

Silent Republics?

Secrecy and Collective Rule in the
Early Modern Period

International Conference, University of Bern
26–28 March 2026



Thursday, 26 March 2026

Conference Venue

University of Bern, Main Building, Hochschulstr. 4, Room 028

13:30 *Welcome Coffee*

14.00–14:30 **Nadir Weber** (Bern)
Introduction

Section 1

Practices and Institutions of Secrecy

Chair **Debora Heim** (Bern)

14:30-15:15 **Ioanna Iordanou** (Oxford)

Hidden Feelings: The Emotional Labour of State Secrecy in the Early Modern Venetian Republic

15:15-16:00 **Vedran Stojanović** (Dubrovnik)

Cultivating Secrecy in the Republic of Ragusa: The Needs of the State and the Fate of Individuals

16:00-16:30 *Coffee Break*

16:30-17:15 **Andreas Würgler** (Geneva)

Open Secrets? The Swiss Diet and Republican Politics in the Early Modern Confederacy

17:15-17:45 Panel Discussion



Friday, 27 March 2026

Conference Venue

University of Bern, Haus der Universität
Schlösslistr. 5, 3008 Bern

Section 2

State Secrecy and Commercial Interests

Chair **Lavinia Gambini** (Bern)

09:00-09:45 **Ronald Sluijter** (Amsterdam)

The Secret Committee of the Dutch
States General (1671–1702)

09:45-10:30 **Susanne Friedrich** (Munich)

From Open Windows to Closed Doors:
The Audits of the Dutch East India
Company before the States General
between Secrecy of State and Accoun-
tability

10:30-11:00 *Coffee break*

11:00-11:45 **Noah Businger** (Bern)

Keeping Trade Secret: Merchant
Practices and Republican Management
of Smuggling in Eighteenth-Century
Basel

11:45-12:15 Panel Discussion



Section 3

Representations of Secrecy and Silence

Chair **Jan Haugner** (Bern)

14:00-14:45 **Alessandro Metlica** (Padova)

Printed Secrets: What Republican
Festival Books Say (and What They Do
Not) (via Zoom)

14:45-15:30 **Giorgia Gallucci** (Venice)

Representing Silence and Tyranny in
Lucca's Republican Theatre

15.30–16.00 *Coffee Break*

16:00-16:45 **Anna Grześkowiak-Krwawicz**
(Warsaw)

Between Efficiency and Freedom:
Discussions about Secrecy in Politics in
the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

16:45-17:15 Panel Discussion



Saturday, 28 March 2026

Conference Venue

University of Bern, Main Building, Hochschulstr. 4, Room 028

Section 4

Councils, Archives, and Participation

Chair	Sarah Rindlisbacher (Bern)
09:00-09:45	Matthias Schnettger (Mainz) Secret Deputations: Civic Participation and Governmental Arcana in the Imperial City of Frankfurt
09:45-10:30	Debora Heim (Bern) Producing Public Secrets: Secret Councils in the Old Swiss Confederacy
10:30-11:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11:00-11:45	Thomas Weller (Mainz) Republics and Princely States: Secrecy and the Use of Archives in Hanseatic–Spanish Relations, 1570–1700
11:45-12:30	Jan Haugner (Bern) Restricted Access as a Means of Secrecy in Early Modern Swiss Archives
12:30-13:00	Panel Discussion

Section 5

Secrecy in the Age of Revolutions

Chair	Andreas Berger (Bern)
14:00-14:45	Katlyn Carter (Notre Dame) Secrecy and Legitimacy in the Early American Republic (via Zoom)
14:45-15:30	Nicole Bauer (Tulsa) In the Kingdom of Shadows: Secrecy and Transparency in Eighteenth-Century France
15:30-16:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>
16:00-16:45	Joris Oddens (Amsterdam) <i>A Secretive Fremdkörper</i> : The Dutch National Assembly's Committee of Foreign Affairs (1796–98)

Closing Comment and Final Discussion

Chair	Nadir Weber (Bern)
16:45-17:15	Thomas Maissen (Heidelberg) Closing Comment
17:15-18:00	Final Discussion

Organisers

Nadir Weber and the team of the SNSF 'Republican Secrets' project

Registration

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Please indicate whether you would like to participate in person or online.

Funding and support



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**UNIVERSITY
OF BERN**

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Otto van Veen, "Nihil silentio
utilius", in: Quinti Horatii Flacci
Emblemata, Antwerpen 1607, p. 63