



Article

The Florentine Archives in Transition: Government, Warfare and Communication (1289–1530 ca.)



European History Quarterly

2016, Vol. 46(3) 458–479

© The Author(s) 2016

Reprints and permissions:

sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav

DOI: 10.1177/0265691416648261

ehq.sagepub.com**Andrea Guidi***Birkbeck, University of London, UK***Abstract**

A turning point in European administrative and documentary practices was traditionally associated, most famously by Robert-Henri Bautier, with the monarchies of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. By summarizing previous research in this field, as well as by using both published and unpublished sources, this article intends to underline an earlier process of transition connected to the development of significant new techniques for the production and preservation of documents in Renaissance Italian city-states. Focusing on the important case of Florence, the administrative uses of records connected to government, diplomacy and military needs will be discussed, and evidence will be provided that such documentary practices accelerated significantly during the so-called Italian Wars (from 1494 onwards). A particular reason of interest for Florence at this time is that a major role in the production and storage of a large quantity of state papers was played by Niccolò Machiavelli, one of the outstanding political thinkers of the age. This was especially true in connection to the new militia which he himself created in 1506. By stressing the role of information management and the importance of correspondence networks at a time of war and crisis, this article also contributes to recent scholarship which has focused on the growth of public records relating to diplomacy in Italy during the second half of the fifteenth century, as well as to a recent field of historiography which has lately gained importance: namely the 'documentary history of institutions'.

Keywords

Archives, diplomacy, Florence, Italian wars, Machiavelli, record-keeping, Renaissance Italy, warfare

Corresponding author:

Andrea Guidi, Department of History, Classics and Archeology, Birkbeck, University of London, 26 Russell Square, London WC1B 5DQ, UK.

Email: a.guidi@bbk.ac.uk

In 1498, a set of new instructions for the Chancellor of the *Riformagioni* described the ritual ceremony for the periodic renewal of the *Signoria* (the Priors), the highest office in the Florentine Republic. The office of the *Riformagioni* was the branch of the Florentine chancery in charge of preparing and preserving government records, yet the new instructions gave a prominent role to all the chancellors of the Republic as keepers of the government's memory, and thus made them responsible for administrative continuity in a republican regime otherwise marked by rotation and discontinuity. Many other chancery officers are mentioned in this document, from the Chancellor of the *Tratte*, in charge of dealing with the electoral records, to the *Coadiutori*, who were simple scribes in charge of writing letters on behalf of the city magistracies or their superiors in the chancery. In particular, the instructions gave significant responsibilities to the first Chancellor, who was required to explain briefly to the new governors – the Priors – the basic procedures of government and the arrangements for the writing of official state letters, as well as supplying them with a notebook summarizing the rules of their office.

Once the new *Signoria* comes into office [...] all of the Chancellors and *Coadiutori* shall present themselves and swear an oath to the *Signori*, starting with the Chancellor of the *Tratte*. After this, the first Chancellor presents the Priors with some brief instructions contained in two *filze*¹ with an explanation of the effects of the *Provisioni* and the basic rules concerning the procedures for official state correspondence. Files are to be presented for the binding of both those letters which arrive from beyond their jurisdiction, and those which come from the subjects. Then the chancellor of the *Riformagioni* holds in his hands a notebook with a brief explanation of laws and acts concerning the Priors, titled the 'short handbook of rules', which explains how, as established by ancient custom, the Chancellor presents it to the Priors so that they may easily consult a brief summary of what they must observe in the duties of their office.²

The Florentine chancellors were thus the custodians of the fundamental rules of the Florentine *reggimento*. They formed a nucleus of continuity within a governmental system otherwise operated predominantly by amateurs who were sometimes holding their magistracies for the first time and for a period of no more than six months – and only two in the case of the *Signoria*.

Such a situation raises a number of questions. How did the chancellors of the city come to hold the responsibility for these tasks? How did they acquire sufficient knowledge of governmental practices and principles, in some cases dating from up to two centuries earlier? What were the record-keeping techniques that enabled them to preserve this kind of information? How much significance was given to the preservation of records, and which types of documents were prioritized? Many scholars have stressed the importance of the formation of a bureaucracy in late medieval Florence³ and of the process of documentary production in the construction of a communal identity,⁴ yet comparatively little attention has been given to the role of the archives themselves within this system.

In recent years, scholars have studied the archives of Florence with a particular focus on their role in politics and institutions. Giuseppe Biscione has for instance claimed that the early archives of the *Camera del Comune* were a vehicle for the preservation of the legal documents that sat at the core of the city's authority and unity as a political system.⁵ The *Camera del Comune* was the oldest office responsible for collecting and preserving public records, which was also charged with administering the city's income and expenditure and with the keeping of account books.⁶ Scholars have also focused on the relationship between the physicality of the archives and the wider sphere of Florentine politics. In particular, Francesca Klein has recently claimed that the fourteenth-century transition from the Archive-Thesaurus of the *Camera* (which was originally dedicated to a very specific kind of document, such as charters, pacts and treaties of alliance which provided evidence of ancient privileges and of the city's various territorial rights) to an archive of current government documents (resulting from daily administration, such as official correspondence, *litterae patentes* and so on) was inextricably tied to the physical shift from using these old archives, situated in the *Palazzo del Podestà*, to the new archives of the *Riformagioni* in charge of preparing and preserving government records. These were situated in the *Palazzo del Popolo* (now called *Palazzo Vecchio*); the same building that hosted the *Priori*, who used them as instruments of government.⁷ In addition, Paul Dover has recently emphasized the growth of the city's diplomatic archives in the second half of the *Quattrocento*.⁸

Other scholars have focused more specifically on the production and registration of written records. In her magisterial work on Bartolomeo Scala (Florence's first Chancellor in the years 1465–97), Alison Brown highlighted his role in introducing new forms of both documentary practice and registration procedures.⁹ More recently, Lorenzo Tanzini has shown how Florentine politics was occasionally influenced by the growth of its legislative activity.¹⁰ In addition, Andrea Zorzi and Piero Gualtieri have emphasized the role of the production of legislative documentation in the Italian communes, such as the so-called *Legislazione anti-magnatizia*, as a means by which the *popolo* could legitimize its power against the old aristocracy.¹¹

Various features of these studies present a potentially novel approach to the history of Florentine politics. They resonate with a wider historiographical trend for interpreting the archives and chanceries of the Renaissance Italian city-states as a central element of their formation and territorial expansion; in other words, the connection between the increasing production of written records and the formation of a 'homogeneous sovereignty'.¹² However, this article proposes a slightly different approach, stressing instead the role of the Italian Wars (1494–1559)¹³ as a turning point in the history of Florentine documentary production.

Through the use of both published and unpublished documentation, I will begin by demonstrating how the formation of the Florentine government between the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century was deeply connected to the creation and use of the public archives as an instrument of government, diplomacy and warfare, through processes of record-making and

record-keeping which developed in response to the ever-changing circumstances of the city's politics and institutions. In addition, by emphasizing the critical role of information-management and correspondence networks in times of war and crisis, I will present new evidence suggesting that such documentary practices experienced a significant acceleration during wartime, due in no small part to the major role played by chancellors such as Niccolò Machiavelli in the production and preservation of a large quantity of military and state papers.

By looking at the machinery of state in relation to governance, diplomacy and above all the military, this article will demonstrate how the permanent state of conflict generated by the Italian Wars from 1494 onwards should be considered a major shift in the history of Florentine document production. As a result of this, I will also argue that these early practices must be considered as the beginning of an earlier and more long-term process in European administration and record-keeping practices than the conventional interpretation based upon the traditional turning point of the late sixteenth century might suggest.

A widespread need for public records in late medieval Italy generated the formation of new archival repositories, as measures for the preservation of records and the appointment of the first archival staff were implemented throughout the peninsula towards the end of thirteenth century.¹⁴ As mentioned above, the oldest office responsible for collecting and preserving public records in Florence was the *Camera del Comune*.¹⁵ A chapter of the so-called *Provvizioni canonizzate* of 1289, the oldest Statutes (*Statuti*) of the city, established the role of an officer in charge of looking after the records, who was to be elected from 'the most circumspect and dependable notaries of the city'.¹⁶ This officer was required to store the city's various acts and charters in a series of drawers within the armoire of the *Camera*, on which he had to 'affix a card with a description of the contents'.¹⁷ He was also tasked with 'writ[ing] in clear and large characters a summary title of the contents on each book cover',¹⁸ to be renovated, if needed, 'at the expense of the *Camera*'.¹⁹ A few decades later, the *Statuti* of 1322 included a chapter containing instructions for the preservation of records and their physical organization.²⁰ Charters and documents were to be stored in the *Camera*, 'in sacks which display and describe the contents and subject of the charters and documents on the outside',²¹ in order to 'make it easier to find documents'.²² Finally, an addition to the *Statuti* outlined new measures for financing the construction of new repositories for the archives of the *Camera*.²³

This early period constituted the first stage in the evolution of city archives in Florence. It was marked by the role of notaries in the archives' organization,²⁴ and by the role of the *Camera del comune* as an official repository for charters, pacts, treaties of alliance, and so on. The papers of the *Camera* included 'instrumenta et iura comunis Florentie', which defined the legal basis of the Florentine government and its territories,²⁵ the records and acts of government ('omnia acta curie'),²⁶ as well as its financial records.

The *Statuti* were a compilation of laws enacted by the legislative councils²⁷ concerning both day-to-day government and legislative activity, which, at this stage,

were largely in use as an instrument for the daily activities of city and chancery offices. As a result of their use in administrative affairs, the series thus included a number of rubrics pertaining to the first archival formation in Florence.

A second stage of this evolution, which began around the middle of the fourteenth century, was characterized by a general growth in the legislative activity of the Republic. The management of the Florentine archives in this period was regulated by a growing number of *Provvisioni*. The *Provvisioni* were the decrees, or rather laws of the Republic, approved by the above-mentioned councils. They were administered by the chancery-office of the *Riformagioni*, which, not surprisingly, in the Florentine vernacular meant the ‘reforms’ (or ‘laws’) passed by the legislative councils that introduced new political and administrative norms in the governance of the city. A number of *Provvisioni* signalled an expansion of government involvement in documentary production and preservation. Such a shift in political and institutional practice was marked by new techniques of registering and preserving the *Provvisioni* themselves. As illustrated by Lorenzo Tanzini, the *Provvisioni* were copied into duplicate registers to be made available to the city’s offices.²⁸ Finally, the registers were provided with indexes, and a thesaurus of terms and contents was also created in order to facilitate the retrieval of legislative precedents.²⁹ By this time, Florence had thus improved its record-management systems by compiling newer and more accurate inventories of the terms and contents of the *Provvisioni*, such as the so-called *Carte di Corredo*.³⁰

A growing number of *Provvisioni* also concerned archives and their staff. One of the earliest *Provvisioni*, dated January 1339, ratified the creation of a new notary to work within the *Camera* who was in charge of looking after (‘ad custodendum’), researching (‘perscrutandum’) and ‘making available to a public domain’ (‘mostRANDUM’) the records pertaining to the *Camera communis*.³¹ Duties like storing, investigating and sharing the records are still today the fundamental aspects of the archivist’s job. Before this point, the election of the *Camera*’s notary had been overseen by a committee consisting of the communal priors, the consuls of the seven major guilds, and 12 individuals nominated by the priors and the consuls, as spelled out in the *Statuti* of 1289.³² Instead, the 1339 *Provvisione* explicitly made the *Priori* solely responsible for the task of nomination and so established, in a way, direct governmental control over the old city archives of the *Camera* (‘this nomination belongs to the *Priori* and *Gonfaloniere* of justice currently elected, and to nobody else’).³³ This process was marked in 1340 by another *Provvisione* which officially established – or at least formally recognized the administrative and political functions of – the new archival repository built within the *Palazzo dei Priori* (also known as *Palazzo della Signoria*, or *Palazzo del Popolo*), the new seat of the city’s government whose construction had started at the end of the thirteenth century. This *Provvisione* was implemented to fund all expenses relating to the preservation of the ‘acts of the councils and any other public record already produced or to be produced in the future’.³⁴ This act reflected the growing importance of the *Priori* in the production and preservation of public records,³⁵ whilst later *Provvisioni* that established new rules on the topic further illustrated their

continuing influence over this process. In 1388, for instance, the *iura communis*, previously stored in the *Camera*, were 'incorporated' into the *Riformagioni*.³⁶ This process culminated in 1415 in the establishment of a new set of functions for the notary of the *Riformagioni* concerning the preservation of documents and their uses for governmental and diplomatic purposes.³⁷

These measures marked the transition from an Archive-Thesaurus to a current archive of government documents.³⁸ In Florence, this process took place on different levels: administrative, geographical and political. In terms of diplomatics (the science that studies ancient diplomas and charters), it constitutes a shift from the cultural and institutional predominance of the archive conceived for *Urkunden* (that is, diplomas or muniments), to one conceived for *Akten* (the records of day-to-day administration).³⁹ Geographically, the focus shifted from the old archival repository located in the *Palazzo del podestà* to that of the *Riformagioni* located in *Palazzo dei Priori*, the main site of political power. Finally, this process was characterized from a political perspective by the shift from an archive (the *Camera del Comune*) as *Thesaurus*, a place in which charters and muniments relating to the city as both a community and a singular judicial entity were preserved, to an archive which more specifically represented the daily activity of the government: the office of the *Riformagioni*.

City oligarchies and political regimes in the Italian Renaissance states used bureaucracy as a tool to legitimize their power.⁴⁰ As a result, in Florence, the production (as well as preservation, or loss) of documents was influenced by the cultural and political circumstances of the ruling class.⁴¹ One famous example of regime change in Florence, for instance, was the overthrow of the Duke of Athens in 1343, which culminated in the destruction of the previous archives. Amongst the judicial records lost in the fire were those pertaining to the prosecution of political opponents, several of whom were now in power, by the previous regime.⁴²

This phase in the history of the Florentine archives culminated, in the early decades of the fifteenth century, in the earliest compilation of inventories pertaining to the papers of the office of the *Riformagioni*. Such inventories were necessary in order to facilitate the use of the archives as a tool of government, and thus illustrated the contemporary relevance now afforded to this growing body of records. Not surprisingly, the earliest examples of these inventories referred specifically to the series of *Provvisioni* registers, a partial inventory of which was compiled by ser Martino di Luca Martini around 1415, and which can still be found in the *Carte di corredo* series of the Florentine Archives. Following this, a more comprehensive inventory of the wider *Riformagioni* archive was initiated by ser Alberto di Donnino di Luca in 1432.⁴³

The *Statuti*, by contrast, took too long to be formed as an effective tool of government. These were compilations of laws passed by the Commune's various legislative councils, sometimes decades before their entry into the volumes themselves, and thus were rendered obsolete by the more up-to-date and ever expanding series of *Provvisioni*. Given that the city had now improved its record-management systems by creating the more contemporary inventories of the

Provisioni, the *Statuti* increasingly appeared to be no longer necessary, at least to the daily activity of the offices themselves, and were therefore not revised beyond 1415.

As a result of this process, by the second half of the *Quattrocento* the office of the *Riformagioni* came to be considered the main official archive of the city of Florence, and was where any charter concerning pacts and alliances – in other words those ‘instrumenta’ which had previously been stored in the archives of the *Camera* – had to be exclusively preserved from then on. This was formally recognized by a 1475 *Provisione* promoted by the Chancellor Bartolomeo Scala.⁴⁴ Even in the case of charters and pacts stipulated by the city, therefore, the previous archival system of the *Camera* had largely come to be replaced by that of the *Riformagioni*.

Around the same time, another important process was taking place all over Italy in the creation of other chancery offices, mostly relating to the development of diplomacy and the growth of territorial states. These new offices were overseen by chancellors known as *segretari* (secretaries) – notaries or chancellors in charge of preparing, delivering and later filing both diplomatic correspondence (of particular importance and, above all, secrecy) and communications relating to the administration of the territories under the control of a city or its *signore*. So far, we have been considering the preservation of public records, but we will now consider the main purpose which drove this preservation – that is, the actual use of these documents – in the first place.

By the end of the fifteenth century, Italian states had established their own secretariats, each with their own set of characteristics and with each individual office generating its own set of archives. In the case of Florence, the specific nature of the pre-Medicean government meant that this process took its own unique direction. The aforementioned *Riformagioni* office, together with the Notary of the *Priori* and the so-called *Cancelleria delle lettere* (later the *Cancelliere dettatore*)⁴⁵ were responsible for preparing government acts, the deliberations of the *Signoria*, transcriptions of the enactments of the legislative councils and the discussions of advisory meetings (*Consulte*), and, especially in the case of the *Cancelliere dettatore*, the official correspondence of the Republic.⁴⁶ Given the huge documentary production and increasing administrative responsibilities arising over successive decades, these tasks came to be distributed amongst a series of newly created offices. In 1378, the office of the *Tratte* (in charge of managing elections) was created from a branch of the *Cancelleria delle lettere*.⁴⁷ This was followed by Leonardo Bruni’s well-studied 1437 reform which divided the chancery into two different offices. One, the first Chancellor (‘*primo cancellario*’), was responsible for ‘preparing and recording the elections of ambassadors, their commissions and payments, and every dispatch or other document which was to be sent or carried abroad [by Florentine ambassadors]’.⁴⁸ In other words, this office was in charge of communication with foreign states. The other (‘*alium cancellarium*’, later known as the ‘second’ Chancellor), was responsible for ‘writing all letters and other documents which are to be sent, or else pertained to, the administration of the city’s territories’.⁴⁹ Finally, the office of ‘secretariat’ was formally established in Florence through a reform implemented by the Chancellor

Bartolomeo Scala in 1483. The latter re-established the division of the chancery into two branches originally introduced by Bruni, and created 'six' chancellors, defined as 'secretaries of the Signoria'. Moreover, the 1483 reform assigned two secretaries with the task of 'managing all affairs, even very important ones', thus giving them responsibility for recording documents pertaining to all political and diplomatic business.⁵⁰ In enacting this reform, Scala made reference to the widespread use of secretaries in politics and diplomacy in other Italian states: '[the secretaries'] job is in use in several principalities as well as [free] republics in these and earlier times'.⁵¹

One of the most significant aspects of these institutional changes was the growing production of diplomatic dispatches and letters throughout Italy.⁵² This is particularly well highlighted by the story of the magistracy of the *Dieci* (or Ten) in Florence, a body whose creation was a consequence of the newly arising diplomatic and military requirements facing the Republic. From 1384 onwards, and especially during the *Quattrocento*, the *Dieci* were granted special power (*balia*) in times of war that extended to the conduct of diplomacy.⁵³ By the end of the fifteenth century, this magistracy and its authority had become a permanent body, reflecting a significant turning point in Florentine politics and administration.⁵⁴ The *Dieci* had its own chancery – staffed by a specially appointed secretary and provided with an administrative (or 'current') archive for documents – as well as its own diplomatic envoys.⁵⁵ Thus, the new institutional figure of the secretary created by Scala's aforementioned reform came to be especially employed in the chancery of the *Dieci*.

The growing importance of diplomacy in Renaissance Italy as a whole also necessitated similar archival procedures and practices, especially for the preservation and organization of diplomatic letters alongside the wider body of public records.⁵⁶ Leonardo Bruni's 1437 reform, for instance, generated several new archival series, including the Missives of the second chancery instituted four years later.⁵⁷ Florentine chancellors were now required to make copies of letters pertaining to both the *Signoria* and other government magistracies in special registers for official internal use. This practice was soon regulated by government legislation, such as the *Provvisione* of 13 March 1431, which instructed secretaries to 'copy in suitable books the letters written to and received by both Florentine ambassadors and commissioners'.⁵⁸ The decree even gave examples of the expressions to be used in the copying process, with the intent of creating effective and well-organized registers (such as 'written/received on this day to/from this ambassador...'),⁵⁹ as well as making stipulations on their preservation 'in the chancery' archives.⁶⁰

Another important step in the formation of new archival records, once again relating to the development of diplomacy, was a *Provvisione* of 1466 which explicitly acknowledged the importance of the production of letters and documents by regulating even the material aspects of those received from abroad or due for departure. These were to be accurately copied ('word for word')⁶¹ on 'clean and smooth' parchment,⁶² whilst copies were also to be preserved in the archives ('always having and keeping [the copy book or register] in the chancery').⁶³ Following this, a further reform by Bartolomeo Scala in 1483 established a new

way of registering the transcripts, and archiving the originals, of diplomatic letters by geographical subdivisions 'in order to make it easier to find any document' – that is, by filing letters in 'separate registers' for each respective head of state: one for the Pope, one for the king of Naples, one for the Duke of Milan, and one for the rest.⁶⁴ Scala's reforms thus give a further indication of the growing importance of diplomacy relating to the formation of the archives of the Florentine chancery.

The importance of diplomatic correspondence, as we have mentioned, coincided with a growth in documentary production relating to the territorial expansion of city-states. As scholars of late medieval Italy have explained, this had led to an increasing demand for public records, especially in response to the growth in correspondence between the capitals and the territories under their control, as well as the need to keep lists of their public officers and commissioners.⁶⁵ During the fifteenth century, this subsequently led to the formation of a more definitive system of information, another significant factor in the administrative development of the archives of Florence.⁶⁶

A large part of the extensive documentation of Florence's network of correspondence can still be found in the archives today. This vast body of material serves as a useful sample of both the frequency and volume of state communication, particularly from the second half of the fifteenth century onwards, the majority of which remains unpublished.⁶⁷ Amongst the most widely studied and published of these records are those relating to the chancery career of Niccolò Machiavelli, who, alongside his diplomatic responsibilities, took charge of the administration of the territories under Florence's control, and thus of the correspondence between the city magistrates and their officials in the territories. The dispatches written by Machiavelli, known in modern editions as the 'scritti di governo', attest to both the frequency and extent of the city's network of documentary information. For instance, during the period 1498–1505 alone, less than half of Machiavelli's 15 years in the chancery, the mass of documentation he produced reached the astonishing number of 5493 letters, all of which he wrote in his own hand, consisting mostly of communications prepared in the name of the *Dieci* and of the *Signoria*.⁶⁸ If we also consider those produced by up to 16 similar officers employed in the chanceries of both the *Dieci* and the *Signori*, the two bodies responsible for communications with the territories, we can thus begin to picture the vast scale of documentary production undertaken at this time.⁶⁹

Another significant aspect of this documentary expansion was related to warfare and military organization. Recent scholarship has traced the origins of military documentation to the Italian states of the late Middle Ages. As illustrated by William Caferro, in Florence this prompted an increase in the production of records relating to a series of investigations into the city's wartime finances.⁷⁰ The endemic state of warfare that plagued the peninsula in the decades following the French invasion of 1494 led to a further step in these developments in archival and documentary practices.

At the end of the fifteenth century, the *Dieci di Balìa*, which held special authority in times of war, re-emerged as the *Dieci di Libertà e Pace*: a new magistracy

which, although in principle still a temporary body, soon acquired a *de facto* permanency. Alongside their role in the conduct of diplomacy, the *Dieci* also took responsibility for the administration of the Florentine army during this period. As a result, the chancellors of the *Dieci* held new responsibilities for communicating with both Florentine envoys and military officers stationed abroad. Over the subsequent decades, the documents produced by the *Dieci* thus increased in both number and variety as the magistracy assumed authority in matters such as the payment of mercenaries and *condottieri*, leading in turn to an increasing number of records of military expenses.⁷¹ This growth can be seen in the wider archival practices of the magistracy itself, beginning with the *Dieci*'s books of accountancy. Known today as the *Entrata e uscita*, they were first commissioned in 1369 and were followed by the registers of military deliberations, including the employment contracts (*condotte*) of mercenaries and their funding from 1384,⁷² as well as the *Debitori e creditori* series with holdings which date from 1424 onwards. Moreover, by 1413, the chancery of the *Dieci* was also producing a wider series of *Missive* (the series of 'missives' still extant in the archives of Florence), separate from their other diplomatic records, which further developed the network of communications between officials and military commissioners in the territories, alongside other new series such as the *Ricordanze* from 1425, and finally the *Sommari di missive e responsive* and the *Ricordi* from 1478.⁷³

By the end of the fifteenth century and the commencement of the so-called Italian Wars which followed the descent of Charles VIII and his French army into the peninsula, the vast number of military operations such as the enrolment, movement and payment of troops throughout Italy led to a sudden and significant acceleration in documentary practices and the production not only of missives, payments, memos and annotations, but also muster rolls, billeting and pay lists, safe conducts, lists of prisoners, and so on. In Florence in particular, the constant danger of foreign invasions from 1494 onwards led to the creation of new military offices and institutions that also precipitated an intensification of correspondence with both commissioners of the army and officials throughout the state. The early construction and development of these Florentine communication networks through the use of public records illustrate a growing recognition of their role as a tool for information management. For instance, as soon as news broke in Florence of the march of the Spanish and Papal armies towards Tuscany in late August 1512, Machiavelli was sent to raise troops in the *contado*, the territories under the control of the city of Florence, in a desperate, and ultimately fruitless, effort to defend the Republic.⁷⁴ After the threat of invasion had become clear in July, the letters sent by the Florentine officials (*rettori*) in the areas threatened by the enemy had been regularly collected, selected and organized by the chancellors to be read aloud in the city-councils ('several dispatches from our officers in Firenzuola, Mugello and other nearby places were read...').⁷⁵

The impressive increase in the number of copy-registers for the Missives of the second chancery by the end of the fifteenth century also provides clear evidence of this phenomenon. Despite the inevitable losses in this archival series, it is notable

that, of a total of 71 registers of the *Missive* of the *Signori*, only 18 date from 1443 (the year in which the series begins) to 1494 (the beginning of the Italian Wars). The last 53, by contrast, date from 1494 to 1532. Similarly, of 108 registers of the *Missive* of the *Dieci*, only 30 date from 1413 to 1494, whilst only 14 of the 48 registers of diplomatic records of the *Dieci*, known as the *Legazioni e commissarie*, date from before 1494.⁷⁶ Political instability and the pressures of war prompted a dramatic increase in both military organization and warfare, as was reflected in the writing of official letters to representatives in the territories and abroad.

Added to this was the production of new public records, such as those pertaining to the recently created *Nove di Ordinanza e Milizia* (Nine of the Militia), a new city magistracy established in 1506 as the brainchild of Machiavelli and which provides yet more evidence of the increasing production of military records in Florence after the beginning of the Italian Wars. The establishment of the *Nove*, once again with their own chancery⁷⁷ and with the creation of a Militia under their control, also generated a new series of documentary practices relating to the enrolment and organization of militiamen.⁷⁸ Such administrative practices, from the dispatches and administrative letters sent to officials in the Florentine territories to the orders and instructions for military commissioners of the militia, were crucial for the establishment of communication networks and information management based on the writing and preservation of papers in the archives. The list of offices, tasks and documentation required for the militia, as outlined in detail by Machiavelli's Militia Act of 1506, was reflected in the growing bureaucratic and documentary practices which became necessary for their support. For instance, as Jean-Jacques Marchand has demonstrated, the first task for the new militia was to compile a census of its militiamen.⁷⁹ Such records had to be periodically reviewed in response to any changes and additions.⁸⁰ Moreover, a local chancellor was charged with creating new lists of militiamen and other logistical records,⁸¹ such as the details of those who received weapons.⁸² Previous census records relating to the inhabitants of the territories, where available, were requested, collated and copied for the purposes of recruitment.⁸³ Finally, for judicial purposes, the chancellor was obliged to produce a number of records pertaining to the administration of justice. For instance, allegations of illegal armed gatherings by the conscripts, a case punishable by death, needed 'to be recorded in the registers' of the *Nove* 'in the very same day of the notification'.⁸⁴

Whilst the organization of the militia was already a well-established chancery tradition in which Machiavelli had been involved for several years (e.g. the documentation required to ensure the conscription of one man per household), and which he later applied to the administrative methods of enrolment, his reforms brought about unprecedented changes in both its size and systematization.⁸⁵ If we compare this with previous attempts at military reform in Florence, we can better appreciate the novelty of this situation. Previous proposals for a militia, such as that posited by Domenico Cecchi in 1497, had been predicated on a theoretical rather than practical basis, and were therefore informed by the tradition of fifteenth-century literature on the militia without any pragmatic consideration of its

military and bureaucratic implementation.⁸⁶ By contrast, the bureaucratic system which underpinned the Machiavellian militia was so efficient that it was later kept in use by the Medici after the fall of the Republic in 1512: the *Provisione* of 1514, which re-established the *Ordinanza* in the *contado* under the control of the Medici, followed the basic framework of the Militia Act of 1506.⁸⁷

A major turning point in the history of archives has traditionally been associated, most notably by Robert-Henri Bautier, with the European monarchies of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. According to Bautier, archives came to be considered as the ‘arsenal’ of the authorities during this period.⁸⁸ As such, they began to be used as tools for the substantial task of administering and controlling the state, based on the collecting, filing and managing of information for political purposes, not least in the attempt to undermine potential antagonists.⁸⁹ This in turn also had ties to the conduct of war. According to Max Weber and his successors, amongst the defining characteristics of the modern state was the emergence of a standing army under the direct control of central authorities; this required payments, financing, and so took a prominent role in the formation of state bureaucracy and administration.⁹⁰ Once again, this phenomenon is generally associated with the growth of the larger European monarchies,⁹¹ following the same historiographical framework set out by Bautier. We can also add to this historiographical tradition the fact that military bureaucracy – from its very earliest Florentine developments as documented in this article – required new archival repositories in order to store the increasing amount of records generated by these new administrative undertakings (especially fiscal and military) related to the growth of so-called ‘national’ armies.

However, studies of diplomacy, such as those by Dover, provide evidence that this traditional periodization must be reconsidered in the light of the history of Italian archives between the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries.⁹² This period reveals numerous aspects of the procedures for collecting and filing public records, which, although only rudimentary, were certainly comparable to those practised by the European monarchies in the following centuries. Italy’s political entities remained composite or agglomerate states throughout the course of the Renaissance: a mixture of not only a variety of political and institutional bodies of the dominant city, but also of several distinctive local authorities in the territories. Yet this did not exclude the possibility of integrating government policies within a more centralized system of documentation, especially as such a system facilitated the construction of a political identity, acted as a deterrent against political dissidence within the city and its territories, and allowed for the mobilization of rapid and substantial military responses. The development of such documentary practices must therefore be interpreted as a long-term process of transition in the history of archives. In his discussion of Bautier’s thesis, Olivier Poncet has illustrated how the Papal States experienced an early form of ‘bureaucratization’, tied to a growth in both the volume of, and control over, its finances and, as a consequence, its archives. Doubtless, this was a non-linear development, consisting of numerous interruptions and backwards steps, which had its roots in the early

sixteenth century at least, and certainly before the creation of the central archives at the beginning of the seventeenth century.⁹³

We must therefore consider the shifting practices in European administration and record-keeping as an earlier and more long-term process than the traditional 'turning point' of the late sixteenth century. As we have seen, in fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Florence, public records and state communications were managed by a complicated early modern system of documentary production and preservation which, although based on a series of often contradictory and incoherent reforms, nevertheless had profound effects on the uses of their archives. This process emerged more clearly in the case of the Florentine republic, particularly in the development of innovative new techniques for the production and preservation of documents throughout Tuscany. The rising demands of government and diplomacy, as shown by Dover, as well as the military needs discussed above, generated new legislative and administrative practices, leading in turn to the creation of new magistracies and, consequently, new chancery offices (such as those of the *Dieci*, the *Otto* and the *Nove* in Florence). These innovations in the production and storage of an ever-growing mass of state papers facilitated a series of important correspondence networks based on an information system centred on both the chancery⁹⁴ and the archives of its documents. Archives became both a tool of state control, and a source of information for rulers concerning the scribal and documentary practices on which the 'art of government' was based.

Within this process of transition, however, the outbreak of a long-term period of conflict in the Italian Wars (1494–1550) was a major turning point that accelerated the already emerging tendencies in archival practice. This moment of crisis made a significant contribution to the creation of large-scale communication networks in the city-states of Renaissance Italy, based on new techniques for the collection and use of public records for the purposes of governance, warfare and diplomacy. These networks became increasingly necessary for an efficient and rapid response to political and military demands.

The archival and chancery institutions of Renaissance Florence were divided among several distinct offices, at times drawn into direct conflict with each other, and a full unification and centralization of the city's bureaucracy was far from forthcoming during this period. Nevertheless, the necessary creation of documentary tools for governmental activities and political purposes, the establishment of communication networks for both administrative and military purposes, and finally the coordination of military responses in a time of crisis, inspired several advances and a great expansion in the recording, collating and preserving of state information.

Acknowledgements

The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013)/ERC Grant agreement n° 284338. I thank the reviewer and Fabio Antonini for their advice. All translations are the author's, except where otherwise noted.

Notes

1. The *Filza* was the most common system of binding documents in medieval and early modern Italian chanceries. The documents were sewn together after their administrative function was complete with a thread spiked through a bundle of papers.
2. 'Instructio data Officiali Reformationum nuper electo in anno 1498', published in Demetrio Marzi, *La Cancelleria della Repubblica fiorentina* (Rocca San Casciano 1910), 619 ff.: 'Quando entra la nuova Signoria [...] tutti e Cancellieri et Coadiutori, si rapresentano, et prima pel Cancelliere delle Tratte si dà un altro giuramento a' Signori particolare. [...] Fatto questo, el primo Cancelliere presenta alla Signoria certi brevi ricordi, con dua filze, dove sono notati gli effetti delle provisioni, che dispongono circa allo scrivere delle lettere; et le filze, o vero agetti [i.e. 'aggetti', 'filze'], si danno 1° per infilzare quelle lettere che vengono di fuori della iurisdictione; nell'altra quelle che vengono da' subditi. Dipoi el Cancelliere delle Riformagioni ha in mano 1° certo quardenuccio, dove sono notati brevemente gli effecti d'alchune provisioni e leggi appartenenti alla Signoria, el quale si chiama "quadernuccio de' brevi ricordi"; et dice come egli è di consuetudine antiqua observato che per lui si presenti tale quadernuccio acciò che le loro Signorie possino facilmente vedere sotto brevità quello che per loro s'abbi ad osservare nelle cose che occorressino al loro Ufficio'. See also Alison Brown, *Bartolomeo Scala, 1430–1497, Chancellor of Florence: The Humanist as Bureaucrat* (Princeton, NJ 1979), 137.
3. See for instance, Gene Brucker, *Florentine Politics and Society 1343–1378* (Princeton, NJ 1962); Anthony Molho, 'Politics and the Ruling Class in Early Renaissance Florence', *Nuova rivista storica*, LII (1968), 401–20.
4. Useful research, in connection with the process of documentary production, has been done by Andrea Zorzi and Piero Gualtieri, 'Pratiche politiche, scritture documentarie e costruzione identitaria della comunità cittadina. L'esempio di Firenze in età comunale (secoli XII–XIV)', *Scrineum Rivista*, 6 (2009), 1–9, 2.
5. Giuseppe Biscione, ed., *Statuti del Comune di Firenze nell'Archivio di Stato: tradizione archivistica e ordinamenti: saggio archivistico e inventario* (Rome 2009), 185, 139. For a survey of the archival history of this kind of *instrumenta* in late medieval Italy, see Paolo Cammarosano, 'I "libri iurium" e la memoria storica delle città comunali', in *Il senso della storia nella cultura medievale italiana (1100–1350)*, Acts of a conference, Pistoia, 14–17 May 1993 (Pistoia 1995), 309–25 (also in *Le scritture del comune, amministrazione e memoria nella città dei secoli XII e XIII* (Turin 1998), 95–108).
6. See Biscione, *Statuti*, 153; Bernardino Barbadoro, *Le finanze della Repubblica fiorentina. Imposta diretta e debito pubblico fino all'istituzione del Monte* (Florence 1929), 564 *passim*; Guidubaldo Guidi, *Il governo della città repubblica di Firenze*, 3 vols (Florence 1981), Vol. II, 269–70; 275–80; Alessandro Gherardi, 'L'antica Camera del Comune di Firenze e un quaderno d'uscita de' suoi camarlinghi', *Archivio Storico Italiano*, s. IV, XVI (1885), 313–61; Demetrio Marzi, 'Notizie storiche intorno ai documenti ed agli archivi più antichi della Repubblica fiorentina (Sec. XII–XIV)', *Archivio Storico Italiano*, s. V, XX (1897), part I, 85 ff.; part II, 316–35: 318 ff.
7. Francesca Klein, 'Costruzione dello stato e costruzione di archivio: ordinamenti delle scritture della Repubblica fiorentina a metà Quattrocento', *Reti Medievali Rivista* 9 (2008), 1–31: 8. On this subject see also Marzi, 'Notizie storiche', 330. Now also Gian Maria Varanini, 'Public Written Records', in Andra Gamberini and Isabella Lazzarini, eds, *The Italian Renaissance State* (Cambridge 2012), 385–405, 392.

8. Paul Dover, 'Deciphering the Diplomatic Archives of Fifteenth-Century Italy', *Archival Science*, 7 (2007), 297–316.
9. Brown, *Bartolomeo Scala*, 183–4.
10. Lorenzo Tanzini, *Il governo delle leggi. Norme e pratiche delle istituzioni a Firenze dalla fine del Duecento all'inizio del Quattrocento* (Florence 2007), 112.
11. See again Zorzi and Gualtieri, 'Pratiche politiche', 2.
12. Varanini, 'Public Written Records', 385; see also Isabella Lazzarini, ed., 'Scritture e potere. Pratiche documentarie e forme di governo nell'Italia tardomedievale (secoli XIV–XV)', *Reti Medievali – Rivista*, IX/1 (2008).
13. For the Italian Wars, see David Abulafia, ed., *The French Descent into Renaissance Italy, 1494–5: Antecedents and Effects* (Aldershot 1995); and Michael E. Mallet and Christine Shaw, *The Italian Wars 1494–1559: War, State and Society in Early Modern Europe* (Harlow 2012).
14. See also Jean-Claude Maire Vigueur, 'Révolution documentaire et révolution scripturaire: le cas de l'Italie médiévale', *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des chartes*, 153 (1995), 177–85; Isabella Lazzarini, 'Scritture dello spazio e linguaggi del territorio nell'Italia tre-quattrocentesca. Prime riflessioni sulle fonti pubbliche tardomedievali', *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo e Archivio Muratoriano*, 113 (2011), 137–208; ead., 'Le pouvoir de l'écriture. Les chancelleries urbaines et la formation des Etats territoriaux en Italie (XIVe–XVe siècles)', *Histoire Urbaine*, 35 (2012), 31–49; ead., 'Scritture e Potere'; Varanini, 'Public Written Records'.
15. Cf. Biscione, *Statuti*, 153; Barbadoro, *Le finanze*, 564 *passim*; Guidubaldo Guidi, *Il governo della città repubblica di Firenze*, 3 vols (Florence 1981), Vol. II, 269–70; 275–80; Gherardi, 'L'antica Camera', 313–61; Marzi, 'Notizie storiche', part I, 85 ff.; part II, 318 ff.
16. Lorenzo Tanzini, ed., 'Il più antico ordinamento della Camera del Comune di Firenze: le "Provvisioni Canonizzate" del 1289', *Annali di Storia di Firenze*, I (2006), 139–79, 163 (specifically the chapter: 'De Custode Actorum Camere et eius Officio'): 'Custos actorum Camere sit notarius de melioribus fidelioribus et cautioribus civitatis...'. On this chapter of the *Provvisioni*, see also Eugenio Casanova, *Archivistica* (Siena 1928), 328; Clementina Rotondi, *L'Archivio delle Riformazioni fiorentine* (Rome 1972), 8; and Biscione, *Statuti*, 135 and 148 ff.
17. 'Quibus sic peractis reponat ipsos libros quanto potest convenientius et ordinatius per singulas camerulas armarii dicte Camere [...] super quamlibet armarii camerulam infigat cedulam exprimente quid continetur in illa'. On the translation of 'camerula' as 'drawer' see Casanova, *Archivistica*, 328.
18. 'Et in copertura de foris de grossis licteris et apertis scribat brevem titulum de contentis in quolibet et de tempore dominatus et sub annis iudicis examine.'
19. 'Et si talis liber non habuerit sufficientem coperturam camerarii illam faciant renovari expensis Camere'.
20. Romolo Caggese, ed., *Statuti della Repubblica fiorentina*, 2 vols (Florence 1910–21), Vol. 1, *Statuto del capitano del popolo degli anni 1322–25* (Book IV, rubric XXV), 192–3: 'Quod instrumenta comunis completa debeant poni et teneri in Camera Comunis in saccis exterius signatis cum convenienti scriptura'. On the organization of the records, cf. Gherardi, 'L'antica Camera', 319–20, and Marzi, 'Notizie storiche', 323–4.
21. 'Qui sacchuli de foris describantur et designentur de continentia ipsorum instrumentorum' (Book IV, rubric XXV).

22. ‘...set [omnia instrumenta] facilius valeant inveniri’ (Book IV, rubric XXV).
23. *Statuto del capitano del popolo* (Book IV, rubric XXII), 191–2: ‘Additum est in MCCCXXI, indictione quinta, die XVI mensis martii: Quod camerarii camere Communis Florentie de pecunia Communis ipsius construi et fieri faciant in camera dicti Communis archivum in quo acta dicti Communis ponantur in cuius constructione possint expendere usque in quantitatem librarum trecentarum’. Cf. Biscione, *Statuti*, 138.
24. Extensive research has been done on the role of notaries in the organization of public memory as well as in the documentary production of the early Italian communes. Classic studies in this field include: Attilio Bartoli Langeli, ‘La documentazione degli Stati italiani nei secoli XIII–XV: forme, organizzazione, personale’, in *Culture et Idéologie dans la genèse de L’état Moderne* (Rome 1985), 35–55; id., *Notai. Scrivere documenti nell’Italia medievale* (Rome 2006); Marino Zabbia, ‘I notai italiani e la memoria delle città (secc. XII–XIV)’ in Attilio Bartoli Langeli and Gerald Chaix, eds, *La Mémoire de la Cité: Modèles antiques et réalisations renaissantes* (Naples 1997), 35–47.
25. *Statuto del capitano del popolo* (Book IV, rubric XXIV), 192–3: ‘Quod unum de registris comunis debeat stare siggillatum in Camera Communis sigillo Priorum. Quia ex registris Communis Florentie in quibus sunt scripta sive exemplata instrumenta et iura Communis Florentie acquisita et habita ab antiquo nec non de novo in eis aliquid illicitum commicti possit vel debeat in eis aliqua detractio vel mutatio fieri, statutum et ordinatum est quod unum de registris Communis Florentie, in quo dicta iura continentur, sit et stare debeat siggillatum apud curiam dicti Communis...’. On this topic, see Biscione, *Statuti*, 139 and 185.
26. *Statuto del capitano del popolo* (Book IV, Rubrics XXI–XXII), 191, especially the following part: ‘Statutum et ordinatum est quod omnia acta curie comunis Florentie debeant servari et custodiri in Camera dicti comunis...’. Cf. Marzi, ‘Notizie storiche’, 332. The so-called *Riformagioni* (legislation of the councils) originally had to be preserved in the *Camera*, too: cf. Biscione, *Statuti*, 166 ff, 183 and 192 (note).
27. These legislative councils varied from time to time. In the late Middle Ages, the Commune of Florence had four, and sometimes five, legislative councils, until a 1329 reform reduced them to just two large bodies, the Council of the People and the Council of the Commune. These were later replaced by other Councils, such as the Council of the ‘Cento’, or Hundred, at the time of Lorenzo il Magnifico, and by the *Consiglio Maggiore*, or Great Council, in 1494.
28. Tanzini, *Il governo*, 112–14 and 129 ff.
29. See Lorenzo Tanzini, ‘Ad reinveniendum iura communis. Archives and Management of Public Records in 14th-Century Florence’, paper presented at the conference *Politics and the Archives, Politics of the Archives*, 10 June 2013, Birkbeck, University of London.
30. For details on the so-called ‘Carte di corredo’ as an inventory of the *Provisioni*, see: Marcello Del Piazzo, ‘Le ‘Carte di Corredo’ di alcune serie di atti della Repubblica fiorentina’, *Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato*, XVIII (1958), 245–76; Francesca Klein, *Scritture e governo dello Stato a Firenze nel Rinascimento: studi di archivistica e di storia* (Florence 2013), 213 and 225 ff.; Bernardino Barbadoro, ‘Il primo ordinamento dell’archivio delle Riformagioni e la conservazione degli atti consiliari del Comune di Firenze’, in *Ad Alessandro Luzio. Gli archivi di stato italiani. Miscellanea di studi storici*, 2 vols (Florence 1933), Vol. 1, 197–204, 201.
31. Archivio di Stato di Firenze (henceforth ASF), *Provisioni, Registri* 29, fol. 83v: ‘... fuit hactenus preter offiti dominorum priorum et vexilliferi conscientia deputare notarium ad hostendendum [sic], perscrutandum et mostrandum atta [sic] et libros dicte

- Camere...'. See also the proposal in *Libri fabarum*, Francesca Klein, ed., *I Consigli della Repubblica fiorentina: Libri fabarum XVII (1338–1340)* (Rome 1995), 162–3: '...quod domini priores artium et vexillifer iustitie possint [...] eligere et deputare illum notarium quem voluerint ad custodiendum, hostendendum et demostrandum atta [sic] et libros camere comunis Florentini'.
32. Cf. the Statutes' rubric *De forma electionis camerariorum et aliorum officialium camere*, in Tanzini, 'Il più antico ordinamento', 157.
 33. ASF, *Provvisoni, Registri* 29, fol. 83v: '...ipsa deputatio spectat et spectare debet ad officium ipsorum dominorum Priorum et Vexilliferi iustitie et non ad alios'.
 34. *Provisione* of 21 March 1340, in Marzi, *La Cancelleria*, 552 (the part mentioned in my text is in italic): 'Item quod ipsi domini Priores Artium et Vexillifer iustitie, una cum Offitio duodecim Bonorum Virorum, possint eisque liceat, pro Comuni Florentie, providere quod Camerarij Camere dicti Comunis, de ipsius Comunis pecunia, dent, et solvant, et dare et solvere possint, teneantur, et debeant, religiosis viris Camerariis Camere Armorum palatij Populi Florentini, vel alteri ipsorum [...] pro expensis expedientibus pro quadam Camera, que fit in dicto palatio Populi Florentini, *pro conservando reformationes Consiliorum hactenus factas, et que fient in futurum, et alias scripturas Communis eiusdem...*'.
 35. See Marzi, 'Notizie storiche', 330; more extensively Klein. 'Costruzione dello stato e costruzione di archivio', 8.
 36. Cf. Riccardo Fubini, 'Diplomazia e governo in Firenze all'avvento dei reggimenti oligarchici', in id., *Quattrocento fiorentino* (Pisa 1996), 44; and Biscione, *Statuti*, 157.
 37. *Statuta populi et communis Florentie publica auctoritate collecta castigata et præposita anno salutis MCCCCXV*, 3 vols (Friburgi 1778), Vol. 2, 716–17 (Book 5, Rubric CCXXVIII): 'Et teneatur ipse notarius scribere sua propria manu, vel sui coadiutoris, omnia consilia et consiliorum decreta, et reformationes dicti populi et communis. [...] Et non possit, vel debeat idem scriba et notarius, facere copiam alicui de secretis consiliis, nec de aliis, quae imposita fuerint ei in secreto teneri. [...] Et non debeat, vel possit, morari in hospitio in quo morabitur dominus potestas, vel capitaneus, vel executor ordinamentorum iustitiae populi florentini, sed alibi stare debeat, et moretur in eo loco ubi per offitium dominorum priorum et vexilliferi iustitiae fuerit ordinatum. [...] Ac etiam teneatur et debeat scribere per se, vel dictum notarium coadiutorem, omnia instrumenta sindicatus ac etiam omnes scripturas et reformationes quascumque pertinentia ad ipsum commune Florentiae quoquomodo'.
 38. In bureaucratic terms, a 'current archive' functions as the administrative archive of documentation necessary to resolve the different tasks of government. The so-called 'archivio corrente' of the Italian chanceries during the centuries later formed what historians now define as the 'archivio di deposito' or 'sedimentazione' – cf. Filippo Valenti, *Scritti e lezioni di archivistica, diplomatica e storia istituzionale* (Rome 2000), 89 ff.
 39. Muniments (or *Urkunden*, as in the traditional German definition) were documents, charters, deeds, and so on, relating to the property, rights and privileges of the commune, see above. On the difference between an Archive-*Thesaurus* conceived for these kinds of records and another kind of archive resulting from the accumulation and storing of documents relating to the daily administration of a state (*Akten*), see above; also Varanini, 'Public Written Records', 389.
 40. See also Dale Kent, 'The Power of the Elites: Family, Patronage, and the State' (especially the section 'Defining the Elites: Size, Wealth, Office-Holding, Prestige'), in John M. Najemy, ed., *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance 1300–1550* (Oxford 2004).

41. For the case of Florence, see Zorzi and Gualtieri, 'Pratiche politiche, scritture documentarie', 2. For more information about the processes of selection of the ruling class, as well as on political struggles in Florence, see John M. Najemy, *Corporatism and Consensus in Florentine Electoral Politics, 1280–1400* (Chapel Hill, NC 1982).
42. See Amedeo de Vincentiis, 'Politica, memoria e oblio a Firenze nel XIV secolo. La tradizione documentaria della signoria del duca d'Atene', *Archivio Storico Italiano* CLXI (2003), 209–48; Andrea Zorzi, *Pluralismo giudiziario e documentazione: il caso di Firenze in età comunale*, in Jacques Chiffolleau et al., eds, *Pratiques sociales et politiques judiciaires dans les villes de l'Occident à la fin du Moyen Age*, Actes du colloque, Avignon, 29 Nov.–Dec. 2001 (Rome 2007), 1–39, 1.
43. Both are still preserved in ASF: *Inventari, serie V*, 635, and *Carte di Corredo* 44, see above note 30 for bibliography.
44. *Provvisione* of 27 October 1475, published in Marzi, *La Cancelleria*, 597–8: 'quecumque instrumenta et seu scripture publice, seu littere aliquorum principum, aut dominationum externarum, continentia aliquam confederationem, pacem, ratificationem, acceptationem, aut conventionem, aut nominationem, aut aliud simile, debeat presentari Officio dominorum Priorum et per dictos consignari Officiali Reformationum, qui ea conservet, prout per ordinamenta disponitur'. See also Rotondi, *L'Archivio delle Riformazioni fiorentine*, 15–16.
45. See also Francesca Klein, *Coluccio Salutati dalle Riformazioni all'ufficio di Dettatore: la ridefinizione delle pratiche di scrittura nella Cancelleria fiorentina*, in *Coluccio Salutati cancelliere e letterato*, Acts of the conference, Buggiano, Castello 27 May 2006 (Buggiano 2007), 145–58, 145.
46. Guidi, *Il governo della città-repubblica*, Vol. II, 3–33.
47. See Marzi, *La Cancelleria*, 169–76; Paolo Viti and Raffaella Maria Zaccaria, eds, *L'Archivio delle Tratte*, Pubblicazioni degli archivi di Stato, Strumenti 105 (Rome 1989), 3–115; Vanna Arrighi and Francesca Klein, 'Dentro il palazzo: cancellieri, ufficiali, segretari', in Rosalia Manno Tolu et al., eds, *Consorterie politiche e mutamenti istituzionali in età laurenziana* (Cinisello Balsamo 1992), 77–102, 88–90.
48. *Provvisione*, 30 October 1437, published in Francesco Paolo Luiso, 'Riforma della Cancelleria Fiorentina nel 1437', *Archivio Storico Italiano*, s. V, XXI, 2 (1898), 136–8: 'ad quem pertineat rogare et scribere electiones oratorum, commissiones et relationes et stantiamta eorumdem, et omnes licteras et alias scripturas, que extra territorium communis Florentie mitti aut portari deberent'.
49. '...unum alium cancellarium communis, [...] quod ad huiusmodi electum pertineat scribere omnes licteras et quascumque alias scripturas facere, que mitterentur aut operarentur in territorio communis predicti...'.²
50. *Deliberazione* of the *Signoria*, 28 November 1483, published in Marzi, *La Cancelleria*, 598–602: '...sex appellentur Secretarij [...] Quorum duo [...] qui idonei per omnia sint ad succedendum eis et ad quaecumque etiam magna negocia gerenda'. On this provvisione, see Brown, *Bartolomeo Scala*, 180–2.
51. '...horum opera pluribus in rebus principes, in pluribus etiam reipublice (liberae, praesertim) priscis ac nostris temporibus usi sunt', cf. again Brown, *Bartolomeo Scala*, 180–1.
52. See Dover, 'Deciphering the Diplomatic Archives'.
53. For the institution and history of the *Dieci*, see Guido Pampaloni, 'Gli organi della Repubblica fiorentina per le relazioni con l'estero', *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*, XX, 2 (1953), 261–96: 270 ff.; Guidi, *Il governo della città repubblica*,

- Vol. II, 203–12. For the period up to 1454, see also, Heinrich Lang, *Cosimo de' Medici, die Gesandten und die Condottieri. Diplomatie und Kriege der Republik Florenz im 15. Jahrhundert* (Paderborn 2009), 69–79.
54. Pampaloni, 'Gli organi della Repubblica fiorentina', 283.
 55. The *Dieci* were partially replaced in some periods by the Medicean *Otto di pratica*, starting by 1482, together with a further step for the creation of new chancery offices, and archives, relating to diplomacy.
 56. See again Dover, 'Deciphering the Diplomatic Archives'.
 57. See in the Archives of Florence the series *Signori, Missive II Cancelleria*, which dates from 1441 onwards.
 58. '...in libris propterea ordinandis [...] scribantur omnes lictere que ad eum [i.e. Ambassadors and Commissioners] scribentur, et que ab ipso recipientur...'. The *Provvisione* was published by Marzi, *La Cancelleria*, 589–590. Cf. F. Klein, 'La conservazione delle carte della Cancelleria delle lettere', in Rosalia Manno Tolu et al., *Consorterie politiche*, 97. See also the documentation mentioned by Dover, 'Deciphering the Diplomatic Archives', 308.
 59. '...sub hoc exemplo: "Die tali recepte fuerunt littere a tali Oratore"...'
 60. '...quodam libro [...] in Cancelleria retinendo.'
 61. *Provvisione* of 3 October 1466, published in Marzi, *La Cancelleria*, 594–5: '[per cancellarium dominorum] debeant copiar, et de verbo ad verbum transcribi ac registrari in uno libro, seu registro, ad id specialiter deputando et ordinando...'. On this *provvisione*, see Brown, *Bartolomeo Scala*, 167–8.
 62. '...scribi, seu scribi fieri, in cartis edinis, seu pecudinis, pulchris ac politis.'
 63. '...in dicta Cancelleria semper habendo ac tenendo.'
 64. *Deliberazione* of the *Signoria*, 31 December 1483, in Marzi, *La Cancelleria*, 604–7 (italics are mine): 'Et, ut facilius scripta ad Comune Florentie pertinentia inveniantur, copientur in libris separatis omnes litterae ab Oratoribus apud Pontificem; in altero, ab Oratoribus apud Regem Ferdinandum; in tertio, ab Oratoribus apud illustrissimum Ducem Mediolani. Et in eisdem libris copientur etiam litterae, quae ab huiusmodi principibus mitterentur; in quarto libro, ceterae indistincte'. On this reform by Scala, see again Brown, *Bartolomeo Scala*, 183 ff.
 65. See Maire Vigueur, 'Révolution documentaire', 177–85; Varanini, 'Public Written Records'; Lazzarini, 'Scritture dello spazio', 137–208; and ead., 'Le pouvoir de l'écriture', 31–49.
 66. Cf. Lazzarini, 'Scritture dello spazio'; and ead., 'Le pouvoir de l'écriture', *passim*. Also Nadia Covini, 'Scrivere al Principe. Il carteggio interno sforzesco e la storia documentaria delle istituzioni', *Reti Medievali Rivista*, 9 (2008), for the case of Milan.
 67. For modern editions of diplomatic correspondence, see *Commissioni di Rinaldo Degli Albizzi per il Comune di Firenze dal 1399 al 1433*, 3 vols (Florence 1867–73), Giuseppe Canestrini and Abel Desjardins, eds, *Négociations Diplomatiques de La France Avec La Toscane*, 2 vols (Paris 1859–86); more recent editions of Florentine diplomatic correspondence include Lorenzo de' Medici, *Lettere*, general editor Nicolai Rubinstein, then Francis W. Kent (Florence 1977–2011); *Corrispondenza degli ambasciatori fiorentini a Napoli*, coordinamento scientifico di Bruno Figliuolo, 8 vols. (various places 2002–13). For the government correspondence of Niccolò Machiavelli, to whose publication I have contributed, see the following note.
 68. This total includes the dispatches from Machiavelli's diplomatic missions. Nonetheless, the majority of them are the so-called 'Scritti di governo', including those relating to his

- administrative or military missions ('Commissarie') to the Florentine *Contado*. On the composition and number of Machiavelli's chancery autographs, cf. A. Guidi, 'Indice cronologico degli autografi', in N. Machiavelli, *Legazioni. Commissarie. Scritti di governo* ('Edizione Nazionale delle Opere'), 7 vols, Jean-Jacques Marchand et al., eds (Rome 2002–11), Vol. VII (1510–27), and the postfaces to N. Machiavelli, *Legazioni, Commissarie e scritti di governo*, 4 vols, ed. by Fredi Chiappelli and Jean-Jacques Marchand (Bari 1971–85).
69. The number of 16, although not all of which were necessarily related to the compilation of letters, is taken from a *Provvisione* of December 1487 and from the lists of officers dating from 1494 onwards (Marzi, *La Cancelleria*, 508 ff. and 608). The second chancery, in charge of writing the correspondence of the *Dieci*, officially listed three people (the secretary and two coadjutors), to which we must add at least the *coadiutore* and private correspondent of Machiavelli, Biagio Buonaccorsi, cf. Denis Fachard, *Biagio Buonaccorsi* (Bologna 1976), 24 *passim*.
70. See William P. Caferro, 'Warfare and Economy in Renaissance Italy 1350–1450', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XXXIX, 2 (2008), 167–209. See also Anthony Molho, *Florentine Public Finances in the Early Renaissance, 1400–1433* (Cambridge, MA 1971); Fabio Bargigia and Gianmarco de Angelis, 'Scrivere in guerra. I notai negli eserciti dell'Italia comunale (secoli XII–XIV)', *Scrineum. Rivista*, 5 (2008), 19–87; Fabio Bargigia, 'I documenti dell'esercito: l'esempio del Libro di Montaperti', in Paolo Grillo, eds, *Cittadini in armi. Eserciti e guerre nell'Italia comunale*, Seminario di Studi, Milano, 11 giugno 2009 (Padova 2011), 71–82; Lazzarini, 'Scritture dello spazio', 170 ff.
71. Cf. Pampaloni, 'Gli organi della Repubblica fiorentina', 284.
72. Now in the series *Deliberazioni, Condotte e Stanziamenti*. On the *Deliberazioni* of the *Dieci*, cf. Molho, *Florentine Public Finance*, 12–13; William P. Caferro, 'Continuity, Long-Term Service, and Permanent Forces: A Reassessment of the Florentine Army in the Fourteenth Century', *The Journal of Modern History*, 80, 2 (2008), 219–51, 222–3; and cf. Lang, *Cosimo de' Medici*, 75–6.
73. Cf. *Guida generale degli Archivi di Stato italiani*, 4 vols (Rome 1981–1994), vol. 2, s.v. *Firenze*, 54.
74. 'A di 21 d'agosto 1512, ci fu come el campo della Chiesa e degli Spagniuoli veniva a' danni de' Fiorentini': Luca Landucci, *Diario fiorentino dal 1450 al 1516*, Iodoco Del Badia, ed. (Florence 1883), 320. For an overview and an explanation of these events, see Andrea Guidi, 'Machiavelli al tempo del sacco di Prato alla luce di sei lettere inedite a lui inviate', *Filologia e critica*, XXXI (2006), 274–87, 277.
75. Report of the *Consulta* of 30 July 1512, in Denis Fachard, ed., *Consulte e pratiche della Repubblica fiorentina 1505–1512* (Geneva 1988), 352: 'lecte più lectere venute di proximo da più nostri rectori, et di Firenzuola, et Mugello, et altri luoghi quivi circumstanti'.
76. This estimate is based on the lists of registers in the inventories of the Florentine State Archives in the collection 'Archivi della Repubblica'. Note that, from a certain point onwards, the *Dieci* took over from the *Signori* authority over diplomacy. Not surprisingly, the *Legazioni e commissarie* of the *Signori* date mostly from before 1494. Note also that Marzi, *La Cancelleria*, 529–30, dates to 1441 the beginning of the series second chancery (which probably refers to the series now called *Signori, Missive*).
77. The *Provvisione* established also a new chancery, with new staff, serving the magistracy of the *Nove*: 'Abbiano detti Nove un cancellieri con un coadiutore o più, quali parranno alli eccelsi Signori, e 9 ufficiali...', in Niccolò Machiavelli *Provvisione della*

- ordinanza (§ 17), in id., *L'arte della guerra. Scritti politici minori* ('Edizione Nazionale delle Opere'), ed. by Jean-Jacques Marchand et al. (Rome 2001), 480.
78. Such procedures are well depicted in the correspondence of that time, such as a letter of the *Dieci* of 23 February 1507, in which the Florentine commissioner Bartolomeo Bartolini in San Miniato was asked to use notebooks and rolls with notes and lists pertaining to the men of the Militia, and then to send them back to the chancery in Florence, see Machiavelli, *Legazioni. Commissarie. Scritti di governo* ('Edizione Nazionale delle Opere'), Vol. 5, 558.
 79. 'Debbino detti primi ufficiali, subito che aranno giurato l'offizio, rivedere li quaderni e listre delle bandiere insino a questo dí ordinate per li signori Dieci, e fare detti quaderni e listre copiare da il loro cancelliere in su un libro o piú, distinguendo bandiera per bandiera, e facendo nota de' connestabili che le hanno in governo; e quelli, o raffermare, o permutare, o di nuovo eleggerli, come a loro parrà, salvo le cose infrascritte; e debbino avere saldi detti quaderni e listre fra due mesi dal dí che aranno preso l'offizio loro. E similmente debbino tenere conto e scrivere in su i libri distintamente di tutti li uomini e bandiere che di nuovo scriverranno', in Machiavelli, *Provisione della ordinanza* (§ 26–7), 482. See Jean-Jacques Marchand, 'Introduction' to Machiavelli, *Legazioni*, Vol. 5, 56.
 80. 'Debbino ancora detti ufficiali, in calendí di novembre, e infra 20 dí innanzi e 20 dí dipoi, rivedere tutti li quaderni delli uomini descritti, e cancellarne e di nuovo riscriverne in aumento e corroborazione, e non altrimenti: cancellando quelli che per cagioni legittime fossono diventati inutili e scrivendo delli utili; e passato detto tempo, non possino al numero delli descritti né aggiugnere né levare alcuno', Machiavelli, *Provisione della ordinanza* (§ 46), 485.
 81. 'Debbino ad ogni connestabile eleggere un cancelliere che tenga conto delli uomini scritti sotto di lui', Machiavelli, *Provisione della ordinanza* (§ 48), 485.
 82. As we understand from the correspondence of the Florentine magistracies written by Machiavelli as chancellor: 'E noterai a chi tu darai l'armi, acciò sappiamo a chi l'armi nostre sieno distribuite', Machiavelli, Letter sent (on behalf of the *Dieci*) to Bernardo del Beccuto, 28 April 1506, Machiavelli, *Legazioni*, Vol. 5, 303.
 83. 'Debbino detti ufficiali, per rinovare gli uomini del contado e distretto loro, ordinare che tutti i rettori de' popoli e sindachi particolari de' communi, o chi sotto altro nome avesse simile officio, portino ogni anno in calendí di novembre al magistrato loro le listre di tutti gl'uomini che abitano nel popolo o comune loro, che sieno d'età d'anni quindici o piú', Machiavelli, *Provisione della Ordinanza* (§ 51), 486.
 84. 'Dovendosi eziandio con simil pena capitale e di morte punire insino in tre di detti descritti che in tali ragunate si trovassono. E quando di detti o altri eccessi ne fosse fatta alcuna querela o alcuna notificazione a detti 9 ufficiali, le quali il loro cancelliere sia tenuto registrare nel dí che le saranno date', Machiavelli, *Provisione della Ordinanza* (§ 72–4), 490.
 85. On this topic, see Andrea Guidi, 'Per peli e per segni. Muster Rolls, Lists and Annotations: Practical Military Records Relating to the Last Florentine Ordinances and Militia, from Machiavelli to the Fall of the Republic (1506–1530)'. *Historical Research* (forthcoming). Militia formations were occasionally reformed during the *Quattrocento*: see Philip J. Jones, 'The Machiavellian Militia: Innovation or Renovation?', in *La Toscane et les toscanes autour de la Renaissance: Cadres de vie, société, croyances. Mélanges offerts à Charles-M. de La Roncière* (Aix en-Provence 1999), 11–52, 14.

86. See Andrea Guidi, *Un Segretario militante. Politica, diplomazia e armi nel cancelliere Machiavelli* (Bologna 2009), 159 ff.
87. Andrea Guidi 'Machiavelli e la milizia nella Firenze repubblicana del primo Cinquecento: aspetti teorici e sviluppi pratici', in *Il pensiero della crisi: Niccolò Machiavelli e Il Principe* (forthcoming). The *Provisione* is published in Giuseppe Canestrini, 'Documenti per servire alla storia della milizia italiana dal XIII secolo al XVI raccolti negli Archivj della Toscana', *Archivio Storico Italiano*, XV (1851), 328–36, now reprinted with a presentation by Lorenzo Tanzini (Reggello 2007).
88. '[...] un arsenal d'arme juridiques à la disposition de la Couronne', Robert-Henri Bautier, 'La Phase cruciale de l'histoire des archives: la constitution des dépôts d'archives et la naissance de l'archivistique (XVIIe-début du XIXe siècle)', *Archivum*, 18 (1968), 139–49, 142.
89. On the uses of archives as a tool for politics in seventeenth-century France, cf. Jacob Soll, 'The Antiquary and the Information State: Colbert's Archives, Secret Histories, and the Affair of the Régale, 1663–1682', *French Historical Studies*, 31, 1 (2008), 3–28.
90. See Steven Gunn, *War and the Emergence of the State: Western Europe, 1350–1600*, in F. Tallett and D. J. B. Trim, eds, *European Warfare, 1350–1750* (Cambridge 2010), 50–73.
91. See Jan Glete, *War and the State in Early Modern Europe: Spain, the Dutch Republic and Sweden as Fiscal-Military States 1550–1660* (London 2002).
92. Dover, 'Deciphering the Diplomatic Archives'.
93. Olivier Poncet, 'Les archives de la papauté (XVIIe-milieu du XVIIIe siècle): la genèse d'un instrument de pouvoir', in Armand Jamme and Olivier Poncet, eds, *Offices, écrit et Papauté (XIIIe–XVIIIe siècle)* (Rome 2009), 737–62, 737–9.
94. Even if this was divided between several distinct offices, each with its own archive, for a significant period.

Author Biography

Andrea Guidi is the author of *Un Segretario militante*, a book which investigates Niccolò Machiavelli's work in the Florentine chancery. He also co-edited two volumes of the series *Legazioni. Commissarie. Scritti di governo*, which present autograph documentation of Machiavelli's activities in the chancery. He is currently a member of 'AR.C.H.I.ves', a project on the history of the Italian archives based at Birkbeck (University of London) and funded by the European Research Council.