

Manuscript chapter to be published in:

*Regulating knowledge in an entangled world* [ISBN 9780367234522] / edited by Fokko Jan Dijksterhuis (Routledge, ©2023).

## **Regulating the Transfer of Secret Knowledge in Renaissance Venice:**

### **A Form of Early Modern Management**

**Ioanna Iordanou, Oxford Brookes University**

In the late 1560s the Venetian ambassador in Constantinople, who was casually termed *bailo* by the Venetians,<sup>1</sup> was ordered to desist from the ‘very dangerous’ practice of using ‘lemon juice’ (a euphemism for invisible ink) when relating ‘the secret matters that take place daily’ in the Ottoman capital in his letters to the Venetian government. Instead, he was admonished to revert to the widely accepted use of ciphers because the Sultan’s envoy in Venice, Ibrahim Bey, had grown increasingly suspicious of the *bailo*’s clandestine method of correspondence.<sup>2</sup> This appeal followed a formal request by the Sultan, via Ibrahim Bey, for the *bailo* to actually stop using ciphers altogether in his communication with the Venetian authorities or to submit the cipher keys to the Sultan, a request that the Venetians rejected, arguing that letter interception and the widely-accepted use of ciphers as a common diplomatic practice precluded such a concession.<sup>3</sup> In response, the Sultan, who was irrevocably resolute, demanded a clause to the capitulation of the peace treaty with Venice, forbidding the use of methods of encryption. The Venetians retorted, however, that without ciphers, they would not be able to render favours to his majesty, transporting secret messages to his grandees across the Mediterranean.<sup>4</sup> This response related to a favour the Venetians had rendered to the Sultan two years earlier, transporting, in secret, letters sent by their Grand Vizier (the Sultan’s prime minister) Sokollu Mehmet Pasha to a grandstanding military commander who was sailing across the

Mediterranean with his fleet, after he had played an instrumental role in the Siege of Malta (1565) by the Ottomans.<sup>5</sup>

In a separate incident, a few years later, the Venetian authorities instructed their governor in Trogir – at a time a Venetian colony – to employ a Turkish spy, tasked with travelling to the Ottoman Empire, in order to deliver a letter to the *bailo* who, at the time, was under house arrest. The commission came with detailed instructions: the spy was to hide the letter in a waterproof piece of cloth, which had been duly provided by the Venetian Council of Ten – the executive committee responsible for the security of the Venetian state.<sup>6</sup> Then, he was to stitch up the concealed letter in a way that it created a secret compartment inside his clothes. Upon arrival in *Pera*, the suburb of Constantinople where the Venetian embassy was situated, he would hand over the letter to the *bailo* through a window, and wait until the *bailo* had composed and handed him a reply for the Venetian authorities, which he would consequently transport back.<sup>7</sup>

This chapter will focus primarily on ‘secret’ knowledge, that is, privileged knowledge or confidential information on political, military, economic, social, and even cultural matters that was of geostrategic significance for the Venetian state and, thus, ought to be protected and concealed. Within the context of state security, where this chapter is situated, this type of privileged knowledge or confidential information fell under the term ‘intelligence’, which indicated knowledge or information of political, economic, social, or even cultural value that was worthy of secrecy, evaluation, and potential covert (at times even overt) action by the Venetian government in the name of state security. The two aforementioned episodes are representative of two significant features in the dissemination of secret knowledge in the early modern world – and this chapter: Firstly, official state secrecy, the accomplishment of which enabled the transfer of privileged knowledge that had to be concealed in order to cross both geographical, as well as societal, borders, moving in the courier’s bag, through diverse local

sites of interaction – such the home, the workshop, the marketplace, the government – to a variety of recipients.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, formal processes of regulating – or, as it will become more evident as the chapter unfolds, managing – the transfer of secret knowledge through official decrees on the use, provision, classification and disposal of widely-accepted methods of encryption. These were primarily ciphers, an encryption technique through which a message was concealed by means of changing the characters in which it was composed.<sup>9</sup>

The chronological and geographical focus of this chapter is sixteenth century Venice, a sprawling maritime empire, encompassing vast parts of northern Italy, the Balkan Peninsula, and several mainland and island territories in the Levant, covering part of what is contemporary Greece. This territorial expansion was crucial for Venice, because it enabled her to control the most strategic Mediterranean and European trade routes, dominating the commerce of luxury items like silk and spices from India and Egypt, and overseeing their distribution to the rest of Europe.<sup>10</sup> For this reason, and following the exponential growth of diplomacy in the early modern period,<sup>11</sup> the Venetians had delegated the administration of their territorial state to formally appointed governors, while official ambassadors across Europe played the role of the intermediary between the Venetian government and foreign rulers.<sup>12</sup>

As a result of its imperial make up and the significance of defending its territories in order to protect its economic prominence, early modern Venice marshalled into existence one of the world's earliest centrally organised state intelligence organisations.<sup>13</sup> At the helm of this process was the Council of Ten, the governmental committee responsible for all matters of the security of the Venetian Republic.<sup>14</sup> The Council was actually made up of seventeen men, including ten ordinary members who served annual terms, the Doge's six ducal councillors – who did not have voting rights – and the Doge as the ceremonial figurehead.<sup>15</sup> Every month three ordinary members took turns at heading the Ten's operations. They were called *Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci*, the Heads of the Council of Ten.<sup>16</sup>

In an era when written correspondence was the most prevalent method of long distance communication,<sup>17</sup> letters and dispatches became the cornerstone of political and diplomatic exchanges.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, for the Council of Ten, correspondence provided the main communication link between the government and their formally appointed representatives within and beyond the Venetian empire. Innumerable such epistles pertaining to matters of state security were sent, on a daily basis, from and to the Doge's Palace – Venice's political nucleus situated in Saint Mark's Square, overlooking the Venetian lagoon – most of them written in cipher for secrecy purposes. A great number of them have survived in Venice's State Archives, primarily because the Council of Ten kept a 'secret' archive, called *Cancellaria Secreta*, the storehouse for official state knowledge that had to be kept secret.<sup>19</sup>

In fact, secrecy, that is, official state secrecy, had a pervasive aura engulfing the Venetian government's state security pursuits. For this reason, the Council of Ten institutionalised it, issuing several formal decrees on the necessity and accomplishment of secrecy for the benefit of effective knowledge transfer.<sup>20</sup> These decrees were complemented by regulations – that is, legally binding directives – on the provision, use, classification and disposal of ciphers to enable the transfer of secret knowledge. For the Venetian authorities, such regulations had a specific function: they determined and dictated uniform and interdependent ways of working across all different operations of Venice's state bureaucracy and intelligence apparatus. They are, thus, indicative of a primordial form of managing human action through commonly accepted working patterns, an enlightening insight, which renders the process of regulating the transfer of secret knowledge more significant than the content and revelatory nature secret knowledge itself.

The chapter will start by exploring the Venetian regulations on secrecy, firstly those pertaining to official state secrecy and consequently those relating to the provision, use, classification and disposal of methods of encryption. Drawing from early theorisations of

bureaucratic organisation, the chapter will then proceed to analyse the process of regulating the transfer of secret knowledge and exclusive information as a primordial form of management, that is, managing coordinated ways of working, more often than not, at a distance. Finally, through the use of social theorisations of secrecy, the process of intentional concealment will emerge as an enabler of knowledge transfer, facilitating interactions that helped transcend geographical and even societal barriers for the purpose of communicating privileged knowledge. As an outcome of this analysis, it will become apparent that official state secrecy made concessions that open knowledge could not proffer.

### **The Ten's Regulations on Official State Secrecy**

Sixteenth century Venice was renowned for its obsession with secrecy. As a territorial state with commercial – and by extension political – interests across Europe and Anatolia, this fixation pertained primarily to official state secrecy, that is secrecy of state affairs that were dealt with by the government. They were, thus, debated and deliberated upon by the numerous deliberative bodies that made up the Venetian government. Therein lay the difficulty in the accomplishment of official state secrecy; the large number of patricians participating in the Venetian governmental committees. More specifically, the Venetian Senate – the government's debating committee and primary legislative organ up until the mid-sixteenth century – was made up of 300 men, while the Great Council (*Maggior Consiglio*), the assembly of the entire body of Venetian male patricians, was composed of 2000 men.<sup>21</sup> Aside from their extended family networks, most of these councillors had an entourage of servants and gondoliers accompanying them to the Doge's Palace on a daily basis, the majority of whom were, more often than not, keen to overhear and prattle about what was discussed within the Palace's halls.<sup>22</sup> For this reason, already from the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Council of Ten had decreed that all patricians who partook in Venice's governing bodies were legally required

to keep the content of discussions and debates taking place during formal assemblies strictly confidential.<sup>23</sup>

This was only one of a series of decrees on the necessity and accomplishment of official state secrecy for the preservation of privileged knowledge that had to be protected at any cost. ‘Everyone in this Council [...] knows how necessary secrecy is [...], since without it our State cannot be governed effectively’, the Ten declared, when they introduced a slew of regulations institutionalising secrecy as a vital instrument of statecraft.<sup>24</sup> In fact, for the Venetian government, and especially for the Council of Ten, secrecy embodied confidentiality, harmony, and civic concord. It was primarily for both these ‘functional’ and ‘symbolic’ purposes that secrecy was ‘inherent in Venice’s Republican ideology’, and, therefore, was glorified as one of the government’s most potent virtues.<sup>25</sup> Hence, the string of regulations, already from the fifteenth century, intended to protect secrecy and, ultimately, to institutionalise it. These regulations involved a variety of affairs, including the dealings of governmental bodies with secret matters of the state, the encounters of patricians with foreign princes and their emissaries, and the safeguarding of the formal correspondence and other relevant documentation of Venetian envoys serving within and beyond the *Dominante*, as Venice was known across the Venetian dominion.<sup>26</sup>

As we have already seen, already from the beginning of the sixteenth century, Venetian patricians were strictly forbidden to communicate any matter discussed in the Senate or other deliberative bodies, either orally or in writing, to any outsider of these committees, for a fine of 1000 ducats and, in extreme cases, even the death penalty.<sup>27</sup> The impending punishments were extremely harsh, considering that the annual salary of a patrician serving as an ambassador overseas ranged from 2400 to 7200 ducats.<sup>28</sup> Sanctions were even more stringent for members of the Council of Ten for whom any attempt to disobey this law entailed forfeiting their rights to statecraft for a decade.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, patricians who partook in governmental

councils were prohibited from revealing any debates or instances of conflict and discord during assemblies. The Ten were particularly preoccupied with disclosures of debates and disagreements that arose during governmental committees, as these would tarnish the image of Venice as *La Serenissima*, the most serene Republic. For this reason, they decreed against such ventures under the extraordinary pain of death and the subsequent confiscation of all personal possessions.<sup>30</sup>

The Ten's unyielding preoccupation with minimising disclosures ensuing from governmental assemblies went hand in hand with their stout-hearted resolve to limit Venetian patricians' encounters with foreign grandees and dignitaries. For this reason, already from the 1480s, members of the Venetian ruling class were strictly forbidden to discuss state matters when consorting with foreign emissaries, for a fine of 1000 ducats and a two-year exile.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, when a Venetian nobleman wished to visit a foreign dignitary in the city, he was required by law to obtain a special permission.<sup>32</sup> In 1569, for instance, when an imminent visit of the Archduke of Austria to Venice was rumoured, Girolamo Lippomano, who had served as the Venetian ambassador to the Archduke's court two years earlier, hurried to obtain a licence from the Heads of the Ten to call on the imperial visitor.<sup>33</sup>

These decrees on official state secrecy served a fundamental purpose: they constituted commonly accepted patterns – that is, standardised and thus, mutually accepted practices – of conduct that demarcated the passages, boundaries, and obstacles of the direct communication of official secret knowledge. Accordingly, they determined who was included or excluded from access to privileged knowledge or exclusive information. This was fairly evident in the protection of state secrets that had to be communicated via written correspondence between Venetian diplomats serving overseas and the Venetian authorities stationed in the Doge's Palace. For this reason, already from the fifteenth century, a series of regulations had been issued to safeguard the secrecy of these communications. According to them, formal Venetian

representatives serving within and beyond the *Dominante* were not allowed to divulge information on their mission or on relevant matters of the state in their correspondence with relatives, friends, and other acquaintances.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, when Venice's diplomatic legations were run by distinguished state secretaries, such as in the case of Milan and Florence, *Residenti*, as they were called, were strictly ordered to write their missives personally, under the pain of loss of their diplomatic prerogatives and other public benefits.<sup>35</sup> Importantly, when communicating with the government and its representatives on state affairs – particularly on issues of state security – using methods of encryption, especially cryptography, was compulsory by law.<sup>36</sup> So instrumental was the use of ciphers in the official communication between the Venetian government (especially the Senate and the Council of Ten) and their formal representatives that another string of regulations issued by the Ten pertained to their use, classification and disposal.

### **The Ten's Regulations on Writing in Cipher**

Cryptography, that is, the art of writing in cipher,<sup>37</sup> provided the basis for written communication between the Council of Ten and their formal representatives within and beyond the territories of the Venetian dominion. Its significance, therefore, was immense for Renaissance Venice's diplomatic and, by extension, intelligence operations. For this reason, early modern Venice created one of the world's earliest professional departments of cryptology. This was housed in the *Palazzo Ducale* and occupied some of the most gifted cipher secretaries of the period.<sup>38</sup> Aside from breaking enemy ciphers, the main responsibility of the Venetian state cryptographers was to produce ciphers for the official clandestine communication between the Venetian government and their formal representatives – including Venetian ambassadors, governors, and military commanders – stationed beyond the watery confines of the lagoon city. For this reason, the Ten issued a slew of regulations on the provision, use, classification and disposal of Venetian ciphers.

The first string of the Ten's regulations involved the provision of enciphering and deciphering facilities for the representatives of the *Serenissima*. On a basic level, this meant that all secretaries accompanying Venetian ambassadors in overseas missions ought to have been trained in methods of encryption and decryption in order to handle the correspondence responsibilities on behalf of the envoys they served. In practice, this meant developing the ability to wield the designated cipher in order to encipher and decipher official letters. In consequence, the systematic study and development of a working knowledge of ciphers was an essential aspect of their job.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, as Venetian governors and military chiefs were required to communicate in cipher regularly, they had to either be conversant with cryptography or to be provided with secretaries adept at methods of encryption and decryption. This was particularly important for high ranking naval commanders such as the *Capitano Generale da Mar* – the commander-in-chief of the Venetian fleet, who frequently communicated information to the Ten that would nowadays be deemed classified. For this reason, in 1577, the Ten unanimously decreed that navy chiefs should be provided with a secretary who would be responsible for enciphering and deciphering the *Capitano's* letters to the Council of Ten and their state representatives.<sup>40</sup>

The second string of regulations involved the actual use of formal ciphers. Already from the 1540s the government had decreed that all major diplomats had to be granted a distinct cipher for their direct communication with the Council of Ten. For security purposes, that cipher would differ from other ciphers provided for the communication amongst Venetian diplomats. The same decree was reiterated in 1589, clearly stating that Venetian envoys had to be furnished with two distinct ciphers, one for their written interactions with the Ten and another one for their communication with the Ten's legates and other state servants.<sup>41</sup> By the seventeenth century, the Venetian system of encrypted communication distinguished between two types of cipher: the *zifra grande*, which was reserved for the communication between the

Ten, their ambassadors, their governors, and their *Provveditori Generali*, and the *zifra piccola* that was allocated to lesser representatives, such as Venetian consuls in areas where Venice did not have diplomatic representation but strong commercial presence, and naval commanders of a lesser rank, such as *capitani*.<sup>42</sup> At times of diplomatic tribulations or impending dangers, however, temporary decrees were issued to increase the security of methods of encryption. In the summer of 1590, for example, the Ten ordered the Venetian ambassador in Savoy to combine two major ciphers in constructing different parts of his epistles, in order to boost their inaccessibility.<sup>43</sup>

Regulations surrounding the use of methods of encryption were not to be taken lightly by Venetian state representatives. Instead, those who ignored them were severely scolded and chastised. The Venetian envoy in Milan was once reprimanded for neglecting the Ten's order to write in cipher, especially when names of important dignitaries were mentioned in his epistles.<sup>44</sup> Secretaries who misused the cipher were threatened with a raft of punishments, including the loss of one year's salary or even their job. In November 1577, a secretary in the employ of the Duke of Candia – the Venetian ruler of the island of Crete – lost both, as a result of mishandling the designated cipher and compromising, thus, the security of the Venetian state.<sup>45</sup>

For the appropriate cipher to be used by Venetian state officials, it had to be distributed to them in a secure manner, ensuring that outdated ciphers were returned safely to the Venetian intelligence headquarters in the Doge's Palace. Accordingly, every time a fresh cipher was introduced, it was sent to the relevant dignitaries, who were expected to start using it imminently, while carefully restoring the old one to the Council of Ten. In January 1591, for example, the Venetian governor in Dalmatia was sent the key to a new cipher with the instruction to consign the old one to any Venetian representative on his way to Venice through the Dalmatian coast, ensuring that a formal receipt of consignment was produced.<sup>46</sup> At the

close of the sixteenth century, Iseppo Gregolin, the secretary of the *Provveditore Generale da Mar*, wrote to the state cryptographer Ferigo Marin informing him that he had received the newly allocated cipher. In his epistle, he proposed to return the outdated one in person, in order to escape the risks involved in a postal consignment.<sup>47</sup> In a territorial state like Venice, however, the coordination of the distribution of the designated cipher did not always go according to plan, causing mismatches and halting the flow of correspondence. In 1605, for instance, the governor of Zante informed the *Capi* that his cipher was different to the one used by his counterpart in Cerigo (the contemporary Greek island of Kythira in south-eastern Peloponnese), causing a communication breakdown between the two islands.<sup>48</sup> The main cause of these discrepancies was the regular update of ciphers that occurred when the Ten had confirmation or even suspicion that a cipher had been broken. In such cases, they ordered the immediate halt of a cipher's use and its instant substitution with a fresh one.<sup>49</sup>

Detailed instructions on such updates were sent to formal cipher users and reminders were communicated when deemed necessary. In the summer of 1583, for example, the *Capi* reminded the *bailo* in Constantinople that he should desist from using a cipher already deemed outdated by the Ten. The Ten became aware of the *bailo*'s gaffe when the Venetian governor of the city of Crete, stationed in the city of Candia, contacted them to inform them that he was unable to read enciphered letters sent to him by the Venetian diplomat in Constantinople, as he was no longer in possession of the out-of-date key the *bailo* was using. To rectify the issue, the Ten supplied the *bailo* with the new cipher and updated the *Provveditore* in Crete on this final development, in order to restore the secret communication between the two officials.<sup>50</sup>

The great speed with which ciphers were updated bore the need for a third string of regulations. These pertained to their classification and, importantly, to the disposal of out-dated ciphers. Already by 1578, ducal secretaries had been ordered to produce lists of all those who received the cipher keys, making a note of the proposed manner in which the keys would be

returned after their use.<sup>51</sup> As the number of ciphers gradually proliferated by the beginning of the seventeenth century, especially since Venice deployed several permanent embassies and ruled over a large number of geographically dispersed strongholds, fresh decrees were issued for their cataloguing. More specifically, in 1605 official state cryptographers were asked to register all ciphers and their keys in two formal books, one for the Venetian colonies in the Mediterranean and one for the Venetian dominated territories in the Italian mainland. Furthermore, they were requested to take a note of the date and the person to which keys were consigned, in addition to the proposed return date. They were also ordered to create two copies of these books that were to be stored in secret locations. Importantly, due to the miscommunication problems caused by the misplacement of outdated keys, the Ten also decreed that older keys no longer in use were to be burned from time to time, so that they would not be misperceived for keys currently in use.<sup>52</sup>

### **Regulating the transfer of secret knowledge: A form of management?**

The formal regulations discussed above – both on official state secrecy and on the provision, use, classification and disposal of state ciphers – were issued by the Venetian Council of Ten for the purpose of protecting the transfer of privileged knowledge pertaining to the security of the sprawling Venetian empire. In essence, they constituted commonly accepted norms, stemming from formal governmental decrees, on official state secrecy and methods of encryption for the written communication of knowledge – usually of diplomatic, political, and military value – that, in order to be transferred, had to be protected and concealed. In this respect, these regulations had two distinct functions. Firstly, they served as commonly accepted patterns of conduct that delineated the channels and boundaries of knowledge transfer, determining who was included or excluded from access to privileged knowledge. Secondly, transcending the purpose of mere instructions to their formal representatives and state officials, they assumed a managerial overtone, even an outright managerial function. This observation

becomes more clear if we consider the fundamental nature of management as a set of rules that create a certain degree of homogeneity in the way people work. To do so, we must resort to contemporary terminology and basic theoretical conceptualisations of management.

Since we are dealing with the development of an emergent, early modern state bureaucracy, it is prudent to draw on the work of one of the foundational thinkers of the bureaucratic management theory, the German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920).<sup>53</sup> According to Weber, in its purest form, management is built on regulations, knowledge of which constitutes 'special technical expertise' that leads to a certain degree of consistency and homogeneity in the way human action is organised.<sup>54</sup> Accordingly, the Ten's directives and regulations on official state secrecy and encrypted correspondence constituted what Weber described as 'an administrative order' that communicated 'general rules and regulations which are more or less stable, more or less exhaustive, and which can be learned'.<sup>55</sup> These rules and regulations dictated the actions of not only administrative staff but anyone involved directly with the organisation of work within Venice's state bureaucracy and intelligence apparatus.<sup>56</sup> In this respect, in both their functions, regulations regarding encrypted communication became enablers in the dissemination of knowledge that had to be concealed and, therefore, protected. Their enabling capacity lay in their governing 'organized action' by dictating some consistency and homogeneity in the way methods of encryption were wielded by their users.<sup>57</sup> In a way, then, regulations acted as techniques 'to handle controversies by breaking them down into mundane technical details'.<sup>58</sup> It is for this reason that regulating the concealment and transfer of secret knowledge and exclusive information assumed an outright managerial function.

The instrumentality of regulations in the coordination of enciphered communication between the Council of Ten and their formal representatives across Europe, the Near East, and even Northern Africa necessitates further elaboration. The series of formal decrees and regulations that the Ten deliberated upon and issued determined the systematic, interdependent

ways of working across all different operations of Venice's state bureaucracy and intelligence pursuits. Such regulations conferred a legal authority, indicating that 'powers of command' were 'legitimated by that system of rational norms', not the ruler's influence or institutional right.<sup>59</sup> In practice, this meant that those serving in Venice's secret service were expected to bestow obedience less on the Ten's power of command and more on the decrees and directives issued by them, a trait widely different to other early modern states that employed more conventional forms of power and control, imposed primarily by tradition or charisma.<sup>60</sup> Accordingly, it was the implementation of such norms and regulations stemming from the Ten's formal decrees that rendered the protection and transfer of secret knowledge possible, indicating, once again, their function as a primordial form of management, that is, managing human action through interwoven ways of working.

Undeniably, in the era of wind and sail, the communication of these regulations was achieved through enciphered epistles. Accordingly, while the regulations surrounding the encrypted transfer of knowledge became a form of management, official correspondence became the tool through which management was accomplished. Under this light, (encrypted) correspondence became less a means of knowledge or information transfer and more a vital tool of management, which involved complex processes of issuing, sending, receiving, executing, and reporting on written instructions and regulations. The focus of both superiors and subordinates on the instructions conveyed by an epistle rather than the subject matter disclosed or undisclosed in it further supports this claim. The string of directives and regulations surrounding state secrecy and official methods of encryption further reinforces the managerial function of written communication as a process requiring and dictating uniformity of action. It is for this reason that the Ten's decrees served as commonly accepted patterns of conduct that demarcated the boundaries, passages or obstacles of knowledge transmission.

By and large, in both their functions, regulations on the accomplishment of official state secrecy and the provision, use, classification and disposal of encrypted communication acted as enablers in the communication of knowledge that had to be concealed and, hence, protected. In this respect, secrecy itself became a vehicle, rather than the obstacle, of the communication of secret knowledge between, in the Venetian case, the government and the governed. This social aspect of secrecy, that enables the transfer of secret knowledge or exclusive information by protecting it from the prying eyes of outsiders, has been overwhelmingly neglected by historians of the early modern period and merits further analysis.<sup>61</sup>

### **Secrecy as an Enabler of Knowledge Transfer**

Trying to delineate the concept of secrecy in the early modern period is, as historian Daniel Jütte has astutely remarked, ‘an elusive task’.<sup>62</sup> To do so, once again, one must turn to contemporary theorisations of secrecy. The sociologist and philosopher Sissela Bok defined secrecy as the process of ‘intentional concealment’, echoing sociologist Georg Simmel’s interpretation of the concept as ‘consciously willed concealment’.<sup>63</sup> In their definitions and interpretations of the term, both literati put the emphasis on the social process of concealing, rather than on the knowledge that must be concealed. Nevertheless, defining secrecy in terms of concealment, or even in terms of who remains excluded from privileged knowledge or confidential information, offers the historian limited ground for scholarly analysis. This is because, while secrets (and their keepers) can be arresting for researchers (and their audiences), they offer little more than momentary thrill. On the contrary, exploring secrecy as a ‘communicative event’ premised upon ongoing social interactions necessary for the transfer of knowledge that must be concealed in order to be communicated,<sup>64</sup> offers more fertile ground for deep historical analysis.

Let us explore this contention further. The Council of Ten's formal regulations on secrecy, including those on methods of encryption as a means to conceal privileged knowledge that ought to be protected, demarcated the behaviours and actions of their formal representatives and other functionaries. In consequence, these decrees enabled and nurtured social interactions amongst those involved in the protection and transfer of secret knowledge. Borrowing from social theorisations of secrecy might help elaborate on this contention further. Secrecy, as a process, enables the creation of social boundaries between two separate entities, a privileged inner circle of those *in the know* and everyone else not *in the know*. The exclusivity of being *in the know* can boost the sense of distinctive inclusiveness in the inner circle and, by extension, cement one's identification with it.<sup>65</sup> In the case of the Ten's formal deliberations and ensuing decrees on state secrecy and encryption methods, this is evident not only in the inclusion of a variety of individuals in the 'circle of secrecy' – including the Council of Ten, their state representatives within and beyond the Venetian Republic's confines, the state secretaries responsible for Venice's cryptologic pursuits, as well as the ordinary messengers and spies who were entrusted with transporting secret knowledge – but in the 'strongly accentuated exclusion' of everyone else who should not be privy to the privileged knowledge shared between those in the 'circle of secrecy'.<sup>66</sup> Viewed from this prism, secrecy became a legitimate method of handling privileged knowledge and organising its secret diffusion.<sup>67</sup>

While instances of breach of secrecy were inevitable, the conscious awareness of being the designated custodians of state secrets and the sense of specialness in being entrusted with official, privileged knowledge of state affairs may have reinforced those officials' inclination towards ongoing intentional concealment. Sustaining this intentional concealment served a dual purpose. Firstly, from a practical (and moral) perspective, it helped maintain the Venetian patricians' social standing, as they were threatened with enforced withdrawal from their duties if they deliberately attempted to breach secrecy. In such cases, they would risk being ousted

from statecraft, a grave punishment indeed for someone belonging to the Venetian ruling class. Secondly, from a social perspective, it rendered them members of a privileged inner circle, potentially enhancing their sense of distinctive inclusiveness in it and, by extension, cementing their identification with it.<sup>68</sup> Especially in the context of contemporary official state secrecy, intelligence historian Michael Herman went as far as to argue that the ‘mystique’ of secret knowledge can have ‘therapeutic functions due to the group bonding it provides’ and can even generate a ‘wry professional pride in secrecy’.<sup>69</sup> While extending the applicability of this claim to the early modern period is inappropriate, primarily due to overwhelming lack of self-narratives of the custodians of secret knowledge, based on contemporary social theorisations of secrecy, we can infer that state secrecy created a dynamic and enduring relationship between the Venetian government and its formal representatives.

On the whole, official secrecy served several purposes in Renaissance Venice. Firstly, it enabled the concealment of both the keeper of secrets and the privileged knowledge of the secret, especially in situations of conflict or competition. Secondly, underpinned by the notion of *arcana imperii*, emerging from the scriptures of Roman historian and senator Tacitus (c. 56 AD - c. 120 AD) and sanctioned by Renaissance diplomat and political thinker Nicolò Machiavelli, secrecy helped preserve governmental power. Importantly, secrecy enabled the Council of Ten to shape and stage-manage working relationships within the Venetian intelligence apparatus. This relationship building aspect of secrecy has been analysed effectively by Nobel laureate Elias Canetti, who showed how rulers mobilise secrecy to mould their relationship with subordinates, as well as relations between subordinates. They do so by creating a system of secrets, and quietly observing and controlling information flows and the institutional loyalty may ensue from this endeavour. Through the use of secrecy, Canetti argued, rulers, as the sole possessors of panoramic views of knowledge, create an aura of mystery around them.<sup>70</sup> While writing within the context of dictatorships, Canetti’s

ruminations are relevant to Venice's official secrecy pursuits. This is because, in early modern Venice, secrecy became 'an ongoing accomplishment of social interactions',<sup>71</sup> creating a space, ostensibly concealed from the public's eyes, to debate, to strategise, and to take decisions for the benefit of the Venetian state.

On the whole, it is this social aspect of secret communication that renders Renaissance Venice's official state secrecy pursuits such a fascinating object of historical study and analysis. As evidenced in the above-mentioned instances, this is due to the paradox of secret communication that lay, on the one hand, in erecting cognitive barriers between those *in the know* and those not *in the dark*; and, on the other hand, in demolishing barriers that would be needed, if no means existed to conceal and protect the transfer of privileged knowledge or confidential information. During this demolition process, societal barriers were also temporarily taken down, as privileged information was shared between individuals of diverse social standing, including the individual in power, his formal representatives overseas, and the lowly messenger who materialised the communication between them through transporting their enciphered epistles – and, more often than not, could become privy to some of the 'classified' information – in addition to the cipher secretary who, billeted in the Venetian black chamber, enciphered and deciphered privileged knowledge. Through this lens, secrets became 'specific modes of knowledge exchange and social action' that mobilised idiosyncratic ways of communication and interaction, primarily because of the possibility for intentional concealment.<sup>72</sup> In consequence, despite the enduring challenge in its upholding, secrecy was a performative and social praxis that transcended the static nature of a secret's content to enable social interactions amongst individuals who, without the shield of concealment, would not have been able to interact.

## Conclusion

In the early modern era there were different channels of knowledge exchange and transfer; secrecy was only one of them. Indeed, the early modern world had an unyielding fascination with secrecy, which spawned several cultural, intellectual, and political outlets. The literary genre of the *secreta* that dealt with secrets and their disclosure was one of them.<sup>73</sup> This flourished in parallel with a distinct profession, that of the *professori dei secreti* – the professors of secrets, who pursued the study of nature’s secrets.<sup>74</sup> And of course, in the era of state formation and the gradually ensuing governmental bureaucracies, the imperative role of secrecy for *arcana imperii* – the secrets of the state – sprung from published copies of Machiavelli’s political doctrines to become the cornerstone of early modern politics.<sup>75</sup> Additionally, secrecy was tightly intertwined with the protection, even regulation, of intellectual and commercial rights which materialised with the advent of the patent system.<sup>76</sup> Accordingly, secrecy was an instrumental tool of knowledge protection and knowledge transfer. It was for this reason that the early modern period saw the institutionalisation of official state secrecy. Renaissance Venice, the state that boasts one of the earliest centrally organised state intelligence organisations, pioneered this process with the Council of Ten, the governmental committee responsible for the domestic and foreign security of the sprawling Venetian empire, at the helm.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Venetian government issued a slew of regulations for the accomplishment of official state secrecy, as well as the provision, use, classification and disposal of official state ciphers. Both types of regulations served two important functions. Firstly, they acted as commonly accepted patterns of conduct that enabled the communication of privileged knowledge or information that had to be protected in order to be transferred, by clearly delineating the passages and boundaries of its transmission. This type of knowledge and information crossed both geographical and societal borders. Secondly, and

following from the first function, regulations became a primordial form of what nowadays is termed ‘management’, which, in its purest form, is made up of norms that create a certain degree of uniformity in the way human action is organised.<sup>77</sup>

To be sure, it would be challenging to interpret early modern regulations as primordial forms of management that enable and organise homogenous action without drawing on contemporary theorisations of both management and secrecy. Drawing on such sources enables us to cast the spotlight on the process of regulating the transfer of secret knowledge across geographical as well as societal borders, rather than the actual content of knowledge itself. Seen in this way, the enciphered transfer of knowledge matters less as a means of information exchange and more as a vital form of management, involving complex processes of issuing, sending, receiving, executing, and reporting on written instructions, which, ultimately enabled the *regulators* (in our case, the almighty Council of Ten) to control their underlings’ behaviour and choreograph their actions across vast distances. And while those regulators’ power of command was sanctioned through their regulations, rather than through their institutional right to power, one wonders who regulated those who issued those regulations. In other words, invoking Roman poet Juvenal’s timeless aphorism ‘Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?’ (*Satire VI*, 347-348), it is worth asking: who regulated the regulators of knowledge and its transfer in the early modern era? In the era of fake news and post-truth, the answer to this question remains as much of a challenge now, as it was in the early modern era.

## **Bibliography**

Antonini, Fabio. ‘Historical Uses of the Secret Chancery in Early Modern Venice: Archiving, Researching and Presenting the Records of State’. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis (Birkbeck College, University of London, 2016).

Bellman, Beryl L. ‘The Paradox of Secrecy’, *Human Studies* 4 (1981): 1-24.

- Bertelè, Tommaso. *Il palazzo degli ambasciatori di Costantinopoli a Venezia*. Bologna: Apollo, 1932.
- Bethencourt, Francisco and Egmond, Florike eds. *Correspondence and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400-1700*. Vol. 3 of *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Robert Muchembled and William Monter. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Bok, Sissela. *Secrets: On the Ethics of Concealment and Revelation*. New York: Vintage, 1989.
- Boutier, Jean, Landi, Sandro and Rouchon, Olivier. *La politique par correspondance: Les usages politiques de la lettre en Italie (XIVe-XVIIIe siècle)*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2009.
- Canetti, Elias. *Crowds and Power*, transl. Carol Stuart. New York: Continuum, 1981.
- Coco, Carla and Manzonetto, Flora. *Baili veneziani alla Sublime Porta: Storia e caratteristiche dell'ambasciata veneta a Costantinopoli*. Venice: Stamperia di Venezia, 1985.
- Costas, Jana and Grey, Christopher. *Secrecy at Work: The Hidden Architecture of Organizational Life*. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2016.
- Cozzi, Gaetano. 'Authority and the Law'. In Hale, John R. ed., *Renaissance Venice*. London: Faber & Faber, 1973, pp. 293-345.
- Cummings, Stephen, Bridgman, Todd, Hassard, John and Rowlinson, Michael. *A New History of Management*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Cummings, Stephen and Bridgman, Todd. 'The Relevant Past: Why the History of Management Should Be Critical for our Future'. *Academy of Management, Learning and Education* 10, no 1 (2011): 77-93.

- De Vivo, Filippo. 'Cœur de l'Etat, Lieu de Tension: le Tournant Archivistique vu de Venise (XVe-XVIIe Siècle)'. *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 68, no 3 (2013): 699-728.
- De Vivo, Filippo. 'Ordering the Archive in Early Modern Venice (1400-1650)'. *Archival Science* 10, no 3 (2010): 231-248.
- De Vivo, Filippo. *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Dursteler, Eric R. 'The Bailo in Constantinople: Crisis and Career in Venice's Early Modern Diplomatic Corps.' *Mediterranean Historical Review* 16, no 2 (2001): 1-30.
- Eamon, William. *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Finlay, Roberts. *Politics in Renaissance Venice*. London: Ernst Benn, 1980.
- Ferguson, John. *Bibliographical Notes on Histories of Inventions and Books of Secrets*. Glasgow: Glasgow University Press, 1883.
- Gürkan, Emrah Safa. 'Laying Hands on *Arcana Imperii*: Venetian Baili as Spymasters in Sixteenth-Century Istanbul.' In Maddrell, Paul, Moran, Christopher, Iordanou, Ioanna and Stout, Mark eds. *Spy Chiefs Volume II: Intelligence Leaders in the Europe, the Middle East, and Asia*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2018, pp. 67-96.
- Hanß, Stefan. 'Baili and Ambassadors.' In Pedani, Maria Pia ed. *Il Palazzo di Venezia a Istanbul e i suoi antichi abitanti / İstanbul'daki Venedik Sarayı ve Eski Yaşayanları*. Venice: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2013, pp. 35-52.
- Herman, Michael. *Intelligence Power in Peace and War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

- Hulme, Edward Wydham. 'History of the Patent System under the Prerogative of the Common Law'. *Law Quarterly Review* 12 (1896): 141-154.
- Hyde, John Kenneth. 'The Role of Diplomatic Correspondence and Reporting'. In Waley, Daniel Philip ed. *Literacy and its Uses: Studies on Late Medieval Italy*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993, pp. 217-259.
- Iordanou, Ioanna. *Venice's Secret Service: Organizing Intelligence in the Renaissance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.
- Iordanou, Ioanna. 'The Professionalization of Cryptology in Sixteenth Century Venice'. *Enterprise and Society* 19, no 4 (2018): 979-1013.
- Iordanou, Ioanna. 'The Spy Chiefs of Renaissance Venice: Intelligence Leadership in the Early Modern World.' In Maddrell, Paul, Moran, Christopher, Iordanou, Ioanna and Stout, Mark eds. *Spy Chiefs Volume II: Intelligence Leaders in the Europe, the Middle East, and Asia*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2018, pp. 43-66.
- Iordanou, Ioanna. 'What News on the Rialto? The Trade of Information and the Early Modern Venice's Centralised Intelligence Organisation'. *Intelligence and National Security* 31, no 3 (2016): 305-326.
- Johnson, Paul C. 'Secretism and the Apotheosis of Duvalier'. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 74, no 2 (2006): 420-445.
- Johnson, Paul C. *Secrets, Gossip, and Gods: The Transformation of Brazilian Candomblé*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Jütte, Daniel. *The Age of Secrecy: Jews, Christians, and the Economy of Secrets, 1400–1800*, transl. by Jeremiah Riemer. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015.

- Kahn, David. *The Codebreakers: The Story of Secret Writing*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966.
- Koselleck, Reinhart. *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988.
- Lanaro, Paola ed., *At the Centre of the Old World: Trade and Manufacturing in Venice and on the Venetian Mainland (1400-1800)*. Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2006.
- Lane, Frederic. *Venice: A Maritime Republic*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.
- Lazari, Vincenzo. 'Cenni intorno alle legazioni venete alla porta ottomana nel secolo XVI.' In Albèri, Eugenio ed. *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato*, Series III. Vol. III. Florence: Società Editrice Fiorentina, 1855, pp. xiii-xx.
- Lazarini, Isabella. *Communication and Conflict: Italian Diplomacy in the Early Renaissance, 1350-1520*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Lazarini, Isabella. 'Renaissance Diplomacy'. In Gamberini, Andrea and Lazarini, Isabella eds. *The Italian Renaissance State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 425-443.
- Lonardi, Simone. 'L'anima dei governi. Politica, spionaggio e segreto di stato a Venezia nel secondo Seicento (1645-1699)'. Unpublished Ph.D thesis (University of Padua, 2015).
- Luzzatto, Gino. *Storia economica di Venezia dall'XI al XVI secolo*. Venice: Centro Internazionale delle Arti e del Costume, 1961.
- Macchi, Mauro. *Storia del Consiglio dei Dieci*. Milan: G. Daelli, 1864.

- Maranini, Giuseppe. *La costituzione di Venezia dopo la serrata del Maggior Consiglio*. Venice: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1931.
- Mattingly, Garrett. *Renaissance Diplomacy*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1955.
- Pesic, Peter. 'Secrets, Symbols, and Systems: Parallels between Cryptanalysis and Algebra, 1580-1700'. *Isis* 88:4 (1997): 674-692.
- Preto, Paolo. 'Le relazioni dei baili a Constantinopoli.' *Il Veltro* 23 (1979): 125-130.
- Romanin, Samuele. *Storia documentata di Venezia*. Vol. VI. Venice: Pietro Naratovich, 1857.
- Ruef, Martin and Harness, Alona. 'Agrarian Origins of Management Ideology: The Roman and Antebellum Cases'. *Organization Studies* 30, no 6 (2009): 589-607.
- Schneider, Gary. *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500-1700*. Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2005.
- Sichelman, Ted and O'Connor, Sean. 'Patents as Promoters of Competition: The Guild Origin of Patent Law in the Venetian Republic'. *San Diego Law Review* 49, no 129 (2012): 1267-1282.
- Simmel, Georg. 'The Sociology of Secrecy and Secret Societies', *American Journal of Sociology* 11, no 4 (1906): 441-498, transl. by. Albion Small.
- Van Dülmen, Richard. *Der Geheimbund der Illuminaten: Darstellung, Analyse, Dokumentation*. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann, 1975.
- Viggiano, Alfredo. 'Politics and Constitution'. In Dursteler, Eric R. ed. *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400-1797*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013, pp. 47-84.

Walker, Jonathan, De Vivo, Filippo and Shaw, James. 'A Dialogue on Spying in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Venice'. *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice* 10, no 33 (2006): 323-344.

Weber, Max. *Economy and Society: Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Vol. 1, ed. by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978.

Weber, Weber. *Economy and Society: Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Vol. 2, ed. by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.

Zannini, Andrea. 'Economic and Social Aspects of the Crisis of Venetian Diplomacy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries'. In Frigo, Daniela ed., *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy: The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1450-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 109-146.

---

<sup>1</sup> On the Venetian *bailo* in Constantinople, see Lazari, 'Cenni intorno alle legazioni venete'; Bertelè, *Il palazzo degli ambasciatori*; Preto, 'Le relazioni dei bails a Constantinopoli'; Dursteler, 'The Bailo in Constantinople'; Hanß, 'Bails and Ambassadors'; Gürkan, 'Laying Hands on *Arcana Imperii*'.

<sup>2</sup> Archivio di Stato di Venezia (hereafter ASV), Consiglio di Dieci (hereafter CX), *Deliberazioni Segrete*, Registro (hereafter Reg.) 8, carta (hereafter c.) 82 verso (hereafter v.) (3 April 1567). Unless otherwise stated, all dates have been converted to the Gregorian calendar.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, cc. 76 v.-77 recto (hereafter r.) (27 January 1567).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 78 v.-80 r. (18 February 1567).

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., cc. 38 v.-40 r. (14 August 1565).

<sup>6</sup> On the Venetian Council of Ten, see Macchi, *Storia del Consiglio dei Dieci*; Finlay, *Politics in Renaissance Venice*.

<sup>7</sup> ASV, CX, *Deliberazioni Secrete*, Reg. 10, cc. 73v.-74r. (14 Nov. 1572).

<sup>8</sup> The word ‘transfer’ is used purposely here, to indicate the direct and controlled communication of privileged knowledge or confidential information, as opposed to any type of free-flow or wider circulation of knowledge.

<sup>9</sup> Kahn, *The Codebreakers*, xv.

<sup>10</sup> On the economy of sixteenth-century Venice, see Luzzatto, *Storia economica di Venezia*; Lane, *Venice*; Lanaro ed., *At the Centre of the Old World*.

<sup>11</sup> On the development of diplomacy in the early modern period, see the classic work of Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*. For revisionist view, see Lazzarini, *Communication and Conflict*; Lazzarini, ‘Renaissance Diplomacy’.

<sup>12</sup> Iordanou, *Venice’s Secret Service*.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. See also, Iordanou, ‘What News on the Rialto?’.

<sup>14</sup> On the Council of Ten as Venice’s spy chiefs, see Iordanou, ‘The Spy Chiefs of Renaissance Venice’.

<sup>15</sup> Cozzi, ‘Authority and the Law’, 308.

<sup>16</sup> Macchi, *Istoria del Consiglio dei Dieci*; Finlay, *Politics*.

<sup>17</sup> On correspondence and epistolary exchange in the early modern period, see Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity*; and the essays in Bethencourt and Egmond, eds., *Correspondence and Cultural Exchange*.

<sup>18</sup> On epistolarity as a political tool in early modern Italy, see Boutier, Landi, and Rouchon, *La politique par correspondance*. Generally on the role of diplomatic correspondence and reportage in early modern Italy, see Hyde, ‘The Role of Diplomatic Correspondence and Reporting’.

<sup>19</sup> On the *Cancellaria Secreta*, see De Vivo, ‘Ordering the Archive’; De Vivo, ‘Cœur de l’Etat, Lieu de Tension’; Antonini, ‘Historical Uses of the Secret Chancery’.

<sup>20</sup> See Iordanou, *Venice’s Secret Service*, esp. ch. 2.

<sup>21</sup> On a synthesis of the inner workings of the Venetian political system, especially in the sixteenth century, see Viggiano, ‘Politics and Constitution’. On the the *Maggior Consiglio*, especially the requirements for admission and its prerogatives, see Maranini, *La costituzione di Venezia*, esp. 41-46 and 78-102.

<sup>22</sup> Walker, De Vivo, and Shaw, ‘A Dialogue on Spying in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Venice’, 325.

- 
- <sup>23</sup> ASV, CX, *Deliberazioni Segrete*, Reg. 3, c. 2 r./v. (31 March 1529); *Ibid.*, Reg. 14, cc. 129 v.-130 r. (28 November 1605).
- <sup>24</sup> Deliberation of the Council of Ten dated 19 April 1583, in Romanin, *Storia documentata di Venezia*, Vol. VI, 130.
- <sup>25</sup> De Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice*, 41.
- <sup>26</sup> Lonardi, 'L'anima dei governi', 209.
- <sup>27</sup> Romanin, *Storia documentata*, 121-122 (the deliberation is dated 12 February 1532 *more veneto* – meaning the calendar year started on 1st March, as was customary in early modern Venice).
- <sup>28</sup> Zannini, 'Economic and Social Aspects', 127.
- <sup>29</sup> Romanin, *Storia documentata*, 523-534 (*Capitolare* of the Ten dated 22 December 1578).
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, Reg. 14, cc. 129 v.-130 r. (28 November 1605). See also, Romanin, *Storia documentata*, 138; De Vivo, *Information and Communication*, 43.
- <sup>31</sup> Romanin, *Storia documentata*, 116-117. This regulation already existed, in a more basic form, from 1403. See Lonardi, 'L'anima dei governi', 209, fn. 577.
- <sup>32</sup> ASV, CX, *Deliberazioni Segrete*, Reg. 9, c. 213 r. (8 February 1572).
- <sup>33</sup> ASV, CCX, *Licenze per visitare ambasciatori e personali esteri* (4 and 16 May 1569).
- <sup>34</sup> ASV, CX, *Deliberazioni Miste*, Reg. 16, c. 120 v. (23 May 1464).
- <sup>35</sup> See, for example, ASV, CX, *Deliberazioni Segrete*, Reg. 19, cc. 85 r.-86 r. (11 July 1641). On the Venetian *Residenti*, see Zannini, 'Economic and Social Aspects', 112, 133.
- <sup>36</sup> See, for example, ASV, CX, *Deliberazioni Segrete*, Reg. 4, c. 34 r. (25 September 1539).
- <sup>37</sup> Cryptography has been defined as the transformation of a text in a way that it becomes unintelligible to outsiders without a key. See Kahn, *The Codebreakers*, xv.
- <sup>38</sup> Ioanna Iordanou, 'The Professionalization of Cryptology'.
- <sup>39</sup> ASV, CX, *Deliberazioni Miste*, Reg. 35, c. 114 c./v. (14 July 1512); ASV, CX, *Deliberazioni Comuni*, Reg. 30, c. 130 r./v. (4 August 1572).
- <sup>40</sup> ASV, CX, *Deliberazioni Segrete*, Reg. 11, c. 135 r. (3 July 1577).
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, Reg. 13, cc. 57 r.-58 r. (18 April 1589).
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, Reg. 14, cc. 126 r.-127 r. (31 August 1605).
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, Reg. 13, c. 73 v. (19 June 1590).
- <sup>44</sup> ASV, CCX, *Lettere Segrete*, filza 3 (1 August 1543).

- 
- <sup>45</sup> ASV, CCX, *Lettere dei Rettori e di altre Cariche*, b. 286 (20 November 1577).
- <sup>46</sup> ASV, CCX, *Lettere Segrete*, filza 11 (21 January 1591).
- <sup>47</sup> ASV, *Inquisitori di Stato*, b. 399 (14 December 1599).
- <sup>48</sup> ASV, CCX, *Lettere dei Rettori e di altre Cariche*, b. 296, fol. 130 (28 May 1605)
- <sup>49</sup> See, for example, ASV, CX, *Deliberazioni Segrete*, Reg. 13, cc. 52 v.- 53 v. (13 July 1584); *Ibid.*, c. 85 r. (3 April 1591); ASV, CCX, *Lettere Segrete*, filza 11 (29, 30 March 1591).
- <sup>50</sup> ASV, CCX, *Lettere Segrete*, filza 10 (25 June 1583).
- <sup>51</sup> ASV, CX, *Deliberazioni Segrete*, Reg. 11, cc. 166 r.-167 r. (18 August 1578).
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, Reg. 14, cc. 126r.- 127r. (31 August 1605).
- <sup>53</sup> On a well-rounded review of the significance of Max Weber's work on organisation and management studies, see Cummings and Bridgman, 'The Relevant Past'; Cummings, Bridgman, Hassard, and Rowlinson, *A New History of Management*, 118-147.
- <sup>54</sup> Weber, *Economy and Society*, Vol. 2, 958.
- <sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>56</sup> Weber, *Economy and Society*, Vol. 1, 52.
- <sup>57</sup> Max Weber called this attribute 'Verwaltungsordnung'. See Weber, *Economy and Society*, Vol. 1, 51.
- <sup>58</sup> Ruef and Harness, 'Agrarian Origins of Management Ideology', 604.
- <sup>59</sup> Weber, *Economy and Society*, Vol. 2, 954.
- <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol 1, p. 48.
- <sup>61</sup> An exception here is the phenomenon of secret groups and societies, especially in the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. See, for example, Van Dülmen, *Der Geheimbund der Illuminaten*, on the Enlightenment-minded secret order of Illuminati; Kossleck, *Critique and Crisis*, on eighteenth century freemasonry; Johnson, 'Secretism and the Apotheosis of Duvalier'; and also, Johnson, *Secrets, Gossip, and Gods*, for insightful discussions on the notion of 'secretism' in twentieth century South America.
- <sup>62</sup> Jütte, *The Age of Secrecy*, 98.
- <sup>63</sup> Bok, *Secrets*, 5; Simmel, 'The Sociology of Secrecy and Secret Societies', 449.
- <sup>64</sup> Bellman, 'The Paradox of Secrecy', 2.
- <sup>65</sup> On social theorisations of secrecy, see Simmel, 'The Sociology of Secrecy'.
- <sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 464.
- <sup>67</sup> Bellman, 'The Paradox of Secrecy', 8.

---

<sup>68</sup> On the social link between secrecy and group identity, see *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Herman, *Intelligence Power in Peace and War*, 329-330.

<sup>70</sup> Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, 290-297. See also Costas and Grey, *Secrecy at Work*, 21-22.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>72</sup> Jütte, *The Age of Secrecy*, 10.

<sup>73</sup> For a useful overview of this type of literature, see Ferguson, *Bibliographical Notes*.

<sup>74</sup> Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*; Jütte, *The Age of Secrecy*.

<sup>75</sup> Pesic, 'Secrets, Symbols, and Systems', 19-20, 56-57.

<sup>76</sup> On the emergence of the patent system in Renaissance Venice, see Hulme, 'History of the Patent System. On a revisionist view, see Sichelman and O'Connor, 'Patents as Promoters of Competition'.

<sup>77</sup> Weber, *Economy and Society*, Vol. 2, 958.