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**Exiled Diplomacy: the Material Side of Documentation
in the Embassies for Francesco II Sforza (1526-1530)**

Duke Francesco II Sforza (1495-1535) was the last member of the Sforza family to rule Milan and its duchy (1522-1535). Between 1526 and 1530, Francesco II was banned from his own duchy by the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, as the duke had allegedly conspired against Charles' influence in Italy. During these four years, Francesco tried to keep the pace of foreign affairs establishing an emergency network of trusted followers, who acted as ambassadors. They operated in some of the key courts of the time: the imperial court of Charles V, the court of Francis I, king of France, and the papal court in Rome.

Given the weak financial and political situation of the exiled duke, the *status* of Francesco's agents abroad was very different from the diplomatic standards of the time. For example, Amico Taegio, who followed Charles V, was not acknowledged as ambassador at all. Taegio was not granted any proper accommodation, he had to collect information through intermediaries. In Paris, Francesco Taverna was better received, because the king of France was considering an anti-imperial alliance with the Sforza. However, the presence of anti-Sforza exiles made the situation permanently unstable.

Embassies such as these offer the chance of grasping some vivid material facets of diplomacy, especially those connected with documentation. Just because of the precarious scenario in which they were operating, the ambassadors tended to linger on the strategies they used for gathering, producing and circulating information. Taegio, for example, had his incoming and outgoing missives regularly intercepted, and used merchants as covers to smuggle his dispatches to the duke via Venice. Meanwhile, in the ducal headquarters, the duke's secretaries produced pragmatic documents to organize information: summaries with the main points of the incoming dispatches, to-do lists and so forth. My paper aims at analyzing such practices in detail.

Giacomo Giudici is currently a second-year PhD student at Birkbeck, University of London. He is a member of the Archives Project, working on the comparative history of archives in late medieval and early modern Italy (www.bbk.ac.uk/history/archives). His PhD thesis consists in a documentary history of the second Sforza restoration (1522-1535) under duke Francesco II. He is contributor for the Brepols *Bibliographie Internationale de l'Humanisme et de la Renaissance*.