

Back to the future, forward to the past?: paradiplomacy as a site of neo-medievalism.

Symposium on the occasion of the publication of

Manuel Duran *Mediterranean paradiplomacies: the dynamics of diplomatic reterritorialization*, Brill editors

In some respects the 21st century has more affinity with the 14th than the 19th or the 20th c. Then as now, there were empires, multinational corporations, strong regional authorities and city-states, religious groups and fanatics, fear of contamination and superstition.

Certain tendencies in today's diplomacy also show a striking resemblance with medieval diplomacy. Indeed, now as then, a great number of non-state actors (NSA) is involved in diplomatic activities: regional and local authorities, corporations, non-governmental and international organizations.

The NSA diplomatic activities allow polities of different levels (provinces, regions, sub-national entities) to develop structural or ad-hoc contacts, without the need for physical embassies, much along the lines of feudal lords, especially in Italy, who tried to uphold their interests in dealing with other lords, with the Byzantine Empire and with the Muslim Emirate of Sicily.

In a comparable way, today's city diplomacy mirrors the diplomatic activities of medieval cities like Bruges, city-states like Venice and city-alliances like the Hanseatic League.

At the occasion of the publication of Manuel Duran's book, *Mediterranean paradiplomacies: the dynamics of diplomatic reterritorialization* a conference on NSA diplomacy will be organized in collaboration with the *Academia Belgica* in Rome on February 10th, 2016. The conference will address the phenomenon of paradiplomacy, the diplomatic activities of sub-state political actors.

As discussed by the Manuel Duran in his book "Mediterranean paradiplomacies", the diplomatic and foreign policy activities of French and Italian regions, as well of Spanish autonomous communities, have engendered distinct diplomatic dynamics in the Mediterranean region that show resemblance with and in some cases can even be traced back to the medieval diplomatic setting within the Mediterranean. As such, they become instances of the current neo-medieval constellation.

Program

15:00-15:15

Welcome

15:15-15:30

Introduction by professor Wouter Bracke, director of the Academia Belgica.

15:30-17:00

Presentation of Manuel Duran, *Mediterranean paradiplomacies: the dynamics of diplomatic reterritorialization* by the author, with the participation of professors Earl Fry (Brigham Young University), Jörg Friedrichs (University of Oxford), and Isabella Lazzarini (Università degli Studi del Molise)

A panel debate on neo-medievalism and diplomacy, moderated by professor David Criekemans (University of Antwerp).

17:00-17:20

Closing remarks

Reception

Date and location

Wednesday February 10, 2016

Academia Belgica, Via Omero, 8, I-00197 Rome

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