

Polina Barducci: Sinocentrism in the History of East Asian Foreign Relations

The Ming dynasty of China (1368–1644) is remembered in the history of international relations as the hegemon of East Asia thanks to its elaborate tributary system and a strong sense of Sinocentrism, propagated in diplomatic documents. Recent reconsiderations of the Chinese tributary system however question the prescribed suzerainty of premodern international relations. The Ming court recognized itself as the superior domain which pointed to an ideological pre-eminence of China as the cradle of civilization in East Asia, rather than an actual dominating position in respect to vassal states. As a result, even exemplary tributary states, such as Joseon Korea (1392–1910), while showing affectionate veneration of the Chinese world order, tended to maintain relations as long as it was deemed profitable in terms of domestic interests. The case of diplomacy with Muromachi Japan under the rule of the Ashikaga shoguns (1336–1573) presents further challenges to the superiority of the Ming order. The Japanese authorities often found symbolic subjugation to the Chinese emperor problematic and sought compromise to avoid using too many Ming symbols in international relations. At the same time, the shoguns appropriated the Chinese concept of the realm (*tenka/tianxia*) to confirm their legitimacy among the local elite. Even with the change of the ruling warrior dynasty to the Tokugawa shoguns (1603–1867), the Japanese authorities continued to use Sinocentric concepts for maintaining their power domestically, while minimizing Chinese symbolism in diplomacy within the East Asian region. This paper argues that such a stance comes not from emerging national consciousness but is rather indicative of the domestic struggle for control over international relations between factions among the Japanese elite.

Zoltán Biedermann: Conceptualizing Commensurability in Diplomatic History: the Early Modern View

Commensurability has been sitting at the heart of the renewal of global and transoceanic history for the past three decades. It has helped fuel the connected history boom by suggesting that societies in the early modern period were capable of talking to each other on grounds of shared understandings of key matters. Courtly elites in particular have been imagined as sharing notions of civility, body language, ritual, and formalized speech, thus facilitating cross-cultural diplomacy where earlier historians saw mainly obstacles. The rise of commensurability as a concept has, however, not been accompanied by any rigorous

conceptual discussions. This troubling fact is the point of departure for my paper, which will explore the reach and the limitations of current assumptions about cross-cultural commensurability in diplomatic settings.

Tessa de Boer: Hidden in plain sight: global dimensions in diplomatic financial services in Europe

This paper will address the role played by embassies and consulates in Europe in the increasing globalization of finance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Although both the globalization of diplomacy and the globalization of finance in the premodern era have been subject to historiographical consideration in recent decades, their synchronization remains understudied. Similarly, financial services or assistance provided by diplomats – either to the state or to private individuals - remain underexplored in the umbrella theme of ‘finance and diplomacy’ (compared to for example the financing of embassies themselves). Yet while these services were in fact consequential for political economies of empire, this realization and their assessment is hindered by historiographical and source-based fragmentation. This paper therefore recovers the ‘global’ links of diplomatic financial services performed in Europe, where these at first glance seem to be absent or intra-European. It reconstructs how the capital involved, or the interests at play in financial diplomatic services are in fact inextricably tied to developments outside of Europe.

Taking the French and Dutch embassies/consulates as an example, it examines three different types of financial services: 1) Administrative facilitation of transnational borrowing, sustaining expenditure related to French Atlantic and Asian colonies; 2) Negotiating empire-oriented demands of key private stakeholders in public finance; 3) Local intermediation of transimperial credit operations.

Malika Dekkiche: The Hajj Diplomacy in 15th century Mamluk Egypt

In the past decade, scholars of the premodern Islamic world have increasingly come to question Eurocentric definitions of Diplomacy and its sources. This was crucial as it allowed scholars to focus on the rich *inshā'* material that kept the copies of letters and other documents exchanged among Muslim polities. Those collections provide us with an unique insight into the working of Islamic chanceries, but also, reveals the intricate web of contacts and connections among Muslim courts in the premodern period. This switch of focus has

already greatly helped breaking free with the common war/peace dichotomy that too often characterized interactions in the Islamic world.

Among the many issues discussed among Muslim polities, those concerning the *Hajj* (or Muslim pilgrimage) and related matters such as the protection of pilgrims and religious patronage were central. Egyptian *inshā'* collections from the Mamluk period are indeed quite explicit about that. The Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt and Syria had inherited from their Ayyubid predecessors the title of protector of the Holy cities of Islam and thus claimed full supremacy in the pilgrimage matters. While many dynasties contested these claims, other used these to their advantages to either establish contact with Cairo or to gain the sultan's support. This paper aims to discuss some of those foreign strategies and Mamluk attitude towards them. Doing so, the paper will address Mamluk broader relation to Mecca and its system of religious patronage in the late fifteenth century.

Rémi Déwière: Life and death of African Frontiers, the Diplomacy of Borders between Kanem and Borno, 1575-1578

The concept of border, as a spatial marker between two political entities represented by lines or dots, has been largely understood as a concept imported in the African continent in the context of European colonization. However, documents produced by Islamic rulers in Sahel show that the concept of frontier was well established (Stewart: 1976; Lefebvre: 2015; Zehnle: 2018). In precise contexts, rulers could set up frontiers, unilaterally or bilaterally, in the framework of diplomatic negotiations. Taking as an example the relations between the sultanates of Kanem and Borno in the 16th century, this paper will show how diplomatic practices materialized a frontier between the two sultanates. From 1575 to 1578, a short-lived frontier at Siki Dananma (actual Chad) is the episode of several political and diplomatic initiatives from the sultan Idris b. Ali of Borno and Muhammad b. Abdallah from Kanem. The establishment of a clear separation between the two sultanates will confront with the limits of their effective power in the region, revealing attempts from central States to organise their respective margins.

José Miguel Escribano Paez: Malukans, Iberians and the making of a Global Spice Diplomacy (1511-1606)

The Sultanates of Maluku engaged with other polities out of their rise as regional exporters of spices long before the arrival of the Europeans. However, the study of Malukan contribution to the making of a diplomatic repertoire shared by actors from other parts of the world has

been hindered because of two reasons. First, because the cyclical violent clashes between Malukans and Iberians attracted a great deal of scholarly attention. Second and even more importantly, because of the virtual lack of Malukan sources to balance the narratives emanating from the abundant European letters, reports, and treaties. As a result, Malukans continue to be depicted as actors who incorporated European newcomers into their own political culture of local rivalries. In this paper I will explore how (despite their obvious bias and limitations) European sources can be analysed to reconstruct some key aspects of the Malukan diplomacy. I will then argue that the Malukans played a leading role in the making of a vibrant diplomatic arena in which actors from different parts of the world interacted attempting to prevent violent escalations resulting from the opposite interests on the trade of Malukan spices. In so doing, we can recover Malukan agency, not as mere spice producers, but also as contributors in the making of norms and practices shaping the exchange of some of the main commodities in early modern global trade.

Dorothee Goetze: Peace: A European Affair

The early modern period in Europe was long characterised by its bellicosity (Johannes Burkhardt). However, this era is at least as rich in peace as in war as the development of early modern historical peace studies over the last 15 years has shown.

Peace keeping and restoring peace were supreme duties of early modern European rulers. Moreover, early modern peace was highly shaped by Christian ideals and the idea of a European society of princes (Lucien Bély). Peace thus became a highly European affair.

With the rise of early modern European diplomacy, negotiating peace developed into one of the central tasks of diplomats, as evidenced by database of the Institute of European History in Mainz, which comprises 1800 European peace treaties. In a first step the paper will describe the characteristics of early modern European peace thinking. Thereafter, in a second step, it reflects on the impact of these Eurocentric ideals on early modern peace diplomacy.

Lorenz Gonschor: A late entry into the World System, right to its forefront: Diplomacy in 19th century Oceania

Oceania is arguably the world region that remained longest isolated from the rest of the world – generally until the late 1700s, with a few exceptions. Once contact was established through European explorers, followed by merchants and missionaries, some island groups quickly caught up with the World system and their societies rapidly transformed into modern nation-states, including constitutional governments and the establishment of formal diplomatic

relations following European protocols. By the mid-19th century, the Hawaiian Kingdom, having made such a transition earlier and more thoroughly than any other indigenous Pacific state, became the leading country of the region. In that position, Hawai‘i made significant contributions to reshaping not just the region but the entire world system, first by becoming the first non-Western state to be fully recognized as a member of the family of nations – not subject to unequal treaties – and later initiating the reversal of the unequal treaty system in Asia. Following Hawai‘i – and often directly copying its political system –, other Oceanian states such as Sāmoa and Tonga also engaged in international diplomacy, although they only achieved lower levels of recognition more comparable to Asian nations. Nevertheless, some of their actions similarly influenced global regimes, such as Tonga's pioneer role in claiming sovereignty over its territorial sea in 1887. The same year also marked the first climax of Oceanian regionalist diplomacy with a treaty of confederation between Hawai‘i and Sāmoa, intended to become the nexus of a pan-Oceanian alliance. While these initiatives failed due to colonial encroachment of European powers, ultimately leading to Hawai‘i's own incapacitation due to its invasion and occupation by the United States in the 1890s, 19th century Oceanian diplomacy laid the groundwork for postcolonial regionalism in the Pacific Islands region that has developed since the late 20th century.

Mathias Karslmoose: Tranquebar's Tamil Protector: The Case of Rama Nayak, 1657-1698

For three decades in the mid-17th century, the Danish colony of Tranquebar on the Coromandel Coast of south India survived as a colony without any aid or supplies arriving from Europe. This was made possible through cooperation with the local population of the town, particularly through an alliance with a local nobleman from the Kingdom of Thanjavur named Rama Nayak. He moved to Tranquebar in 1657 and used his troops and territories to defend the town from its enemies and to keep it supplied until help arrived from Denmark. Afterward, Rama Nayak continued to reside in the town until his death in 1698. Yet Rama Nayak's critical contribution to Tranquebar's endurance is almost entirely absent from both contemporary Danish sources, and most historical works on the history of Tranquebar, which instead focuses on the few Danes in the town. The purpose of this paper is to use the available sources, which are almost entirely European in origin, to examine Tranquebar in the 17th century as Rama Nayak might have perceived it. Why did he move to Tranquebar, and provide material and military support for four decades, while never challenging the Danish

colonial rule in the town? The paper will provide new insight into the nature of European expansion in Asia in the 17th century, and its reliance on the cooperation with local elites.

Florian Kühnel: Same Same but Different: 'Sociability' and 'Friendship' in Early Modern Istanbul

'Sociability' and 'friendship' are two key concepts of the recent 'New Diplomatic History'. Both point to the fact that early modern diplomacy was characterised less by relations between states than between actual people. Especially within the European 'society of princes' diplomacy usually took place at monarchical courts where the ruler, his ministers, his staff and his family interacted with the residing diplomats. Consequently, diplomacy functioned according to a courtly logic where informal relationships such as kinship, friendship or patronage were at least as important as formal (office) structures. But how did this look like in the European-Ottoman context? Was diplomacy here also fundamentally based on sociability and friendship? For a long time, European-Ottoman diplomatic encounters have been described as antagonistic and marked by mutual disdain. Only recently, research claims to have discovered a vivid diplomatic sociability between European envoys and Ottoman ministers that was marked by intimacy and friendship. Diplomacy in Istanbul, it now is said, was not radically different from that within Europe in this regard. In my paper I would like to subject this view to critical scrutiny. On the basis of mainly English sources, I will analyse how European diplomacy worked in practice at the Porte and highlight what distinguished it from that within the society of princes. By doing so, I will try to specify the meaning of the terms 'sociability' and 'friendship' for this context more precisely.

Vladislav Rjéoutski: Eastern European Diplomacies and the Limits of a Pan-European Lingua Franca

Throughout the early modern period, European diplomatic language practices underwent significant transformations, marked by the decline of Latin and German and the rise of French as the dominant medium. Over a rather long period, Spain insisted on the use of its own language as a possible medium of diplomatic communication, without ultimately succeeding in propelling Spanish to the forefront of the diplomatic stage. However, on the other end of the European continent, other languages played significant roles which have not been thoroughly researched, largely due to the primary focus on the major European powers in traditional diplomatic history. Shifting attention to the evolution of linguistic practices on

Europe's eastern edges opens up new avenues of inquiry for scholars studying early modern diplomatic languages. Drawing on a range of studies, including recent research conducted as part of the DFG-funded project on language practices in Russian diplomacy, I will present the evolution of language practices in international relations among eastern-European polities prior to the eighteenth century, including Russia, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Ukraine, the Crimean Khanate, and the Ottoman Empire. This perspective is especially valuable as it prevents historians from overemphasizing the linguistic developments at the center of Europe, which could otherwise suggest a teleological narrative of the inevitable emergence of a pan-European lingua franca.

David Keanu Sai: Hawaiian Diplomacy

The political and legal history of the Hawaiian Islands, called the Hawaiian Kingdom, has been absent from contemporary scholarship until the Permanent Court of Arbitration, in 1999, acknowledged its continued existence as a State under an American occupation since 17 January 1893 for jurisdictional purposes. From archaic State to a British protectorate in 1794 to a sovereign and independent State in 1843, the Hawaiian Kingdom's evolution of governance during the imperial age is unparalleled in the world. Being the first country of Oceania to become a member of the international community of States, the Hawaiian Kingdom was not able to escape the tentacles of empire, but it was able to engage it head on and survive. Diplomacy was the means by which to be recognized by Great Britain and France as an independent State, and it was diplomacy that secured its status as a neutral State in treaties. After United States troops invaded Honolulu on 16 January 1893, it was diplomacy, not bloodshed, that thwarted American expansion. While diplomacy secured Hawaiian Statehood under international law, it could not thwart the physical take over by the United States in 1898 in its ambition to be a naval power in the world. Despite over a century of revisionist history, the continuity of the Hawaiian Kingdom as a sovereign and independent State is grounded in the very same principles that the United States and every other State have relied on for their own legal existence. The Hawaiian Kingdom is a magnificent story of perseverance and continuity.

Ann Towns: The Changing Gender of Diplomacy, ca 1750-1960: A Global View

What are the origins of the main contemporary gender features of bilateral diplomacy? Have bilateral diplomatic interactions always and everywhere been so male dominated? How has

the gender of diplomacy changed over time? Addressing these questions, this chapter provides a comparative global historical overview of the sending and receiving of diplomatic envoys. It serves as a crucial backdrop for the remaining empirical chapters, providing historical context that sheds light on contemporary practice. The chapter takes the mid-18th century as a point of departure, when the world consisted of a multitude of inter-polity systems and ways of organizing gender in inter-polity interactions. As a result of this diversity, men and women played different roles in different systems. The chapter then traces out how European imperialism entailed the restructuring of gender/diplomatic practice on a global scale during the 19th and 20th centuries. The previous diversity was thus integrated and standardized into one system of bilateral diplomacy based on European hetero-binary gender standards: a male envoy with a diplomatic wife, a residential diplomatic mission modeled on the European patriarchal household, and more. To provide this macro-historical analysis, the chapter relies on secondary sources, piecing together insights from a very large number of studies to provide novel claims.