'Goet, Origineel, ende Autentijcq': Printing Privileges, Forgery, and Authority in the Dutch Republic

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Abstract

The question of whether printing privileges added more to publications than mere financial protection has often been raised in studies of printing privileges in the Dutch Republic. Traditionally, these discussions focus on the relationship between the authorities, printers, and privileged books, but what can the books that violated printing privileges tell us about the matter? This article offers a first exploration of the relationship between printing privileges, authority, and two different kinds of forgery (counterfeit and creative forgery) printed in the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. The counterfeits of Jacob Cats's *Self-Stryt* (1620) and the States Bible confirm that the authority of the States-General and the sense of official endorsement that printing privileges added to a publication indeed played a role in the discourse of counterfeits in the Dutch Republic. But did this sense of endorsement make printing privileges an attractive tool in the publication of creative forgeries? It appears that the role of printing privileges was limited in this genre, but the possible reasons behind this are relevant too in the context of the relationship between authority and printing privileges.

Keywords: printing privileges, forgery, counterfeits, authority, book history, forgery studies

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In 1704, Daniel Defoe wearily noted: 'If a Man tells a Lye in Print, he abuses Mankind and imposes upon the whole World.'[1] Thanks to the movable-type printing press, the early modern world found itself indeed much imposed on by a multitude of forged books and pamphlets, ranging from faked classical texts to fabricated travel accounts and from simple hoaxes to wholly invented national histories. Over the past few decades, this landscape of early modern forgery has been the subject of an increasing stream of books, articles, and conferences that explore the dynamics of specific printed forgeries, from creation to exposure, as well as the structural role of forgery in early modern societies.[2] The Dutch Republic has largely remained a blind spot in these studies: although the Republic printed more books, per capita, than any other country in the seventeenth century, it is unclear just how much of this output was fake.[3]

Mapping the Fake Republic (1550-1800) is the first structural study of forgery in early modern Dutch print culture: it aims to identify and research the printed fakes in Leiden University's Special Collections and unite these in the first national Special Collection of forgeries. The project primarily focuses, as is common in Forgery Studies, on creative forgery, the type that ranges from fabricated science to pamphlets with fake news and from false imprints to forged confessions. However different these fakes may seem at first sight, they all share that they are unique constructs, created to be accepted as authentic and woven into the fabric of reality, however briefly. However, the project also includes duplicate forgery, in which an existing construct is copied and offered as 'the real thing', or something so similar that it can be mistaken for or replace the original.

1 Defoe, *The Storm*, A2-b. This article was supported in part by the ERC project *Before Copyright* (ERC, BE4COPY, 101042034), funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Council Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them. I am grateful to the Leids Universitair Fonds (LUF) for making the *Mapping the Fake Republic* project possible. I also wish to thank my assistant Charley Bohlmeijer for her practical help in the research for this project and the anonymous peer reviewer for their helpful comments.

2 Notable examples include Grafton, *Forgers and Critics*; Lynch, *Deception and Detection*; Loveman, *Reading Fictions*; Stephens and Havens (eds.), *Literary Forgery*; Gielens and Papy (eds.), *Falsifications and Authority*; Lavender and Amundsen Bergström, *Faking It.*

3 Pettegree and Der Weduwen, *The Bookshop of the World*, 1.

Duplicate forgery is the realm of the counterfeit or pirated book, the very thing that printing privileges were supposed to prevent. But just how effective was this measure? How were printing privileges perceived by the printers and booksellers that applied for them, and what exactly did the indication of a privilege on a title page mean to the book's reader? Research on printing privileges in the Dutch Republic tends to focus primarily on the relationship between the authorities that granted them, printers, and privileged books, in order to shed light on the dynamics of the printing privilege. This article will approach the subject from a different angle, by focusing on the books that violated printing privileges: what can counterfeits tell us about privileges and how they were perceived by Dutch printers and readers?

The notion that printing privileges bestowed books with more than just the protection of their printer's financial interests has been discussed before. In the nineteenth century, Arie Cornelis Kruseman ventured the opinion that publishers in the Dutch Republic would only apply for privileges to make their books seem more distinguished.[4] Paul Hoftijzer cautiously notes that 'it is not unlikely that to some applicants the suggestion of official approbation, which was suggested by the presence of the privilege on the title page, was an attractive way to improve sales'.[5] Marius Buning goes even further: after a discussion of several cases in which a printing privilege indeed seems to have been understood as an official endorsement, he concludes that 'the real value of a privilege, then, lay in the fact that it enabled a printer to market his work by distinguishing it from similar publications'.[6] In order to shed more light on the exact nature and dynamics of this value, this article will first discuss the counterfeit of Jacob Cats's *Self-Stryt* (1620) and the response of the holder of its privilege, bookseller Jan Pietersz van de Venne. It will then turn to the Amsterdam counterfeits of the States Bible in the 1640s and discuss how these related to a warning issued by the States-General in 1639.

Even though printing privileges are firmly tied to the category of duplicate forgery, the notion that they bestowed publications with a sense of authority raises the question of whether they might have played any role in creative forgery as well. The concept of authority has been the subject of a number of recent publications in Forgery Studies, in terms of the role that the (alleged) author's or printer's authority might play in making a fake seem more credible to the reader. If printing privileges indeed gave books a sense of official approbation, then could they have been used as a rhetorical tool in creative forgeries? The article will offer a first reflection on this question and, on the basis of the creative forgeries that have already been identified and analysed in the *Mapping the Fake Republic* project, provide a first few distinctions and insights – particularly in terms of the category of translation – as well as avenues for further research.

Counterfeiting Cats

Every discussion of printing privileges in the Dutch Republic includes the disclaimer that only a very small number of books actually had them. Simon Groenveld cites a total

4 Kruseman, *Aanteekeningen betreffende den boekhandel*, 345.
5 Hoftijzer, 'Nederlandse boekverkopersprivileges in de achttiende eeuw', 163.
6 Buning, 'Privileging the Common Good', 95.

number of 534 privileges issued by States-General and 572 granted by the States of Holland between 1572 and 1700 – 'small numbers', Groenveld notes, 'in comparison with the total Dutch output of over 100,000 printed books in the same period'.[7] Paul Hoftijzer mentions that about 1,000 publications were granted a printing privilege in the eighteenth century – an even smaller percentage of the estimated total of about 200,000 publications in the northern Netherlands.[8] Among the reasons given for this relatively low number of privileges are that the application was expensive and that many printers did not agree with the principle behind privileges, either for commercial or ethical reasons. For example, in 1646 Jan Jansz Deutel attached a preface entitled 'To all reasonable Booksellers' to his popular journal of Captain Willem Ysbrantsz Bontekoe, in which he explained why he had refused to protect the book with a privilege, despite the counterfeits that had already appeared. As a devout Mennonite, Deutel was a pacificist, and he found it difficult to accept that he should turn to the government for an aggressive tool to protect something that he felt was rightfully his. 'People will say: you did not have a privilege. This is true,' he wrote, 'but does one always need to be armed with the bodyguard or convoy of the privilege?'[9] Printers also had other tools at their disposal to protect their publications, which included publishing warnings along the same lines as Deutel's, against inferior counterfeits. Some signed every copy of a particular edition to vouch for the book's authenticity.[10]

More importantly, having a printing privilege for a bodyguard by no means guaranteed that a publication would be safe from counterfeiters. One particularly relevant example of such a violation is the case of *Self-stryt, dat is Crachtighe beweginghe van Vlees en Gheest* (1620), the second collaboration between lawyer-turned-poet Jacob Cats and the Middelburg bookseller Jan Pietersz van de Venne. For this book, which retells the biblical story of how Joseph succeeds in resisting the advances of Potiphar's wife, Van de Venne acquired a four-year printing privilege, signed on 16 May 1620, from the States-General. The extract of the privilege stipulated that during these four years, Van de Venne alone had the right to print, have printed, and publish the book in the Dutch Republic.[11] Reproduction was forbidden in part, as a whole, and in any format, without the consent of Van de Venne. If the privilege was violated, the counterfeits would be confiscated and the counterfeiters would be fined. Nevertheless, *Self-stryt* was pirated immediately, both in part and as a whole, and in a range of formats.

Perhaps the most striking of these early counterfeits of *Self-Stryt* is an edition that is almost identical to Van de Venne's book.[12] It is printed on cheaper paper, but the counterfeiter made considerable effort to make his version as similar as possible to the authentic one. The title page was copied meticulously and bears the names of Van de Venne and the printer Hans van der Hellen, while every single section, from the extract of the privilege to the prints, was included and imitated. There are small differences and little errors (for instance, the extract of the privilege misspells the word *verbeurte*), but at first sight a buyer

7 Groenveld, 'The Dutch Republic', 293-294.
8 Hoftijzer, 'Nederlandse boekverkopersprivileges in de achttiende eeuw', 175.
9 Deutel, in Bontekoe, *Iovrnael.* See also Pettegree and Der Weduwen, *The Bookshop of the World*, 108.
10 Verhoeven, 'Antiquarische Adversaria', 78.
11 'Extract uyt de Priviligie', in Cats, *Self-Stryt*.
12 Cats, *Self-stryt*, copy held at The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, shelf mark 758 B 5.

might well have been fooled and have mistaken the counterfeit for the original. A year later Van de Venne published a second edition of *Self-stryt* replete with new plates and a text revised and expanded by the author. This new edition may well have been a response to the counterfeits of the first edition – the title page defiantly mentions a 'four-year privilege'. This suggests that another privilege was given for this edition, but the extract reveals that this refers to the privilege given to the first edition, on 16 May 1620, which would remain valid for only three more years. But this second edition and its assertive title page did not make the problem of piracy go away, and *Tooneel van de Mannelicke Achtbaerheyt* (1622), Van de Venne's next collaboration with Cats, shows just how much these counterfeits troubled Van de Venne.

Tooneel van de Mannelicke Achtbaerheyt opens with 'a necessary warning', directed at all bailiffs, magistrates, and other officials in the Dutch Republic as well as the general reader. For nearly four pages, Van de Venne rails about the counterfeiting of *Self-stryt* and his fury focuses exclusively on the book that was 'counterfeited with unprecedented fakery'.[13] He instructs the reader on how to identify his book, giving three examples of how the counterfeit differs from his original: in the image on page 50, the female figure with the apple (symbolising gluttony) is depicted on the left of the page, but in the counterfeit she appears on the right. The same difference is found in the plates on pages 64 and 111 – here too the female figures appear on the opposite side of the image.

Again, it was not uncommon for printers to warn against counterfeits in prefaces, but what makes Van de Venne's exceptional is that his book was privileged and that his warning focuses mainly on this particular feature. The creators of the counterfeit, he writes, are in contempt of his privilege and thus the mighty States-General that granted it. Moreover, they tried to copy the work as closely as they could and even stooped to including a forgery of the privilege itself.[14] Of course, Van de Venne minded the 'ugly setting, dirty paper, and the ugly plates', but he was particularly outraged by the forging of the extract.[15] Because of this particular offence, he requested all officials in the country to defend the honour of the States-General by fining the culprits in accordance with the privilege. Sanctions, he continues, are in order to make sure that the 'the authority of the mighty States-General is safeguarded against these falsifiers'.[16]

Van de Venne's repeated insistence on presenting the States-General as an injured party is somewhat odd: after all, he held the privilege and it was intended to protect his investment in the book. Nevertheless, he never mentions his own financial losses or insists on sanctions for his own sake. Or did he perhaps perceive the privilege differently, as something that bestowed his book with more than just financial protection? Van de Venne's remarks about the forgery of the extract and the authority of the States-General suggest that he did. The counterfeit may have used cheaper paper and included misprints and

13 Van de Venne, in Cats, *Tooneel van de Mannelicke Achtbaerheyt*, A3: 'met een ongehoorde ende tot noch toe noyt gebruycte valscheyt na te conterfeyten'. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the author's.

14 Van de Venne, in Cats, *Tooneel van de Mannelicke Achtbaerheyt*, A3.

15 Van de Venne, in Cats, *Tooneel van de Mannelicke Achtbaerheyt*, A5: 'den leelicken druck, vuyl pampier, ende leelicken platen'.

16 Van de Venne, in Cats, *Tooneel van de Mannelicke Achtbaerheyt*, A5: 'en de authoriteyt van de groot-mogende Heeren tegen alle soodanige falsarisen mach werden gehanthaeft'.

misplaced figures, but what truly set his book apart was the extract, which proved that the highest authority in the land recognised his book, and his book only, as 'the true Joseph'.[17] The fact that Van de Venne does not mention any of the other counterfeits of *Self-Stryt* printed before 1622 – all published without any mention of the privilege – further reinforces this notion. He singles out this particular counterfeit because it had dared to copy the extract of his privilege and had thus removed his book's distinction of having been acknowledged as authentic by the States-General. Joseph, Van de Venne concludes, 'had been stripped of his rich garments and the forgers put him in a dirty rag'.[18]

Tooneel van de Mannelicke Achtbaerheyt came with a privilege, too: as the extract shows, on 22 July 1622 the States-General had granted it a privilege of seven years, more than Van de Venne had applied for ever before. Even so, it did not deter forgers: the book was soon copied, quite possibly by the same anonymous pirate printer, and in much the same way. Again, the counterfeiters had gone to great lengths to copy the book as closely as possible, including the extract of the original's privilege. However, there is one major difference between the authentic book and the counterfeit: the pirate printer left out Van de Venne's warning against the counterfeit *Self-stryt*.

Even though Van de Venne's furious warning may not have prevented further piracy, it demonstrates that to him the acknowledgement of the States-General and the authority that this body represented was at least, if not more important than the protection of his financial rights. The counterfeiting of *Self-Stryt* and *Tooneel van de Mannelicke Achtbaerheyt* also offers a good starting point for some more general observations about the forgery of privileged books in the Dutch Republic, the first of which is that there appear to have been two distinctly different types of counterfeits. The first is the (almost exact) duplicate, which would usually, like *Self-Stryt*'s counterfeit, mention the privilege on the title-page and include an extract of this privilege among its paratexts. The books have to be put side-by-side to tell which is the authentic one, or it required one to have the source of the original, as Van de Venne had, to tell the reader where to look. The counterfeit tried to be taken for the authentic, which suggests that an authentic book held value, and the pirate printer aimed to profit from that aura of authenticity – the very authenticity that the counterfeit privilege seemed to guarantee. The second type had no such ambitions: many pirate printers simply wanted to offer the customer the same content at a lower price. This type of counterfeit tends to look completely different from the original: the format may be smaller, it may include fewer or no images, paratexts tend to be different, and, more often than not, the text will have been amended in places. A good example of this type is found in another early counterfeit of *Self-Stryt*.[19] Although an address to the reader claims it was also published in Middelburg in 1620, it bears very little relation to Van de Venne's original. It makes no mention whatsoever of a privilege, it is notably smaller, the lay-out and setting differ, and it only includes a single image. This book did not need to look similar: the point was to make it cheaper rather than authentic.

17 Van de Venne, in Cats, *Tooneel van de Mannelicke Achtbaerheyt*, A4: 'den Rechten Joseph'.

18 Van de Venne, in Cats, *Tooneel van de Mannelicke Achtbaerheyt*, A6: 'Joseph is sijnen bonten rock uytgetogen, ende hem is van dese valsaerts een vuyl slet aengetogen.'

19 Cats, *Self-stryt*, copy held at Leiden, University Library, call number 1018 H 25: 2.

What sets both types of counterfeits apart from the piracy of non-privileged books is their anonymity. Counterfeits of books without a privilege often include the pirate's name on the title page – after all, even though the practice of counterfeiting was frowned upon, it was not illegal. Take Joost Hartgers, one of the many printers and booksellers who took advantage of Jan Jansz Deutel's refusal to provide Willem Ysbrantsz Bontekoe's journal with 'the bodyguard or convoy of the privilege'.[20] Hartger's publication, published in 1648, is an obvious counterfeit, but its title page explicitly mentions his name and even the location of his bookshop in Amsterdam, next to the town hall. However, the counterfeiters of privileged books were much more cautious. Counterfeits that aimed to pass for their originals would, for obvious reasons, state the name of the original printer on their title page, but those that merely intended to offer a cheaper version would appear anonymously or with a false imprint – when it came to privileged books, pirate printers made sure to cover their tracks.

The States Bible: Authority and Authenticity

Every rule is proven by its exceptions, and the most notable exception to the anonymous publication of pirating privileged books relates to the most controversial printing privilege of the seventeenth century, the one granted to the States Bible. Following the deal made by the city of Leiden with Machteld van Wouw, the widow of the printer Hillebrant Jacobsz. van Wouw, the States-General granted her a fifteen-year privilege for the first Dutch state-approved Bible, in every possible format and edition.[21] Van Wouw's monopoly on the most lucrative book in the Republic caused a major uproar among Dutch publishers that filled the air with talk of piracy – despite the consequences (imprisonment and a hefty fine) that violating her privilege would entail. On 23 December 1639, the States-General issued an extraordinary public warning, starting with a brief repetition of the privilege granted to Van Wouw, emphasising that this gave the right to print, publish, distribute, and sell the new translation of the Old and New Testament as ordered by the national Synod of Dordrecht and the States-General to her and her alone, excluding all others.[22] This warning also stated that the States-General had reason to suspect that despite the patent, 'several people in search of profit and conflict have been seduced into copying, distributing, and selling the aforementioned translation, without the widow's consent or knowledge'.[23] These counterfeits, the warning noted, not only harmed the widow's financial interests but also the book and its translation, which all parties, including the government itself, had created with the utmost care.

20 For a more general discussion of the counterfeit editions of Bontekoe's journal, see Verhoeven, 'Het verhaal'.
21 The history of the States Bible's privileges and publications is much more complex than can be explained here. For a more detailed overviews of the controversy, see Pettegree and Der Weduwen, *The Bookshop of the World*, 125-132; Schriks, *Het kopijrecht*, 157-161.
22 Cau, *Groot Placaet-Boeck*, 192.
23 Cau, *Groot Placaet-Boeck*, 192: 'Verscheydene baet ende twist-soeckende Menschen sich hebben laten gelustigen de voorschreve Translatie nae te drucken, venten, ende verkoopen, sonder consent ende voor-weten vande voornoemde Weduwe ende Erfgenamen.'

However extraordinary it was for the States-General to issue such a warning, what is most striking is that the text explicitly addressed different notions of authority. These included the States-General's political power, as well as its authority to assess publications and decide whether or not to grant them a privilege. Towards the end of the text, the States-General stated that they had taken the decision to inform and warn the 'inhabitants of the United Provinces and its associated regions, towns and members, that no Bibles nor any New Testaments based on our translation, may be considered good, original, and authentic except for those printed by the widow and heirs'.[24] Several scholars have pointed out that the States-General repeatedly stated that their printing privileges did not entail an official endorsement of the publication.[25] Although this is true, the 1639 warning explicitly stated the opposite and positioned the States-General as the arbiter of what ought to be considered *goet, origineel, ende autentijcq* ('good, original, and authentic'). This explains Van de Venne's earlier argument that the counterfeit of *Self-Stryt* had stripped Joseph of his rich garments: copy the extract and you remove the original book's official endorsement that it is good, original, and authentic.

The States-General's warning not to counterfeit the States Bible fell on deaf ears: the Republic's printers refused to accept that only one printer was allowed to produce the nation's Bible. Some local governments agreed and promised to protect those who wanted to counterfeit the book. The pirated Bibles that were printed in Amsterdam in the 1640s offer particularly good examples of these defiant counterfeits: they were produced by a consortium of major Amsterdam printers, with the consent of the town's officials. These counterfeits represent a somewhat curious mixture of the two main categories of book piracy described earlier. The most noticeable differences are that the Amsterdam version is significantly smaller than Van Wouw's original folio version and that the notes in the margins have been shortened – in other words, no one could have confused the counterfeit for the original. However, considerable effort was made to imitate the title page of the original: at first sight, they look remarkably similar. But there are differences: the Amsterdam pirates added Amsterdam's coat of arms next to the lion of the Dutch Republic and its motto *Eendracht maakt macht* ('Unity through strength'), and the Leiden cityscape at the bottom of the page was replaced with one of Amsterdam. The original's title page notes that the Bible was printed in Leiden by Paulus Aertsz Ravensteyn for the widow and heirs of Hillebrant Jacobsz. van Wouw, the official printer of the States-General, and that it has a fifteen-year privilege. The counterfeit replaces this text with the name of the Amsterdam printer and removes any mention of the privilege; instead, it states that the book has been printed with the consent of the mayor and governors of the town.

The Amsterdam counterfeits of the States Bibles are an oddity in the history of the counterfeiting of privileged books. The protection of the Amsterdam authorities made the printers bold enough to explicitly identify themselves on their title page, but even more important is that the Amsterdam counterfeits' mixture of the two genres of book piracy

24 *Groot Placaet-Boeck*, 192: 'Gheene Bybels noch oock Nieuwe Testamenten van de meer-ghenoemde onse Translatie en werden ghehouden, noch oock ghehouden mogen worden voor goet, origineel ende autentijck, als die gene de welcke by de meer-ghenoemde Weduwe ende Erfgenamen zijn en ende worden gedruckt.'

25 Hoftijzer, 'Nederlandse boekverkopersprivileges in de achttiende eeuw', 162.

appears to have been a response to the States-General's assertion that only Van Wouw's version was *goet, origineel, ende autentijcq*. The meticulous imitation of the title page challenges that notion of authenticity, for it demonstrates that they could easily have produced an identical version. However, the bold differences show that they went even further than this: they did not imitate the 'good' version but produced a better one instead. The most striking improvement related to the size of the book: Van Wouw's original was big and heavy, but what the citizens of the Republic needed was a Bible that was less expensive and more convenient to read at home. The Amsterdam States Bible met this need and went on to become a major commercial success. As such, the Amsterdam counterfeits not only defied the privilege, but also successfully challenged the States-General's position as the authority of what was 'good, original, and authentic'.

Printing Privileges and Creative Forgery

At first sight, printing privileges have little, if anything, to do with creative forgery: their role was to protect an original from being copied. Creative forgeries are not copies: they are original constructs that present the public with falsehoods, ranging from fake news to completely fabricated national histories. This is a crucial difference, as it involves a different notion of authenticity: in duplicate forgery, the object is fake but the content can be authentic, while in creative forgery it is the other way round. However, this does not necessarily mean that creative forgeries are not relevant to the discourse on printing privileges. The controversies surrounding the counterfeits of Cats's *Self-Stryt* and the States Bible clearly demonstrate that printing privileges went beyond the protection of the financial interests of the privilege holder: they endowed a publication with a sense of official endorsement. Van de Venne's warning demonstrates clearly that to him, the privilege given to *Self-Stryt* made 'the authority of the mighty States-General' a stakeholder in the book and dressed his Joseph in 'rich garments'.

I have argued elsewhere how the authority of various parties involved in publishing (including printers, authors, translators, dedicatees, and booksellers) were used as rhetorical tools in early modern creative forgery, in the sense that their authority helped to persuade the reader of the authenticity of the lies presented in the book.[26] Good examples of this strategy include the English forgeries *The Originall of Idolatries* (1624), a book deliberately misrepresented as written by Isaac Casaubon, and *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa* (1704), an almost entirely fabricated book on Formosa written by George Psalmanazar. The religious content of these books meant that they had to be vetted by the office of the Bishop of London before they could be published. In both cases, the deception went unnoticed by the bishop's office and both books made much of its official approval, using it as a rhetorical device to make the forgery seem more convincing. The notion that Dutch printing privileges bestowed books with a similar sense of approbation raises the question whether they were used for the same purpose in the Dutch Republic. So far, the *Mapping the Fake Republic* project has identified around three hundred creative

26 Hylkema, 'The Forgery of Isaac Casaubon's Name'.

forgeries published between 1550 and 1800, ranging from fake imprints to visual fake news in history prints and from forged letters to books presenting fake scholarship. While the corpus of positively identified creative forgeries is as yet small, it is expected to double, if not triple, over the next few years. There is, however, enough evidence to make a few observations, albeit cautiously. The first is that very few creative forgeries were published with a printing privilege.

Of course, printing privileges were relatively rare to begin with in the Dutch Republic, but the most important reason for so few creative forgeries having them is that most Dutch creative forgeries concerned fake news or other subjects related to current events. Major political episodes, such as the Arminian Controversy and the run-up to the Glorious Revolution, were accompanied by dozens of pamphlets with fake confessions, fabricated correspondence, and other deceptions. These texts had to be printed quickly and were not expected to have much of a shelf life, which made applying for a privilege a rather pointless exercise. In addition, the political stance taken in many creative forgeries was rarely in line with the views of the States-General. Many of the more subversive publications were therefore published with a false imprint – a practice that would have rendered any attempt to apply for a privilege moot. Finally, given that this type of creative forgery was produced to influence public opinion, pirated copies would not have posed a problem. On the contrary: piracy helped to spread the message.

On the basis of the current corpus, the group of creative forgeries that appears to be the most relevant in terms of the relationship between printing privileges and the official approbation they were perceived to represent is that of the translation. Translations were expensive to produce and easy to counterfeit, so it made sense for printers to protect their investment with a printing privilege, especially in the case of books that involved other investments, such as the cutting of new plates for illustrations. For creative forgeries however, having a genuine printing privilege may have offered extra benefits – this applied to the publication of translated foreign fakes as well as to translations in which the original author was deliberately misrepresented. An example of the latter is found in *School voor de Jaloerschen* (1691), which was presented as the translation of a comedy by Molière but had actually been written by his rival Antoine Jacob de Montfleury. The reason for the deception seems straightforward: after Molière's death in 1673, his plays remained highly popular in the Republic, much more so than Monfleury's, and an unknown play by his hand would be expected to sell well.

The comedy was published by the heirs of Jacob Lescailje, an Amsterdam bookseller who had been a printer for the city's theatre, the *Schouwburg*, since 1658. In 1684, the States of Holland had given the theatre's regents a general printing privilege of fifteen years for all of the plays that the *Schouwburg* had performed and would still perform.[27] The issuing of the privilege to individual publications was left up to the theatre's regents – the one for *School for de Jaloerschen* was granted on 12 November 1691. Apart from this date, the 'copy of the privilege' is virtually the same in all plays published by Lescailje's heirs after 1684 – in fact, the text stipulates that the privilege must be given in full, without any changes or omissions. It explains why the States decided to grant the general privilege to

27 For a general discussion of the Schouwburg's privilege, see Geesink, 'Over privileges'.

the theatre's regents: piracy robbed the original texts of their lustre, in terms of the quality of the language as well as the spelling, and therefore hampered the theatre's mission to promote the Dutch language and the art of poetry within the Republic.[28]

The privilege goes on to warn that it is only intended to protect the supplicants from any damage caused by piracy but that it should not be perceived as authorising or advocating the content of the publication, nor did it bestow any 'credit, prestige, or reputation'.[29] The fact that this had to be mentioned explicitly implies that the States were aware that Dutch readers perceived printing privileges as a mark of official approval, despite the many earlier protestations to the contrary. Following the scandal surrounding Pieter de la Court's *Aenwijzinge der heylsame politycque gronden ende maximen van de Republycke van Hollandt ende West-Vrieslandt* in 1669, the States-General pointed out that printing privileges merely served to protect the holder's investment.[30] As Van Eeghen noted, the privilege given to Jan Rieuwertsz for Gerard Brandt's *Historie der Reformatie*, published in 1670, states that the States-General issued the privilege to prevent the holder from any damage caused by counterfeiting, but that it must be understood that this did not mean that it 'authorises or advocates the content and even less so that our protection adds any credit or prestige'.[31]

The fact that over twenty years later an almost identical warning was used in the *Schouwburg*'s privilege shows how deeply ingrained the perceived relationship between privileges and official approbation still was. More research is needed to understand how the printing privilege affected Dutch readers' response to cases like Lescailje's fake Molière, but it is safe to assume that it did make the deception seem more credible or prevent suspicion. This seems to have worked for *School voor de Jaloerschen*: a second edition of the comedy was published in 1722 by Lescailje's heirs and Dirk Rank, with a new printing privilege from the *Schouwburg*'s regents.

If printing privileges could indeed help to make creative forgeries seem more credible, then why did so very few forgeries have them? Even the forgeries that fall squarely into the genres that Groenveld identifies as the most likely to seek a privilege, most notably religious works and scholarly publications (these two categories made up more than half of the privileges granted by the States-General as well as the States of Holland between 1576 and 1700), rarely included them.[32] One example of a creative forgery that could well have been expected to have a Dutch printing privilege is found in the two Dutch editions of George Psalmanazar's *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa* (1704). In 1703, George Psalmanazar had presented himself in London, claiming to be a native of Formosa, today's Taiwan. He quickly went on to publish the *Description*, a curious mixture of a scientific treatise on the history of Formosa, sensational stories of life on the

28 Molière, *School voor de Jaloerschen*, A2.

29 Molière, *School voor de Jaloerschen*, A2: 'eenig meerder kredit, aanzien oft reputatie te geven'.

30 Buning, 'Privileging the Common Good', 97.

31 Cited in Van Eeghen, *De Amsterdamse Boekhandel*, V, 211: 'Daer door in geenen deele verstaen den inhoude van dien te authoriseren ofte te advoueren, en veel min het selve onder onse protectie en bescherminge eenigh meerder credit, aensien ofte reputatie te geven.'

32 Groenveld, 'The Dutch Republic', 295.

island (including tales of recreational cannibalism), and reflections on the Anglican faith to which Psalmanazar claimed to have converted. Nearly all of it was fabricated, but the book sold well. In 1705, two translations appeared in the Dutch Republic: a French translation was published by Estienne Roger in Amsterdam and, shortly afterwards, a Dutch one, printed by Pieter vander Veer in Rotterdam.

These two Dutch editions were even more ambitious than their English original: for instance, new and far superior copperplates were cut and a number of new illustrations added. Even though Roger and Vander Veer shared the cost of the new plates, the translations must have been a considerable investment, but given the success of the English edition it is reasonable to assume that they expected their respective books to make a profit. The Dutch Republic's appetite for tales of the Orient remained strong but, as Deutel's *Iovrnael ofte gedenckwaerdighe beschrijvinghe vande Oost-Indische Reyse van Willem Ysbrantsz Bontekoe* had demonstrated, their success did attract pirate printers. In addition, the approval of authorities had played a part in the success of Psalmanazar's English edition: Psalmanazar had travelled to England at the invitation of the Bishop of London, Henry Compton, and it was his office that had to approve any book remotely connected to religious subjects. It must have done so with Psalmanazar's book, and Psalmanazar emphasises this by adding a dedication to Compton to his text. It would have been logical for Roger and Vander Veer to seek an equivalent – a printing privilege from the States-General – but as far as I have been able to gather, neither applied for one, even though their editions ticked all the right boxes for such an application.

What sets *School voor de Jaloerschen* apart from Psalmanazar's treatise and other creative forgeries published in the Dutch Republic is that its privilege was very specific and granted by proxy, by the regents of the *Schouwburg*. This may well have impacted the assessment of the text: the only criterion for the privilege seems to have been that the play had been or was to be performed by the theatre. The States-General argued on several occasions that the application procedure of printing privileges did not include any assessment of the content of the publication, but as several of the contributions in this special issue show, this just does not hold true. After 1670, publications were increasingly vetted in terms of their content, and it is not unlikely that this scared off any printers who might want to add the prestige of the privilege to their forgery.

This may seem too convenient an explanation, but Andrew Pettegree and Arthur der Weduwen offer an example of such a decision in their account of Willem Jansz Blaeu's publication of the travel journal of Captain Willem Cornelisz Schouten.[33] After Schouten and Jacob Le Maire had managed to reach the East Indies by sailing round Cape Horn between 1615 and 1617, Lemaire's journal had been confiscated by the Dutch East India Company. Blaeu had access to Le Maire's journal and sensed that it would do well on the Dutch market. However, when his plans for publication were thwarted by the States of Holland, he rewrote Le Maire's journal and published it, falsely, as Captain Schouten's. 'Because of the questionable origin of the journal', Pettegree and Der Weduwen write, 'Blaeu did not dare ask for a privilege from the States-General to protect his publication.'[34]

33 Pettegree and Der Weduwen, *The Bookshop of the World*, 97-98.
34 Pettegree and Der Weduwen, *The Bookshop of the World*, 98.

Of course, if the States-General turned down the application of a fake book, this did not mean that it could not be published (there was no law against printing creative forgery in the Dutch Republic), but controversy is the last thing any printer of fake books would want, especially after having gone through all the expense of printing the book and applying for the privilege.

Although it is always difficult to write about actions not taken, a possible explanation for the absence of a printing privilege in the Dutch editions of Psalmanazar's *An Historical and Geographical Description* is that like Blaeu, they decided to play things safe: whether or not they knew that Psalmanazar's text was a fabrication, they must have been aware of the rumours about the text's authenticity. In Psalmanazar's case, these had started even before his English edition was published. In February 1704 the Royal Society had forced Psalmanazar into a debate with Jean de Fontanay, a Jesuit who had recently visited China and would be able to assess Psalmanazar's assertions better. The debate did not prove entirely conclusive – Psalmanazar claimed throughout that Fontaney was a liar – but the book did not help to dispel the rumours. After reading the book in August 1704, the author James Tyrrell wrote to his friend John Locke that he found 'so plain marks in it of an Impostor, that I wonder the Bishop of London and some other Divines who contribute to his maintenance as a Convert to the Christian Faith could be so impos'd upon'.[35]

Hoftijzer has also observed that the States-General refused to grant privileges to works that were 'seditious, rebellious, defamatory, and scandalous'.[36] This in itself proves that the States-General did indeed assess the content of a publication before granting a privilege, but what would happen if a book slipped through the net and was discovered to be fake after its publication? The States-General would not have liked the kind of egg that the scandal surrounding Psalmanazar had left on Henry Compton's face. According to Hoftijzer, it was rare for the States-General to retract a privilege, but it did happen.[37] When Jan Rieuwertzs published his second edition of Brandt's *Historie der reformatie* in 1677, a new privilege was granted but then hastily retracted, at the insistence of the national synod.[38] Retractions also occurred in the eighteenth century: the Dutch edition of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile*, for instance, had its privilege removed several months after its publication in 1762, due to its 'wicked and pernicious statements'.[39] If a book were suspected of being fake after its privilege had been granted, the controversy might have caused the States-General to withdraw the printing privilege – a devastating blow in any authenticity debate.

However, there was a way for printers of foreign creative forgeries to circumvent the States-General and still benefit from the sense of official approval that printing privileges carried. A good example of this practice is found in the French translation of the *Historia Verdadera del rey Don Rodrigo* (1600), published by Daniel Elsevier in Amsterdam in 1671. *Historia Verdadera del rey Don Rodrigo* claims to be an authentic chronicle of the Arab conquest of Spain from the eighth century, written by Captain Aly Abencufian,

35 Beer (ed.), *The Correspondence of John Locke*, VIII, 373, no. 3607.
36 Hoftijzer, 'Nederlandse boekverkopersprivileges in de achttiende eeuw', 162.
37 Hoftijzer, 'Nederlandse boekverkopersprivileges in de achttiende eeuw', 162.
38 Van Eeghen, *De Amsterdamse Boekhandel*, V, 212.
39 Hoftijzer, 'Nederlandse boekverkopersprivileges in de achttiende eeuw', 162.

viceroy and governor of the provinces of Deuque in Arabia. But all is not as it seems: Abencufian's account was fabricated in the late sixteenth century by Miguel de Luna, a Spanish historian and translator. Even though the authenticity of the book was soon questioned, it remained popular and went through several Spanish editions in the course of the seventeenth century. Elsevier's book presented the first edition in French, translated by the Jesuit scholar François d'Obeilh, and its title page explicitly states that it had a privilege from the king (*avec Privilege du Roy*).

Elsevier's *La vie du roy Almansor* does not clarify this privilege with an extract but it is probably a reference to the privilege of the fifth and at that point most recent Spanish edition of *Historia Verdadera del rey Don Rodrigo*, which was printed by Melchor Sanchez for bookseller Gabriel de Leon in Madrid in 1654. Unlike earlier and later Spanish editions, Sanchez's title page does not mention the privilege, but the extract included in the book shows that in December 1653 the Madrid magistrate Joseph de Arteaga y Canizares had granted De Leon an eight-year privilege for the book. This means that the privilege had long expired by 1671, but even if it had not, it would not have had any legal meaning in the Dutch Republic or France. In the light of how printing privileges were perceived in the Dutch Republic, it is plausible that the mention of the privilege on the title page was intended to give the book a sense of official vetting and approval, and thus proactively combat any of the doubts about its authenticity.

Conclusion

The *Mapping the Fake Republic* project still has some way to go but on the basis of the current corpus, it is already possible to identify some patterns and distinctions in the dynamics between printing privileges, authority, and forgery in the Dutch Republic. Van de Venne's response to the counterfeit of *Self-Stryt* confirms that, to printers and booksellers in the Republic, the privilege meant more than just the protection of their financial interest: it was perceived as official approbation. The States-General's warning to anyone thinking of counterfeiting the States Bible reinforces this notion: granting a privilege went beyond a simple assessment of whether all criteria for a patent were met – it meant that only the privileged book was 'good, original, and authentic'.

Even though the use of printing privileges appears to have been very limited in creative forgery, the cases of Elsevier's *La vie du roy Almansor* and Lescailje's fake Molière show different ways in which creative forgery could benefit from the perceived official approval that printing privileges would bestow on publications. The question as to why the Dutch printers of the two translations of George Psalmanazar's *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa* did not apply for a printing privilege is particularly relevant to another debate in studies of printing privileges in the Dutch Republic, namely whether or not the authorities used the privilege system as a censorship tool. The absence of applications in the case of Psalmanazar's book and the many other creative forgeries, foreign as well as homegrown, that belong to the categories of work which are commonly found with printing privileges, suggests that the States-General did assess publications and that the prospect of rejection or – perhaps worse – withdrawal was a sufficiently strong deterrent.

All in all, the examples discussed in this essay demonstrate that printing privileges did play a role in the 'Fake Republic' and that forgery, duplicate as well as creative, offers a rich vein for the further exploration of the general dynamics of printing privileges in the Dutch Republic.

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