

Dalle lettere d'America si scrive che...
Echoes of the Seven Years' War Overseas
in the Italian Periodical Press

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Introduction

The Seven Years' War has been described by contemporary historiography as the first true world war,¹ since, unlike earlier conflicts,² the colonial theatres were not merely appendages of the European confrontation but fully integrated arenas in which powers such as France and Great Britain deployed a substantial portion of their military resources. In the North American theatre, the two European powers engaged in a struggle whose outcome would shape the continent's future.³ The significance of the military events in the American theatre was so evident to contemporaries that even Frederick II of Prussia, writing in July 1757, argued that the causes of the conflict then unsettling Europe were to be traced back to disputes between the British and the French over the fishing of stockfish in some remote area of Canada.⁴

The scale of the North American conflict ensured a continuous flow of information within European networks, facilitated by established naval routes linking ports such as Boston and New York with Brest and Portsmouth, allowing letters to reach Europe in approximately 30–40 days.⁵ This media coverage enabled European newspapers to report frequently and with up-to-date information on military movements, battles, sieges, and diplomacy with Native American peoples, thanks to the use of highly detailed accounts that were often published in their entirety.⁶

¹ JÜRGEN LUH, 'Frederick the Great and the First 'World' War', in *The Seven Years' War. Global Views*, eds. MARK DANLEY and PATRICK J. SPEELMAN (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 1–21.

² Specifically, this refers to the North American extensions of the Nine Years' War, the War of the Spanish Succession, and the War of the Austrian Succession.

³ FRED ANDERSON, *The War That Made America: A Short History of the French and Indian War* (London: Penguin Books, 2006).

⁴ FREDERICK THE GREAT, *Die Werke Friedrichs des Grossen in deutscher Übersetzung*, eds GUSTAV BERTHOLD VOLZ and FRIEDRICH VON OPPELN-BRONIKOWSKI, 10 vols (Berlin: R. Hobbing, 1913–1914), vol. 3, 209ff.

⁵ NIKOLAUS SCHOBESBERGEN ET AL., 'European Postal Network', in *News Network in Early Modern Europe*, eds JOAD RAYMOND and NOAH MOXHAM (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 19–63 (32–37, 47, 55–58).

⁶ About the European press and the Seven Years' War see MARK H. DANLEY, 'The British Political Press and Military Thought during the Seven Years' War', in *The Seven Years' War* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 359–97; about the colonial press and the mentioned conflict, see DAVID A. COPELAND, 'Newspaper Coverage of the English and French War For Control of North America, 1754-1760', in *Archiving Early America*, <https://www.varsitytutors.com/earlyamerica/early-america-review/volume-2/how-newspapers-covered-the-french-and-indian-war>, accessed 3 March 2026; To cite just one example of a European gazette containing reports of this kind, see the *Gazette de Vienne* of 3 November

If, therefore, it seems natural to acknowledge the interest shown by these gazettes in events unfolding overseas, given that almost all of them were printed in contexts that were, in one way or another, involved in the conflict, the same cannot immediately be assumed for the Italian peninsula. Indeed, the purpose of this article is to show, through an examination of all the main Italian-language news periodicals available, that during a conflict of such magnitude a formally neutral environment such as Italy, complex and fragmented owing to the multitude of political actors that inhabited it, was nonetheless deeply interested in following what was happening beyond its own borders; and that above all, it was keenly focused on what was occurring across the ocean, in a theatre so distant, where two of the most important European powers were confronting one another in a setting full of exotic elements.

Brief methodological note

This article is based on a selected corpus of Italian-language periodicals, including the *Gazzetta di Mantova*, the *Diario Ordinario*, and *Il Postiglione*. These publications have been chosen based on their availability, continuity, and the existence of sufficiently complete runs for the years under examination, which allow for a systematic comparison of informational flows over time. While not exhaustive, this corpus provides a coherent sample to observe how foreign news was selected, translated, and published. The following analysis should therefore be understood as a case-based investigation aimed at identifying broader patterns, rather than as an exhaustive survey of all Italian gazettes.

The conflict within Italian historiography

The apparent lack of interest shown by Italian historiography in studying the echoes and reception of such a significant conflict within the peninsula and among Italian actors unduly fosters the implicit notion that the political and cultural context was wholly indifferent to the war that had involved all the surrounding European powers.⁷ Such an assumption is scarcely credible, as a glance at the political situation of the Italian peninsula during the years of the conflict clearly shows. To cite only a few examples: the close ties between the Spanish and Neapolitan thrones, with Charles's succession following the death of his brother Ferdinand; the strategic role of the port of Livorno as a support base for the British after the fall of Minorca; the Genoese and Neapolitan loans to the Austrian court; the diplomatic mediation carried out by the

1759, available at: <https://viewer.onb.ac.at/1032E3A1/>, which includes the full report on the capitulation of Quebec, complete not only with an account of the event but also with all the articles of the surrender.

⁷ Although several works have addressed aspects of the relationship between the Seven Years' War and the Italian peninsula, the subject seems not to have been yet systematically explored from the perspective of information flows and periodical press. Studies such as ANNA VITTORIA MIGLIORINI, *Diplomazia e cultura nel Settecento: echi italiani della guerra dei sette anni* (Pisa: ETS, 1984) and FRANCO VENTURI, *Settecento riformatore* (Turin: Einaudi, 1976) touch upon the Italian perception of the conflict, while more recent syntheses such as TREVOR BURNARD, EMMA HART and MARIE HOULLEMARE, eds, *The Oxford Handbook of the Seven Years' War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024), make extensive use of contemporary newspapers but do not dedicate specific attention to the Italian press.

court of Turin between Prussia and Austria; the very existence of Francis Stephen's Tuscany, which sent three Tuscan battalions to serve under the aegis of his consort, Maria Theresa;⁸ and the diplomatic activism of the Roman Curia, with its unsuccessful attempts to present itself as a mediator between the warring powers.⁹

Therefore, although it is true that the political actors were too weak to pursue autonomous and formally neutral policies regarding the conflict being fought beyond the peninsula, they were nonetheless tied to it, albeit with varying degrees of intensity, especially in diplomatic, political, and economic matters. Consequently, keeping informed about events as they unfolded was a necessity, particularly for the chanceries of the various Italian states, which maintained dense correspondence networks with their consuls stationed in European courts. These consuls often sent home reports, manuscript newsletters, and gazettes from the countries in which they resided, as well as their own impressions of current events. Their letters did not focus solely on the European conflict. As can be seen in this example drawn from the correspondence between the Neapolitan minister Bernardo Tanucci and his resident in London, one can clearly discern the keen interest expressed by the former regarding the North American theatre:

Le memorie che Vostra Eccellenza mi ha mandate, sono, o saranno note solamente al Re e a Me. Distintissime e chiarissime memorie, se noi avessimo qui potuto rinvenire una carta più cospicua della Luisiana, del Canada e delle terre inglesi, onde son cinti que' paesi francesi. Questa carta un mese addietro ho io chiesta a Vostra eccellenza e al sig. Carpentier nell'occasione d'avermi qui dato d'ufficio il ministero inglese una memoria continente le ragioni britanniche, la quale parimente si rese alquanto oscura dalla mancanza di quella carta che ora nuovamente le chiedo.¹⁰

Although this flow of information was not directly accessible to the public and reflected primarily the concerns of political actors, Italian gazettes, on the other hand, allow us to understand what was being communicated to the readership and subscribers. In those years, just as with other European periodicals, they could learn about events unfolding on the European battlefields and, above all, in the colonial theatres. The production of these gazettes in Italy had by this time become a well-established mechanism, grounded in an efficient postal system that enabled the rapid circulation of letters and information from across Europe, alongside a widespread presence, extending across almost the entire peninsula, of printing houses of varying sizes, each producing its own periodical.¹¹ Many of these, by the outbreak of the conflict, had already accumulated several decades of experience and market presence. One may think, for instance, of the large Roman printing house of the Chracas family,

⁸ MIGLIORINI, *Diplomazia e cultura nel Settecento*, 13, 107–11, 151–59.

⁹ JOHANNES BURKHARDT, *Abschied vom Religionskrieg. Der siebenjährige Krieg und die päpstliche Diplomatie* (Tübingen: De Gruyter, 1985).

¹⁰ BERNARDO TANUCCI, *Epistolario di B. Tanucci*, 20 vols, vol. 3 (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1982), 271–72.

¹¹ MARIO INFELISE, *Prima dei giornali. Alle origini della pubblica informazione* (Rome: Laterza, 2002), 3–48, 79–104.

with its *Diario Ordinario*, published from as early as 1716,¹² officially approved by the Holy See,¹³ or of the *Milano, Raguagli di varj paesi*, a newspaper that began its publishing career on 28 November 1640.¹⁴ Other publications were founded *ex novo* to address informational gaps, as in the case of *Il Nuovo Postiglione*, which began its editorial life under Giambattista Albrizzi in 1741 as a direct translation of the *Postiglione Universale*,¹⁵ a Frankfurt gazette. It was subsequently enriched with news obtained from other periodicals,¹⁶ eventually becoming the only publication in the Republic of Venice devoted to foreign affairs until 1778.¹⁷

Italian newspapers rarely ‘produced’ news of their own, relying instead on information published in handwritten *avvisi*, letters, and above all foreign periodicals. They engaged in a process of selecting items, which were often translated almost verbatim, so as to preserve their original narrative structure, or condensed when too lengthy for full publication.¹⁸

Another important element in the production of gazettes in Italy is the control and influence that local governments were able to exert over printing houses across the peninsula. One may consider, for example, the *Gazzetta di Mantova*, which was printed in an Italian territory that came under the direct control of the Austrian Habsburgs following the War of the Spanish Succession.¹⁹ This significantly shaped its content, to the extent that, in the period under examination, it consistently featured on its front page news from Vienna and reports concerning actions undertaken in the city in service of the Austrian crown. A less immediately visible but far more stringent example of control and influence is provided by the case of Naples, where the drive to centralise as many prerogatives as possible within royal institutions, in order to achieve an increasingly thorough form of control, took shape through the granting of contracts surrounding the *jus prohibendi*, that is, the exclusive right to print, awarded to a single printer. Over the course of the eighteenth century, this privilege came into the hands

¹² UGO BELLOCCHI, *Storia del Giornalismo Italiano*, 8 vols, vol. 5 (Bologna: Edison, 1974), 88.

¹³ MARINA FORMICA, ‘Mutamenti politici e continuità redazionali: le gazette della stamperia Chracas’, in *Dall'erudizione alla politica. Giornali, giornalisti ed editori a Roma tra XVII e XX secolo*, eds MARINA CAFFIERO and GIUSEPPE MONSAGRATI (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 1997), 103–26.

¹⁴ PIERANGELO BELLETTINI, ‘Le più antiche gazette a stampa di Milano (1640) e di Bologna (1642)’, in *Anatomie bibliografiche. Saggi di storia del libro per il centenario de «La Bibliofilia»*, eds LUIGI BALSAMO and PIERANGELO BELLETTINI (Florence: Olschki, 1999), 465–494.

¹⁵ BELLOCCHI, *Storia del Giornalismo Italiano*, vol. 5, 125.

¹⁶ MARIO INFELISE, ‘Europa’. *Una gazetta manoscritta del '700*, in *Non uno itinere. Studi storici offerti dagli allievi a Federico Seneca* (Venice: Stamperia di Venezia, 1993), 231–39 (222).

¹⁷ RUDJ GORIAN, *Le gazette sul conclave, 1724-1779: analisi di una tipologia di periodici veneziani* (Venice: Marcianum, 2007), 25–34; ROSANNA SACCARDO, *La stampa periodica veneziana fino alla caduta della Repubblica* (Padua: Tipografia del Seminario, 1942), 39–42.

¹⁸ BRENDAN DOOLEY, ‘Preface’ and ‘Introduction’, in *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe*, ed. BRENDAN DOOLEY (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 1–22; MARIO INFELISE, ‘News Networks between Italy and Europe’, in *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe*, ed. DOOLEY, 51–68.

¹⁹ NICOLETTA BAZZANO, *La Guerra di Successione spagnola: l'Italia, l'Europa, il mondo (1700-1714)* (Cagliari: UNICAppress, 2024), 63, 81.

of the Flauto family,²⁰ who held a monopoly over the production of printed news in the capital under the watchful eye of state authorities.²¹

The final product was consumed by a socially and professionally heterogeneous public. Whereas, initially, news sheets circulated only among those who required rapid updates on developments in European politics, such as merchants, diplomats, and political officials, with the advent of printed gazettes their readership gradually expanded. From the seventeenth century onwards, men of letters, members of the urban elite, and even the merely curious began to consult these publications, elevating gazettes from simple instruments of practical information to objects of curiosity and debate. Despite this broader readership, print runs remained limited, averaging around three hundred copies. Nevertheless, through practices of collective reading, they were able to reach a far wider audience.²² While direct evidence on reception remains limited, studies suggest that readers were aware of the provisional nature of news and engaged with it critically rather than passively.²³

Returning to the conflict under examination, this progressively came to dominate the pages of the various Italian gazettes, encroaching upon those informational flows that, prior to the war, had found their place within these publications, such as news from small and medium-sized Italian centres or from the Near East. In their stead, paragraphs began to appear headed by a wide range of European locations, such as Olomouc, Matochitz, Werschowitz, or Trautenau, often connected to battlefields, transit points, or encampments of marching armies, from which information was transmitted to the principal European centres. It is possible to grasp this phenomenon of spatial erosion through a comparative analysis of the composition of the *Diario Ordinario*,²⁴ specifically by examining the places from which its news originated, and comparing 1755, before the outbreak of the conflict, with 1756, when hostilities began.²⁵

By examining the chart (Fig. 1), it is possible to observe that, prior to the conflict, news from Istanbul held a significant presence in the publication, amounting to twenty-three occurrences. In the following year (Fig. 2), however, the Ottoman capital does not appear in the chart at all, as it is mentioned only ten times in the pages of the *Diario*, less than half the number recorded in the previous year. When analysing the entire period of the conflict, it becomes clear that, from as early as 1757, news items

²⁰ ANNA MARIA RAO, 'Mercato e privilegi: la stampa periodica', in *Editoria e cultura a Napoli nel XVIII secolo*, ed. ANNA MARIA RAO (Napoli: Liguori, 1998), 173–99 (180–84).

²¹ NINO CORTESE, *Cultura e politica a Napoli. Dal Cinquecento al Settecento* (Napoli: ESI, 1965), 163–84.

²² INFELISE, *Prima dei giornali*, vi–vii, 7–10, 17, 80, 99, 101–102, 168–69.

²³ MARIAN FÜSSEL, *The World in Flames. A Global History of the Seven Years War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2025), 269–96.

²⁴ The choice of this periodical is determined by its archival availability. The same analysis has also been carried out on the *Gazzetta di Mantova* and the *Gazzetta di Bologna*, yielding similar results.

²⁵ *Diario Ordinario*, 1755 and 1756. The complete collection of the *Diario Ordinario* is available at: <https://casanatense.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/chracas> (accessed 03 March 2026).

relating to Istanbul published by the gazette almost completely disappeared, averaging roughly one occurrence per year.

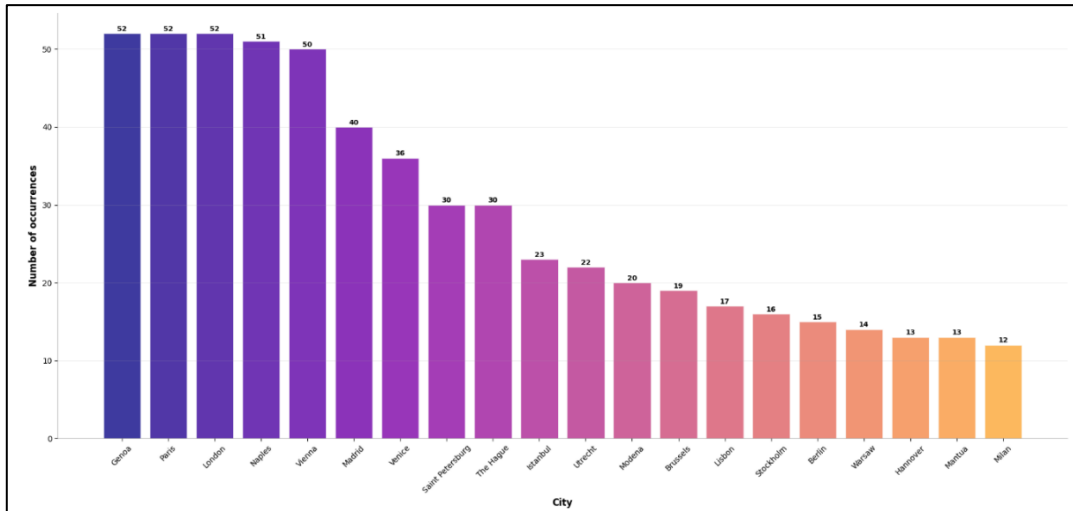


Figure 1. Cities of origin for news items published in the *Diario Ordinario* for 1755. Author's elaboration.

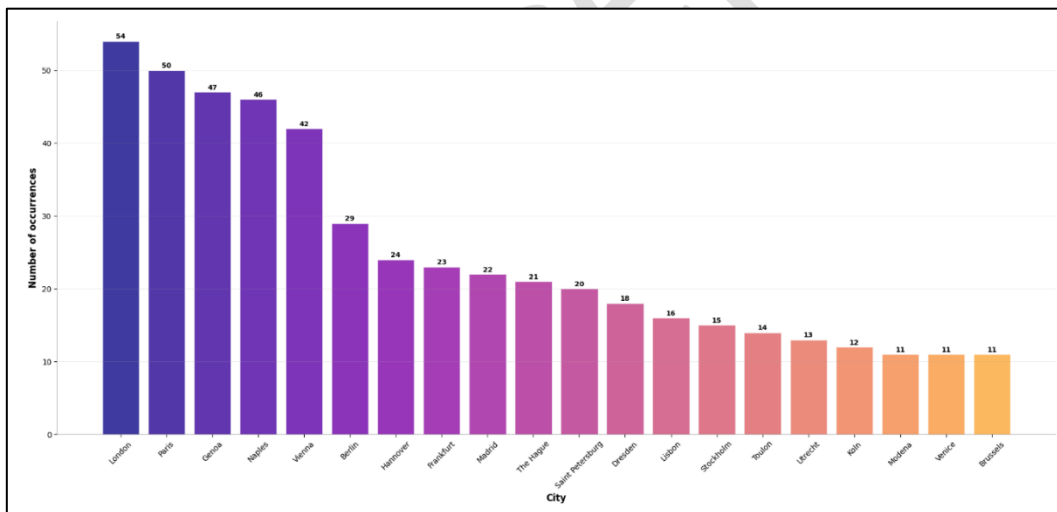


Figure 2. Cities of origin for news items published in the *Diario Ordinario* for 1756. Author's elaboration.

A similar pattern can be observed for Italian locations, which underwent a reduction both in the range of places reported and in the overall quantity of news items within the span of a single year (Figs 3 and 4).

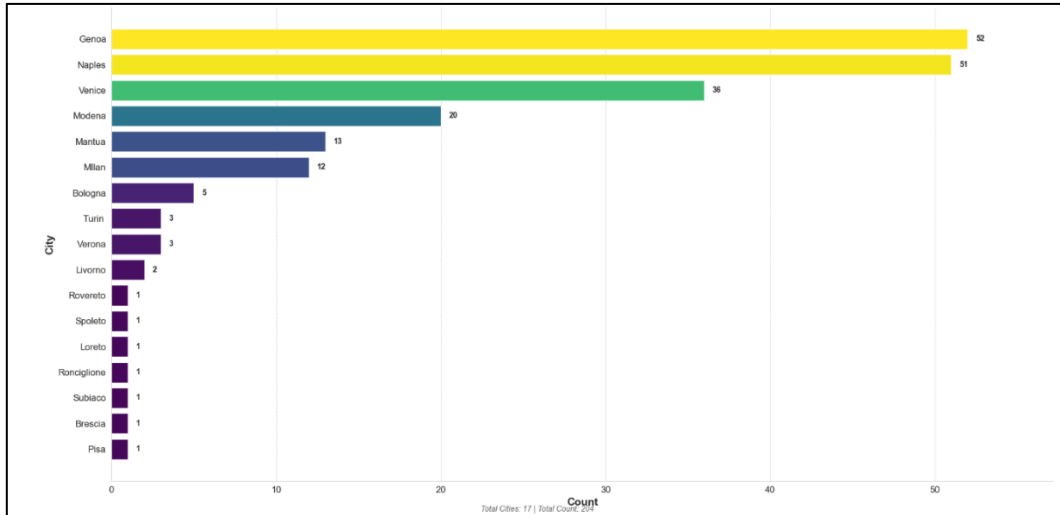


Figure 3. Italian cities of origin for news items published in the *Diario Ordinario* for 1755. Author's elaboration.

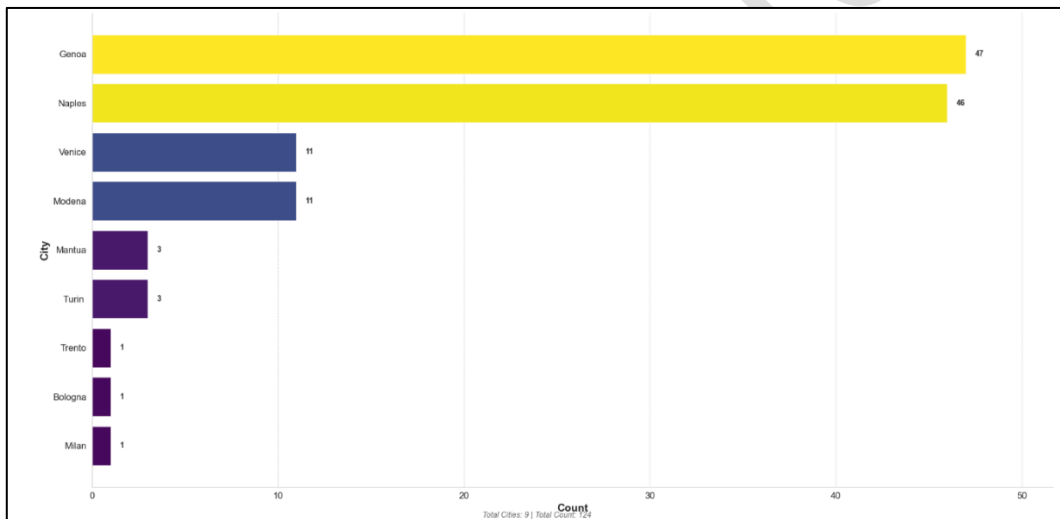


Figure 3. Italian cities of origin for news items published in the *Diario Ordinario* for 1756. Author's elaboration.

The American theatre in the Italian periodical press

During the conflict, however, the narrative of the Italian gazettes was not dominated solely by news concerning the diplomacy of the Old Continent and the clashes fought on its battlefields, as these were accompanied by flows of information from various colonial theatres, such as India, the Caribbean, and West Africa; the largest share of news concerned the North American theatre. As with European news, this information reached the pages of the Italian periodicals through processes of selection and reshaping carried out by Italian news operators on both manuscript and printed flows originating from the main European hubs. For the theatre under examination, as will be shown below, when manuscript sources were not employed, these operators

drew primarily on periodicals such as *The London Gazette*, the official British newspaper,²⁶ the *Gentleman's Magazine*, a monthly compendium of news,²⁷ and *The London Chronicle* for the British sphere, as well as the *Gazette de France*, the official counterpart of the French crown.²⁸ In most cases, however, the transmission of such information followed a multi-layered trajectory: reports originating in colonial contexts were first conveyed to metropolitan centres such as London or Paris, where they were selected, reformulated, and published, and were then further disseminated through secondary hubs—such as Amsterdam—before being translated, condensed, and incorporated into Italian gazettes. Italian news operators thus did not access colonial information directly, but engaged with it through a process of mediation, actively selecting and reshaping material drawn from these interconnected European informational circuits.²⁹

These sources did not merely provide the Italian periodicals with detailed accounts of the ongoing events between armies at war but also offered extensive coverage of the policies implemented locally by the metropolitan powers, diplomatic relations with Native American populations, and even natural disasters such as fires or hurricanes. Such attention reflects the integration of Italian news producers within European informational flows, particularly, in this case, those centred on the French and British spheres.

With regard to the North American scenario, Italian interest did not arise suddenly with the outbreak of the war; rather, as Migliorini has shown, it had existed for some time and is particularly evident in the periods' book production, which from the early eighteenth century witnessed an increase in works devoted to the history and geography of the continent.³⁰ Such interest is likewise evident in the informational flows of the Italian gazettes: even before the official outbreak of the conflict in Europe, they were already reporting news concerning the intensification of tensions between the British and the French in the Ohio Valley in 1753.³¹ The outcome of this escalation

²⁶ RACHAEL SCARBOROUGH KING, 'All the News that's Fit to Write: The Eighteenth-Century Manuscript Newsletter', in *Travelling Chronicles: News and Newspapers from the Early Modern Period to the Eighteenth Century*, eds SIV GØRIL BRANDTZAEG, PAUL GORING, and CHRISTINE WATSON (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 95–118 (95).

²⁷ CARL LENNART CARLSON, *The First Magazine: A History of the Gentleman's Magazine* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1938), 9–15, 20–25.

²⁸ RAPHAEL LEVY, 'The Daily Press in France', in *The Modern Language Journal* 13, no. 4 (1929): 294–303 (294–95).

²⁹ WILL SLAUTER, 'The Paragraph as Information Technology: How News traveled in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World', in *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales (English Edition)* 67, no. 2 (2012): 252–78 (260–68); ANDREW PETTEGREE, *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know About Itself* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 424–26.

³⁰ MIGLIORINI, *Diplomazia e cultura nel Settecento*, 17–19.

³¹ ERIC HINDERAKER, 'War in North America', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Seven Years' War*, ed. TREVOR BURNARD (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024), 435–52 (436–38).

was the outbreak of the so-called French and Indian War in May 1754,³² as attested in several Italian gazettes, which report that:

LONDRA 9. Luglio.

[...] Riferisce il padrone di un bastimento arrivato dalla Nuova Inghilterra, di dove parti li ventotto dello scorso maggio, di essere comune l'opinione, che si farà guerra aperta tra Francesi, e gl'Inglese in quelle bande, avanti che giungano a Londra le lettere di recente data; ed aggiugne, che il Governatore della stessa Nuova Inghilterra era sul punto di marciare alla testa d'un buon corpo di soldatesche, e andarsene a piantare una fortezza nuova sul fiume di Quebec [...].³³

This extract, as it appears in Italian periodicals, is nothing more than a translation of a portion of what was published in the *Gazette d'Amsterdam* on 9 July 1754,³⁴ itself likely derived from letters or manuscript newsletters originating from London, given its absence from the extant English periodicals. The events that followed the outbreak of the conflict in North America were given ample coverage in the Italian gazettes, which increasingly incorporated reports attributed to major colonial settlements along the eastern seaboard, such as Philadelphia, Boston, and New York, circulating through the transatlantic networks of news exchange that linked colonial and European periodical press, alongside the regular reports from London.³⁵ The regularity of these flows enabled readers of the Italian gazettes to remain informed about developments overseas with an average 'delay' of approximately three months: letters took around forty days to travel from North America to their respective metropolises,³⁶ and then a further fifteen to thirty days had to be added for printing and dissemination among the various Italian periodicals.³⁷

In May 1756, with the Battle of Minorca,³⁸ the war on the Old Continent began rapidly to take shape, while the flows of information from the European courts intensified considerably, especially those concerning London and Paris, the principal protagonists of the war. This substantial body of information originating from the two capitals, in addition to reporting on everything related to the fighting on the island, continued to convey news concerning the North American theatre, since the so-called French and

³² WILLIAM R. NESTER, *The French and Indian War and the conquest of New France* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014), 115–150.

³³ *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 26 July 1754; *Diario Ordinario*, 7 August 1754. The complete collection of the *Gazzetta di Mantova* is available at: http://digilib.bibliotecateresiana.it/index_periodici.php (accessed 3 March 2026).

³⁴ *Gazette d'Amsterdam*, 9 July 1754, available at: https://www.gazettes18e.fr/Gazette_Amsterdam_du_09_07_1754 (accessed 03 March 2026).

³⁵ SLAUTER, 'The Paragraph as Information Technology', 253–55, 257; COPELAND, 'Newspaper Coverage'.

³⁶ COLIN G. CALLOWAY, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 40.

³⁷ As will be shown below, the news often appears earlier in the *Gazzetta di Mantova*, owing to its proximity to Milan, one of the main points through which news from London and Paris reached the Italian peninsula. BRUNO CAZZI, *Dalla posta dei re alla posta di tutti. Territorio e comunicazioni in Italia dal XVI secolo all'Unità* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 1993), 30–34.

³⁸ JANET SLOSS, *A Small Affair: The French Occupation of Menorca during the Seven Years' War* (Tetbury: Bonaventura Press, 2000), 16–20.

Indian War had by no means ceased. The Italian gazettes followed a similar pattern: alongside reporting, under the headings of letters from London and Paris, on events on the island of Minorca and more generally in the Mediterranean, they also devoted considerable space to the overseas conflict.

In the summer of the same year, the Italian periodicals reported a detailed account of French origin concerning the expedition against Fort Bull,³⁹ conducted between February and April. The news reproduced in the Italian gazettes was directly translated from the *Gazette de France* of 3 July,⁴⁰ which had published the events on the basis of letters from Canada previously received in Brest.

As is well known, the months that followed saw the Prussian invasion of Saxony and the gradual entry into the war of all the major European political actors. Despite the enormous flow of information concerning 'local' events that filled the pages of the Italian gazettes, they nonetheless continued to keep their readers informed about developments overseas, particularly regarding the military operations on Lake Ontario conducted by both crowns, as can be read in the *Gazzetta di Mantova* of 24 September:

LONDRA 3. Settembre.

Alcune lettere della Nuova-York, degli otto del passato Luglio, danno contezza, ch'essendosi di troppo accostati al forte di Frontignac uno schifo Inglese, fabbricato sul lago Ontario, e sei barche, cariche di provvisioni, e di munizioni da guerra, eran perciò rimaste attaccate da' Franzesi, e dagli Indiani, i quali, dopo un assai vivo combattimento, se n'eran resi padroni.⁴¹

Although absent from the pages of *The London Gazette* and the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the news reported above was drawn and translated by the Italian periodicals directly from the *Gazette d'Amsterdam* of 10 September.⁴² The examples discussed so far represent only a small portion of what the Italian gazettes published on North America, but they nonetheless show that this type of news occupied a clearly defined place within the Italian periodical information sphere. They also show how Italian news operators actively sought out such information from a variety of sources, not limiting themselves to official publications, but also drawing on material published in other European periodicals.

With the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, this coverage was not reduced to make room for news of the fighting in Europe; on the contrary, as will be seen shortly, it increased significantly. Indeed, whereas in 1756 such updates appeared in the pages of the Italian gazettes on average once a month, with the intensification of the conflict in certain periods they can be observed to have been published on a weekly basis. This shift in the transmission of information can be clearly illustrated by using the two

³⁹ *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 23 July 1756; *Diario Ordinario*, 6 August 1756.

⁴⁰ *Gazette de France*, 3 July 1756, <https://books.google.it/books/about/Gazette.html?id=wwxNAAAcAAJ> (accessed 3 March 2026).

⁴¹ *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 24 September 1756; *Diario Ordinario*, 8 October 1756.

⁴² *Gazette d'Amstedeam*, 10 September 1756, https://www.gazettes18e.fr/Gazette_Amsterdam_du_10_09_1756 (accessed 3 March 2026).

British campaigns against Louisbourg as an example. Between May and September 1757, General Loudoun and Admiral Holbourne attempted a combined expedition to besiege and capture the fortress located on the island of Cape Breton, in order to secure control of access to the River St Lawrence, a key prerequisite for any advance against Quebec.⁴³ News of the preparations for the operation reached Italian readers through letters from London dated between 22 and 24 April, which began to be published in the Italian press from mid-May onwards,⁴⁴ while throughout June further updates were printed at an almost weekly pace by both sides involved in the war.⁴⁵

New developments emerged thanks to letters from Boston dated 7 July, included in those from London of 12 August and published by *Milano, Raguagli di varj paesi* on 7 September. These letters informed readers that intelligence from Halifax had revealed the presence of substantial defences, both naval and land-based, protecting the island.⁴⁶ This report, besides being of interest for tracing the dynamics surrounding the Louisbourg affair, makes it possible to grasp the speed with which the Italian periodical press was able to transmit news originating from across the ocean, thanks to a well-established postal network and system of copyists. Indeed, in just sixty-two days the Milanese gazette offered its readers a direct insight into North American events. The following months were accompanied by updates from both sides, covering the entire course of the affair.⁴⁷ The operation ultimately ended in failure for London, as French naval superiority and the indecision of the British command prevented any engagement from taking place.⁴⁸

In the following year, the British Crown dispatched numerous reinforcements to the area and launched a series of attacks against the main French fortresses, preparing to mount a new expedition against the stronghold, which was subsequently besieged and captured between June and July.⁴⁹ On this occasion as well, the Italian gazettes covered the event in meticulous detail from the arrival of Admiral Boscawen in the area on 24 April.⁵⁰

The news of the landing that marked the beginning of the siege of Louisbourg first appeared, among the available periodicals, in the *Messaggiere* of 26 July,⁵¹ within the Paris paragraph dated 9 July, where the information was drawn directly from the *Gazette de France* of 8 July.⁵² A few days later, the *Gazzetta di Mantova* published in a

⁴³ HINDERAKER, 'War in North America', 440–44.

⁴⁴ *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 13 May 1757; *Milano, Raguagli di varj paesi*, 18 May 1757, <https://www.gazzetteeavvisi.com> (accessed 3 March 2026); Società Napoletana di Storia Patria (SNSP), SG B5, Pesaro. *Nuove di diversi corti, e paesi principali di Europa*, 17 May 1757, f. 8.

⁴⁵ To cite just a few examples: *Diario Ordinario*, 25 May and 17 June 1757.

⁴⁶ *Milano, Raguagli di varj paesi*, 7 September 1757.

⁴⁷ *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 23 September, 28 October, and 11 November–2 December 1756.

⁴⁸ NESTER, *The French and Indian War and the Conquest of New France*, 283–88.

⁴⁹ HUGH BOSCAWEN, *The Capture of Louisbourg, 1758* (Norman: Oklahoma, 2011), 152–287.

⁵⁰ *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 23 June 1758; *Gazzetta di Bologna*, 27 June 1758; *Diario Ordinario*, 7 July 1758.

⁵¹ *Il Messaggiere*, 26 July 1758, <https://www.gazzetteeavvisi.com> (accessed 3 March 2026).

⁵² *Gazette de France*, 8 July 1758, available at: <https://books.google.fr/books?id=9QxNAAAAcAAJ&> (accessed 3 March 2026).

single issue both the aforementioned account and that originating from the British sphere, dated London, 4 July.⁵³ Cases in which Italian periodicals presented their readers with accounts of the same event originating from both sides involved were by no means rare. This practice, which also characterised reporting on the European theatre, reflects the composite and stratified nature of news circulation within the eighteenth-century European information system.

Further updates arrived shortly thereafter, this time conveyed through letters from Philadelphia:

FILADELFIA, nell'AMERICA Settentrionale, 1. Giugno.

L'Ammiraglio Boscawen è attualmente davanti Louisburgo colle truppe destinate per la conquista di Capo Breton. Il generale Abercrombie, alla testa d'un'armata di 26 mila uomini e 18 de' quali sono stati levati nelle provincie Orientali di questo continente, è in marcia dal forte Eduardo, per andare ad attaccare Ticonderago, e Crown Point; ed il General Forbes si prepara qua per la spedizione di Quesne; ed avrà tutto a' suoi ordini 1700 uomini di truppe regolate, e 5000 provinciali, levati in parte nella nostra Colonia, ed in parte nella Virginia, con un piccolo treno d'artiglieria [...].⁵⁴

This paragraph is of particular interest insofar as it appears in the Italian periodicals with its original place and date of origin, rather than being subsumed, as was more commonly the case, within a metropolitan heading. The presence of 'Philadelphia' should not be interpreted as evidence of a direct transmission of letters to the Italian press; rather, it reflects the reproduction of material drawn from the *London Chronicle* of 8 June,⁵⁵ which had published the letter with its original temporal and geographical references.

The news of the capture of the fortress of Louisbourg reached the pages of the Italian periodicals from 5 September 1758,⁵⁶ under the heading of letters from London dated 18 August. The gazettes published a translation of the content of *The London Gazette* of 15 August,⁵⁷ within which a highly detailed war journal of the British forces was presented, concerning the landing at Cape Breton and the siege of Louisbourg, together with the letters of General Amherst.

Even though the news had already been reported, the *Gazzetta di Mantova* also informed its readers of the reception, within the French sphere, of the official confirmation of the fall of Louisbourg. Presented under letters from Paris dated 22 September, it reported that:

Finalmente siamo venuti a conoscenza della sorte di Louisburgo; perché il Re dichiarò ieri mattina che quella capitale dell'Isola Reale si era resa agli Inglesi il 26 dello scorso

⁵³ *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 28 July 1758.

⁵⁴ *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 11 August 1758; *Diario Ordinario*, 23 August 1758.

⁵⁵ *The London Chronicle*, 8 June 1758, https://books.google.it/books/about/The_London_Chronicle.html?id=D57CwjXOOrEC (accessed 3 March 2026).

⁵⁶ *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 1 September 1758; *Gazzetta di Bologna*, 5 September 1758; *Il Messaggiere*, 6 September 1758; *Diario Ordinario*, 20 September 1758.

⁵⁷ *The London Gazette*, 15 August 1758 <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/> (accessed 03 March 2026).

Luglio. [...]. Del resto, le cose sono tali quali sono state annunciate nei pubblici fogli d'Inghilterra.⁵⁸

The news arriving from the North American theatre in the course of 1758 was by no means monopolised by the capture of Louisbourg but rather encompassed the full range of developments in the British military campaign. Indeed, while the siege was approaching its conclusion, on 8 July French forces near Fort Carillon (known in the Mohawk language as Ticonderoga) succeeded in inflicting a significant defeat on the British army.⁵⁹ On this occasion too, the Italian gazettes did not overlook the event, publishing accounts drawn from both Paris and London.⁶⁰ The same occurred with the subsequent British conquests of Fort Frontenac at the end of August and Fort Duquesne three months later,⁶¹ the preparations for which had already been mentioned in several informational paragraphs,⁶² including the Philadelphia report discussed above.

The capture of Fort Duquesne deserves closer attention, as its reporting within the Italian periodical press was initially marked by uncertainty. The first indications of what was believed to have occurred appear in the *Nuovo Postiglione*. In the last page of the gazette, dated 20 January, under news carried by the ordinary courier from Trent, it was stated that:

La voce della espugnazione che dicevasi fatta da' Nostri del Forte Du-Quesne non si sostiene; anzi accertasi che il Gen. Forbes, per varj non preveduti casi, ha dovuto sospendere da quell'impresa, riserbandola a tempo migliore.⁶³

The purported capture of Fort Duquesne had been reported from Glasgow on 11 December 1758;⁶⁴ however, what was conveyed under letters from London dated 5 January revealed that even the British court itself was uncertain as to what had occurred, a situation that fostered the circulation of rumours and conjectures regarding the outcome. Six days after the aforementioned issue of the *Postiglione*, the *Corriere Neutrale d'Europa*, under letters from Genova dated 13 January, reports that it was said in Paris that:

Giunto da Quebech in Brest il Sig. di Bongainville Maresciallo Generale dava avviso che li Francesi dopo ripreso il Forte di Frontenach, avessero abbandonato l'altro di Du Quesne, per togliere agli Inglesi il motivo di attaccarli in quella parte.⁶⁵

The information reported from Paris via Genoa did not in any way correspond to that arriving from London, yet it proved to be accurate. The fort had indeed been abandoned after being set ablaze, allowing the British to occupy the site without any

⁵⁸ *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 6 October 1758.

⁵⁹ HINDERAKER, 'War in North America', 446.

⁶⁰ *Diario Ordinario*, 20 October and 27 December 1758.

⁶¹ HINDERAKER, 'War in North America', 447.

⁶² *Diario Ordinario*, 8 December 1758.

⁶³ Biblioteca dei Musei Provinciali di Gorizia ERPAAC (BMPG), 3184, cat 01785, 1759, V, f. 8.

⁶⁴ *The London Chronicle*, 16 December 1758.

⁶⁵ *Corriere Neutrale d'Europa*, 26 January 1759 <https://www.gazzetteavvisi.com> (accessed 03 March 2026).

engagement. Italian readers, however, initially encountered in the gazettes reports reflecting the uncertainties prevailing at the British court, which continued to believe, and to disseminate the idea, that the operation had ended in complete failure, projecting the worst possible scenarios.⁶⁶ The reason for this approach laid simply in the absence of fresh information from General Forbes, which only reached the metropole in the second half of January through a letter from the general himself,⁶⁷ later translated and reproduced by other newspapers. This appeared in the *Postiglione* of 17 February—around one month after its arrival in London—thus providing readers with a definitive account of events.⁶⁸

This brief example makes it possible to grasp more clearly the precarious nature of information, which generated rumours and uncertainties that, given the mechanisms of access to and copying of news, were also transmitted through European and Italian gazettes themselves. In the case under consideration, the absence of information from a reliable or official source led the *Corriere Neutrale d'Europa* to rely on the Genoese channel, which conveyed a report that, upon closer examination, finds no correspondence either in the *Gazette de France* or in British sources. This suggests that, considering its content, it may have derived from a third-party source that transmitted inaccurate information. As Füssel has argued, the circulation of uncertain and contradictory news was not a malfunction but a structural feature of eighteenth-century information systems, with readers accustomed to navigating successive and often conflicting reports.⁶⁹

The year 1759 proved decisive for British supremacy in North America. French difficulties in delivering reinforcements enabled the British to operate almost simultaneously on three fronts: Quebec, Fort Niagara, and once again Fort Ticonderoga.⁷⁰ These military campaigns generated an exceptionally dense informational flow, which was intercepted and published by all the Italian gazettes, significantly increasing the presence of North American news to the point that updates appeared almost on a weekly basis. While the frequency of such reports increased, the time lag with which they reached the Italian peninsula decreased in certain cases. As seen previously, news generally took between two and three months to become accessible to Italian readers. By contrast, if one considers the most significant conquest of 1759—the capture of Quebec—it can be observed that official confirmation of the French surrender appeared in the *Gazzetta di Bologna* on 6 November.⁷¹ Under letters from London dated 19 October, the French capitulation was reported in full, including the articles themselves. According to the account, the information arrived during the

⁶⁶ BMPG, 3184, cat 01785, 1759, VI, f. 3.

⁶⁷ *The London Gazette*, 16 January 1759.

⁶⁸ BMPG, 3184, cat 01785, 1759, IX, f. 3.

⁶⁹ FÜSSEL, *The World in Flames*, 255–56.

⁷⁰ FRANK MCLYNN, *1759. The Year Britain Became Master of the World* (London: Pimlico, 2004); PHILLIP A. BUCKNER and JOHN G. REID, eds, *Revisiting 1759: The Conquest of Canada in Historical Perspective* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

⁷¹ *Gazzetta di Bologna*, 6 November 1759.

night of 15 October via the British ship *Alcide*, which is known with certainty to have departed after 18 September, the day on which the articles of capitulation were signed. This attests to a transmission and dissemination time of just forty-nine days—well below the usual average. This further example illustrates how, in the face of particularly significant news, informational flows could accelerate at the source, a dynamic that naturally affected their subsequent circulation within the Italian periodical press.

Military operations in the North American theatre between the two European powers concluded in 1760, following a final British campaign aimed at conquering the last French settlement of strategic importance, namely Montreal. This operation, coordinated on three fronts, unfolded between March and September.⁷² The campaign was closely followed by the Italian periodical press from its preparatory stages, as evidenced by reports published from early July based on letters from London.⁷³

The estimate of forces reported from London proved to be exaggerated, since little more than four thousand French troops remained to defend their last possessions, as opposed to the approximately eighteen thousand British soldiers, a disparity that was reflected in the outcome of the engagements. The city of Montreal fell on 8 September, after having been surrounded for only two days. News of the surrender reached London on 5 October, less than a month after the event itself. By the end of the same month, Italian periodicals began to publish only brief notices informing readers of what had occurred. In the weeks that followed, drawing on the account of the capture of Montreal originally published in the October issue of the *Gentleman's Magazine*,⁷⁴ and subsequently used by other European periodicals, Italian gazettes filled their pages with a highly detailed report of the events.⁷⁵

The end of fighting between the French and the British in the North American theatre did not, however, bring an end to the flow of news from that region, since even in the preceding years European and Italian gazettes had carried information covering colonial administration, local trade, privateering, and relations between European powers and Native American groups. The latter became prominent within the informational flows of the Italian press after 1760.

Before proceeding further, it is important to clarify that relations between the two colonial powers and Native American groups existed well before the conflict and were shaped by a strict pragmatism. Local populations did not regard themselves as subject to European authorities, but rather as autonomous allies, ready to renegotiate relationships to safeguard their territorial integrity. Within this framework, France appeared as a more reliable interlocutor, characterised by a less intrusive colonial

⁷² NESTER, *The French and Indian War*, 346–49.

⁷³ To cite just a few examples: *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 4 July 1760; *Gazzetta di Bologna*, 8 July 1760; *Diario Ordinario*, 18 July 1760.

⁷⁴ *The Gentlemen's Magazine*, October 1760, 458–64 <https://books.google.it/books?vid=UOM:39015018387947&> (accessed 3 March 2026).

⁷⁵ *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 24 October 1760; *Gazzetta di Bologna*, 28 October 1760; *Il Messaggiere*, 29 October 1760; *Diario Ordinario*, 5 November 1760.

presence and a diplomacy grounded in trade and gift-giving. By contrast, British demographic expansion and the pressure exerted by settlers on frontier lands undermined relations with Native peoples.⁷⁶ With the outbreak of hostilities, these groups played a crucial role for both colonial powers, primarily by providing manpower and intelligence. Frequently referred to by the epithet ‘Selvaggi’, their presence within the news reported by Italian gazettes is highly tangible. If one remains temporally close to the capture of Montreal, it is possible to read in the pages of several Italian gazettes that:

Danno le più recenti notizie della Carolina Meridionale, ch’era stato per mesi bloccato da’ Chirochesi il forte Laudon, fino ad esservi trovata la guarnigione sugli ultimi estremi, per mancanza di sussistenza [...]; ma finalmente, allora appunto, ch’era di tutto affatto sfornita, sono andate a liberarla le truppe Provinciali della Virginia; ed i Chirochesi, per agevolare la pace cogl’Inglesi, hanno uccisi 15 de loro uomini, come promotori della rottura.⁷⁷

News of this kind conveyed not only the theme of conflict but also that of diplomacy, as can be seen in the final lines of the paragraph cited above—an issue that remained present throughout the duration of the war. The fragile nature of relations between the British and Native American peoples features prominently within the informational flows that reached the pages of Italian gazettes, as can be seen, for instance, in the *Corriere Neutrale d’Europa* of 11 May 1759:

Dall’America non abbiamo altre notizie, se non che il Generale Forbes lascia al forte Quesne un capitano con 200 Montagnari Scozzesi, 300 milizioti per difenderlo, e fece un trattato colle Nazioni Indiane delle rive dell’Ohio, ed altre 6. di selvaggi.⁷⁸

This precariousness is equally evident in reports such as the following, published in the same periodical on 25 April 1760:

Notabile poi si è la novella, che abbiamo colle lettere della Carolina meridionale in data delli 8 febbrajo spirato, e da cui si vede qual sia l’indole, ed il conto, che può farsi della fede di quelle selvagge Nazioni. Appena il nostro Governatore Lyttelebon ebbe segnato lo scritto Trattato di pace, e di amicizia cogl’infedeli Cherochesi, e ripigliata colle sue genti la via della Capitale, quei barbari mentitori, in numero di 200 uomini armati hanno tentato di sorprendere il Forte Giorgio; ma il nostro Officiale ivi Comandante che poco si fidava di coloro, faceva buona guardia e perciò potè respingerli, e farli allontanare; ma non potè poi impedire, che irritati coloro pel colpo fallito non trucidassero spietatamente quanti Mercanti Inglesi non furono a tempo di salvarsi dalle loro barbare mani. Il Governatore perciò aveva di bel nuovo radunate le Truppe, e dimandati rinforzi al Generale Amherst per far pentire li Selvaggi dell’indegno loro procedere.⁷⁹

The picture conveyed by news of this kind must certainly have stirred a sense of fear among Italian readers, but at the same time also a desire to learn more about Native

⁷⁶ JOHN OLIPHANT, *Peace and War on the Anglo-Cherokee Frontier, 1756-63* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 6–31.

⁷⁷ *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 7 November 1760, *Diario Ordinario*, 19 November 1760.

⁷⁸ *Corriere Neutrale d’Europa*, 11 May 1759.

⁷⁹ *Corriere Neutrale d’Europa*, 25 April 1760.

American peoples. Indeed, reports were not uncommon in which distinctive—and at times stereotypical—elements concerning Native populations were highlighted, as emerges from the letters from Pressburg published in the 1 February 1760 issue of the *Corriere Neutrale d'Europa*:

Li Francesi, che presentemente hanno a pensare alla lor propria salvezza, ora non c'inquietano in verun modo. Lavorano a piantare un considerabile posto sullo stretto, ed i Selvaggi fumano tranquillamente le loro pippe coll'orecchio rivolto a questa parte. Alcuni Wyondotti sono venuti a portarci le loro Pelliccerie, e ci dicono, che tolti li Chipparays noi non abbiamo da temere cosa alcuna da Naturali del Paese, che abitano sull'Orlo de' Lagi.⁸⁰

If one moves forward to 1762, recalling once again that within the Italian gazettes the flow of news concerning North America had by no means been exhausted but rather had increasingly focused on the British and Native American populations—given that the former did not refrain from perpetrating hostilities against the latter—it is possible to cite an extremely interesting informational paragraph from the *Diario Ordinario*:

LONDRA 5. Luglio.

[...] È stato assegnato un superbo palazzo nella contrada, detta Sulfolkstreet, allo scritto Re de' Chirochesi, qui arrivato, per assicurare, come già si accennò, Sua Maestà Britannica della sottomission sua, e riconoscerla per suo gran Re. Questo Principe Indiano è d'una Bellissima sembianza. Egli è alto 6 piedi, ed ha il viso tutto dipinto di un color rossiccio. È vestito alla Chirochese, ed i suoi abiti consistono in una camicia, un paro di brache, ed un mantello. Ha la testa guernita di conchiglie di varj colori, di pennacchj, e piccole inanellature.⁸¹

The episode of the arrival in London of the Cherokee leader Attakullakulla is well known in the historiography on Anglo-Cherokee relations and eighteenth-century British imperial diplomacy, and has been interpreted as an attempt by the Cherokee themselves to establish a direct relationship with the Crown in order to secure the respect of territorial boundaries and to restore diplomatic relations following the years of conflict.⁸² This paragraph is particularly significant in that it reveals a certain degree of curiosity on the part of its original author towards Native American societies. This interest is further reflected in the decision to translate and disseminate the text within the Italian periodical press. Indeed, it was not uncommon for Italian gazettes—especially the *Diario Ordinario*—to summarise the news they received, often applying substantial cuts for editorial reasons or omitting material deemed irrelevant. In this case, however, the account could have been reduced or even excluded altogether without impairing the overall comprehension of the letters from London; yet this was not done, thereby indicating a genuine interest in the subject.

⁸⁰ *Corriere Neutrale d'Europa*, 1 February 1760.

⁸¹ *Diario Ordinario*, 4 August 1762.

⁸² On Attakullakulla's diplomatic mission in London, see OLIPHANT, *Peace and War on the Anglo-Cherokee Frontier, 1756-63*, 191–207; CALLOWAY, *The Scratch of a Pen*, 23–24.

Conclusions

In concluding this brief study, it is worth citing Migliorini, who, in *Diplomazia e cultura nel Settecento*, when discussing the perception that Italian political actors had of the war in America, wrote:

Gli stati italiani ebbero in realtà un'immagine distorta della guerra: essa venne vista soprattutto nel suo aspetto continentale, eurocentrico e sfuggì la reale portata degli avvenimenti americani.⁸³

This assertion appears only partially convincing considering the evidence presented here. An analysis of the informational flows conveyed by the Italian periodical press shows that the North American theatre was by no means perceived as a marginal appendage of the conflict, but rather as an integral component that occupied a stable and recurring place within the informational agenda of these periodicals. The frequency, continuity, and level of detail of the news originating from the North American scenario—including that relating to diplomatic relations and balances with Indigenous peoples—suggest that this front occupied a significant place within the informational agenda of the Italian periodical press, rather than being treated as a marginal or secondary theatre. Rather than pointing to a distorted perception, these features instead suggest a multi-layered representation of the conflict, in which the continental and European dimension coexisted with sustained attention to colonial dynamics.

⁸³ MIGLIORINI, *Diplomazia e cultura nel Settecento*, 14.