



Splendid Encounters 9

Call for Papers

Struggle for Sovereignty?
Small States and the Diplomacy of the Early Modern Period

16th -17th April, 2020

Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts,
The Institute for Historical Sciences in Dubrovnik

University of Zagreb, Centre for Advanced Academic Studies

Clearly, there is no universally accepted definition of a 'small state', as 'small' is quite an ambiguous concept. However, one possible approach would be to say that small states were those whose territory was significantly smaller than that of most other states, which often also implied limited military and/or political power. More precisely, one could say that small states were those whose lack of territory and resources caused them to *usually negotiate from a position of weakness*. This conference is dedicated to such 'underdogs' of Early Modern diplomacy who were routinely forced to engage in asymmetrical diplomatic relations.

Within the context of this broad definition, some of the key issues that Splendid Encounters 9 seeks to explore are:

- ❖ defining a 'small state': the changing meanings of the concept both in Early Modern political discourse and in modern scholarship. Which were the criteria of considering a polity as a 'small state' (territory, population, military power or something else) especially in diplomatic context? How did these criteria change over time?
- ❖ small states' strengths and weaknesses as diplomatic players: were there any specific strengths of small states which were due *exactly* to their small size and resources? What were the reasons for diplomatic victories of small states over their larger counterparts?
- ❖ struggle for sovereignty: ways in which small states sought to establish and legitimize their status as independent international subjects. Which strategies – ranging from political and legal treatises, ceremonies and symbols, all

the way to alliances and warfare – did they employ in order to achieve the desired status and prestige? Which were the common obstacles they had to overcome?

- ❖ dynamics of relations with great powers: specific diplomatic relations shaped by significant difference in territory and power between the two polities. Which were the forms of patronage and dependence between the small states and great empires (e.g. tribute, military aid, symbolic submission)? What were the small states' means of resisting the pressure of their more powerful counterparts?
- ❖ small states and 'modern diplomacy': with all due caution regarding the term 'modern', one could ask whether small states were innovators or traditionalists regarding the mechanisms and values seen as characteristic of 'modern' diplomacy? This concerns not only the well-known issue regarding the resident ambassadors, but also norms such as neutrality or the idea of formal equality between international subjects (regardless of their territory or power).

We invite submission of abstracts of max. 300 words for twenty-minute papers or 3-paper panels dealing with the above-mentioned or other issues linked to role of small states in diplomacy in Early Modern era.

Please e-mail abstract and short biography to: se9.dubrovnik@gmail.com. Deadline for submission is 15th June 2019. The applicants will be notified of the acceptance of their proposal by 30th July 2019.

All queries should be directed to Dr Anna Kalinowska: akalinowska@ihpan.edu.pl or Dr Lovro Kuncevic: lovro.kuncevic@gmail.com

Splendid Encounters is a series of international and interdisciplinary conferences which aims to bring together scholars from the broadest possible range of perspectives to consider diplomacy and diplomatic activities in the early modern era. After successful meetings in, Warsaw, Bath, Florence, Budapest, Prague, Lisbon, Vilnius and Toulouse we invite you to join us for another event, this time hosted by The Institute for Historical Sciences in Dubrovnik, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Venue:

University of Zagreb
Centre for Advanced Academic Studies
Don Frana Bulica 4
20000 Dubrovnik
Croatia
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Please be advised, that a conference fee of max. 30 EUR, covering the conference package and coffee breaks, may apply. There will be a number of rooms (student accommodation) available at preferential prices for the speakers.