day-by-day the facts. The 'journal' fell into the hands of an individual who shared it with a friend. Recognizing its value, he compared the accounts with letters from English mercenaries, translated them into Italian, choosing for the publication.

Literary motifs recurred. Histories of Hungary circulated everywhere in Europe often referring to previous authors and publications¹⁴. In this sense, *Diario* evoked the refrain on the existence of questionable narratives, inaccurate or fake. To awaken and satisfy a more refined and demanding audience, Porsile asserted the trustworthiness of a well-documented work, as well as the elegance and clarity of the report.

A small volume contained all the information that 'a thousand others had not gathered'.

4. The matter in the Neapolitan publishing

Just the year before the *Diario* of Porsile, the publishers Camillo Cavallo and Michele Luigi Muzi printed a small book, *Distinto Diario*. A cloying dedication from Domenico Antonio Parrino to a person of high lineage, Bartolomeo IV di Capua, accompanied the written. Under the guise of a homage, Parrino asked for political protection of the head of a noble house whose members traditionally were in the top offices of the kingdom and emblem of the Neapolitan warrior loyalty. Leaving aside the inferences behind the bombastic baroque dedication, a faint hint gains meaning on the editorial backstage: the Catholic world called for more detailed accounts.

Events were recent. Looking at the dedication signed on 8th November 1686 in Naples, these publishers had done intense work. And considering the unusual promptness

¹⁴ See, for example, ANGELINI 1674; BRUSONI 1665, which refers to ultramontane accounts and letters, and texts endorsed by writers; or, again, FRESCHOT 1684, which spoke of unsatisfied curiosity on the topic, the number of reports, the oddity of authors. The refrain on a trustworthy narrative occurs in PANCERI 1686. The list goes on. This literary genre was well-known in the Naples. For example, already published in Bologna, FRESCHOT 1687, it was reprinted in Naples on 1687, to comfort Christianity according to the editor Giuseppe Rosselli, and to instil pro-Austrian emotion according to the Royal Jurisdiction's censor. An edging: Freschot is indicated as Alemannic by the censor. He came from Franche-Comté.

of the permits, the job was facilitated from the top. Beyond the canonical licences, the royal privilege covered the book.

Following a leitmotif, the underlying editorial purpose was against misinformation. Moreover, the rhetoric prose seemed to allude to murmur and misbeliefs. From the initial pages, the accent fell on the number of victims on both the Christian and Muslim sides. Given that the real causes of a war remained almost unknown to people, the metaphor of David and Golia evoked the figure of the emperor Charles V. Ottoman feared him not for the number of his soldiers but for his fortune. In this context, the concept of Fortuna, although polysemic and more secular following Niccolò Machiavelli's reflections, was used to justify events as God's will. This rhetorical device cornered dissenting views while the 'few' Christians died, the Ottoman casualties and the enslaved proved the reason of the victors: an ideological mood wrapped in the handy 12° format¹⁵.

The story continued with a pressing chronicle, actions, and lists. The heroic storytelling ended with the unstoppable massacre made by soldiers reluctant to the order. According to the authors, this concise narrative had briefly fixed heroism and facts, knowing that other writing existed on the events or their sequel.

Distinto Diario was realized quickly but not improvised. There was a fil rouge. Days before, Cavallo & Muzi had published for the Parrino bookshop a canzone on the capture of Buda by Domenico Bartoli of Lucca, a preceptor and abbot, Tuscan author went to light motifs and occasion odes. The printing locations were Lucca and Naples¹⁶. Living aside the theme of the connections between the Neapolitan book market and the Tuscan cenacles¹⁷, the canzone showed the commitment of these entrepreneurs. In addition, Parrino dedicated the opuscle to Diego Ortiz de Zarate y Garibay, Secretary of State and War of the Kingdom of Naples. The tribute gave back to the authors a protective wing: in other words, it was an eye-opening deference. The general atmosphere favoured the circulation of sonnets and other laudatory works¹⁸.

In short, writing on Hungarian affairs came from professionals close to the top of the state. Cavallo had brought his family firm to the monopoly on newspapers and gazettes, sharing it with Domenico Antonio Parrino. Merging professional guaranties and loyalty to the crown, he gave account from time to time of the facts of Hungary. The *Distinto Diario* was sold at the bookstore-cenacle of Parrino, as the gazettes and other publications

¹⁵ Distinto Diario 1686.

¹⁶ BARTOLI 1686. In Florentine version, the *Canzone* was dedicated to the Papal Nuncio at the court of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Giuseppe Archinto, who had direct experience in Vienna, Germany and Hungary and had a brother in the imperial troops.

¹⁷ LOMBARDI 2000.

¹⁸ Al Serenissimo Carlo Quinto 1686.

of this group. Former theatre actor, Parrino was used to the Italian courts, until becoming publisher, and historiographer. With Muzi, a Savoyard long time in Naples, they managed this notorious printing house and bookshop.

We do not dispose a critical collation about such publications, and this is not the place for discussing sources. Anyhow, the tight narrative of Cavallo & Muzi transposed in *Distinto Diario* a direct message. Focusing on the epic elements, rather than the sources, they reported the war hardness, the loot of slaves - that also dotted other tales – the slaughter in Buda supporting the reasons of the victory¹⁹. The gazettes' contractors were used to review the texts with the royal officers, submitting the drafts to the Viceroy's staff, handling with the chancelleries what to publish in war time, dealing with censorship and risks. As chroniclers, Cavallo and Parrino converted Hungarian news into an ordinary narrative. Their political background, the temporal proximity of the events marked the work.

Regarding this, the *Diario de' Successi dell'Arme Cesaree* of Carlo Porsile suggests different moods. Considering the euphoria of the early accounts, and the broad reuse of previous publications, the text appeared more balanced and well-studied. It reflected a changed climate²⁰. Further away from the events, the narrative delved into the public's reactions to the disclosure of the facts and their repercussions. The ferocity of the victory in the fall of Buda is now a given fact. Such a veil of justification accompanies the account of the Christian commanders' actions regarding plunder, killings, and rapes: they struggled in vain to stop the cruelty of the soldiery. These motifs have emerged in other publications as well, but in this context, they enhance the peculiarity of the book. Pointing out the high number of enslaved individuals now re-echoes what has become evident to the people, considering that the courts and the market are dealing with an unprecedented surplus of slaves, along with related issues and a fall in prices. The account of the facts supported argumentative processes, in many ways oblique or subliminal, referred to a society more reflective and less surprised in which different emotions emerged. The events continued to act.

In general, there was not a great distance between the core values of the two narratives: that of Porsile and those of Cavallo and Company. Setting aside the broader time frame considered by Porsile, they stand out for their style, timing, and sources. In some way, it is the Neapolitan context to explain the allusions hidden behind the restrained prose. Not by chance, in this publishing model based on shared sources, the dedications, introductions, editors, sponsors, and other notes became key references. We can say that with the fall of Buda, the news was shaped by expectations and passions. Months later, this information evolved into public memory and reflection.

¹⁹ See for example BRONDI 1686, 17 and *passim*, in which slaughter and slave raids crowd the tale.

²⁰ *Diario De' Successi dell'Arme* 1684a. Similar edition - *Diario De' Successi dell'Arme* 1684b - was published as 'Bologna, per Gioseffo Longhi'.

Time since the conquest of Buda, Carlo Porsile had to expose rather than celebrate. In line with this aplomb, the *Diario de' Successi dell'Arme Cesaree* was detailed and in clear prose. With very legible fonts, this pocket-sized (12°) could pass from hand to hand. Coincidence, the format was promoted by a prominent French editor in Naples, in business with Porsile: Antonio Bulifon, a pro-bourbon, fled later in the wake of Philip V because of the Spanish Succession War. Francesco Massari Roman-born publisher and stepfather of Parrino, paid for the edition²¹. Therefore, a network emerges around the editorial operation. Massari's involvement itself suggests Porsile's closeness to Parrino's entourage, even though the reasons and timing of this involvement are not clear. Massari's name was added to the decorative headpiece after the printing.

Ultimately, the *Diario* was not a niche product, but a book for modern readers, with an outlook on the events and their consequences over time. In Neapolitan publishing, a need to review the facts was appearing. In addition, between the lines, it is possible to glimpse political circumstances and moods. Something sounds like veiled messages to the factions, cryptic for the modern reader. The issue of the sources and the formation of the texts remains open.

5. General consideration

How the historical narration produces a mediated reality is a timeless topic. Somehow, it lies at the core of historiography and crosses disciplinary boundaries. So, it is appropriate to focus on some points rather than to establish conclusions.

Some discrepancies have emerged regarding the sequence of the celebrations, the descriptions, and the details related to the war for Buda. These can be considered secondary issues compared to the essence of our findings. Misprints and transcription errors were common. The social imagination shaped the representations, and vice versa.

The circulation of these publications in Europe and the Mediterranean opens up new fields of study, calling for new sources and patterns. A text analysis requires researches beyond the scope of this essay.

Nevertheless, various details are relative considering the sense of such literature for the Neapolitan audience. Part of the message of this publishing was in its historical and contextual happening, in the social and literary resonances, and in the reputation of the typographers. Some phraseologies found meaning in the social watermark, in the shadow of politics, editorial mechanisms, and expectations. The individual, collective, and institutional storytellers acted within the folds of the Neapolitan society.

²¹ LOMBARDI 2000: *passim*.

The fall of Buda in 1686 was a turning point in modern history in this part of the world. The editorial echoes of the events were important, both from a documentary point of view and as an expression of the colourful cultural Neapolitan industry. The circulation of news and the international nexus of the Mediterranean capital is an endless space of investigation there existed an economy of communication. In this context, some publishers stood out, and some publications succeeded or gained attention. All of this showed the political and social inferences of this kind of communication. Sometimes through ordinary means, as in the case of the gazettes. Other times through editorial projects, such as in the cases of *Distinto Diario* of Cavallo, Parrino and Muzi, or *Diario de' Successi dell'Arme Cesaree* of Carlo Porsile, where reports, concepts, and lists were flaunted and skillfully utilized. Occasionally, this was done through sonnets, canzoni, or other forms of laudatory literature.

The whole of that narrative was basilar to shape public opinion. It was a moment of social and political redefinition. The ties between text and context and the implicit or subliminal messages played a decisive role. The figures involved in the publishing were part of the communication, as were the characters depicted and the values proposed as reference for self-recognition of the Neapolitan society.

In this perspective, the Hungarian facts reshaped the arena of political action. This way, the ruling classes exploited symbolic languages and deep-rooted social ties, while the success reaffirmed hierarchies and diplomatic relations.

The Neapolitan publishing scene produced multiform storytelling, recounted with professionalism and determination, not as an external observer but as part of the flow of events.

In this sense, the representation embodied the communication codes of the time. The events surrounding the fall of Buda became part of a *mise en scène* of the society, highlighting its organizations and emphasizing its conventional values.

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