

so it has a clear intention of providing a starting point for students or researchers less familiar with the field. In addition to this, however, it works as a good reference for more advanced students and researchers seeking to reflect on how their own findings may be situated in broader time frames, and in world history.

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Maurits A. Ebben and Louis Sicking (eds), *Beyond Ambassadors. Consuls, Missionaries, and Spies in Premodern Diplomacy* (Leiden: Brill, 2020). x, 223 p. ISBN 9789004438842 (hardcover), 9789004438989 (e-book).

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The field of diplomatic history used to be firmly anchored in Garrett Mattingly's 1955 book *Renaissance Diplomacy*. Resident ambassadors that emerged with the Italian city states at the end of the fifteenth century formed the baseline for the historical analysis of formal inter-polity exchanges of the premodern period. In the last two decades or so, diplomatic history has developed in a field that includes cultural exchanges and the agency of people beyond just the ambassadors. This edited volume by Ebben and Sicking, which shares the results of a conference in Leiden in September 2016, does precisely that and contributes to the post-Cold War wave of renewed interest in diplomatic history from specifically Medieval and Early Modern historians.

The book is divided into an introduction and four parts of two chapters each. After a theoretical contribution, the subsequent three parts focus on case studies of consuls, missionaries, and spies. Each case study contains a medieval and an early-modern contribution in an attempt to overcome the divide between the two historical periods.

The introduction by the editors is an excellent summary of the historiographical developments since Mattingly's work and its primary boon for the Anglophone academic world is that it draws extensively from scholarly contributions in French and German. Although French might still be the *lingua franca* of present-day diplomatic exchanges, English has become increasingly dominant in scholarly work. Thus, making findings and historiographical developments available to a wider audience is very appropriate.

In the theoretical part of the book, John Watkins shares the history of the discipline of diplomatic history and situates its developments in a wider context of IR-theory, and Dante Fedele demonstrates how pre-modern contemporaries already identified the agency of non-state actors. Notwithstanding state's efforts to exclusively consider ambassadors as official representatives, Fedele shows how heralds, consuls, and many others featured in debates on what constituted legitimate representation.

The part on consuls has a medieval contribution by Louis Sicking and an early-modern case by Maurits Ebben. Theorists believed that consuls were merely side-kicks to the ambassadors with not much diplomatic status, but both Sicking's chapter on the medieval *Vögte* (plural of *Vogt*, a person representing merchant's interests) on the Scania peninsula and Ebben's chapter on the Dutch consuls in Spain demonstrate that this is not the case. Consular services included much more than just commercial advocacy, and the Dutch consuls in Madrid also supplied political and military intelligence to the Dutch States General.

Missionary diplomacy ventures outside Europe with Jacques Pavio's contribution on friars in the Khanate in the thirteenth century. Felicia Roşu's chapter focuses on the Jesuits in North Eastern Europe in the sixteenth century. Despite offering their services to multiple potentates at the same time, religious groups were popular because of their discretion, neutrality, and relative dignity. Their networks were inherently transnational and generally they had a good command of Latin. Missionaries are perhaps not the most surprising group in diplomacy, when looking 'beyond ambassadors', but especially Pavio's chapter is an excellent example of testing theory by studying its concepts outside Europe, before the emergence of the modern state, and before Mattingly's supposed establishment of diplomatic institutions.

The book's final part deals with secret intelligence and spies. It has a chapter by Jean-Baptiste Santamaria on late medieval France, and the chapter by Alan Marshall makes the point that many people in early modern Europe were spying, while there were not many spies. Spies are a good way of including the agency of the people that were not male and/or social elites as it was a kind of 'dirty' business not fit for ambassadors of noble birth.

All in all, the volume is a good collection of chapters on historical diplomacy that looks 'beyond' the role of the ambassador. I can totally imagine the book will make a great addition for anyone teaching a course on diplomatic history. One might also dream that the book

will attract readership by people who still have not realized the Westphalian system is an anachronistic myth, but perhaps the book would have needed to include contributions from historians working on the modern period to make that happen.

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Katherine L French, *Household Goods and Good Households in Late Medieval London. Consumption and Domesticity after the Plague* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021). 314 p. ISBN 9780812253054.

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Katherine French's impressive new book examines the changes in domestic material culture in the houses of London's merchants and artisans c.1300-1540 and how these changes fostered new behaviours, identities, and gender roles. The increase in the abundance and variety of household goods across Europe following the Black Death of c.1348 has been widely catalogued by social and economic historians. French moves beyond this cataloguing and is instead concerned with what effect these objects had on the people who owned and interacted with them: how did all of this 'stuff' shape the cultural practices of late medieval London's mercantile classes? This focus positions this book in an increasing seam of multidisciplinary scholarship on material culture which begins with the understanding that things have the power to shape socio-cultural systems. For French, the changing objects she identifies are not merely symptomatic of wider cultural changes but were themselves active participants in these changes. She convincingly argues that these household goods 'directed occupants' activities' (p. 77) and fostered a mode of living distinctive to late medieval merchants and artisans.

The book opens with three contextual chapters which introduce the reader to urban living and material culture in the later Middle Ages. The first outlines how people lived in London before 1350, the second focuses on domestic objects and the systems of economic and affective value in which they operated, and the third provides an overview of changes to London's domestic spaces after the plague. These chapters masterfully synthesise a large amount of historiography and pro-