Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

Antonella Alimento (ed.)

War, Trade and Neutrality: Europe and the Mediterranean in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

The present work, edited by Antonella Alimento (Pisa), assembles contributions presented at different scientific meetings in the research project Empires and small states: War and neutrality between the Peace of Westphalia and the Continental Blockade, a joint undertaking by the Universities of Paris 1, the EPHE, Pisa, Rotterdam and Seville.

In her introduction, Antonella Alimento suggests that the Mediterranean was a more decisive region in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe than traditionally assumed. The study of ‘the configuration of political and commercial relations between states of different sizes and “constitutional” structures’ (10) ought to reveal concepts and practices of big, medium and small-sized European powers. Not only in times of conflict between states, but foremost – according to Lucien Febvre’s incitation – in times of peace, when different levels of governance and authority intervene to regulate interactions (14). The study of international law as such is not at the heart of this collection, but the role of law as a factor among others, closely linked to specific actors and their strategies. As a result, an intrusive and thorough dialogue between primary sources and theoretical insight provides a unique panorama of diplomacy and consular institutions, domestic legislation and sovereignty versus the inter-state realpolitik, economic theory and law of nations doctrine, encounters with extra-European powers and transnational intellectual history.

Manuel Herrero Sánchez’s essay (‘Republican Diplomacy and the Power Balance in Europe’) is a variation on a well-known theme, that of the origins

of modern diplomacy in the Italian republics. Yet, his use of Spanish archival material is revealing. Herrero Sanchez illustrates the origin of the ambassadorial institution with examples drawn from Genoese noblemen in Spanish service. Genoese oligarchies imposed themselves as the court's bankers, managed to marry into the main Spanish noble families, obtained positions in the monarch's governing councils and were essential to the management of the 'disaggregated and dispersed structures' of the Empire (40). Genoa, like Venice, looked at the diplomatic service as an essential state function. It made diplomatic service abroad compulsory within the *cursus honorum* for municipal civil servants (29). The introduction of Italian institutions and practices in the Spanish monarchy were thus the product of a broader transnational integration across different fields of action into a 'distinctly cosmopolitan political culture in Europe' (33). Under Spanish military protection during most of the sixteenth century, the *de iure* still independent Republic of Genoa opted for neutrality after the Peace of Westphalia. Herrero Sanchez argues its legacy in Spanish and European diplomacy was lasting.

Marcella Aglietti's contribution focuses on the consular institution, the 'transformation of its legal basis and the consequent restructuring of its relationship with sovereign authority' (41). Taking as an example the expulsion of the consuls of Genoa, Venice and Lucca from Spain during the War of the Spanish Succession (1711), Aglietti demonstrates to what extent consuls were seen as true representatives of their sovereign, and not just as patrons for private individuals (43). The Spanish decision to exclude the Italian consuls was linked to their states' attitudes in recognizing Charles of Habsburg, competitor to the Spanish throne. Consuls also acted as information hubs, coupling their personal commercial network with state policy, an activity bordering on espionage. Yet, public/private distinctions remained blurred, most of all when consuls turned out to be active merchants themselves (44). The free port of Livorno in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany did not recognize foreign consuls as public ministers (46). However, when war broke out in Europe, the Governor (acting on the Grand-Duke's behalf), systematically negotiated neutralization conventions with them, 'representing their sovereigns and agreeing the form and content of the document'. Understandably, sovereigns refrained from allowing their subjects to act as consuls for another nation. A double loyalty was a potential disloyalty to one of the parties involved (49). For neutral states, their own nationals' consular behaviour could create diplomatic incidents (51). Accepting to bear the coat of arms or wear another state's uniform equalled forfeiting one's Tuscan nationality and nobility (52). Similar rules applied in Genoa, leading to a penury in suitable candidates. The contribution of Francisco Javier Zamora Rodriguez builds further on this, illustrating the