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De Vivo, Filippo. *Archives of speech : recording diplomatic negotiation in late medieval and early modern Italy / Filippo de Vivo.*

2016

Article

To cite this version:

De Vivo, F. (2016). Archives of speech : recording diplomatic negotiation in late medieval and early modern Italy / Filippo de Vivo. *European History Quarterly*, *46*(3), 519–544. https://doi.org/https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0265691416648275

Available at: https://commons.warburg.sas.ac.uk/concern/journal_articles/m039k4882

Publisher's URL: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0265691416648275

DOI: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0265691416648275

Date submitted: 2020-05-11

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European History Quarterly
2016, Vol. 46(3) 519–544
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DOI: 10.1177/0265691416648275
ehq.sagepub.com
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Archives of Speech: Recording Diplomatic Negotiation in Late Medieval and Early Modern Italy

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Abstract

Early modern diplomatic negotiation was conducted primarily through face-to-face encounters dominated by the oral medium, generally known as audiences. Yet ambassadors were very keen to take written records of the words spoken by themselves and their counterparts. This article considers the role of oral exchange in diplomatic audiences and the reasons why participants were so interested in recording and filing reports of those exchanges. This article begins with an analysis of diplomatic dispatches, the genre that has attracted most scholarship so far, but then goes on to trace the recording of audiences on the part of hosting sovereigns and their chanceries and secretaries. The article compares three examples: the transcripts of ambassadors' speeches by fifteenth-century Florentine chancellors, the diaries of papal masters of ceremonies in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and, the most detailed example of audience records, the *Esposizioni* archive of thousands of ambassadorial speeches, replies and subsequent conversation, assembled by secretaries of the Venetian republic from the mid-sixteenth century onwards. These examples enable us to perceive oral culture in unexpected settings. Moreover, the Venetian case constitutes a typical example of archival transformation: an increase in quantity accompanied by a substantial and conscious improvement in preservation methods and retrieval tools. In order to explain this transformation, this article traces the uses that were intended and made of the records at the time, not just to report on current, but to inform future negotiations.

Keywords

Archives, diplomacy, Florence, orality, record-keeping, Renaissance and early modern Italy, Rome, Venice

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Odoardo Fialetti, Doge Leonardo Donà giving audience to Sir Henry Wotton (c. 1610), oil on canvas,174 × 265 cm, Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2016.

Early modern diplomacy was conducted primarily through the oral medium, as ambassadors, sovereigns and ministers met face to face in personal encounters generally known as audiences and signed written agreements only after protracted discussions. Yet negotiations also occasioned large amounts of documents, both because ambassadors acted on the basis of written instructions and because they reported home in regular dispatches. The interaction between orality and writing is well captured in the early seventeenth-century painting depicting an audience of the English ambassador Sir Henry Wotton with the doge in the hall where the Venetian Republic received foreign representatives every morning.[1] The ambassador and the doge sit together, their bodies turned to face one another, their hands nearly touching while they talk. On either side, councillors crane their necks to listen to the speakers, while on lower stools, junior patricians engage in their own conversation, whispering into each other's ears. But written texts feature prominently too. Wotton holds a piece of paper, perhaps a dispatch or a notebook, and several secretaries busy themselves with writing or reading. We are only shown the back of one standing with his head uncovered, but contemporary variants of this scene (a cherished souvenir for departing ambassadors) depict him holding a document.[2] Meanwhile, sitting at two desks in the foreground, several others handle books, paper, quills and an inkwell. As we shall see, this may well be because, since the 1570s, they minuted audiences in detailed transcripts that they then transcribed and stored in hundreds of volumes. This spectacular example of the early modern

growth in record-making and keeping – the subject of this special issue – shows that written records did not so much displace orality as attempt to capture it.

Late medieval and early modern Italy, a region that is famous for the early establishment of resident diplomacy, also developed refined techniques for recording the activities of ambassadors. In another article, written in parallel with this, I have investigated how chancellors and secretaries designed archives of diplomatic correspondence as tools for the management of valuable information.[3] Here, I turn from information to negotiation and from letters to spoken words, to discuss how and why those officers tried to capture and file the most evanescent form of communication, orality. I compare the relatively little known Venetian transcripts of oral exchanges with other forms of recording diplomatic audiences: ambassadorial dispatches, the registers of fifteenth-century Florentine chancellors, and the diaries of papal masters of ceremonies in sixteenth-century Rome. Historians have often used these documents – particularly dispatches – as sources of information, but have never investigated the ways in which, or the reasons why, they were produced and preserved.[4] As the recent archival turn in historical studies indicates, however, approaching archives as not just repositories of sources but as objects of research themselves, with histories of their own, can shed new light on the significance of the records at the time. Historians of archives often focus on collections of charters, treasured because they constituted legal evidence of rights and privileges.[5] But why preserve records of volatile activities such as spoken negotiations? What do the material aspects and archival arrangements of audience records tell us about their short- and long-term functions?

The history of diplomatic archives can contribute to two further fields. The first is the history of oral culture, because audience records are possibly the most detailed transcripts of speech to be found outside judicial archives.[6] What do they tell us about the peculiarities of speech as an instrument of negotiation? Influenced by the works of Walter Ong and Jack Goody, early modernists used to view orality as essentially alternative to writing and as the preserve of the illiterate.[7] More recently, however, scholars have investigated the relationship between the two on a range of social levels, including the highly educated practice of transcribing academic lectures as a source of knowledge.[8] But why make and keep records of conversations that were aimed not at the transmission of enduring ideas but at the day-to-day management of ever-changing conflicts? Secondly, the study of audiences is crucial to the new, culturally informed history of diplomacy that has recently emerged as historians of international relations shift their attention from institutional developments to study diplomatic practices, information networks and rhetorical strategies.[9] Audiences stand at the junction of these topics. Elsewhere, historians have recently studied the gestures of ambassadors and their ways of speaking in the fifteenth-century.[10] A recent volume has focused on diplomatic negotiation, including the language and methods of argumentation, and the ambassador's choice of priorities and occasional conflicts of interests.[11] But most historians have focused on ambassadorial dispatches alone. What do the records of audiences taken by the ambassadors' hosts add to our knowledge? Ultimately, did the very act of recording audiences assist and even alter diplomatic activity?

The Ambassador's Reports

Diplomatic dispatches abound with traces of orality. On the one hand, ambassadors reported information obtained by word of mouth, either from unspecified rumours ('it is said') or in conversation with well-connected individuals. In these cases, what people said mattered more than who spoke and how, especially as ambassadors often referred to common talk either to hide a source or to disguise their own opinions, as Machiavelli recommended in 1522.[12] On the other hand, ambassadors described at length the frequent audiences that they had with their hosts. Accurate recording was of great importance here, because a single word might change the meaning of a sentence, the tone of voice could reveal attitudes in foreign policy, and even a prince's gestures might contain important indications. Therefore, although the amount of detail depended on individual conscientiousness and style, most ambassadors transcribed lengthy conversations with rulers and ministers, including at the very least long statements and easily remembered aphorisms, but also sometimes long quotations in the first person. From these written sources, ambassadors emerge as not just accomplished orators – as it is reasonable to expect – but also as keenly interested in capturing the speech of others.

Wealth of detail in dispatches increased over time, particularly after the establishment of resident embassies in the second half of the fifteenth century required ambassadors to keep their masters informed on a regular basis.[13] Carefully compiled records of audiences enabled negotiations between distant sovereigns. Thus for example, Antonio da Trezzo, Milanese ambassador at Naples in 1455–68, demonstrated extraordinary mnemonic skills in reproducing the words spoken to him by the king. As has been suggested, a comparison between da Trezzo's dispatches and the king's letters to Milan confirms that the former contained veritable 'transcripts' (*verbalizzazioni*) of the king's speeches.[14] They frequently included synctactic oscillations that can only be explained as traces of orality, and idioms which are rarely found in contemporary literary writings. Da Trezzo's Lombard origins made him particularly attentive to local expressions, and he tried to capture (in his own vernacular) phrases that mixed the king's own Iberian mother tongue with Neapolitan inflections. Occasionally the ambassador felt he had to justify such colloquialisms, briefly switching to the Latin formula *ut eius verbis utar* ('to use his own words').[15] Generally, he reported the king's words in third-person indirect speech, but sometimes resorted to direct-speech quotations, mostly in cipher, so as to convey especially meaningful sentences.[16] Fifteenth-century ambassadors also mentioned whether interlocutors knelt, sat or stood, touched or kissed hands, and made other more or less spontaneous gestures, from laughter to tears.[17]

In the sixteenth century, many texts of advice for ambassadors and their secretaries recommended 'extreme diligence in reporting the *parole formali* of the people with whom one negotiates' – the term 'formal' in this case meaning 'adherent to their form', i.e. precise.[18] As one manual argued, ambassadors were to 'recite' (*recitando*, re-citing both as citing back again and as acting) 'the words of those with whom [ambassadors] have had to deal, describing their actions and external

movements, which can reveal their soul'.[19] This points to the theatrical style of many dispatches – while some were terse, others recreated conversations for an audience located far away, mixing a succession of direct-speech quotations with notes about the speakers' gestures, like dialogue and stage directions in the script of a play. Over the course of the century, ambassadors reported their audiences at even greater length than in the past, as part of a wider increase in the scale of diplomatic letter-writing and the size of individual dispatches.[20]

An example can be drawn from the correspondence of Venice's ambassadors to Madrid, one of the most important destinations for Italian diplomats in the early modern age. In April 1573, they announced to Philip II the conclusion of a separate peace with the Ottoman Empire. Because this unilaterally put an end to the already strained Holy League with Spain, the ambassadors went to great lengths to justify the Republic's conduct. Having reported their full speech, they described the king's response:

> He listened most attentively . . . with his eyes upon us, and never gave a sign with his face, but when in the end he heard that peace was formally concluded, his mouth made a movement, very small and ironic, almost as if he wanted to say 'Come then, you did it, as everyone told me you would'. Later his Majesty, as is his wont, without showing emotions, and speaking to us in his usual manner, said these few words: 'Ambassadors, you are never importune and you have done well [in seeking an audience outside the usual times], but since I had no idea that you would have to talk about such an event, and since this is an important and considerable action, it is not fit that I reply all of a sudden . . .[21]

Keen to relate the king's spoken words and to decipher the unspoken thoughts hidden behind his famously impassive face, the ambassadors recorded his every word and gesture. In the following dispatches they went on to report, with similar accuracy and also in direct speech, the much longer reprimands they received from Philip's ministers, as well as his own official response a few days later.[22]

The Host's Records

Finding lengthy reports of speeches in dispatches is not surprising since ambassadors were required to report on their negotiations, and since letter writing and oratory had many and ancient contacts.[23] But what about the other side of the coin: sovereigns giving audiences *to* ambassadors? Did they or their secretaries also record conversations, and in what form? Some traces of note-taking survive. Shortly after receiving ambassadors, for instance, pope Alexander VI himself wrote brief notes in his own hand and in three languages.[24] In Naples, the king's counsellor Diomede Carafa witnessed an audience between the king and the already mentioned Milanese ambassador da Trezzo, then penned a letter in which he reported some of the king's phrases.[25] Every government needed to inform its ambassadors abroad about the negotiations it held with other

ambassadors, and for this purpose secretaries may have employed brief note-taking practices during audiences.[26] On the whole, however, this practice resulted in no consistent series of records. Letters *to* ambassadors contain only brief summaries of audiences and contrast starkly with the detailed reports made *by* ambassadors; the purpose of the former was less to inform about the contents of a conversation than to explain the replies made by the sovereign, so that the ambassador could repeat the same point (*referire*) in his audiences.[27] If notes were ever taken, most were discarded as soon as they were summarized in letters. To my knowledge, there are only three cases audiences being recorded consistently and at length in documents meant not just for immediate use, but for long-term preservation.

Because it often involved foreign ambassadors, the first case that needs to be mentioned is that of ceremonial records. The diaries of papal masters of ceremonies can be singled out due to their rich content.[28] Johann Burchard began this practice in 1483, with a logbook which included useful reminders for future occasions as well as procedural mistakes (mostly committed by colleagues). His seems to have been a personal initiative, but beginning with his successor, Paride Grassi (active 1504–21), this type of record-keeping was turned into a formal requirement.[29] Masters of ceremonies gave prominence to the role of diplomats, and Grassi even compiled a treatise on the ceremonial status of ambassadors to the pope.[30] As Catherine Fletcher has recently argued, this is a reflection of the emerging importance of diplomacy following the establishment of resident embassies in Rome.[31] Several later masters of ceremonies, including Biagio Martinelli (1463–1544), Giovanni Francesco Firmano (?–1565) and Giovan Paolo Mucanzio (1557–1617) also themselves played minor roles in the retinue of papal legates posted outside Rome. Nonetheless, each of these diaries was concerned with ceremonial order rather than diplomatic negotiations. In this regard, they described the ambassadors' arrival at first audience, the seating arrangements, and the number and position of accompanying prelates. The diaries also occasionally described an ambassador's manner of speaking, but crucially not what he actually said. For example, Burchard remarked that one 'very old and ill' ambassador spoke so softly he could hardly be heard.[32] In describing an ambassador from the King of Poland in 1505, Grassi wrote that he 'pronounced his oration fairly well, with good style and gracefulness' ('satis bene . . . cum bonis modis et gratia'), but added nothing about the substance of the oration itself.[33] Of another visiting ambassador in 1518, Grassi recorded only that 'he said he had come for the most important affairs'.[34]

It was only when things went wrong that diaries record more details. For example, in an oration 'brevem et bonam' of 1504, the English ambassador provoked a small diplomatic incident when he said he was speaking on behalf of Henry VIII, 'by the grace of God king of England and France'. Standing up, the French ambassador retorted that *he* had already spoken for the king of France.[35] Masters of ceremonies did record at length, and apparently word for word, speeches by the pope and by cardinals in consistory, but never by foreign ambassadors.[36] They were ultimately indifferent to the contents of diplomatic negotiation. For example,

when cardinals and ambassadors gathered to deal with the explosive situation following the death of Alexander VI, with rival armed bands in the city and rampant Franco-Spanish rivalry, Burchard summed up the meeting as 'three hours of conversation, persuasion and discussion' ('trium horarum collocutiones, persuasiones, propositiones, disputationes').[37] This was in stark contrast to the much greater detail of ambassadorial dispatches. For example, the Venetian ambassador present at this meeting reported the opinion of each participant, including words taken from their speeches.[38] Later diaries increased in size and detail, but still showed little interest for the negotiations themselves.[39] Even the lengthy early seventeenth-century diary of Mucanzio included long transcripts of orations by the pope and cardinals but no reference to the pope's conversation with ambassadors, and Mucanzio made naive mistakes when reporting the diplomatic squabbles in which the papacy was enmeshed at the time, for which he was later reprimanded.[40] Of visiting ambassadors, his successor usually annotated simply that they 'had audience' ('habuit audientiam').[41]

For more detailed descriptions of ambassadorial orations, we need to turn to the second case. Fifteenth-century Florentine chancellors made records of the formal audiences of foreign ambassadors before the Signory. Two volumes are extant, though more may have been compiled at the time. As Robert Black has pointed out, the practice was inaugurated in 1458 by the recently elected humanist chancellor Benedetto Accolti, who kept a volume until 1461.[42] The other volume belonged to Bartolomeo Scala and covered the years 1465–1496.[43] The two chancellors recorded the speeches delivered by ambassadors, the replies made by the Gonfalonier of Justice, or by themselves, and the ambassadors' closing remarks, sometimes followed by a succinct description of the measures taken by the Signory *auditis iis*: 'having heard these things'.[44] The oral nature of these exchanges is well recognized. While some speeches are summarized in a few sentences, indicating the speaker's main points, others are transcribed in full. The volumes contain almost no corrections or cancellations, and must have been constructed from either memory alone – Benedetto Accolti was famous for his – or from notes which have subsequently been lost, or, in the case of fuller orations, from texts supplied by the speakers, which we know also circulated in multiple copies at a time of fashion for oratory.[45] On the whole, however, they read like summary reports rather than verbatim transcripts of the audiences.[46] They are referred to in modern scholarship as *Risposte verbali di oratori forestieri*, but this title can only be applied to some of the audiences recorded; the originals bear no title, and a surviving scrap of the original leather cover in the second volume simply reads *Legationum externarum*.[47]

The Florentine records cover speeches, but not discussion. The actual conduct of negotiations is not the principal subject: only the most formal occasions were recorded (two or three per year on average), usually the receptions of visiting dignitaries and the audiences of special (rather than resident) ambassadors. To add to the formality of the occasion, most orations were written in Latin – whether this reflected the ambassador's actual speech or the secretary's later rendering – even

when ambassadors came from nearby Siena.[48] Speeches and replies are often summarized in only few lines, while ceremonial details (whether the ambassadors are received 'at the door' or 'in the middle of the room') receive as much attention as the spoken words.[49] In 1460, for example, the pope himself was received lavishly when he addressed the Signory to encourage participation in a crusade against the Turks. The record of his audience gives a full version of his oration and of the Florentines' reply, but no further discussion and little about the ensuing negotiations.[50] Similarly, in responding to the imperial ambassadors in 1496, Scala recited a long oration: yet this mostly verged on vague assurances of friendship partly based, in true humanist spirit, on Florence's Roman imperial past. Instead, the object of the mission was summarized briefly and the negotiations were deferred to a new mission, promptly to be dispatched to the emperor: 'just as his Majesty has sent to us [declarations] by [the ambassadors'] live voice', the chancellor announced, 'we have thought it necessary to respond equally by live voice' – that is, by sending another ambassador.[51] Thus, the practice of negotiation was to remain strictly oral. In the fifteenth century, the Florentine chancery made important advances in the management of correspondence with its own ambassadors, but it had little time for recording discussions with foreign ones.[52]

A Special Case

The last case contrasts sharply with the preceding two. From the mid-sixteenth century until the fall of the Republic in 1797, Venetian secretaries kept increasingly detailed and organized records of all the audiences of foreign ambassadors with the doge in the Collegio. In entries that often extend to many pages, they transcribed not just the ambassador's speech and the doge's reply but also, especially in the period 1550–1680, all subsequent conversation with other patricians, including quick ripostes and occasional interruptions.[53] The files' spines and title pages show that the records were known at the time as *Expositiones* or *Esposizioni*. Roman masters of ceremonies and Florentine chancellors also used the verb *exponere* to introduce an ambassador's oration to a receiving sovereign.[54] On the eve of the treaty of Westphalia, the instructions of a Tuscan ambassador to Spain used the less common noun: 'once you have completed your *esposizione* you shall take your leave'.[55] But the Venetian *Esposizioni* constitute the only case where the term denotes not just the speech but also the record of both that speech and all ensuing conversation.[56] Compared with the Florentine volumes (213 leaves in all), the *Esposizioni* are typical of the early modern explosion in paperwork, amounting to a total of 242 files of between 400 and 600 paper leaves each.[57] But as we shall see, they were remarkable not just for their quantity, but for their sophisticated cross-references and archival arrangement.

A few *Esposizioni* are exant from 1541, but they only emerged as a consistent series in the 1560s.[58] In 1602 Venice's official historian and superintendent of the Secret Chancery, Andrea Morosini, explained that the doge had originally informed the Senate in person about the proposals of foreign ambassadors, and

confirmed that 'over the last forty years' the new practice of written recording precipitated a great deal of extra work within the Chancery.[59] In 1574, the Senate noted that this activity was falling behind and allocated responsibility for recording different ambassadors to different secretaries. The latter were 'to note down (*notar*) the proposals which ambassadors of [foreign] princes make in the Collegio and the answers which are made to them'.[60] From that year on, the *Esposizioni* seem to have been compiled and stored more systematically.

The 1574 ruling made no specifications as to the level of detail. How did secretaries take records at the time, then, and how reliable are their records as guides to spoken conversation? A degree of speculation is necessary here. Extant *Esposizioni* are on the whole too polished to have been made during audiences. We must therefore assume that secretaries took notes, now lost, which they transcribed and expanded into continuous texts with the aid of their, and their colleagues', memory. *Esposizioni* generally describe ambassadors as coming 'this morning', indicating that secretaries wrote them only few hours later. The existence of notes can also be inferred from oversights in the extant records, such as in cases when secretaries misread their earlier abbreviations.[61] *Esposizioni* – especially the earliest ones – contain numerous corrections, cancellations and additions in more than one hand, and so look like collective working copies.[62] Perhaps for this reason the names of the secretaries compiling the report were not recorded until the mid-1620s. Sometimes, short phrases are added, possibly because they escaped the secretary and were suggested to him by colleagues. For example, one secretary concluded a French ambassador's audience with a short, formal statement of gratitude, which another secretary substituted with a long speech in the first person, including a quotation from Cicero.[63] Other times, secretaries corrected single words to avoid repetitions, although we cannot know whether this was to adhere to the speaker's own vocabulary or, on the contrary, to improve the record's written style.

Certain elements of the original address were inevitably lost in the process. Thus, when we read that an ambassador *passò poi a parlare* (literally 'moved on to speak about' a different subject), we do not know whether he felt it necessary to explain or even mark the shift in topic with words, gestures or a pause. At times secretaries summarized, whenever there were long repetitions, or when an ambassador said he would return to a subject at a later point.[64] Other times they missed entire phrases: in 1607, for example, a secretary noted that the nuncio 'added a Latin quotation from Cornelius Tacitus, which I could not hear'.[65] Very occasionally, some material is censored intentionally. For instance, when the papal legate in Romagna offered to help Venetian families owning estates there, the passage was crossed out possibly because Venice's laws prohibited favours from foreign sovereigns to private individuals.[66]

Evidently, the *Esposizioni* are no perfect transcripts, nor could they be. Yet secretaries did attempt to follow as closely as possible the flow of spoken audiences. This is reflected, for instance, in the records' syntax. Each almost invariably begins with the words '[the ambassador] said in essence' – *in sostanza*, or *nella seguente*

sostanza. This is followed by a long quotation, generally in the first person, followed by the doge's reply. This is similar to some of the Florentine records, but Venetian secretaries went on to follow the rest of the conversation, including quick ripostes and occasional interruptions.[67] The records contain a mixture of direct and indirect speech, occasionally switching from one to the other in order to mark a change of subject. This technique stems from the preoccupation – peculiar to writing rather than talking – with making the flow of speech easily readable.[68] Yet the switches are not always properly introduced, showing the secretary's struggle to keep up with the speakers' pace. Indirect speech is common when the dialogue was thickest, with short statements and replies, as secretaries tended to summarize. Punctuation is not standardized, whilst quotation marks are never used; instead, pauses are often indicated by a blank space signalling a shift in subject matter with no further introductory verbs such as 'said' or 'spoke' – a procedure reminiscent of free indirect speech. The sequence of tenses also shows the attempt to quote reliably. As is natural for a secretary writing after the audience, speakers are always introduced in the past (the ambassador 'spoke'); but speech itself is in the present, not only when spoken in the first person, but often even when reported in the third person, where correct syntax would require using the past tense. Secretaries disregarded grammatical rules because they adhered to spoken practice and followed the notes they had taken, in the present, while actually listening to the audience.[69]

Further confirmation of the closeness of the records to actual orality comes by comparing audiences held in Italian with others in foreign languages, which secretaries translated. In these cases, the records are noticeably succinct, as the secretary summarized his own interpretation and could not employ the ambassador's own words.[70] But he did follow the Venetians' replies faithfully, such as when reporting the doge's candid admission to the Dutch ambassador (who had spoken in French): 'we are not sure we have understood everything, because it is a long time since we were last [in France]'.[71] Incidentally, in many such cases, senior patricians with a mastery of foreign languages were required to respond instead.[72]

The style of *Esposizioni* feels more natural than that of contemporary written texts and documents, with shorter sentences, fewer formalisms, and abundant idioms and colloquialisms. At times they were employed to express an emotion. In 1561, the French ambassador François de Noailles, a bishop, angrily exclaimed 'I don't know how the Devil' (*'Io non so come Diavolo'*) – later adding: 'Your Sublimity, forgive me if I speak perhaps with less modesty than would be appropriate'.[73] Other times, speakers reinforced a point with sarcastic comments that it would be difficult to imagine in writing. For example, the doge reprimanded a disloyal prelate that love for the *patria* was as old as the world, 'be that five, six, or seven thousand years ago or however many you want'.[74] Of the Jesuits' desired return after their expulsion in 1606 he said, 'we believe it as much as we believe we can fly'.[75] Ambassadors too made witticisms. On one occasion, the Spanish ambassador blamed his gout for his delay in visiting the Collegio: an ailment that troubled him because it normally befell the great and the rich, whereas, he said, he was neither.[76] Moreover, secretaries were

attentive to the particular way in which words were spoken, often noting the movements, gestures and tone of voice of ambassadors and patricians: the Dutch ambassador's 'very low voice', the French ambassador's excitement, the Spanish ambassador's shaking of his head, the blushing of the ambassador of the Three Grey Leagues, and so on.[77] Secretaries also recorded whether ambassadors suddenly stood up or moved their bodies to address particular members of the Collegio.[78] In sum, even though successive steps in the record-making process separate the written record from the ambassador's voice, the *Esposizioni* are the closest we are ever likely to get to the spoken words of early modern diplomats. On this basis, in the next three sections I shall investigate the uses of speech, records and archives in the preparation and conduct of diplomatic negotiations.

The Uses of Speech

The first point of interest of the *Esposizioni* is that they capture the respective importance of orality and literacy for practising diplomats. Strikingly, they show that the impermanence of speech – the principal problem to us as historians – was useful to negotiators in the actual course of their activities. In face-to-face encounters, ambassadors and patricians could show their uncertainties or admit that they lacked necessary pieces of information to an extent which they would have found problematic in writing.[79] As shown by linguists interested in the pragmatics of argumentation, in talking we can appear to concede a point while in fact maintaining the opposite; when having an argument, for instance, we may say things (which we would not write) like 'I'm not saying you're wrong', when in fact I am.[80] Similar passages abound on the lips of ambassadors, such as: 'I don't know whether [what you say] is true . . . but I am telling you . . .'; 'I am not saying that your Serenity is or isn't right . . . but I object . . .'.[81] As Walter Ong characteristically put it, orality helps to overcome discrepancies 'by glossing them over' (*glossa* is Latin for tongue).[82]

Despite the ceremoniousness of audiences, face-to-face oral communication helped negotiators seek personal sympathy in informal ways which they would have found difficult in writing. A recently arrived nuncio implored concessions, lamenting that he would otherwise incur the pope's anger – a point he would hardly have put on paper. The doge in turn couched refusals in fatherly language: 'take this counsel from me not as doge of the Republic but as an old man, expert in the affairs of the world'.[83] Emphasizing the doge's person rather than his office would have been difficult to achieve through impersonal official documents. Even in confrontational situations, orality allowed negotiators to assert or simulate empathy. In 1570 the Ottoman ambassador who handed over the Sultan's declaration of war which would eventually lead to the battle of Lepanto, added 'with a very pale face and with a trembling voice . . . that he unhappily undertook this task'. Then – the record switches to the first person – he concluded: 'Your Serenity be well, this war will not last forever, and then there shall be peace'.[84]

Similarly, orality allowed negotiators to make hypothetical suggestions as if these were spontaneous initiatives rather than plans agreed upon with their masters. 'While

on my way here, I have had this thought', said the papal nuncio in 1619.[85] On another occasion, he stated: 'I will tell you in all sincerity something which has just now crossed my mind'.[86] This reflected a principle that the political elites of Europe acquired throughout their education, and that Baldassarre Castiglione (himself an experienced ambassador) famously captured with the notion of *sprezzatura* – 'which conceals art and presents what is done and said as if it was done without effort and virtually without thought'.[87] Diplomatic negotiation required long planning, but by pretending extemporaneousness ambassadors could underscore the honesty and reasonableness of their words.

The indeterminacy of orality also helped negotiators wishing to maintain room for manoeuvre – just as a sense of feigned surprise had enabled Philip II in 1573 to take time and consult with his advisors. For this reason, the Senate's official responses to ambassadors were read out to them in the Collegio but not distributed in writing. After their audiences, ambassadors invariably asked for copies, but their requests were always refused, and instead secretaries offered to read the response several times over.[88] On their part, ambassadors too exploited orality in order to procrastinate. For example, after the doge's refusal to budge over a particular question in 1619, the nuncio said that he would wait before writing to the pope – whether or not he did, he knew that keeping on the level of orality made it possible to leave space for further bargaining.[89]

Yet orality never functioned in isolation, as ambassadors assisted themselves with written documents during negotiations. At their first reception, they presented formal credentials and later, in the course of discussions, they showed letters to support specific requests, perhaps as evidence that those requests originated from important authorities.[90] On occasion, they also resorted to written information which served to support the discussion underway in speech. In 1574, for example, the Collegio secretary described the French ambassador pulling out of his bag a letter from a colleague in Istanbul and reading out a passage ('I believe from the end of the letter'), which the secretary then incorporated into the *Esposizioni* file.[91] In Venice as in Rome, finally, documents written in foreign languages also required translation, first orally and later in writing.[92]

More strikingly, from the 1620s onward, we find an increasing number of ambassadors providing written texts of their speeches. As has been mentioned already, accomplished speakers had long circulated written copies of their orations, which in Florence may have formed the basis of the chancellors' records of ambassadorial receptions.[93] Yet this is the first time we see speeches presented in writing prior to being, and sometimes in order to be, read out. Some ambassadors only presented summaries, described as *memoriali*, containing the principal points they wanted to make; while speaking, they then referred to these texts for further detail.[94] Others presented a complete text of the speech with which they wished to open the audience.[95] Ambassadors who had little Italian were particularly reliant on these written texts. In 1622–23, the French ambassador regularly spoke in French, but left transcripts of his speeches, either in translations prepared by his secretary, or else in the original, to be translated by Venetian secretaries.[96] In some

cases, instead of speaking, he asked the Collegio secretaries to read out his text in his presence.[97] Even a fluent speaker of Italian like Henry Wotton would occasionally present written speeches, which he signed and left to be enclosed within the record of his audience.[98]

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, then, many foreign ambassadors shunned audiences and instead relied on their secretaries to bring the texts of their requests 'to the gates of the Collegio'. There, Venetian secretaries received and read them out to assembled members of that council.[99] Gradually the Collegio abandoned its role as audience chamber and turned towards examining written information in order to table proposals for discussion in the Senate with the aim of putting forward written agreements to foreign ambassadors. Audiences maintained their importance and continued to be recorded until the fall of the Republic, but became less numerous; the *Esposizioni* were increasingly conceived less as records of oral negotiations than as a means of organizing the written material presented by foreign ambassadors. In the diplomacy of the eighteenth century, the great age of conversation, the balance between orality and writing began in fact to shift towards the latter.

The Uses of Records

To understand the intended uses of the *Esposizioni*, we need to begin by examining their material features. Single audiences were written on quires which were placed, one on top of the other with the earliest at the bottom, on a spike, leaving holes in the middle of each sheet. At the end of the year, these temporary sheaves were sewn (in reverse chronological order) in files known as *filze*, onto supports which could be easily unsewn if necessary, for example to enclose more papers or to extract particular audiences (for this reason, multiple perforations are often visible on the left-hand side of the sheets). They were then covered in parchment, sometimes with extensions that could be folded to protect the fore edge for better preservation, and the timespan of each file was marked on the spine to ensure correct arrangement and retrieval on the shelves of cabinets in the Secret Chancery.[100] Audiences were filed together with documents presented by ambassadors or produced by Venetian secretaries, so as to gather together all the necessary information relating to a specific affair.[101]

Esposizioni had a range of uses in guiding diplomatic negotiations both in Venice and abroad. The Senate regularly sent copies to ambassadors abroad so that they could adjust their conduct in order to complement or counteract that of foreign ambassadors in Venice. This process is only occasionally recorded in the *Esposizioni* themselves, but is confirmed by other sources.[102] As the Venetian ambassador in Paris commented upon receiving one such copy, 'it will be useful in the service of Your Serenity, so I can be informed in accomplishing my obligations'.[103] These copies subsequently served different purposes. In 1591, the Senate sent its ambassador in Turin the text of the audience of the duke of Savoy's ambassador, commenting that the latter had caused great annoyance and

instructing the Venetian ambassador to protest formally.[104] Inversely, in 1606 the English ambassador's *Esposizione* was sent to the Venetian ambassador in England to show that an earlier divergence had been resolved.[105] The records could serve as guidelines for further action, such as the case when another of Wotton's audiences was sent to the Venetian ambassador in London because it contained preliminary details of a new agreement concerning maritime customs.[106] Alternatively, *Esposizioni* could help in double-checking information regarded as suspicious. For example, after the Spanish ambassador shocked the Collegio by announcing that his king's fleet had beaten the Venetians in the Southern Adriatic in 1617, the text of his audience was sent to the Venetian representative in Naples, who was to enquire and report back.[107] Surviving files of documents gathered by ambassadors abroad show that they kept copies of *Esposizioni* bundled together with summaries of official letters and transcripts of their own dispatches.[108]

Esposizioni were useful in managing foreign policy in Venice itself, as the authorities could compare them with other reports about the opinions of foreign ambassadors. At the height of the Interdict crisis in 1606, for example, the doge noted a discrepancy between the French ambassador's official audiences and his more positive overtures in a conversation they had while sitting next to each other in church. 'He said so many things in our favour, that I was struck about this divergence', the doge commented, exclaiming: 'if only he spoke in the Collegio in the same manner as he did when alone with me'.[109] More generally, *Esposizioni* informed government discussions concerning foreign affairs. This was envisaged in the Senate's 1574 decree discussed above, which instructed secretaries to read out the records in the Senate at the earliest opportunity, so that senators could 'deliberate with mature judgment and sound resolution'. To understand the immediate significance of this measure, we need to remember that this was a period of confrontation between, on one hand, the oligarchic Council of Ten and, on the other, the larger and more inclusive Senate. Amongst other things, the conflict verged on foreign policy, because a majority of senators resented the 1573 separate peace with the Ottomans which had been concluded exclusively by the Ten.[110] Senators may have seen the *Esposizioni* as instrumental in exercising greater direction in foreign policy. For this reason, individual *esposizioni* were annotated with the letters L. R. (*Lecta Rogatis*: read in the Senate) and the date of reading. Thus the records helped the Senate to formulate a response to the ambassador, and ensure that the Collegio actually adhered to that decision.

The *Esposizioni*'s arrangement in the Chancery archive was designed to facilitate access to these records during the course of Senate deliberation. The most recent were thus kept in a separate cabinet for frequent reference.[111] This particular purpose also explains why *Esposizioni* were split between two distinct series: one (*Esposizioni Roma*) for the audiences of the nuncio – and, less systematically, the agents of the Knights of Malta and other prelates – and the other for ambassadors of secular powers (*Esposizioni Principi*).[112] This meant that the *Esposizioni Roma* could be read after the required departure of *papalisti*, those patricians who were ineligible to participate in decision-making concerning the Holy See because they

had ecclesiastical relatives.[113] Thus, the records' physical organization was directly instrumental to governmental activity.

The Uses of Archives

This brings me to my final point. The examples discussed above all relate to the short- or medium-term uses of records, but the Venetian government also took measures for the long-term preservation of those records. Indeed, an additional cause for the 1574 ruling may be that, only a few months earlier, a fire had destroyed a large part of the Senate's archive, perhaps heightening its concern for the state of its record-keeping. Interestingly, as Fabio Antonini has recently demonstrated, the Republic was also embarking at this time upon a vast historiographical programme that entailed the compilation of archival registers, or *Annali*, of memorable events, which included transcripts of passages from official records and particularly from the *Esposizioni*, as well as a renewed effort to publish official histories written by patricians especially charged with that task.[114]

Once again, the material features of the documents give precious indications as to their intended uses. *Esposizioni* could only be read with difficulty once sewn into *filze*, which were meant for storage rather than consultation and are generally so thick that they do not stay open on the desk. However, the records were also transcribed retrospectively, in neat cursive handwriting, into parchment volumes bound in wooden boards. These were entitled *Libri expositionum*, but are better known today as *registri* or registers, and the process was known at the time as *registrare*.[115] In 1600, a secretary illustrated the importance of this practice for protracted use when he complained about cuts made to the number of staff allocated to the task of registration. As he suggested, in the absence of registers, the Collegio and Senate utilized paper *filze* 'and so [the files] are becoming worn and corroded and, in time, no one will be able to read and register them'.[116] Clearly, archivists were as concerned then as they are today with balancing the demands of access and preservation.

While the recording of audiences was part of the Chancery's daily work, the records' registration was a special task, carried out at a rate which accelerated or slowed at particular junctures. The earliest registers, namely two volumes covering 1541–69 and 1570–73, were made sometime after 1578 (following a second disastrous fire), as we can tell because the earliest register contains references to events of that year.[117] The registers were compiled by retrospectively ordering and transcribing the records which had accumulated in the files until that point. The third register covers the years 1574–77, and begins with a copy of the 1574 ruling. After a brief pause, a new secretary, Giovanni Maravegia, was specially appointed to the task in the late 1580s.[118] Later, the production fell behind once again, and in 1601 the newly elected superintendent of the Secret Chancery found that most of the *filze* for the previous 15 years not been registered. On his recommendation, Maravegia took up the work again and within six months registered six and a half years' worth of *Esposizioni*.[119] By 1605, he and others had brought the registers up to date, and

the task was accomplished regularly until 1617, when it slowed down again because of the staff's overwork, before finally being brought up to date again in the 1630s.[120] These details demonstrate that registering was a time-consuming task that absorbed substantial energies. Yet despite these odds, the process was accomplished with such consistency that the final register reaches the summer of 1796, shortly before the fall of the Republic itself.

The reason why the Chancery put so much effort into registering the *Esposizioni* was that it regarded registers as long-term reference tools. To this end, secretaries supplemented the entries of single audiences with useful information about precedents and later developments concerning related areas of foreign policy. For example, the 1547 audience in which English ambassador Edmund Harvel communicated Henry VIII's death is followed by a veritable digest concerning the interruption of diplomatic ties with England after Harvel's own death in 1550. A secretary compiled it from summaries of audiences and dispatches covering the years 1534–1578, probably in order to inform deliberation surrounding the proposal by certain senators to resume relations with England in 1578.[121] At the end of the digest, a later hand added a note about further debates in 1591, a sign that the volume was again fished out for reference at that stage.[122]

To facilitate their use, registers were provided with paratextual tools that helped the retrieval of specific audiences: page numbers, tables of contents and indexes. In the *filze* there is no way of locating particular audiences amongst hundreds of sheets. Instead, secretaries numbered the leaves of each register, and inscribed a running title at the top of the page indicating the date of the audience and the ambassador's provenance. In the earliest register, manicules were also used in the margins to highlight particularly important pieces of information. Each audience was briefly summarized, and the summaries were listed in chronological order in calendars known as *rubriche*, complete with references to individual leaf numbers. Calendars were divided by country and written on separate quires, also in parchment, sewn at the beginning of each volume.[123] This made (and still makes) it easy to gain a general idea of Venice's relations with each country and to locate particular aspects of their negotiations. The thoroughness of these summaries varies from volume to volume, and clearly depends on the expertise and diligence of individual secretaries. Especially in the early decades, they made useful lists of audiences under more than one heading, so as to provide further reference.[124]

Finally, the Venetian government devoted attention to the organization of *Esposizioni* as an easily accessible series, one that was to be closely integrated within the wider archive of documents relating to foreign policy inside the Secret Chancery. The two earliest registers also include references to records in other series. Moreover, the Chancery produced aggregate indexes to multiple series of records relating to foreign policy. In 1586, noting how difficult it was 'to retrieve documents and other things pertaining to specific affairs because of the interruptions in negotiations and the profusion of writings', the Council of Ten put a secretary in charge of compiling an 'index divided by subject matter and by subheadings' of all records relating to foreign policy: the Ten argued that this

would be useful to both decision-making and negotiating (*deliberazioni* and *negotii*).[125] Because of the magnitude of the task, a second secretary was added in 1600. The *Indici generali della Secreta*, which they went on to produce every four or five years, collated calendars from *Esposizioni* and other series of records, including, for example, dispatches addressed to ambassadors abroad.[126] These indexes were soon discontinued, but for two decades they effectively worked as reference guides to foreign policy, pointing readers, both secretaries and patricians, to relevant documents across the Chancery archive.

Conclusion

Dispatches and audience records demonstrate that, in early modern diplomacy, orality was not only an obvious means of communication in face-to-face encounters, but also an effective mode of bargaining, skilfully utilized to advocate one's cause and reach a compromise. The impermanence of speech helped negotiators smooth over differences and gain time. It permitted a degree of informality that would have been unthinkable in writing, as ambassadors and their hosts sought the sympathy of their counterparts, resorting to a rich variety of techniques not unlike those with which preachers, singers and street sellers suited their performances to the mood of their audience.[127] Diplomatic negotiation too was to some extent a performative art. Written instructions provided ambassadors with basic plotlines, but they adapted their positions to changing circumstances through witticisms, eloquent gestures, studied pauses and more or less premeditated improvisation. Like good actors, even when ambassadors followed a precise script, they always pretended to act spontaneously.

But the impermanence of orality also posed problems that required the use of writing. As the Venetian doge told the nuncio in 1607, spoken words are easily retracted, because 'the wind takes them away'.[128] This explains why oral negotiations ultimately had to culminate in written agreements, and also why – as we have been seeing – negotiators were keen to record the words spoken in the course of their audiences. Their precision varied from case to case and from genre to genre, but generally depended on the intended uses of the records themselves. Throughout Italy, and especially with the growth of resident diplomacy from the late fifteenth century onwards, ambassadors described the contents, and often cited the exact words, of their audiences in regular dispatches to their masters back home. Although the level of detail varied, ambassadors generally had an interest in faithfully transcribing speeches, describing gestures, and even interpreting silences. Their aim was both to account for their own conduct during their missions and to report on the position of their interlocutors in order to help their masters plan responses and further moves.

Things are less clear-cut when it comes to the records of the authorities receiving ambassadors. Documents such as ceremonial diaries described diplomatic receptions in order to establish, for future reference, the status to which foreign ambassadors aspired and that which the pope was prepared to accord them. For this reason,

successive masters consulted and sometimes annotated previous diaries whilst instructing themselves on the proper management of ceremonial occasions.[129] However, the diaries served no purpose in the formulation of foreign policy, and consequently gave little space to the contents of the audiences themselves. They were never organized in an archive for reference: Burchard's untidy writing shows that he did not originally intend his diary for use by others; different masters kept separate and sometimes overlapping diaries; and the diaries had minimal paratextual tools to help in locating particular events.[130] They were transcribed in many copies, and collected by important Roman families, less as records of negotiation than as evidence of the papacy's universal leadership and of the city's attraction as the 'theatre of the world': less as documents than as monuments.[131]

For more accurate transcripts of ambassadorial speech we need to turn to the records of republican chanceries. This is not surprising. While princely government made foreign policy the business of sovereigns and their ministers, the frequent rotation of offices in city-states required written information for new incumbents.[132] As well as tools of knowledge, moreover, records were tools of control inside the republican power structure, because councils constantly checked on each other.[133] Comparing different republics demonstrates that records were more detailed where they were intended for greater use. Florentine chancellors kept records of foreign ambassadors' orations and replies, but not of actual discussions. They may have regarded those records, written in beautiful cursive script and, at least initially, impeccable humanist Latin, as evidence of their own good handling of the embassies received by Florence, or (again) as monuments to the humanist rhetoric deployed in the service of civic glory. Yet the practical uses of the records were limited, which explains why the registers have no referencing devices or annotations other than brief marginal indications. This is likely because, increasingly during the last decades of the century, actual negotiations took place in informal talks between foreign ambassadors and the Medici rather than in republican councils.

By contrast, Venetian secretaries recorded an exceptional amount of detail from audiences, enriched the records with retrieval tools and cross-references to other documents in the chancery archive, and put great care into ensuring their preservation, transcribing the loose records into bound registers and arranging the registers within special cabinets. All of this demonstrates that the Venetian records were produced and stored for both immediate and long-term use. On a day-to-day basis they were read to assist deliberative activities in Venice and were regularly sent to ambassadors abroad to help them prepare their own audiences. They also enabled the Senate to keep control of the activities handled separately by smaller councils such as the Collegio, and so they served to maintain the constitutional balance of power. Finally, they were consulted retrospectively years and decades later, when the government needed guidance on particular affairs, and when official historians were preparing their accounts of recent history. Thus, in conclusion, a comparison of these documentary traditions shows that different archival practices not only passively reflected shifts in the balance of power but also actively served and

maintained different political regimes. The function of these records was twofold: to report on current activities, but also to inform further action. In the case of diplomatic negotiations, audience records both documented diplomatic activity and also served as guides to foreign policy itself.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Carol Rutter for her suggestions, Anna Gialdini for her help in analysing the material features of Venetian archival bindings, as well as Fabio Antonini, Alison Brown, Francesco Senatore and the special issue's co-editors for their comments on an earlier version.

Notes

1. The painting, held in the Royal Collection, is mentioned in Deborah Howard and Henrietta McBurney, eds, *The Image of Venice: Fialetti's View and Sir* Henry Wotton (London 2014), 105. On the timing of ambassadorial receptions in the Collegio, Marin Sanudo, *De origine, situ, et magistratibus urbis venetae*, ed. Angela Caracciolo Aricò (Milano 1980), 96. The following abbreviations have been used: ASFi: Archivio di Stato, Florence; ASVat: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Rome; ASVe: Archivio di Stato, Venice; BL: British Library (Add. MS: Additional Manuscript); *Principi*: ASVe, *Collegio, Esposizioni principi*; *Roma: ASVe, Collegio, Esposizioni Roma*.
2. This is indicated in many other paintings, and prints, depicting the same scene, cf. Howard and McBurney, p. 104; a history of this genre still needs to be written.
3. 'Archival Intelligence', in *Archives and Information in the Early Modern World*, Liesbeth Corens, Kate Peters, and Alexandra Walsham, eds, Proceedings of the British Academy (Oxford, forthcoming). For a magisterial discussion, but on an earlier period, see Francesco Senatore, *'Uno mundo de carta'. Forme e strutture della diplomazia sforzesca* (Napoli 1998).
4. The Venetian audience records are summarized in translation in A. B. Hinds and H. R. Brown, eds, *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, and in other Libraries of Northern Italy* (London 1864–1940) but have only attracted analysis in one article, Piero Scarpa, 'Ricevitori e rappresentanti dell'Ordine di Malta a Venezia in epoca moderna nelle *Esposizioni* del Collegio', *Archivio veneto*, 137 (2006), 191–210. Recently, Carol Rutter has been conducting a systematic analysis of these records in the course of her research on Henry Wotton, cf. '"Hear the Ambassadors!" Marking Shakespeare's Venice Connection', *Shakespeare Survey*, 66 (2013), 265–86.
5. See for example Randolph Head, 'Knowing Like a State: The Transformation of Political Knowledge in Swiss Archives, 1450–1770', *Journal of Modern History*, 75 (2003), 745–82 and, for an Italian case, Peter Rück, *L'ordinamento degli archivi ducali di Savoia sotto Amedeo VIII, 1398–1451* (Rome 1977). For a fuller discussion of the 'archival turn', see the introduction to this special issue.
6. For a discussion of the latter as transcripts of speech, see Andrea Del Col, 'I processi dell'Inquisizione come fonte: considerazioni diplomatiche e storiche', *Annuario dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per l'età moderna e contemporanea*, 35–6 (1983–1984), 31–49 and Elizabeth S. Cohen, 'She Said, He Said: Situated Oralities in Judicial Records from Early Modern Rome', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 16 (2012), 403.

7. Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London 1982) and Jack Goody, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* (Cambridge 1986).
8. Françoise Waquet, *Parler comme un livre. L'oralité et le savoir (XVIe–XXe siècle)* (Paris 2003) and see the special issue 'Oral Culture in Early Modern Italy: Performance, Language, Religion', Brian Richardson, ed., *The Italianist*, 34 (2014).
9. Daniela Frigo, *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy: The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1450–1800* (Cambridge 1999); Maria Antonietta Visceglia, 'Corti italiane e storiografia europea', *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica*, 2 (2004), 7–48; John Watkins, 'Toward a New Diplomatic History of Medieval and Early Modern Europe', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 38 (2008), 1–14; Timothy Hampton, *Fictions of Embassy: Literature and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca, NY 2009).
10. Isabella Lazzarini, 'Il gesto diplomatico fra comunicazione politica, grammatica delle emozioni, linguaggio delle scritture (Italia, XV secolo)', in Monica Salvadori and Monica Baggio, eds, *Gesto-immagine tra antico e moderno. Riflessioni sulla comunicazione non-verbale* (Rome 2009), 75–93; Francesco Senatore and Francesco Montuori, 'Discorsi riportati alla corte di re Ferrante d'Aragona', in Giancarlo Abbamonte, Lorenzo Miletti and Luigi Spina, eds, *Discorsi alla prova* (Naples 2009), 519–77.
11. Stefano Andretta et al., eds, *Paroles de négociateurs : l'entretien dans la pratique diplomatique de la fin du Moyen Âge à la fin du XIXe siècle* (Rome 2010).
12. Niccolò Machiavelli, 'Memoriale a Raffaello Girolami', in *Arte della guerra e scritti politici minori*, Sergio Bertelli, ed. (Milan 1961), 285; cf. Jean Jacques Marchand, 'Teatralizzazione dell'incontro diplomatico in Machiavelli: messa in scena e linguaggio dei protagonisti nella prima legazione in Francia', in *La lingua e le lingue di Machiavelli* (Florence 2001), 125–43.
13. But cf. Isabella Lazzarini, 'Argument and Emotion in Italian Diplomacy in the early Fifteenth Century: The case of Rinaldo degli Albizzi (Florence, 1399–1430)', in A. Gamberini, J.-P. Genet and A. Zorzi, eds, *The Languages of Political Society* (Rome 2011), 339–64.
14. Senatore and Montuori, 'Discorsi riportati', 528.
15. Ibid., 534.
16. Ibid., 550–3.
17. Lazzarini, 'Il gesto diplomatico'. For an example of lengthy direct quotations, see the letter of Piero de Medici's agent in Milan published in Alison Brown, 'Florentine Diplomacy on the Banks of the Po: Bernardo Ricci's Meeting with Lodovico il Moro in June 1493', in Philippa Jackson and Guido Rebecchini, eds, *Mantova e il Rinascimento italiano: Studi in onore di David S. Chambers* (Mantua 2011), 310–14.
18. 'Ricordi in generale per ministri di prencipi presso ad altri prencipi, & altre osservationi per Segretarii', in *La seconda parte del thesoro politico* (Vicenza 1602), 385.
19. Panfilo Persico, *Del segretario* (Venice 1620), 187; cf. Senatore, *Uno mundo*, 444.
20. De Vivo, 'Archival Intelligence' (see note 3 above).
21. Mario Brunetti and Eligio Vitale, eds, *La corrispondenza da Madrid dell'ambasciatore Leonardo Donà (1570–1573)* (Venice 1963), 677–81.
22. Ibid., 682–93 and 698–710.
23. Brian Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric* (Oxford 1988), 13.
24. Giuliano Gasca Queirazza, *Gli scritti autografi di Alessandro VI nell'Archivum Arcis* (Turin 1959).

25. Francesco Senatore, 'Ai confini del "mundo de carta". Origine e diffusione della lettera cancelleresca italiana (XIII–XVI secolo)', *Reti Medievali Rivista* 10, (2008), 18–23.
26. Francesco Senatore has studied the use of summaries in preparing letters to ambassadors and foreign princes in the chancery of Sforza Milan, and some of the points mention ducal audiences with foreign ambassadors; 'Ai confini', 48–50.
27. For an example, compare the brief letters of the Florentine *Otto di Pratica* to their ambassador in Naples, all very succinct and in the third person ('ha visitati… ha referito… ha replicato'), with the ambassador's much fuller replies, including detailed reports of his audiences with the king and his ministers in Naples. *Corrispondenza degli ambasciatori fiorentini a Napoli Piero Alamanni (12 maggio 1492–21 febbraio 1493) e Bartolomeo Ugolini (12 febbraio–18 Aprile 1493)*, Bruno Figliuolo, ed. (Naples 2012), respectively 7–8 and 64ff.
28. For a description of the office and the diaries in this period, see G. Constant, 'Les Maîtres de Cérémonies du XVIe siècle', *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, 23 (1903), 161–229 and 319–42. For Florence, see Richard Trexler, ed., *The 'Libro cerimoniale' of the Florentine Republic* (Geneva 1978) and Annamaria Testaverde, '"Entrate, onoranze, esequie et altre cose": The Book of Ceremonies of Francesco Tongiarini (1563–1612)', in J. R. Mulryne, ed., *Ceremonial Entries in Early Modern Europe: The Iconography of Power* (Farnham 2015), 99–111; for Venice, Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton NJ 1981); ASVe, *Collegio*, *Cerimoniali* contains 14 volumes.
29. Enrico Celani, 'Introduzione', in Johannes Burckardus, *Liber notarum: ab anno MCCCCLXXXIII usque ad annum MDVI* (Città di Castello 1907–1911), xxiv; cf. Grassi's diary in BL Add. MS 8440, 2v.
30. Philipp Stenzig, *Botschafterzeremoniell am Papsthof der Renaissance: Der* Tractatus de oratoribus *des Paris de Grassi* (Frankfurt 2014).
31. Catherine Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome: The Rise of the Resident Ambassador* (Cambridge 2015), 64.
32. Burckardus, *Liber notarum*, v. 2, 199.
33. BL Add. MS 8440, 154v.
34. BL Add MS 8445, 107r–108r.
35. Burckardus, *Liber notarum*, v. 2, 451–2; the incident is also reported by Grassi, with no further details, BL Add. MS 8440, 6v. For a similar case (but relating to the King of France's claim to the title of King of Sicily and Jerusalem), see Add. MS 8440, 187r.
36. See for example the diary of Grassi, BL Add MS 8445, 20v-32r, and Giovan Paolo Mucanzio, 'Diarii cerimoniales', ASVat, *Fondo Borghese* I.721, 53r.
37. Burckardus, *Liber notarum*, v. 2, 360.
38. *Dispacci di Antonio Giustinian, ambasciatore veneto in Roma dal 1502 al 1505*, ed. Pasquale Villari (Florence 1876), v. 2, 152–4. By contrast, Giustinian was relatively uninterested in purely formal diplomatic ceremony, and for example skipped over the details of the Anglo-French incident, ibid., v. 3, 104–5.
39. Cf. the crisp record of a meeting of cardinals and ambassadors after the death of Leo X (1522) in the diary of Grassi's successor Biagio Martinelli: 'orator regis Francie habuit multa verba receptus a cardinalibus cum paucis verbis in responsione', BL, Add MS 8446, 21v.
40. ASVat, *Fondo Borghese* I. 722, 98v–99r.

41. Günther Wassilowsky and Hubert Wolf, *Päpstliches Zeremoniell in der Frühen Neuzeit: das Diarium des Zeremonienmeisters Paolo Alaleone de Branca während des Pontifikats Gregors XV (1621–1623)* (Münster 2007), passim.
42. Robert Black, *Benedetto Accolti and the Florentine Renaissance* (Cambridge 1985), 164–5.
43. Alison Brown, *Bartolomeo Scala, 1430–1497, Chancellor of Florence: The Humanist as a Bureaucrat* (Princeton, NJ 1979), 157–9. We do not know whether more volumes were ever produced.
44. E.g. ASFi, *Signori*, *Risposte verbali di oratori forestieri*, v. 1, 1r.
45. Domenico Marzi, *La cancelleria della Repubblica fiorentina* (Rocca San Casciano 1910), 230. For a valuable exploration of the role of oratory in Florentine politics and society, see Brian Maxson, *The Humanist World of Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge 2014).
46. E.g. ASFi, *Risposte verbali di oratori forestieri*, v. 2, 86r.
47. Ibid., v. 2, fragment of binding.
48. Ibid., v. 1, 1r. Accolti's volume is in Latin; Scala's mixes Latin and vernacular, especially in the later period.
49. Ibid., v. 1, 36v–37r.
50. Black, *Accolti*, 252–3, from ASFi, *Risposte verbali*, v. 1.
51. Bartolomeo Scala, *Humanistic and Political Writings*, ed. Alison Brown (Tempe AR 1997), 237, from *Risposte verbali*, v. 2.
52. For a discussion of chancery developments in this regard, see Andrea Guidi's article in this special issue.
53. They also filed reports by Venetian patricians of their own, less formal conversation with ambassadors, exchanges which the government was keen to monitor. Filippo de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford 2007), 70–72.
54. For example, *exposuit* in ASFi, *Risposte verbali*, reg. 1, 4r, and *exponendo* in Martinelli's diary, BL Add. MS 8446, 15r. Machiavelli also used it in the vernacular in 1522, 'Istruzione', 286.
55. Alessandra Contini and Paola Volpini, eds, *Istruzioni agli ambasciatori e inviati medicei in Spagna e nell''Italia spagnola' (1536–1648)* (Rome 2007), v. 2, 564.
56. In this article, I have used the lower case for the former and the upper for the latter.
57. The records were divided into two parallel series, for reasons we shall see. An inventory of the *Principi* series was prepared by Roberto Cessi in 1910 and can be found at http://www.archiviodistatovenezia.it/siasve/cgi-bin/pagina.pl?Tipo=riprodinventario&Chiave=222 (accessed 21 August 2015); an inventory of the *Roma* series can be found in Scarpa, 'Ricevitori', 207–10.
58. *Principi*, f. 1 contains seven reports from the 1540s and one from 1558; the bulk of the reports start in 1561; a few documents from 1501 were enclosed in *Principi*, f. 180 (stretching to 1639), but they are letters by foreign ambassadors rather than reports of their audiences.
59. Alfred von Reumont, *Della diplomazia italiana dal secolo XIII al XVI* (Florence 1857), 322–5.
60. The measure is recorded at the beginning of *Principi*, reg. 3, 21r (leaf 1 of the old numbering). The handwriting in the files suggests that the arrangements for the allocation of the recording labour were not consistent.
61. E.g. 'in gratia' crossed out and substituted with 'in gratification', *Principi*, f. 30 (11.2.1622).

62. E.g. *Principi*, f. 1, 508r–510v.
63. *Principi*, f. 1, 436r; a similar case ibid., f. 30 (27.6.1622).
64. *Roma*, reg. 19, 5r.
65. *Roma*, reg. 15, 264r.
66. *Principi*, f. 30 (21.5.1622); the passage is omitted in the copy in reg. 33, 65v. Another case in *Principi*, f. 2, 46v.
67. E.g. *Principi*, reg. 34, 22v.
68. E.g. *Roma*, reg. 19, 9r, 11v and 17r.
69. E.g. *Roma*, reg. 19, 5v.
70. *Principi*, reg. 31, 63v and 97r; reg. 34, 71r.
71. *Principi*, reg. 34, 73v. In London too, the Venetian representative and James I spoke French: Rutter, 'Hear the Ambassadors!', 275.
72. *Principi*, reg. 34, 18r; reg. 50, 181v-182r.
73. *Principi*, reg. 1, 36v Other colloquialisms include: 'mi stringerò nelle spalle', 'mettere il naso', 'lasciamocelo dietro le spalle', 'sta bene', 'non c'entra', 'dirò una sola parola', 'che volete che vi dica', 'goffarie', 'cosette', 'bagatelle', 'scemo di cervello'.
74. *Roma*, reg. 17, 103r.
75. *Roma*, reg. 14, 90v.
76. *Principi*, reg. 31, 107r.
77. Respectively in: *Principi*, reg. 31, 63v; reg. 34, 23r; reg. 14, 157v; reg. 19, 37v; and *Roma*, reg. 19, 16r.
78. E.g. *Principi* reg. 1, 29v–31v and 34v; reg. 31, 63v.
79. E.g. *Roma*, reg. 19, 20r, 30v, 31v.
80. See Frans H. van Eemeren and Peter Houtlosser, eds, *Argumentation in Practice* (Amsterdam 2005).
81. *Roma*, reg. 19, c. 33r.
82. Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 102.
83. *Roma*, reg. 13, 54v.
84. *Principi*, reg. 2, 2v.
85. *Roma*, reg. 19, 20r.
86. *Roma*, reg. 19, 28v.
87. Peter Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier: The European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano* (Cambridge 1995), 31.
88. E.g. *Principi*, reg. 31, 107r and 137r–138r.
89. *Roma*, reg. 19, 5r.
90. Hillard von Thiessen, 'Switching Roles in Negotiation: Levels of Diplomatic Communication between Pope Paul V Borghese and the Ambassadors of Philip III', in *Paroles de négociateurs*, 169.
91. *Principi*, f. 2, 569v.
92. In Rome, the appearance of the earliest credentials in vernacular raised questions about the proper ceremonial order to be followed; see, for example, a case of translation from French into Latin in Rome in 1505 discussed at length by Grassi, BL Add. MS 8440, 186v–187r
93. As discussed above; for examples of circulating orations in Venice in de Vivo, *Information and Communication*, 56–9.
94. E.g., *Principi*, f. 30 (enclosed with Wotton's audience of 29.4.1622); reg. 33, 142r–v; reg. 34, 9v.

95. *Principi*, f. 30 (enclosed with audience of 12.4.1622).
96. E.g. *Principi*, reg. 33, 133v.
97. *Principi*, reg. 34, 20r–23r; for a similar case involving the Dutch ambassador (who spoke in French), *Principi*, reg. 33, 146r.
98. *Principi*, f. 30, enclosed in audience of 14.4.1622.
99. E.g. *Principi*, reg. 100, 42v (1709); more examples are quoted in Scarpa, 'Ricevitori', which (I think wrongly) interprets them as signs of worsening relations between Venice and Malta.
100. Antonio de Negri's inventory of the Secret Chancery (1669) shows that *Esposizioni* were held in seven of 75 cabinets: five for *Principi* (numbered 34–36 for *registri* and 61–62 for *filze*), one for *Roma* (45) and one for current *Esposizioni* (48); ASVe, *Secreta*, *Indici*, reg. 6.
101. E.g., in 1623 a secretary prepared a file including summaries and extracts of dispatches from Naples concerning the negotiations for the restitution of a Venetian merchant galley held there, ASVe, *Collegio*, *Esposizioni principi*, f. 31, enclosed with the Spanish ambassador's audience of 23.3.1623.
102. E.g., the *Esposizione* of the nuncio's secretary of 23.4.1575 was annotated on the verso 'fo mandata all'ambasciator a Roma con lettere dell'Eccellentissimo Senato de 24 aprile', *Principi*, f. 2, 470v; cf. the summaries and transcripts of ambassadorial audiences to the Venetian ambassador in Poland in 1645–47 'per vostro lume', in Domenico Caccamo, ed., *Il carteggio di Giovanni Tiepolo ambasciatore veneto in Polonia (1645–1647)* (Rome 1984), 76, 380, 398.
103. ASVe, *Senato*, *Dispacci*, *Francia*, f. 35, 133r; f. 36, 190r.
104. ASVe, *Senato*, *Deliberazioni segrete*, f. 62, 4.5.1591.
105. ASVe, *Collegio*, *Lettere segrete*, f. 43, 21.4.1606.
106. ASVe, *Collegio*, *Lettere segrete*, f. 44, 28.9.1607.
107. ASVe, *Senato*, *Deliberazioni segrete*, r. 111, 12v; *Senato*, *Dispacci*, *Napoli*, f. 34, 12.12.1617.
108. See e.g. a file collected by Francesco Priuli while ambassador in Spain in 1604–1607, in Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Cod. It. VII.617.
109. *Roma*, reg. 13, 120v.
110. Leonardo Donà, the ambassador seen above discussing this peace with Philip II, went out of his way to criticize the peace's conclusion in his dispatch, *La corrispondenza da Madrid*, 685–6; he became one of the leaders of the senatorial faction.
111. See above, note 100.
112. The division is not as neat in the case of the earliest records; some of the nuncio's *esposizioni* from the 1560s and 1570s are filed separately, whilst others were put together with those of other ambassadors.
113. The Senate's series *Deliberazioni Roma* was created in 1560 for the same purpose, Filippo de Vivo, 'Ordering the Archive in Early Modern Venice (1400–1650)', *Archival Science*, 10 (2010), 237.
114. Fabio Antonini, '"Kept Within their Chests for the Benefit of their Histories": Archival Reform and the Rise of Historical Scholarship amongst the State Records of Early Modern Venice', *Storia della storiografia*, 68 (2015): 37–52 and id., 'A Diplomatic Narrative in the Archive: The War of Cyprus, Record Keeping Practices

and Historical Research in the Early Modern Venetian Chancery', in Tracey Sowerby and Joanna Craigwood, eds, *Cultures of Diplomacy and Literary Writing in the Early Modern World: New Approaches* (forthcoming).

115. Once transcribed, each quire was marked with the abbreviation 'R[egistra]ta'. The process was carried out for many other series of records too, cf. de Vivo, 'Ordering the Archive', *passim*. The volumes were re-bound in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but the original wood covers were used; the spines are lost.
116. Reumont, *Della diplomazia*, 318–19.
117. *Principi*, reg. 1, 188v.
118. He recorded and dated the completion of his work on *Principi*, reg. 5, 200r (in this case, the register, covering 1580–83, was accomplished on 13.2.1588).
119. See the 1602 report discussed above.
120. Reports enclosed on 27.1.1605 and 19.4.1617 in ASVe, *Consiglio dei Dieci*, *Deliberazioni segrete*, respectively, f. 28 and f. 32.
121. *Principi*, reg. 1, 26r–27v. A similar digest also in *Principi*, reg. 1, 29v–32, with records spanning from 1549 to the 1570s.
122. *Principi*, reg. 1, 188v; the 1578 discussions are mentioned in *Calendar of State Papers*, Venice, v. 7, xx–xxi, 581; for 1591, ibid., v. 8, vii.
123. The miscellaneous *Principi* series is fully calendared; by contrast, with the exception of the first register, calendars only start in 1625 for the *Roma* series. From the late seventeenth century, registers spanning multiple years contained separate calendars at the beginning of each year.
124. E.g., the French ambassador's discussions of tripartite negotiations with the duchy of Ferrara are summarized in lists under both France and Ferrara in *Principi*, reg. 4, 1–10.
125. ASVe, *Compilazione delle leggi*, b. 107, 579.
126. ASVe, *Secreta*, *Indici generali*, 11 volumes spanning from 1600 to 1619.
127. Richardson, ed., 'Oral Culture in Early Modern Italy'.
128. *Roma*, reg. 15, 265v.
129. Celani, 'Introduzione', in Burckardus, *Liber Notarum*, xiii–xxiv; examples of annotations, in Wassilowsky and Wölff, *Päpstliches Zeremoniell*, 66. Cf. the discussion of ceremonial records in Giora Sternberg, 'Manipulating Information in the Ancien Régime: Ceremonial Records, Aristocratic Strategies, and the Limits of the State Perspective', *The Journal of Modern History*, 85 (2013), 239–79.
130. For a list showing the diaries' overlap, see Wassilowsky and Wolf, *Päpstliches Zeremoniell*, 23–4.
131. Gianvittorio Signorotto and Maria Antonietta Visceglia, eds, *Court and Politics in Papal Rome* (Cambridge 2002). The BL copies consulted in this article (from the Guildford collection) were originally in the library of the Mattei family.
132. See Andrea Guidi's article in this special issue.
133. For a discussion of the material differences between republican and princely records (including diplomatic records, but not audiences), see Isabella Lazzarini, 'Materiali per una didattica delle scritture pubbliche di cancelleria nell'Italia del Quattrocento', *Scrineum. Saggi e materiali online di scienze del documento e del libro medievale*, 2 (2004), 1–85.

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