SSOAR

Open Access Repository
www.ssoar.info

Security politics and conspiracy theories in the emerging European state system (15th/ 16th c.)

Zwierlein, Cornel

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:
GESIS - Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:
Zwierlein, C. (2013). Security politics and conspiracy theories in the emerging European state system (15th/ 16th c.). *Historical Social Research*, *38*(1), 65-95. https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.38.2013.1.65-95

Nutzungsbedingungen:
Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY Lizenz (Namensnennung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier:
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.de

Terms of use:
This document is made available under a CC BY Licence (Attribution). For more Information see:
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0

gesis
Leibniz-Institut
für Sozialwissenschaften

Mitglied der
Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

Diese Version ist zitierbar unter / This version is citable under:
https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-381565

Security Politics and Conspiracy Theories in the Emerging European State System (15th/16th c.)

Cornel Zwierlein *

Abstract: *»Sicherheitspolitik und Verschwörungstheorien im entstehenden europäischen Staatensystem (15./16. Jh.)«*. The article develops a new definition of conspiracy theory more apt for historicizing purposes than the existing systematic and philosophical ones. It shows that modern conspiracy narratives do appear only with the Renaissance. Also, 'security' as the aim of state and international politics became important only now during the Italian Renaissance while the term and concept had been nearly forgotten during the Middle Ages. The article shows then that both, security politics in practice and political language as well as modern conspiracy narratives belong to the new type of political communication which emerged with inter-territorial diplomacy in 15th century Italy (example: Lorenzo de' Medici) and with the first emerging information public sphere in 16th century Europe (example: conspiracicsm during the French Wars of Religion). The narrative modus of analyzing the present state of affairs, of constructing reality and of planning and conjecturing in that form of political communication is highly similar to the construction of conspiracy narratives. All modern forms of opposition between security and conspiracy theories can be seen as derivatives of that Renaissance constellation.

Keywords: renaissance, conspiracy theory, security politics, Lorenzo de' Medici, information public sphere, diplomacy, Huguenots, French Wars of Religion, Camillo Capilupi, Charles IX of France, Gaspard de Coligny, St Bartholomew's massacre, state system, Francesco Guicciardini.

1. Introduction

Security History has for some years been an emerging field of research complementing the already existing fields of security studies in political and social sciences (Zwierlein 2012 with further references). Conspiracies and conspiracy theories have also attracted more and more interest from historians, often due to current developments on the contemporary political scene.[1] But both fields

* Cornel Zwierlein, Fakultät für Geschichtswissenschaften, Historisches Institut, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Universitätsstr. 150, 44801 Bochum, Germany; cornel.zwierlein@rub.de.

[1] For the conspiracy "mania" after 9/11 in the US cf. Knight (2002), Melley (2000), Barkun (2003); at the same time, several important studies on conspiracy history of other epochs have also been published: Pagán (2004), Pagán (2008), Roisman (2006) for Greek and Ro-

of historical research are still only beginning to define their objects and to have a clear idea under which historical circumstances what kind of means of security production and what kind of conspiracy theories developed or are developing: the objects of investigation are often not clearly defined, nor has a relationship between the two – security politics and proliferation of conspiracy theories – been traced. But clearly, conspiracies are always threats to the security of someone or something and in political history, by "conspiracy" one would always mean a threat to the commonwealth, the state, its government, many or all of these or parts of them. Conspiracies therefore endanger the core of internal and/or external security. I will concentrate on those conspiracy theories which refer to a danger for the security of an actor in the emerging early modern state system or of the whole group of states. I will argue that conspiracy theories are types of narrative which are genuinely linked to a specific context of news communication and interpretation, the (early) modern character of time horizons, and the narratives of methodological planning that became familiar in Renaissance politics: conspiracy theories as narratives are a sister genre of political analysis, planning and project narratives. Both use the information of "true" present and/or past facts such as deeds and movements of political actors as perceived in their newsletters, *avvisi*, dispatches and journals, draw connections between them, interpret coincidences as causalities and give a sense to the whole. The political project tries to predict possible outcomes from a given starting situation if one adds this or that action to it; it often outlines a tableau of *different possible futures*. The conspiracy theory gives an ex-post explanation for an event or a deed showing a *different possible past* from the prevalent normally accepted narrative of that past. Often this different possible past is also narrated to make a certain (mostly threatening) possible future plausible, so past and future narratives go hand in hand.[2] To be plausible, the conspiracy theory has also to be fed by a good deal of "true" and commonly accepted factual elements. But we will develop that in greater detail below.

First we will discuss in more detail the state of the art in security history, conspiracy (theory) history, the problems of definition involved, especially the problems of not giving ahistorical systematic definitions, but rather definitions that enable historicization (Section 2). Second, I will show in a little case study

man history; Coward/Swann (2004) and Bercé/Fasano-Guarini (1996) for early modern history; Campbell/Kaiser (2007) and Tackett (2000) for the French Revolution; Cubitt (1993) for France in the 19th century; Monier (1998) for the beginning of the 20th century; hereafter many studies on the post-war conspiracies (from McCarthysm to 9/11); Horn/Rabinbach (2008) as a recent special issue covering the epochs already mentioned. Historical interest in "conspiracy" seems to be a bit less for the Middle Ages.

[2] I do gratefully acknowledge the exchange on ‚future narratives' with Christoph Bode and his team at the Center of Advanced Studies in Munich, March 2012, which has partly inspired this passage. The first volume of the project will be published with de Gruyter in 2013 under the title *Future Narratives: Theory, Poetics, and Media-Historical Moment*."

of Lorenzo de' Medici's political correspondence and the 15th century so-called "Italian state system" the typical structures and elements of the narratives of political present time situation analysis: the political aim of Lorenzo was always to maintain the "sicurtà d'Italia"; where he analyzes the political present and calculates a possible future, his reasoning on "hidden intentions" and "secrets" of other actors on the political scene already comes close to patterns of conspiracy plots. Florentine political theory a generation later, by Machiavelli among others, already reflects this (Section 3). Third, I will show how the combination of this new Renaissance model of political communication, situation analysis and planning with the new patterns of confessional schism (e.g. identification of actions as planned by the Antichrist) produced the first fully developed early modern politico-religious international conspiracy theories in Europe; but as we will show for the case of the St. Bartholomew's massacre, the step from an elaborated rationalist ex-post explanation of past actions to a conspiracy theory can be as small as the switching of the printing location of such a narrative from Rome to Geneva in 1572/74 (Section 4).

2. Security and Conspiracy History, Renaissance State System: Problems of Definition

"Security" is such a general concept that, on the one hand, it is omnipresent in all fields of historical research; on the other hand, a closer look reveals that there is not yet a specialized sub-discipline or field that bears this title. While in political sciences, criminology, sociology, jurisprudence and, especially, international relations security studies is a broadly recognized subject of research (cf. Daase 2012; Walt 1991; Lipschutz 1995; Krause and Williams 1997; Waever and Buzan 2007), history has not yet established a corresponding field. Important contemporary changes in the concepts and practices of "security production" after the end of the Cold War (the emergence of "extended, comprehensive, human security", the gradual disappearance of the border between internal and external security) have caused our historical perception of "security" to change massively and historiography to respond to this challenge (Zwierlein and Graf 2010; Zwierlein 2011a; Zwierlein 2011b; Zwierlein 2012). In Contemporary History, International Security and many other security topics have always been considered. However, in the field of Early Modern History, "History of Security" remains a rather unexplored topic (but cf. Härter 2003; Rothschild 1995; Kampmann 2010). Even the history of the notion of *securitas/security/sûreté* (...) is always studied in relation to some precise points and regions. There are only a few rare fixed points of secure knowledge about "security": *securitas* has one important ascendance in stoic philosophy and means the state of absence of *curae*, the *tranquillitas animi*. As a political concept, we already find it in Cicero's letters (Epist. ad Quint. fratr. 3,7,3; Cic.

Acad. post. 1,11), but the idea that the *cura reipublicae* has to be aimed at the *securitas* of the empire is developed only under the emperors from Nero to Trajan (Instinsky 1952; Bennett 2001, 72; Hamilton 2013); the allegory, deity and virtue of *securitas publica* is a Roman imperial invention. During the European Middle Ages, the concept and the notion of *securitas* is no longer very present. The prevailing corresponding notion is *pax*: In a time where interpersonal relationships dominated, the peace *between* nobles, princes and kings was the decisive model, not *security* which seems to be connected with a spatial extension, a sphere: security is and prevails *in* a state or *in* a state system. Likely, in the Middle Ages we encounter "security" mostly where a spatial dimension is touched on: *securitates* are the safeguards and letters of consignment of people travelling on the roads (Lingelbach 2009; Rüther 2010); the invention of the prime insurance as *assi/ecuratio* is linked to the dangerous maritime transport, a transport in a risky space (Torre 2000; Ceccarelli 2001; Zwierlein 2011, 24-39). But it is only in the context of the early Italian territorial states, republics and principalities that *sicur(i)tà* again becomes a frequent term of political reasoning, a political aim and virtue. To my knowledge, no study in detail on that subject, on "sicurtà" in the Italian political language of the Renaissance, exists so far (cf. the Lemmata in Battaglia XVIII, 344-47, 424, 1058-73), but if we go through the recently edited volumes of 15th century political letters and diplomatic dispatches of the Sforza, the Gonzaga, Venice, Naples, Florence and the Pope, the frequency of the use of "securità" is very high and it now emerges as a guiding principle and a central political notion and concept; while we may also find "securitas" in this or that citation in earlier medieval texts, it practically never has the status of a key notion of political orientation. Now, the princes and diplomats were in fear of threats to the security of one state, to the security of a league of states and of "tutta Italia", which meant the interdependent system of all states. So, if we are looking for the relationship between security and conspiracy, it makes perfect sense to concentrate on the Italian Renaissance as a laboratory of its development, because it is only then that "security" becomes a guiding principle, and we have to ask how that seemingly obvious shifting of epochs is also to be identified in the realm of "conspiracy (theories)".

The recent literature on conspiracy theories and their history is a little bit more systematic than the literature on security history. Quickly, with a philosopher, we find a definition of "conspiracy theory":

> A conspiracy theory is a proposed explanation of some historical event (or events) in terms of the significant causal agency of a relatively small group of persons, the conspirators, acting in secret. [...] It proffers an explanation of the event in question. It proposes reasons why the event occurred (Keeley 1999, 116).

This is a general definition which seems to work, even if the only slightly more specific part of it ("a relatively small group of persons") is already disputable.

The definition just points to the main function of a conspiracy theory as *theory* to explain a past event. I would add to that explanatory function at least two other functions which are nearly always to be found: the appellative-affective function to stimulate a certain (re)action or simply an identity enhancement, mainly within the community sharing the same values that are important for the explanatory power of the theory; and the propaganda and denunciation function to delegitimize a certain group or person directed (not only, but also) to the public outside that community. Some other contributors to the definition or characterization of conspiracy theories add one or several of the following points (cf. the summary in Girard 2008, 752, who adds even a fourth point):

a) The belief in conspiracy (theories) exists and spreads as a result of paranoid personalities or cultures;
b) Conspiracy (theories) are successful because they simplify complex constellations;
c) Conspiracy (theories) are more widespread within groups under pressure / marginal groups.

The first point has been stressed early by Hofstadter and the school of socio-psychological interpretation (Hofstadter 1963), but it is of doubtful usefulness; especially for premodern societies, where all the elements of a Freudian bourgeois individuality and corresponding psychology are not yet present, this criterion is not at all applicable. The second point is disputable because conspiracy theories are at least double-faceted: they may have a simplifying impact if they give an answer to an open question (who did this, who organized that...?). But on the other hand, they also add complexity to the world, because every new conspiracy theory adds a narrative of a possible past to the reservoir of possible pasts and explanations; people have to choose what to believe and what not to – this rather increases contingency and complexity than reduces it (similarly Pagán 2008, 60). The third point seems to be historically often true: marginal groups or at least (even large) groups which are in a defensive position often produce conspiracy theories. This is why, as stated above, the explanatory function is only one epistemological asset: the reason why minorities propagate conspiracy theories is mostly grounded in the above-mentioned appellative-affective and denunciatory function.

But all the discussion of these points and parts of the definition does not explain one of its crucial deficits, its rather ahistorical status. In all the literature on the history of conspiracy theory, either there is no attempt to define the object, or the criteria for which precise elements of the object are to be historicized and how are not, or only vaguely, reflected upon. Likely, this problem starts in Keeley's definition at the point where he does not consider that the explanatory function of conspiracy theories alone is not narrow enough a criterion: what makes the difference between "normal" rational narratives of possible pasts on the one hand and conspiracy theories on the other? If a committee of historians, after thorough empirical investigation, were to form a narrative

that explained why a past event happened, revealing a plan by a small group of men which had in fact been executed, this would not be a conspiracy theory – but it would fulfill Keeley's definition. So, it is important to take the medium context of the "explanation" into account, the narrative of a possible past. "Conspiracy theory is a kind of storytelling that purports truth and credibility. In this sense, it is much like history; however, history supports its claims to truth and credibility with evidence and testimony" (Pagán 2008, 47). A conspiracy theory is typically a narrative of a possible past constructed with the material of a large amount of facts that have really happened and that are commonly accepted as "real" and other fictitious, or at least not proven and not commonly accepted, elements which are supposed to have happened.[3] Sometimes the conspiracy theory just adds the connection and the causalities between the elements (accepted as "real"). So, the difference between a conspiracy theory and another, e.g. historical, reconstruction of the past lies in the amount of not-proven elements or of elements not commonly accepted as "real" forming the body of the narrative. The difference between a conspiracy theory and a – e.g. literary – fiction lies in the *claim* implicitly communicated by a conspiracy theory of nevertheless explaining *what really happened,* even if not proven and (because of lack of information, a secret...) *not provable* elements and causal connections are formative parts of the narrative. If a sober analyst denounces these elements as "pure fiction", the conspiracy theorist will always insist on their factuality. So, a conspiracy theory is a narrative of a possible past with not-proven elements that can and *have to be believed* if the explanation function of the theory is to fulfill its task (similarly Pagán 2008, 29); vice versa, you cannot believe in a literary fictional past narrative – or if you do so, you are excluding yourself from "normal society" grounded in common reality. So, conspiracy theories lie, epistemologically, in the middle between factual historical and literary fictional writing. It is therefore not surprising that as many literature specialists have shown interest in conspiracy theories as historians – still, without giving fully convincing definitions either (cf. e.g. Antriopoulos 2008). Nonetheless, the borderline between "normal" historical explanative narratives and "conspiracy theories" is very thin and unclear: in a given situation where a lot of information is lacking, competing speculative narratives of possible pasts are often narrated, tested, discussed; arguments pro and contra for the likeliness of one or the other narrative are exchanged; often many of those competing narratives and competing explanations of an event remain through time; some people believe one to be more probable, some another – but all that occurs without each of those competing

[3] There is a similarity to those science fiction stories which start with the account of a known and accepted past reality and which slip over elegantly to a narrative of a fantastic future (e.g. *Golem* by Stanisław Lem) – except that the time horizon of the "real" and fictitious elements of a conspiracy theory is the same: the past or the extended present.

narratives being seen as a conspiracy theory. What makes the difference? Sometimes the difference may lie in a certain added "metaphysical" component – that the hidden power or group who planned and executed the event has supernatural or at least very uncommon resources of knowledge and power. But that would not be a necessity. Probably the element to be added is that a narrative of a possible past which may be believed becomes a conspiracy theory when it contains and adheres to the moral judgement that the event executed is a (shocking, scandalous) evil; necessarily, a conspiracy theory can only be true or at least likely and believable within a given community of values. The amount of belief that is necessary to complement the explanation in the place where it contains fictitious elements often comes in just where convictions and (pre)judgements about an enemy as actor are strong: "al-Quaïda is so evil, cunning and powerful that only they could have done that". Contrary to a simple narrative of a possible past, where the criterion for the necessary amount of belief to be added where the explanatory narrative bridges gaps of knowledge is rather undefined and contingent, with conspiracy theories this amount of belief and its content are drawn from the set of convictions shared by the respective community of values. Still, these elements cannot completely transgress the boundaries of a shared representation of reality.

As we see by the inductive argument of definition above, the status and character of what is to be held as "reality" in a society is decisive for the functioning of conspiracy theories (as well as for historical and literary narratives). The distinction between fictional and factual narratives, the consciousness of that division in a given society and among the recipients and communicators of conspiracy theories is crucial. And this distinction is itself a historical and historicizable one. Only quite recently, research has started to investigate the processes of differentiation between those realms (strangely, an entirely German discussion, if I have not overseen other contributions: Müller 2007, 37; Müller 2004; Haug 2003; Kablitz 2003; Zwierlein and Ressel 2013). It is clear that the division between fiction and factuality is different in the 13th and in the 21st century. The status of "literary" artifacts like the *chansons des gestes* with respect to "reality" is not that clear: in a certain way, what was narrated about Arthur was also held to be "real" and "true". The narrative complex that formed the witchcraft discourse from the 15th to the 18th century was held to be true by all serious intellectuals and judges; its denunciation as "witchcraft illusion" from the 19th century onwards is a judgement taken from the perspective of a new and different consciousness of the borderline between "reality" and "fiction". That the true church is fighting against the Antichrist (in the disguise of the Pope or a heretical prince) was the conviction of Protestants as well as militant Catholics about reality during the 16th and 17th century wars of religion. A conspiracy theory with explanatory power for the early European State System in the 16th/17th century might well contain those metaphysical actors as causal agencies – even if there is plenty of space for discussion of

whether the realm of diplomatic communication and of the inner circles of policy-making had not already arrived at a level of soberness that allowed, at least in certain contexts and times, to distinguish sharply between *cose politiche*/political affairs and divine matters. Approximately, we may say that the metaphysical contents of conspiracy theories were more adapted to the early modern printed public sphere, while the manuscripts of possible past and future narratives produced and, to a smaller extent, circulating in political circles tended much less to be conspiracy theories at all, and if they can be identified as such, their explanatory power stems much less from those supernatural levels of reality assumption. So, the differentiation and distinction between fictional and factual in the consciousness of European societies also has to do with the complex and much discussed (and also denied) process of "secularization". The crucial point of a really *historical* notion (and definition) of conspiracy theories lies not in the discussion of the formal points exposed above with respect to Keeley's and others' rather philosophical definitions, but rather in an approach of how to grasp and characterize the form of "reality" and its boundaries experienced by contemporaries in general and in distinct spheres of communication of their time. Because it is the representation function of past and future narratives, the match or mismatch with "reality", that decides upon their "possibility", and it is the degree of "possibility" that decides upon the explanatory power and the likeliness of reconstructions of the present state of affairs, of projects as well as of conspiracy theories; for the latter it is especially the question of the degree to which they can be believed. So, the form and usual structure of reality perception is the changing pragmatic context and frame of reference for our narratives. To historicize "conspiracy theories" means more than anything else to historicize the representations of reality, of factuality and fiction; it means historicizing the forms of narratives that have the task of representing the world itself and that are the material and the explanatory object of conspiracy theories at the same time. The historicization of the convictions which a certain community of values held at that time and which enter at the crucial point of the knowledge gaps which a conspiracy theory bridges is much easier, but certainly also necessary for a historical definition of conspiracy theories.

If we add up all the elements developed above, a – necessarily more complex – definition of conspiracy theories with the capacity of historicization would be:

> A conspiracy theory is a narrative of a possible past and present, often also containing elements of future predictions, claiming to be the true representation of *the* past and present which is built from some commonly accepted elements ("facts", sequential and causal relationships) and some elements that are not proven but possible and that bridge the gaps of knowledge and understanding concerning a certain event or a sequence of events. The possibility of the formative elements of the narrative depends on the character of the representation of reality in the given society and the form of distinction between

> fiction and factuality accessible in that time and that society. The not-proven elements of the conspiracy narrative are mostly adapted to the convictions of a given community of values. A conspiracy theory mostly has an explanatory, an appellative-affective and a denunciation function. The explanatory power of the conspiracy theory depends on the belief of its recipients and users and is usually strong only within the given community of values. Mostly the conspiracy theory attributes the significant causal agency of the event (or the sequence of events) in question to one person or a small group identified as a dangerous enemy within the value system of the respective community of values.

If we come back to the question of epochal or context specificity of our objects in question, I would suppose that the typical (early) modern conspiracy theories which we have in mind when we try to find historical equivalents to 9/11 or Kennedy murder conspiracy theories is only to be found in Europe from (a large) Renaissance onwards – as is the case for the more or less fully developed notion of political, and foremost state, "security". At least in the literature that I know, this has not been pointed out, but it is already telling that the Middle Ages are typically not present in the collective volumes cited. Conspiracies themselves, certainly, have always existed since human beings have gathered in groups. But more or less elaborated conspiracy theories as narratives present within a group and in a certain public sphere seem to presuppose a) a certain kind of media context, b) a certain use and habitus of narrating political events, c) a certain, even if implicit, consciousness of a distinction between fiction and factuality, d) the already-cited kind of public sphere and corresponding sphere of secrecy in everyday politics. To put it briefly, all this seems to be present in classical antiquity,[4] but seems to regain importance only with the Renaissance, with new forms of steady economic and political information flows inaugurated after the Aragonese "paper revolution" and the import of paper to Italy (cf. Burns 1983; Hills 1993; Zwierlein 2010), with the establishment of the system of postal relais stations and hence of the communication networks of Mediterranean proto-capitalist economics and inter-territorial political diplomacy (Melis 1973; Senatore 1998; Zwierlein 2006; Behringer 2003). The study of the historical relationships between the emergence of these new forms of communication and such "hard" things as new institutions or even "the state" on the one hand, and such "soft" things as ways of thinking, semantics and narrative forms on the other, has not been developed in depth. But what are "states" and what was the emerging "state system"? In the end, those complexes of institutional arrangements that are states rely on specific forms and types of communication framed by some common patterns of perception. The controlling of a

[4] But note that Roisman 2006 indeed shows how conspiracy theories were to a large extent part of the Attic rhetoricians' culture, while Pagán 2004 does not treat the spread and discussion of conspiracy theories in Rome, but treats the ex-post historical narratives of the revealed "real" (Catilinarian, Bacchanalian, Pisonian...) conspiracies.

network of office holders "inside" and "outside" the state from a center is one of the most important features – possible only with the help of paper-based communication. All the well-known past discussions in historiography – for example about the meaning and the exact moment of the emergence of steady diplomacy, about the transformation of the role of magistrates and public servants (Mattingly 1955; Queller 1966; Frigo 2000); or about the formation of the territorial states in general (Tilly 1990; Chittolini et al. 1994; Reinhardt 1999; Fasano-Guarini 1978) could and should be reformulated with serious attention to the structures and also the "soft" forms of communication applied. How did the new forms of communication change the perception of their inventors and participants? One argument that I have brought forward elsewhere more *in extenso* is that the new forms of daily and weekly, sometimes hourly, writing down of information, of narrating the present state of affairs was at the heart of state business; that it became the main practice of state business itself; and that it stimulated some new modes of perception or "frames of thought": addictedness to actual "live" information; empiricism in approaching the necessary data for making decisions; comparatism between the observed enemies and partners of the observer. The "system of state" is first of all a status of consciousness among the participant state actors of belonging to that modus of communication in which every prince and every republican knows that he is a political observer observed by others, and that all their actions are embedded in that network of interdependencies. The question of when those types of state communication were first reflected in systematic treatises of administration sciences, public law and diplomacy training as "state system" is an important one,[5] but secondary to the question of when the structural conditions of that kind of perception were first installed; here we can debate, as has been done, about the centuries and decades, but the classical dating around 1450 has good archival evidence on its side because the long archival series of regularly communicated dispatches and political letters between center (prince, republic) and peripheries (office holders, ambassadors) start at that time in Italy. It is in this context that the distinctions between "internal" and "external" affairs, between "internal" and "external" security, between an emerging public sphere and the secrecy of arcane politics, between simulation, dissimulation and real actions appear as well as those concepts that refer to the above-mentioned interdependency of states, foremost the famous "equilibrium", measurement of alliances and allies, neutrality (Zwierlein 2006b). All those patterns of perception and interpretation of politics in the state system are strongly expressed in the political letters and

[5] Cf. for that question Klueting (1986), Strohmeyer (1992), Muhlack (1998), Muhlack (2003) – a question belonging foremost to German-speaking historiography because the sources (political "science" of that system) emerged foremost as an offspring of academic public, natural and international law taught at 17th/18th century German universities. E.g. Anderson (1998) uses the term "state system" but does not study its conceptual history in depth.

in those texts that were produced to analyze situations, to give advice – in the *Consulte e pratiche* in Florence, in the counsel of a prince or the republican government, in the semi-public sphere of circulating political communication at the European princely and papal courts: projects, *discorsi*, memoirs. Every actor as observer in that system of inter-state communication tried to grasp as completely as possible the present state of affairs and tried to make projections about its possible futures. So, the concern for and even the fear about having the best information, about not missing important news, and then the narrative mode of constructing possible time horizons, mostly possible futures, was inscribed into that system. When the first kind of public spheres were added to that system of diplomatic communication – by the way: as a non-intended effect of outsourcing processes within that same diplomatic communication (Zwierlein 2006, 265-272) – the context was stabilized where complex conspiracy narratives as inverted future narratives (*Discorsi* etc.) could spread because they fitted perfectly into the general mode of narrating and reasoning.

Having stated all these things rather *in abstracto* and in general, it will be good to look more closely at the chosen examples, attempting to demonstrate what has been said in the sources of 15th /16th statecraft and public communication.

3. Lorenzo de' Medici: Concern for Information, Concern for Security, Narrating Past, Present and Future

Lorenzo de' Medici (1449-1492), *il Magnifico*, is not only famous as the great patron of Florentine arts and culture in its golden age, but he is also perhaps the most prominent Renaissance politician of all. We are used to speaking of the "myth" of Lorenzo, because, certainly, the following generation of humanists and politicians – Bernardo Ruccellai, Machiavelli, Guicciardini – began instantly after his death to praise his deeds and talents, and that image became a topos in the early modern collective memory of arts as well as in political theory. But nevertheless, a huge amount of research concentrated on his person and his age; not least, the important edition of his letters (of which nearly 2000 have been published until now) has contributed both to deconstructing some aspects of the myth and to strengthening our picture of his still impressive capacities of organizing economics, arts and politics of Florence from his position as "uncrowned" head of state behind the façade of the late republic (among recent general biographies are Delle Donne 2003, Kent 2004, Unger 2008; many collective volumes are the fruit of several conferences devoted to the 500th anniversary of his death and give a good introduction to the state of the art in the different fields of research, e.g. Toscani 1993, Heintze et al. 1995, Mallett and Mann 1996, Garfagnini 1994). Lorenzo has become famous as something like the inventor of balance-of-power politics due to famous charac-

terizations of his political aims and style after his death by Bernardo Ruccellai, Francesco Guicciardini, Niccolò Machiavelli and later on by Giovanni Botero, Scipione Ammirato and many others (Pillinini 1970).

But in the famous passage of Guicciardini's *storia d'Italia* devoted to Lorenzo de' Medici at the moment of his death and cited in every story of the concept of state systems, not only is the notion of "equilibrium" – under the common name of "contrapeso" – expressed prominently for the first time in a quite systematic reasoning, but Lorenzo is also hailed as the sustainer of Italy's common security ("sicurtà comune").[6] Stability of the state system, "tranquillità" and "security" are synonymous. Strange to say, this important strategic use of the term "security", which can be placed with good reasons in a quite direct genealogy[7] from the notion of "international security" as we know it from the present context, is seldom cited in the current rebirth of interest in security history.[8] Not only in this famous passage but throughout the works of Guicciardini, we find the idea that Lorenzo (or sometimes also others) cared about stabilizing the "sicurtà d'Italia", the security of all states together in their interdependent relationship, while other states (Milan, Venice, Naples) always cared only about their own security. In his letters we see that Lorenzo in fact always tried to form a "liga universale", a universal alliance of all Italian states convincing them that their common security would also be to the benefit of every particular security. Probably behind that politics was not only the idealistic longing for the peace and welfare of Italy but also the sober reasoning that, especially for economic affairs and merchant communication in Italy, peace

[6] "[1492] [...] Tale era lo stato delle cose, tali erano i fondamenti della tranquillità d'Italia, disposti e contrappesati in modo, che non solo di alterazione presente non si temeva, ma nè si poteva facilmente congetturare da quali consigli, o per quali casi, o con quali armi si avesse a muovere tanta quiete; quando nel mese d'Aprile dell'anno mille quattrocento novantadue sopravenne la morte di Lorenzo de' Medici: morte acerba a lui per l'età (perchè morì non finiti ancora quarantaquattro anni); acerba alla patria, la quale per la reputazione e prudenza sua, e per l'ingegno attissimo a tutte le cose onorate ed eccellenti, fioriva maravigliosamente di ricchezze, e di tutti quei beni ed ornamenti, da' quali suole essere nelle cose umane la lunga pace accompagnata: ma fu morte incomodissima ancora al resto d'Italia, così per le altre operazioni, le quali da lui per la sicurtà comune continuamente si facevano; come perchè era mezzo a moderare, e quasi un freno ne' dispareri e ne' sospetti, i quali per diverse cagioni tra Ferdinando e Lodovico Sforza, Principi d'ambizione e di potenza quasi pari, spesse volte nascevano. Da che molti forse, non inettamente seguitando quel che di Crasso tra Pompeio e Cesare dissero gli antichi, l'assomigliavano a quello stretto, il quale congiungendo il Peloponneso, oggi detto la Morea, al resto della Grecia, impedisce che l'onde de' mari Jonio ed Egeo tumultuosamente insieme non si mescolino." (Guicciardini 1988, I, 2, 9).

[7] At least as much a direct genealogy as we are used to establish between the Italian state system of the 15th century and the modern world system of states.

[8] Conze (1984, 843) for example treats the corresponding problem only for the 17th/18th century, referring to Hahlweg (1959): This is due to the fact that he concentrates only on the German political language.

would be much more helpful than war, a reasoning that was much more familiar to a Medici than to the other princely dynasts and condottieri of his time. Having Lorenzo's interest in "security" in mind, more important for our purposes is to have a close look at the form and way of Lorenzo's reasoning. Let's take just one rather random passage out of his huge correspondence:

> Necessarily one of the following two things has to be true: either you have not been told the truth or something disturbing has emerged, and I want rather to believe the second because I cannot believe that so many citizens and the doge – who spoke with you as you have written to me – would have agreed among them to tell you lies. And considering what disturbance might have happened, I think it could be the decision of the duke of Milan. I have introduced him for two reasons: First, it seemed to me that if that *signoria* assured itself of the duke of Milan by that means, it could remain safe [sc. from threats] from all directions; second, because, if you remember well, you have written to me that with or without the duke [sc. the negotiation] will find its conclusion. And if that is the case, do not doubt that it would have pleased us to do it in that way for two reasons: first, because, as we have said to you, we are well served by the duke; second, because it seems to me that if we go together anyway with that *signoria*, we will give reason to bind the king and the duke together, which will be better than to have them divided. And it seems to me that as that *signoria* is in alliance with the king to defend the states, if that second alliance is made, the effect will be to have a general alliance (*lega generale*) because it will find itself bound together with all the other powers of Italy. Furthermore it will enhance the security because either the king will respect that alliance with them, or not; if he respects it, the above-mentioned effect concerning that *signoria* will follow, a *liga universale*; if he does not respect it, it would not be good to have given so much attention to it (Lorenzo de' Medici to Giovanni Lanfredini, August 20th, 1474, Lorenzo de' Medici 1978-2011, *Lettere* Nr. 175 – I have underlined the textual markers of the possibility of narratives).

This is a passage from a letter by Lorenzo concerning a very precise moment in diplomatic history: the general alliance between all the important states of Italy after the peace of Lodi (1454) was, after its last affirmation in 1470, not renewable in 1473/74. In that situation, Venice, which was in a loose alliance with the King of Naples, and which was in doubt of the aims of the duke of Milan, made efforts to approach Florence for an alliance; the duke of Milan had made also an offer of alliance to Venice, but Venice insisted on respecting its alliances with the duke of Burgundy and France, the latter being unacceptable for the duke of Milan's honor; Lorenzo started secret negotiations with Venice with the help of the director of his bank there, Giovanni d'Orsino Lanfredini. The duke of Milan remained jealous concerning the relationships between Naples, Lorenzo and Venice and made a new proposal to Venice which led to the interruption of the planned conclusion of the treaty between Florence and Venice. Our letter is situated just at the moment when Lorenzo received the news of that interruption. This special political situation in itself is not of interest for our purposes here, but let us have a close look at the form of the narrative of Lorenzo's letter: Obviously there are many unknowns in the political field

observed by Lorenzo as well as by his servant in Venice; they do not know many things exactly – concerning the past: why the interruption of negotiations really happened, if their counterparts in Venice were speaking the truth or not; and certainly not concerning the future: how this person or that will act and react. So, his letter is a sequence of reasoning and speculations about possible pasts and about possible futures. The language is shaped by the basic structural elements typical for all those who had been trained in the humanist or scholastic schools of syllogistic reasoning where the mind always has to decide at forks in the road in the mode of "bifurcations", as in the *Arbor Porphyriana* (is the substance corporeal or incorporeal? If corporeal, is it living or not? If it is a living thing, is it sensitive or not? If it is a living, sensitive thing, is it rational or irrational? If it is a living, sensitive and rational thing, it is a man; if it is a man, it is Sortes or Plato?). While this is a propaideutic way of reasoning apt for classifications, the divisive mode of reasoning became an important structural pattern of Florentine political language: one had to bring some order into the situation analyzed, one had to separate important elements from unimportant, one had to classify types of situations, types of actions, types of men as a basis from which one could find the right decision, to choose, if possible, the correct possible future, and not the wrong one. We find this everyday political language here in the letters of Lorenzo, but we also find it, in a more sophisticated and more extensively reflected way as a condensate in Machiavelli's work and in that of other political writers (cf. Chabod 1925/1964, 369-88; Pincin 1971; Marchand 1975; Larivaille 1982, 89-95; Zwierlein 2006, 70-98). Lorenzo's letters, when they are, as in this case, "discorsi" which prepare a decision or advise about decision-making (in Florence, or in Milan), are complex narratives which are fed by the current news from all parts of Italy, which try to reconstruct what has truly happened even if in a given moment certain things always remain unclear: systematically, time sociologists and philosophers tend always to think only of the future as being "open" and as a field of many possibilities, while the past has happened, so, while there is a choice of all possible futures, when the present has taken place, there is only one past. That is true from an objective perspective. But from the subjective perspective of a decision-maker like Lorenzo, it is often not clear exactly which past has happened; so, in a given moment, he is not projecting from a safe point of departure into the choice of one wanted future, but the ground from which he departs is itself slippery and porous (Bullard 1996, 271): it still consists, due to his restricted knowledge, of a pool of possible pasts which could have led to the same outlook that he can see – but to know which of those possible pasts had indeed happened would be important for the subsequent task of rationally projecting.[9] So, Lorenzo first clears the slippery and porous ground by rational-

[9] Similar, Bullard (1996, 267): "These diplomatic letters give ample evidence of the extent to which Lorenzo de' Medici and his agents were sensitive to the reality of contingency and to

ly arguing which of the possible pasts would be more probable, then he goes on to argue which of the possible futures would be the most desirable – also paying attention, by the way, to the functional equivalence, that two different actions (in a possible past or a possible future) can have the same outcome ("effecto").

The addiction to the "news" ("avvisi") is visible in nearly all of Lorenzo's letters. If he is asked for advice by his partners, his greatest concern is whether his information is good enough (if the past ground is not too slippery and porous):

> So, because this Lordship wants to hear our judgements, you know that it is very difficult to counsel in great affairs when one does not yet have the right terms and one is understanding day by day the process and the whole of the affair. This here is in itself a very important and new thing [...] the *avisi* show two things: one, that the duke of Burgundy and the king of France are not very unified; the other, that there is some trust and friendship between the duke of Burgundy and this lordship – and each of those two conditions would take away all of the danger [...] (Lorenzo de' Medici to Jacopo Guicciardini, May 4th, 1476, Lorenzo de' Medici 1978-2011, *Lettere* Nr. 219 – I have underlined the passages showing the fixation on "news").

Here we really have to imagine Lorenzo in front of a multitude of letters, anonymously written "copie" and "lettere d'avvisi", fed also with some oral information from several parts of the city and the country, always laboring to reconstruct the correct "present state of affairs" (so: the recent past) and then to find the right advice for himself and for others. Often the advice may be to "mark time" (*temporeggiare*): if the present situation is bad, it is better not to make important decisions at all:

> [...] I say that to give answer to the *adviso* that you have given me with your letter of the 16th concerning the demand of the king of Hungary to get into cognation and alliance with the Pope with the final aim of Empire. What will happen concerning me is that the Pope will beware of taking sides in order not to provoke the other as enemy and not to create any great inconvenience. And if there is no great necessity to choose one side, I think that the Pope's needs are to stay neutral and to keep each of them in hope and to delay as much as possible every decision, given that time will show counsel better; because if Maximilian lost reputation or the affairs came to a head in some form by themselves, one could adapt more securely to the times; and if he maintained himself, it would be too dangerous to have him as an enemy [then, Lorenzo reasons about the interdependencies of these affairs with Venice, England, the Pope] (Lorenzo de' Medici to Giovanni Lanfredini, Nov. 24th, 1487, Lorenzo de' Medici 1978-2011, *Lettere*, Nr. 1107; I have underlined the passages which show the formula of "adapting politics to time" and "delaying").

---

the difficulties of making political judgements based on what people said." – One may ask why "reality of contingency" and not "contingency of reality"?

Unfortunately no in-depth research yet exists about the lucky formula of "temporeggiare" and its important conceptual presuppositions with respect to the relationship of time and politics – but it was in current use in Renaissance Italian political language and is afterwards to be found also in other Romance languages and other European regions.[10] It shows the possibility of a kind of meta-reflexive access to the problems of past reconstruction and future-building: one tries to delay the necessity of a difficult future happening at all.

Sometimes, the diligent and prudent gatherer and interpreter of news is surprised and even shocked:

> [Lorenzo is alarmed] You write to me in your last one [sc. letter] of the intention and the goals of the Pope in a very different manner than you used to before, because you have always made me understand that one could always make a picture [*fare ogni disegno*] of the Pope in such a way that affairs would not alter the tranquility of his state and would not put him in danger or cause him expense. Now you do surprise me with the obstinacy that he shows in not fearing or estimating the king [of Naples] and I do not know how to make a [sc. good] construction [*né so trarre constructo*] of what reason moves him and what goals he has set. I imagine [*Sto in qualche fantasia*] that this reason/fundament lies not only in the French affairs, but that there is some other more important secret in it, because the French affairs are also long and dangerous, and if one wanted to face them one would have to risk the state as well as money [...]. (Lorenzo de' Medici to Giovanni Lanfredini, Oct 17th, 1489, *Lettere* Nr. 1557; I have underlined the passages which show Lorenzo's operating in reality construction and future speculation).

The Italian wording "how to draw a construction" from the given news is too beautiful not to be translated rather literally: We see Lorenzo here not only sorting, arranging and handling current actions and situations, but also having something like a repertoire of the players in the game, counting on certain character traits and using all that to make his "disegno" and his "constructo" of the entire reality on which one should count. Still, there are sudden changes in the normally expected behavior of some important actors – they "change their nature" as Machiavelli would write a quarter of a century later – and it is hard to "read" their hidden intentions; there are hidden secrets, things that Lorenzo is not able to know; and that stimulates his "fantasia".

So, at this point we are able to combine the observations made: Concern for one's own and others' security as well as oral conspiracy theories may have existed in every human group or society since the advent of *homo sapiens* and since there was competition about resources. Likely, "planning" is an anthropological human behavior. But on the other hand, we find here, in Renaissance

[10] Cf. the same remark with Bullard (1996, 269) – Le Person (2000) has analyzed well the micro politics of simulating being ill and "temporizing" in this way to avoid having to make a final decision (between loyalty or not to Henry III and Henry of Navarre), but he does not really touch on the conceptual dimension of "*temporiser*".

political communication, something quite special and historically new at that time if we compare it to the situation some 50 or 100 years before: only in the emerging diplomatic system of steady inter-territorial communication are "projects", "plans", situation analyses and speculations about possible pasts and possible futures like those shown here regularly written down; it is the "scripturalization" of all this which is changing things, the media and form have their impact on the content and way of perceiving the world. So even if there are anthropological dispositions for all this, it is also correct to stress the quite recent history of an "age of projects" (which according to Graber 2011 starts in the Enlightenment, but we would point to the Renaissance antecedents; we may also remember the classical contribution of Koselleck 1995). The argument is that only in a media and communicative context such as the Renaissance did the reflexivity and explication of speculations in possibilities become so routine that elaborated written conspiracy theories could find their readers and would have their function in that communication context. However, it seems that this started a bit later still, because we are not aware of a wide circulation of conspiracy theories, even in the months and year of the famous *congiura de' Pazzi* (1478).[11] The fear of conspiracies was certainly great, but the term *congiura* referred almost exclusively to internal affairs. The fear of hidden alliances and "pratiche" on the inter-territorial scene was always present, but reasoning remained on the level of a steady fabrication of possible past and future narratives for the purpose of one's own orientation and planning; Lorenzo did not divulge and propagate his interpretations and present and future constructions outside the inner sphere of policy making. So, his speculations about the correct reconstruction of the past do contain unproven elements, but very consciously and prudently, and the whole has no appellative-affective or denunciatory function containing consciously propagated, not-proven elements that would serve to stabilize the convictions of a given community of values and to counteract the influence of another. But we see how close the narrative mode of Lorenzo's normal political past and future analysis and a "conspiracy theory" are: it is not easy to find a clear-cut distinction. One important element seems to be the emergence of a certain prototype of an anonymous public sphere: only if persuasive (re)constructions of the past and the future can circulate there independently from the inner and smaller context of political decision-preparing and decision-making can they have the embarrassing status that classical conspiracy theories have. This type of communication seems not to have evolved strongly until the age of the wars of religion.

[11] Cf. Fubini 1992; the text *De coniuratione commentarium* by Poliziano is in the classical tradition (e.g. Sallust: *De coniuratione Catilinarum*) and is an ex-post conspiracy narrative (Págan 2004) but not a speculative ex-ante conspiracy theory (Roisman 2006).

4. Royal *coup d'états* and Confessional Conspiracy Theories, 1560s/1570s

The structural preconditions of "training" the senders and receivers of the political communication of letters, dispatches, instructions, *discorsi*, *avvisi* in the modus of narrating and constructing the possible past and future remained roughly the same after the 15th century, but the dimensions became European (and later global), and some discursive features entered the political arena which had not been present or important before that time in the Italian context, mainly the confessional schism and the changes of political discourse which followed. The establishment of steady diplomatic representations between the European territories was a process which took a long time and was much more complex than in the early 15th-century Italian case due to the huge differences between them. In North-Alpine Europe, the communication shock of the Reformation during the pamphlet war of 1517-1525 happened even earlier and had much more impact at first sight than the "silent" implementation of the ambassadorial system which is to be found only at the very end of the 16th century in Germany, for instance (Kleinpaul 1930; Kohler 2008). But before, since the late 15th century and mainly during the 1530s to 1550s, we can observe the emergence of a rather different "public sphere" in Italy which only later merged with the North-Alpine realities: as I have argued, some technical decisions concerning the precise form of news communication (division between rather secret or specialized ambassadorial letters and simple newsletters) led not only to the production of different sorts of media, but also permitted the crystallization of a new social function and the outsourcing of news-writing: in Venice and Rome, between the 1530s and the 1550s, former secretaries, agents and courtiers acted as *avvisi* and newsletter writers and copyists. An anonymously working system of political news observation was installed; princes, courtiers and other politicians could now observe themselves as figures on the "news sky", which was refreshed steadily and normally in a weekly rhythm following the postal relais system. This public sphere of political news was also transferred to the whole of Europe afterwards and was enriched there in the late 16th and during the 17th century by the print media support, creating the printed newspaper (cf. Senatore 1998; Zwierlein 2006, 208-72, 557-610 and Dooley 1999; Dooley 2010; De Vivo 2007, 57; Landi 2006 for different approaches which all contribute to the big picture).

Now, confessional minorities in Europe such as the Reformed (Huguenots and German Reformed) could use the public sphere (Zwierlein 2012b) to circulate anonymous possible past and future narratives which were no longer embedded in the current political communication of decision-preparing and decision-making, but which worked with the same news data as politicians in the princely chanceries. And now we find conspiracy theories communicated

which refer to the international state system and the politico-religious competition within and between the states of that system.[12]

A good example is a handwritten conspiracy theory from spring 1567 which circulated in Europe, especially in German Protestant courts, and which was related to the French and Dutch wars of religion (Zwierlein 2006; Zwierlein 2012c): Since a two-week meeting in 1565 at Bayonne between the young king Charles IX, the king's mother Catherine de Médicis on the French side and the duke of Alba and the Spanish queen Elisabeth (of Valois), the Protestants feared a great master-plan of Catholic European powers to finally put an end to Protestantism and to re-conquer Europe for Catholicism. We do not know anything certain about such a plan and it almost surely did not exist as such, the interests and competition between the different Catholic powers always being too great to permit the formation of a big alliance. But Protestant authors did analyze incoming news from 1565 onwards to 1567 and formed a 'story' from it in the sense of a possible past narrative which, in itself, comprehended a future to be materialized: the text claimed to be an extract of an alliance concluded between the Catholic powers.[13] It was set down in 17 articles: the general plan of the Catholic forces headed by the Pope would be to:

1) Exchange all Protestant princes for Catholic ones and to go to war against the Ottomans afterwards;
2) The emperor would be transformed into a hereditary monarchy and the Protestant princes and electors would be replaced by Habsburg ones;
4) All dominions of princes that had not joined the alliance would be sequestered and transferred to the emperor;
5) The Pope would institute a patriarch in Germany;
6) The war against Protestantism would be paid for by the church; after the war, new Catholic priests would be installed;
9) The King of Spain would put all his power into the alliance, his daughter would marry the French king and would gain Calais in return;
10) The king of Scotland would be re-enthroned; Queen Elisabeth would be hunted out of England;
11) The son of the Spanish king would be married to the daughter of the emperor;
12) The duke of Bavaria would become the great proconsul/governor of the Pope and Lieutenant General of all the bishops and prelates;

[12] It has to be noted that the only recent treatments of the 'conspiracy' problem for the Western Wars of religion (Carroll 2004; Roberts 2004) are searching rather for 'real conspiracies' in the medieval conjuration tradition than for conspiracy narratives.

[13] "Auszug Kurtzer Articul von dem verborgnen verpundtnus zwischen dem Pabst, Kaiser, Khönig aus Hispanie, Khonig aus Franckhreich dem Hertzogen von Saphoy vnnd andern jren pündtnus verwanndten zu welchem pündtnus man den Krieg aus Franckhreych anziechen will." (Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, Codex palatinus germanicus 171, f. 232r-33r).

13) The duke of Guise would marry the daughter of the duke of Bavaria; if the duke of Florence did not enter the alliance, he would be hunted out of his duchy;
14) The duchy of Milan and the island of Corsica would be given to the king of France;
15) If Venice did not enter the alliance, war would be declared on the republic and the territory would be divided;
16) The duke of Ferrara would come to France to ratify the articles;
17) The authors of the alliance were the cardinals of Lorraine and Granvelle.

The text itself (which we have not translated here literally due to lack of space) shows in many little details that the anonymous author had very good knowledge of the movements of this duke and that daughter of a prince of that court etc. for the whole of Europe: it is a text which could only be fabricated with access to the news data that the weekly *avvisi* and *Zeytungs* communication furnished, perhaps complemented by other sources and direct access to some dispatches, other letters etc. On the bottom of the last page is written: "Gott kan es woll wennden | dann es stett alls in seinen henden": God can change all that because everything is in his hands – the anonymous writer is not clearly judging the alliance and its future plan negatively; a certain 'pro-Protestant flavor' was certainly detected by all contemporaries, but the text does not use clear propaganda rhetoric (for example, the Pope is not denunciated as Antichrist; no other clear anti-Catholic invectives are to be read).

This text circulated all over Europe, and many dukes and the emperor were upset about the content; the French king even sent special ambassadors to the German courts to disprove any authorship of that plan and the existence of any such alliance. But the text only had such a great impact because it seemed to *be quite plausible* to a large extent: one could think at least that others might think that this alliance had really been made and that this future was planned by Catholic powers. The fitting and adaptation of that plan to the present state of affairs as it was made it possible. But still, the mere multitude of points and relationships made this 'secret alliance' both very dangerous, and a little bit 'too big'; one had to believe in an extremely efficient coordination of all interests and wills from Scotland to Spain, France, the Netherlands, the Reich, Italy. The term 'security' is not used in the text, but from the perspective of the Protestants receiving and discussing it, it was clearly a great threat – to the security of the worldly state system as well as to the safety of so many Protestant souls in their belief.

If we take a second example from the years 1572/74 we can see how the famous massacre of St. Bartholomew's day led to a whole series of conspiracy theories both printed and handwritten, distributed and circulating all over Europe (the literature is immense, cf. Erlanger 1960; Crouzet 1994; Jouanna 2007; Mellet 2006; Kingdon 1988; Smither 1989, 190-233). One of the most astonishing cases, which in our context is also systematically the most interest-

ing, is the first printed news pamphlet about the massacre in Europe at all, which was published not in France, but on September 18th in Rome in a first version, only 10 days after the news had arrived at the center of Catholicism at all (Capilupi 1572). The author, Camillo Capilupi, was a client and agent in Rome of Carlo di Gonzaga-Nervers, one of the most important princes in France directly implied in the decision-making (if we may believe most of the accounts) and the execution of the massacre. Capilupi was at the same time a secret chamberlain of the Pope and had access to incoming messages and letters such as, for example, the dispatches of the nuncio in France. So, we have every reason to take his text seriously at first, even if a thorough investigation of it – and at best a critical edition also taking the manuscript version into account – has yet to be done. Capilupi's text had been one of the central proofs for the 'premeditation' thesis (Romier 1913; Jacquiot 1977) discussed since the 16th century and taken up again by 20th century historiography:[14] the king (and the queen mother, possibly together with an inner circle of insiders) would have planned a great massacre of the Huguenots at least since 1567 – so, something like the prolongation of the earlier conspiracy theory exposed above. Capilupi uses the word 'stratagema' to entitle his work, using the ancient Roman term of the 'science of war': while the treatise *Strategemata* by Sextus Julius Frontinus (30-104 AD) was a collection of artifices of war, Capilupi transferred that technical term from the realm of military and war to the realm of politics. That could also mean that the moral neutrality of 'stratagems', which had been allowed since antiquity in the realm of war, was transferred to politics, where in classical treatises on virtues all that (lying, simulation) was forbidden. His treatise would then show what efficient artifices the king had used by simulating and dissimulating in a three- and fourfold manner. Charles IX and the queen mother had managed to poison Jeanne de Navarre, to lull and caress Coligny, to get from him lists with the names of all the important heads of the Calvinists under the pretext of the marriage to concentrate all the Calvinists in Paris in one district where they could be stabbed efficiently in a centrally organized action. All that was never morally condemned by Capilupi in the text; rather – because it was executed by the most Christian kings against the heretics – it was a proof of the highest mastery of statecraft, of "astuzia" and "prudenza". Capilupi's text uses letters from Italian and French agents coming from France to Rome, uses *avvisi* and other "first hand" sources; he puts them in order and adds the overarching causality and agency of the king as the one who plotted everything in detail. Research today (like many contemporary voices) often characterizes Charles IX as a rather weak ruler dominated by the queen mother, the Guise and others; in Capilupi's text he becomes something

[14] For a summary cf. Anglo (2005, 254-66) – but the account of the publishing context contains some serious errors: the text was printed twice in two different versions; Anglo knows only the second one of 1574.

like a demi-god playing chess with the Huguenots. The *stratagema* is a brilliantly constructed possible past narrative. It formed, together with some other rare examples like Arnaud Sorbin's *Le vray Resveille-matin* and sixty years later Gabriel Naudé's *Coups d'état*, the core of the small but important tradition of rigorous counter-reformation political theory which condoned a massacre like this as *ultima ratio* of royal authoritarian politics (Crouzet 1999, 2002; Zwierlein 2011a, 110-13).

But is it a conspiracy theory? Originally in the Roman context of the first imprint it was not conceived and should not have been perceived like that; it was just a treatise in honor of the prudence of the king, addressed to the Roman semi-public sphere of the curia; the text also had the function of propagating how France was now reentering into the concert of strong Catholic powers, given that the king had resolved (or at least seemed to have resolved) the Huguenot problem. The text was given to the public by Capilupi himself firstly only in manuscript copies, of which over 300 quickly circulated in Rome; then it was given to the (papal!) printer not by Capilupi himself but by clientele of the Este, a family with many close parental ties to the 'right-wing' Catholic noble families in France, the Guise and Lorraine. At that point it seems that the text transgressed a certain invisible barrier of prudency, and the cardinal of Lorraine, who was present at the papal court at that time, managed to ensure that nearly all copies of the printed version were collected and destroyed. The reason for his action was apparently that the representative of the crown judged it inconvenient for the king to have that image as a 'stratagematic' Huguenot executor, at least not in print, where its diffusion was not easy to control: King Charles did indeed propagate many different pictures of the massacre and his role in it through the channels of diplomacy. To the Catholic powers he sent his messages of pride and gratefulness to God, to the Protestant powers he sent messages of dissimulation concerning his role in the preparation of the event.

So, the cardinal in Rome seems to have felt that a print of Capilupi's text – which in itself might fit well into the Roman Catholic context – was dangerous, especially in the context of the aspired election of Henri d'Anjou to the throne of Poland, who was named in the text as one of the most important actors in the massacre, which could have caused serious trouble with the Protestant estates of Poland. And he was correct, because Capilupi's text – a copy of the manuscript version which the author had extended since then – found its way to Geneva, was translated into French and framed by pro-Protestant paratexts: There, the event was now coined a "trop vrayement tragicque Tragedie"; a clear judgement is inscribed into the text. The anonymous Genevan editor tells the reader about the fact of the cardinal's interdiction of the printing in Rome; then he clarifies why he chose to edit the text: "Concerning the truth of history, has there been a place on earth where the greatest secrets of that tragedy have been known better than in Rome, in and for which one can say everything has been undertaken and executed?" (Capilupi 1574, 5). The editor also states that

"divine providence has shown itself more than admirable because it has chosen such an irrefutable testimony of such a deed out of the midst of those who have tried since then to conceal it by all means" (ibid., 6).

After that, he denies the one – in his judgement – false element of his text, the supposed "conjuration" of Coligny against the king, and finally he dismisses the reader with the words: "so, please receive, gentle reader, the true description of that lamentable tragedy and please know by this what Satan can do when he is using his instruments at demand" (ibid., 13). In a further paratext ("L'Argument, ou Sommaire de tout ce Discours"), the editor states that "finally he shows by many reasons that those murders had been planned and undertaken a long time ago [*que ces meurtres avoyent esté premeditez & entreprins long temps au paravant*]" (ibid., 16). There follows a very faithful translation of the Italian manuscript without any further changes or editor's remarks. Just by adding these paratexts, by printing it in the center of Reformed Protestantism, Geneva, and by addressing as such a completely different audience – the European Protestant world and others who were at least undecided concerning the judgement of that brutal massacre – the text transformed into a refined conspiracy theory: now it served as a past narrative whose possibility and probability was reinforced very much by the fact that it was an enemy who spoke, and which served to stabilize the identity and values of a given group, the Huguenots and their supporters (Jouanna 2007, 13-5).

It is indeed a rare fact in history that we have such an accurately constructed story about the one planning instance and agent of causality, the king together with only very few other counselors, which was not meant as a conspiracy theory but as a historical account reconstructed as precisely as possible, and which then changed into a conspiracy theory – simply due to its use in the new context of Huguenot propaganda: the most important paragraphs concerning the premeditation thesis were quickly included by Simon Goulart in his *Mémoires* of the reign of Charles IX, a clearly Calvinist collection of documents and commented from the Genevan point of view (Kingdon 1988, 45). It was thus included in the bulk of 1572 to 1575 pamphlets such as the heroic and anti-heroic biographies of Charles (*Gasparis Colinii Castellonii...vita* by François Hotman) and of Catherine de Médicis (*Discours merveilleux de la vie, actions et déportemens de Catherine de Médicis*, by Henri Estienne), the monarchomach treatises, the *De furoribus gallicis* and the *Resveille-matin* and many other small and longer post-St. Barthelemew pamphlets (Kingdon 1988; Mellet 2006; Jouanna 2007, 231-81): in this context, the narration became a truth revealed by God himself through the voice of a very good insider, a Roman papal courtier, a servant of the Antichrist. It was now something to be believed; it no longer belonged to the discourse of empirical speculation of what had possibly happened due to cunning and masterful royal planning.

If we look at the scene of international politics at that time, pamphlets and texts like that were part of a strong emotional discourse which triggered in

Protestant lands the fear and anxiety that a big Catholic enterprise might subvert the order of the whole continent. Particularly those territories and states which were near to the French border, such as South-Western Germany, thought of the massacre as a real threat: inter-territorial alliances were refounded, the *Reichskreise* (the Empire's executive circles) started to levy soldiers, many diplomatic missions were sent and received concerning the question of how to react to the massacre (Sutherland 1973; Zwierlein 2006, 724-50): it was judged a threat to the "security" of the international system as it existed at that time. Confessionalist conspiracy theories tried to specify and to explain that threat to common "international" and confessional security.

5. Conclusion

If we compare that situation to 50 or 100 years earlier during the first emergence of a system of state situation in quattrocento Italy, it seems that the circulation in manuscript and print of fully developed conspiracy theories in the sense of lengthy texts and carefully elaborated possible past, present and future narratives with an explanatory overdose beyond "proven" reality is a later development going hand in hand with the differentiation between an early public sphere and the more hidden forms of political communication after 1500. But we can see in Lorenzo's statecraft that the special scripturalization impulse and the stimulus of the system of steady diplomatic communication characteristic for Renaissance politics and later transferred to the rest of Europe had its impact on the narrative form that was used by politicians: they now represented reality by empirical investigation into the possible pasts with respect to incoming information and they speculated about possible futures in the same narrative *modus*. That was the necessary precondition for the emergence of that later form of early modern conspiracy theory as a special form of past and present possible and explanatory narratives.

The shift in the overall development takes place here at the same time that "security" is displacing or increasingly complementing "peace" as the overarching important aim of politics. Thus, both phenomena belong to the frames of reference of early modern statecraft, state-building and inter-statal communication since the Renaissance. At the most general level, this specific investigation into the epochal time shift of the Renaissance serves as a demonstration of the paths to be taken if one aims at a serious historicization of "security and conspiracy": first, really historicizable definitions have to be formed, as was tried here for "conspiracy theory", while "security" is a too general a term to be defined in the same manner – but here, the history of the notion and concept should be taken into account.

Systematically speaking, we have tried in this contribution:

a) to distinguish between the elements "emerging state system", "state building", "inter-statal security", media development and forms of political communication, "conspiracy narrative and theory", to detect the interdependency between them and to find a good means of historicization;
b) to state an causal impact of the new forms of steady inter-statal political scriptural communication on the world perception of its producers and receivers;
c) to detect that impact in the way that "the present reality" (and successively also "the past" and "the future") were represented in the narratives that formed the material of everyday political business: political actors, their behavior and their intentions and actions were constantly "written down", followed up in constant refreshments of the current state of affairs; gaps of knowledge had to be bridged by rational reasoning and speculation, and the fluid borderline between factuality and fiction and/or metaphysical levels were drawn along the borders of that form of communication;
d) to suggest that it was only due to that new manner of reality representation that:
   - the perception of the interdependencies of a system of states and actors, also in a rather spatial dimension, was "trained" and the longing for security in that whole spatial arrangement (rather than peace between two or three actors) was stimulated;
   - the narrating of possible pasts and – during political planning and projects – of possible futures and of imaginings and speculations upon probable causal links between actions and intentions of actors was trained; these are the preconditions not only for the modern form of political planning, but also for the structural patterns of the modern conspiracy theory, of which we gave a detailed and historicizible definition in the first paragraph;
e) to suggest further that due to the unfolding of a public sphere different from internal political communication, the last important precondition for the opposition of "security" and "conspiracy (theory)" in an inter-statal system emerged: now the publication of a possible past narrative – similar to those formed every day at court and in the princes' chanceries to reconstruct possible pasts and futures from incoming information flow – that explained a recent action with a certain tendency could have a strong appellative and denunciation force with respect to a given community of values.

In this way, as a distinct pattern of political communication, a conspiracy theory could itself become an (anonymous) agency strengthening fears in this or that direction, triggering certain decisions and actions of actors who tried to produce security in the state system.

It seems that this constellation developed for the first time from the 15th to the 16th century between Italy and the rest of Europe, foremost during the

confessional conflicts of that time – but the structural patterns seem to be comparable from that time on throughout all modern times up until today.

References

Anderson, Matthew S. 1998. *The origins of the modern European state system, 1494-1618*. London/New York: Longman.

Andriopoulos, Stefan. 2008. Occult conspiracies: Spirits and secret societies in Schiller's Ghost Seer. *New German Critique* 35 (1): 103: 65-81.

Anglo, Sidney. 2005. *Machiavelli – The first century: Studies in enthusiasm, hostility, and irrelevance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Barkun, Michael. 2003. *A culture of conspiracy: Apocalyptic visions in contemporary America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Battaglia, Salvatore.1961-2002. *Grande Dizionario della lingua italiana. 22 vol.* Torino: Unione Tip.-Ed. Torinese.

Behringer, Wolfgang. 2003. *Im Zeichen des Merkur: Reichspost und Kommunikationsrevolution in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Bennett, Julian. 2001. *Trajan. Optimus Princeps*. 2nd ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Bercé, Yves-Marie, and Elena Fasano-Guarini, eds. 1996. *Complots et conjurations dans l'Europe moderne.* Rome: École française de Rome.

Bullard, Melissa Meriam. 1994. *Lorenzo il Magnifico: Image and anxiety, politics and finance*. Firenze: Olschki.

Burns, Robert Ignatius. 1981. The paper revolution in Europe. Crusader València's Paper Industry. *Pacific Historical Review* 50: 1-30.

Burns, Robert Ignatius. 1985. *Society and documentation in Crusader València*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Campbell, Peter R. et al., eds. 2007. *Conspiracy in the French Revolution*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Capilupi, Camillo. 1572. *Lo stratagema di Carlo IX. Re di Francia contro gli Vgonotti rebelli di Dio et svoi* [...], Rome: heredi di Antonio Blado.

Capilupi, Camillo. 1574. *Le stratageme, ou la ruse de Charles IX, Roy de France, contre les Huguenots rebelles à Dieu & à luy* [...]. s.l.: Genève.

Carroll, Stuart. 2004. Vengeance and Conspiracy during the French Wars of Religion. In *Conspiracies and conspiracy theory in early modern Europe*, ed. Barry Coward and Julian Swann, 71-86. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Chabod, Federico. 1964. Metodo e stile di Machiavelli. In *Scritti zu Machiavelli*, ed. Id., 369-388. 2nd ed. Turin [1st ed. 1925].

Chittolini, Giorgio, Anthony Molhy, and Pierangelo Schiera. 1994. *Origini dello stato: processi di formazione statale in Italia fra medioevo ed età moderna*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Conze, Werner. 1984. Sicherheit, Schutz. In: *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland, Vol. 5*, ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck, 831-62. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.

Coward, Barry, and Julian Swann, eds. 2004. *Conspiracies and conspiracy theory in early modern Europe: From the Waldesians to the French Revolution*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
Crouzet, Denis. 1994. *La nuit de la Saint-Barthélemy: Un rêve perdu de la Renaissance*. Paris: Fayard.
Crouzet, Denis. 1999. La nuit de la Saint-Barthélemy: confirmations et compléments. In *Le second ordre: l'idéal nobiliaire,* ed. Chantal Grell and Arnaud Ramière de Fortanier, 55-81. Paris: Presses de l'université de Paris-Sorbonne.
Crouzet, Denis. 2002. Louis Dorléans ou le massacre de la Saint-Barthélemy comme un 'coup d'estat'. In *Conflits politiques, controverses religieuses. Essais d'histoire européenne aux 16e-18e siècles*, ed. Ouzi Elyada and Jaques Le Brun, 77-99. Paris: Éditions de l'*EHESS.*
Cubitt, Geoffrey. 1993. *The Jesuit Myth: Conspiracy Theory and politics in Nineteenth-Century France*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Daase, Christopher. 2012. Die Historisierung der Sicherheit: Anmerkungen zur historischen Sicherheitsforschung aus politikwissenschaftlicher Sicht. *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 38: 387-405.
De Vivo, Filippo. 2007. *Information & communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Donne, Giovanni delle. 2003. *Lorenzo il Magnifico e il suo tempo*. Roma: Armando.
Dooley, Brendan, ed. 2010. *The dissemination of news and the emergence of contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe*. Aldershot: Farnham.
Dooley, Brendan. 1999. *The social history of Skepticism: Experience and doubt in Early Modern culture*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.
Erlanger, Philippe. 1960. *Le Massacre de la Saint-Barthélemy.* Paris: Gallimard.
Fasano-Guarini, Elena. 1978. *Potere e società negli stati regionali italiani fra '500 e '600*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
Frigo, Daniela, ed. 2000. *Politics and diplomacy in Early Modern Italy: The structure of diplomatic practice, 1450-1800,* transl. Adrian Belton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Fubini, Ricardo. 1989. L'età delle gongiure: i rapporti tra Firenze e Milano dal tempo di Piero a quello di Lorenzo de' Medici (1464-1478). In *Florence and Milan: Comparisons and Relations*, vol. 2, ed. Sergio Bertelli, Nicolai Rubinstein and C.H. Smyth, 202-14. Firenze 1989.
Fubini, Ricardo. 1993. La congiura dei Pazzi: radici politico-sociali e ragioni di un fallimento. In *Lorenzo de' Medici. New Perspectives*, ed. Bernard Toscani, 219-48. New York: Lang.
Garfagnini, Gian Carlo. ed. 1994. *Lorenzo il Magnifico e il suo mondo*. Firenze: Olschki.
Girard, Pascal. 2008. Conspiracies and visions of conspiracies in Italy after the Second World War. *European Review of History* 15 (6): 749-65.
Graber, Frédéric. 2011. Pour une histoire des formes projet: Du faiseur de projet au projet régulier dans les Travaux Publics (18e-19e siècles). *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 58 (3): 7-33.
Guicciardini, Francesco. 1988. *Storia d'Italia*, 3 vol. Milano: Garzanti.
Hamilton, John. 2013. *Security: Politics, Humanity and the Philology of Care*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Härter, Karl. 2003. Sicherheit und Frieden im frühneuzeitlichen Alten Reich: Zur Funktion der Reichsverfassung als Sicherheits- und Friedensordnung 1648-1806. *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 30: 162-90.

Haug, Walter. 2003. Die Entdeckung der Fiktionalität. In *Die Wahrheit der Fiktion: Studien zur weltlichen und geistlichen Literatur des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. id., 128-44. Tübingen: De Gruyter.

Heintze, Horst et al., eds. 1995. *Lorenzo der Prächtige und die Kultur im Florenz des 15. Jahrhunderts*. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot.

Hills, Richard L. 1993. Early Italian papermaking: A critical Technical Revolution. In *Produzione e commercio della carta e del libro secc. XIII-XVIII*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi, 73-97. Firenze: Le Monnier.

Hofstadter, Richard. 1963. *The paranoid style in American politics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Horn, Eva, and Anson Rabinbach. 2008. Introduction [to Special Issue ‚Dark Powers: Conspiracies and Conspiracy Theory in History and Literature]. *New German Critique* 35 (1): 103: 1-8.

Instinsky, Hans Ulrich. 1952. *Sicherheit als politisches Problem des römischen Kaisertums*. Baden-Baden: Verlag für Kunst und Wissenschaft.

Jacquiot, Josèphe. 1977. Y a-t-il eu préméditation de la Saint-Barthélemy? d'après des documents et des médailles. *BSHPF* 123 (1): 26-42.

Jouanna, Arlette. 2007. *La Saint-Barthélémy: les mystères d'un crime d'Etat, 24 août 1572*. Paris: Gallimard.

Kablitz, Andreas. 2003. Kunst des Möglichen: Prolegomena zu einer Theorie der Fiktion. *Poetica* 35: 251-73.

Kampmann, Christoph. 2010. Sicherheit. *Enzyklopädie der Neuzeit* 11, col. 1143-1150.

Keeley, Brian L. 1999. Of Conspiracy Theories. *The Journal of Philosophy* 96 (3): 109-26.

Kent, F.W. 2004. *Lorenzo de' Medici and the art of magnificence.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Kingdon, Robert M. 1988. *Myths about the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacres 1572-1576*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kleinpaul, Johannes. 1930. *Das Nachrichtenwesen der deutschen Fürsten im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*. Leipzig: Klein.

Klueting, Harm. 1986. *Die Lehre von der Macht der Staaten: Das außenpolitische Machtproblem in der 'politischen Wissenschaft' und in der praktischen Politik im 18. Jahrhundert.* Berlin: Duncker & Humblot.

Knight, Peter. 2002. *Conspiracy nation: The politics of paranoia in Postwar America*. New York: New York University Press.

Kohler, Alfred. 2008. *Expansion und Hegemonie: Internationale Beziehungen, 1450-1559*. Paderborn: Schöningh.

Koselleck, Reinhart. 1995. Erfahrungsraum und Erwartungshorizont – zwei historische Kategorien. In *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*, 3rd ed. [1st ed. 1976], ed. id., 349-75. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.

Krause, Keith, and Michael C. Williams. 1997. *Critical Security Studies*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Landi, Sandro. 2006. *Naissance de l'opinion publique dans l'Italie moderne: sagesse du peuple et savoir de gouvernement de Machiavel aux lumières*. Rennes: Presses Univ. de Rennes.
Le Person, Xavier. 2000. Les symptômes de la temporisation. Langages et significations des maladies idoines d'un Grand: Louis de Gonzague, duc de Nevers (1585-1589). *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 62 (2): 259-302.
Lingelbach, Gerhard. 2009. Geleit. *Handwörterbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*, 2. ed., col. 37-42.
Lipschutz, Ronnie, ed. 1995. *On Security*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Mallett, Michael, and Nicholas Mann, eds. 1996. *Lorenzo the Magnificent: Culture and politics*. London: Warburg Institute.
Marchand, Jean-Jacques. 1975. *Niccolò Machiavelli. I primi scritti politici (1499-1512): Nascità di un pensiero e di uno stile*. Padua: Antenore.
Mattingly, Garrett. 1955. *Renaissance diplomacy*. London: Cape.
Medici, Lorenzo de'.1977-2011. *Lettere. vol. I-XVI*. Firenze.
Melis, Federigo. 1973. Intensità e regolarità nella diffusione dell'informazione economica generale nel Mediterraneo e in Occidente alla fine del Medioevo. In *Mélanges en l'honneur de Fernand Braudel, vol. 1: Histoire économique du monde méditerranéen 1450-1650*, 389-424/b. Toulouse.
Mellet, Paul-Alexis. 2007. *Les traités monarchomaques (1560-1600)*. Genève: Droz.
Melley, Timothy. 2000. *Empire of conspiracy: The culture of paranoia in postwar America*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
Monier, Frédéric. 1998. *Le complot dans la République: Stratégies du secret de Boulanger à la Cagoule*. Paris: Ed. la Découverte.
Muhlack, Ulrich. 1990. Das europäische Staatensystem in der deutschen Geschichtsschreibung des 19. Jahrhunderts. *Annali dell' Istituto storico italo-germanico Trento* 16: 43-92.
Muhlack, Ulrich. 2003. Die Frühe Neuzeit als Geschichte des europäischen Staatensystems. In *Eigene und fremde Frühe Neuzeiten: Genese und Geltung eines Epochenbegriffs*, ed. Renate Dürr, Gisela Engel, and Johannes Süßmann, 23-41. München: Oldenbourg.
Müller, Jan-Dirk. 2004. Literarische und andere Spiele: Zum Fiktionalitätsproblem in vormoderner Literatur. *Poetica* 36: 281-312.
Müller, Jan-Dirk. 2007. *Höfische Kompromisse: Acht Kapitel zur höfischen Epik*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.
Pagán, Victoria Emma. 2004. *Conspiracy narratives in Roman history*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
Pagán, Victoria Emma. 2008. Toward a model of conspiracy theory for ancient Rome. *New German Critique* 35 (1 103) 1: 27-49.
Pillinini, Giovanni. 1970. Il sistema degli stati italiani, 1454-1494. Venezia.
Pincin, Carlo. 1971. Osservazioni sul modo di procedere di Machiavelli nei 'Discorsi'. In *Renaissance: Studies in Honor of Hans Baron*, ed. Anthony Molho and John A. Tedeschi, 387-408. Firenze: Sansoni.
Queller, Donald E. 1966. *Early Venetian legislation on ambassadors*. Genève: Droz.

Reinhardt, Wolfgang. 1999. *Geschichte der Staatsgewalt: Eine vergleichende Verfassungsgeschichte Europas von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*. München: Beck.
Ressel, Magnus, and Zwierlein, Cornel. 2013. Zur Ausdifferenzierung zwischen Fiktionalitäts- und Faktualitätsvertrag im Umfeld frühneuzeitlichen pikarischen Erzählens. In *Das Syntagma des Pikaresken*, ed. Michael Waltenberger and Jan Mohr. Heidelberg [= *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift*, Beihefte].
Roberts, Penny. 2004. Huguenot Conspiracies, Real and Imagined, in Sixteenth-Century France. In Coward/Swann 2004, 55-69.
Roisman, Joseph. 2006. *The rhetoric of conspiracy in ancient Athens*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Romier, Lucien. 1913. La Saint-Barthélemy; les évenements de Rome et la préméditation du massacre. *Revue du XVIe siecle 1*: 529-60.
Rothschild, Emma. 1995. What is Security? *Daedalus* 124, 3: 53-98.
Rüther, Stefanie. 2010. Eine sichere Wahl? Geleit, Verfahren und Versprechen in der spätmittelalterlichen Königswahl. In *Technik und Symbolik vormoderner Wahlverfahren* (Beihefte zur HZ, Bd. 52), ed. Christoph Dartmann et al., 71–93. München: Oldenbourg.
Senatore, Francesco. 1998. *Uno mundo de carta: Forme e strutture della diplomazia sforzesca*. Napoli: Liguori.
Smither, James R. 1989. *Myth and reality of kingship during the French Wars of Religion*, PhD diss., Brown University.
Strohmeyer, Arno. 1994. *Theorie der Interaktion: Das europäische Gleichgewicht der Kräfte in der frühen Neuzeit*. Köln/Wien/Weimar: Böhlau.
Sutherland, Nicola M. 1973. *The Massacre of St Bartholomew and the European conflict 1559-1572*. London/Basingstoke: Macmillan.
Tackett, Timothy. 2000. Conspiracy obsession in a time of revolution: French elites and the origins of the terror, 1789-1792. *American Historical Review* 105: 691-713.
Tilly, Charles. 1990. *Coercion, capital, and European states, AD 990-1990*. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell.
Toscani, Bernard, ed. 1993. *Lorenzo de' Medici: New Perspectives*. Berlin/New York: Lang.
Unger, Miles J. 2008. *Magnifico: The brilliant life and violent times of Lorenzo de' Medici*. London: Simon & Schuster.
Waever, Ole, and Barry Buzan. 2007. After the return to theory: The past, present, and future of Security Studies. In *Contemporary Security Studies*, ed. Alan Collins, 383-402. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Waever, Ole, and Barry Buzan, eds. 1998. *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
Walt, Stephen M. 1991. The renaissance of Security Studies. *International Studies Quarterly* 35: 211-39.
Zwierlein, Cornel. 2006. *Discorso und Lex Dei: Die Entstehung neuer Denkrahmen im 16. Jahrhundert und die Wahrnehmung der französischen Religionskriege in Italien und Deutschland*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
Zwierlein, Cornel. 2006b. Die Genese des neuzeitlichen Neutralitätskonzepts: Italienische 'Discorsi' in Politikberatung und außenpolitischer Praxis, 1450-1600.

In *Internationale Beziehungen in der Frühen Neuzeit - Ansätze und Perspektiven*, ed. Heidrun Kugeler et al., 36-58. Münster: LIT.
Zwierlein, Cornel. 2010. Gegenwartshorizonte im Mittelalter: Der Nachrichtenbrief vom Pergament- zum Papierzeitalter. *Jahrbuch für Kommunikationsgeschichte* 12: 1-60.
Zwierlein, Cornel. 2011a. Der gezähmte Prometheus: Feuer und Sicherheit zwischen Früher Neuzeit und Moderne. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
Zwierlein, Cornel. 2011b. Renaissance anthropologies of security: Shipwreck, Barbary fear and the meaning of 'insurance'. In *Humankinds: The Renaissance and its anthropologies*, ed. Andreas Höfele and Stephan Laqué, 157-82. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.
Zwierlein, Cornel. 2012a. Sicherheitsgeschichte: Ein neues Feld der Geschichtswissenschaften. *Geschichte & Gesellschaft* 38: 365-86.
Zwierlein, Cornel. 2012b. Une propagande huguenote internationale: le début des guerres de Religion en France perçues en Allemagne, 1560-1563. In *Le bruit des armes: Mises en formes et désinformations en Europe pendant les guerres de Religion (1560-1610)*, ed. Jérémie Foa and Paul-Alexis Mellet, 397-415. Paris: Champion.
Zwierlein, Cornel. 2012c. Les saints de la communion avec le Christ: hybridations entre Églises et États dans le monde calviniste (les années 1560). In *Des saints d'État? Politique et sainteté au temps du concile de Trente*, ed. Axelle Guillausseau and Florence Buttay, 35-50. Paris: Presses universitaires Paris Sorbonne.
Zwierlein, Cornel, and Rüdiger Graf. 2010. The Production of *Human Security* in premodern and contemporary history, *Historical Social Research* 35 (4): 7-21.