

The progress of humankind in Galiani's *Dei Doveri dei Principi Neutrali*: Natural law, Neapolitan trade and Catherine the Great

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This chapter is an attempt to place the last work by Ferdinando Galiani, published in 1782 and entitled *De' Doveri De' Principi Neutrali verso i Principi Guereggianti, e di questi verso i Neutrali* in its original contexts and thereby bring out the range of arguments that Galiani simultaneously picked up and brought together into one book.¹ One of the ways to understand Galiani's enterprise in this book is to see it in light of Galiani's historical perspective on the history of trade in the Mediterranean. This take on Galiani's intervention in the eighteenth-century debate on the neutrality of trade and interstate political relations will be central in the argument of this chapter.

By the time *Dei doveri* was published Galiani was famous across Europe as the author of the *Dialogues sur le commerce des bleds* (1770, Paris), an incisive critique of physiocracy and its great scheme for a political economic cleansing of the state of France, conceived with an eye on the future of the international order.²

1 Ferdinando Galiani, *Dei doveri dei principi neutrali verso i principi guerreggianti, e di questo verso i neutrali, libri due* (ed. G.M. Monti, Bologna: Zanichelli, 1942). I will mainly refer to this edition and (where indicated) to the original one from 1782. The manuscript of the book is in the library of the *Società Napoletana di Storia Patria* [BSNSP] XXXI.c.5. This chapter may be read as a sequel to Koen Stapelbroek, "Universal Society, Commerce and the Rights of Neutral Trade: Martin Hübner, Emer de Vattel and Ferdinando Galiani", *Universalism in International Law and Political Philosophy*, ed. Petter Korkman and Virpi Mäkinen, *COLLeGIUM: Studies across Disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences* 4 (Helsinki: Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, 2008), pp. 63–89, the subject matter of which it overlaps with in some parts.

2 See Ferdinando Galiani, *Dialogues sur le commerce des bleds* (ed. Fausto Nicolini, Milan-Naples, 1958 [1770]). The best study of the book is Franco Venturi's, "Galiani tra enciclopedisti e fisiocrati", *Rivista Storica Italiana* 72 (1960), pp. 45–64. For the context of the work see S. L. Kaplan, *Bread, Politics and Political Economy in the Reign of Louis XI* (2 vols, The Hague, 1976). See also Koen Stapelbroek, *Love, Self-Deceit, and Money: Commerce and Morality in the Early Neapolitan Enlightenment* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), pp. 208–24. For a sharp characterization of physiocracy see Michael Sonenscher, "Physiocracy as a theodicy", *History of Political Thought* 23 (2002), pp. 326–39.

The importance of Galiani's last work might be expected to lie in the fact that here one of the people who was best connected in the networks of what we call the Enlightenment gave his views on an issue that so far is poorly understood, but that was crucial in the eighteenth century: the problem of the neutrality of trade in interstate relations, specifically the challenge of somehow politically, institutionally and legally enforcing the protection of commercial exchange between people for mutual benefit from the disruptive effects of competitive rivalry between states.³ Perhaps surprisingly, other than by legal historians there are no serious discussions of Galiani's book in the literature even though it was not without an international reception history (particularly in Germany).⁴ Specifically (apart from in two articles by Furio Diaz of forty years ago⁵) the book has not been discussed in its actual historical contexts.

The obvious primary aspect for understanding the nature of the book is that in the late 1770s and early 1780s Galiani was one of the main architects of Neapolitan foreign policy and in that capacity wrote a number of policy advice pieces on foreign trade treaties.⁶ His last main work was written to justify the Neapolitan accession – which followed in 1783 – to the League of Armed Neutrality that Catherine the Great had brought together as a sequel to her declaration of five principles of neutral trade in 1780.⁷

Equally important, however, as a starting point for reconstructing the nature of *Dei doveri* is to make sense of its internal architecture and give some of its peculiar aspects a place in an overall interpretation of the work.

3 Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

4 Historians have struggled with Galiani's natural law theory in *Dei doveri dei principi neutrali* and even regarded it a hypocritical expression of cynical Machiavellian dissimulation, see Paolo Amadio, *Il disincanto della ragione e l'assolutezza del bonheur. Studio sull'abate Galiani* (Naples: Guida, 1997), pp. 308–24. For the German reception of the work see the very useful article by Paolo Bernardini, “‘Arte di governo’ e ‘diritto di neutralità’ nel tardo illuminismo tedesco. A proposito della traduzione del Galiani ‘Politico’ in Germania”, *Commercium: scambi culturali italo-tedeschi nel 18. secolo* (ed. Federica La Manna, Florence: Olschki, 2000), pp. 3–25, as well as Paolo Bernardini, “Il ‘Diritto di Neutralità’ nel tardo giusnaturalismo tedesco e la traduzione del Galiani ‘politico’ in Germania”, *Materiali per una storia della cultura politica* 25 (1995), pp. 291–312. The German translation by Karl Adolph Cäsar of *Dei doveri* was entitled *Recht der Neutralitaet. Oder: Von den gegenseitigen Pflichten neutraler und kriegfuehrender Maechte* (2 vols., Leipzig, 1790).

5 Furio Diaz, “L'abate Galiani consigliere di commercio estero del Regno di Napoli”, *Rivista storica italiana* 80 (1968), pp. 854–909. Furio Diaz, “Politica estera e problemi economici del Regno di Napoli nell'opera di Ferdinando Galiani”, *Accademia Nazionale Dei Lincei, Convegno Italo-Francese sul tema: Ferdinando Galiani* (Problemi Attuali di Scienza e di Cultura 211, Rome: Accademia Nazionale Dei Lincei, 1975).

6 All of Galiani's foreign policy advice texts (preserved by the *Biblioteca della Società Napoletana di Storia Patria* and the *Archivio Nazionale* in Naples) that remain extant and that have been published are collected in Ferdinando Galiani, *Scritti di politica economica* (ed. F. Cesarano, Lanciano: Rocco Carabba, 1999).

7 On the Armed neutrality the main work remains Isabel de Madariaga, *Britain, Russia and the Armed Neutrality of 1780: Sir James Harris's Mission to St. Petersburg during the American Revolution* (London: Hollis and Carter, 1962).

Antiquity and the history of trade in the Mediterranean

What makes the book and its structure peculiar? First, that it consists of two very unequally sized “books”. The first, which has its own introduction altogether counts 488 pages, whereas the second consists simply of two short chapters entitled: *De’ consigli, che la Ragion di Stato dà ai guerreggianti verso i neutrali* and *De’ consigli, che la Ragion di Stato dà ai neutrali verso i guerreggianti* that add up to a mere 22 pages. The two parts of the entire work are preceded by a preface (of 8 pages) in which two visions about the duties of rulers towards their own citizens and other rulers are pitted against each other.⁸

On the one hand, Galiani argued, there was the vision according to which an “eternal light of justice that was impressed by an omnipotent hand into the hearts of men in all ages” leads all man to realise that humankind naturally forms a “universal society” where everyone has “equal rights to self-preservation” and happiness. This Galiani defined “equality properly so-called”.⁹ Inspired by this “light” people should be assumed capable – classically – not only of abstaining from harming each other, but also to help and love each other.¹⁰ On the other hand, there had been writers (Machiavelli, Hobbes, Tacitus) who based themselves on the facts of human history and advised rulers to derive their actions from the legal presumption that man is naturally evil, selfish and intent on hurting other human beings.¹¹

The problem according to Galiani was that most modern writers mixed these two perspectives in their works on international law. Galiani insisted on discussing them separately. First in a book on true just neutrality. Then in a (much much shorter) book on reason of state precepts for neutrality.¹²

The division here is not between Stoics versus Epicureans (Galiani rejected as useless that opposition between two ancient schools and their explanations of sociability already as a teenager¹³), but between morality versus history. Most writers, Galiani suggested, combined a conjectural history of how history should have been and how it actually unfolded in their construction of a framework that taught politicians how to act. This relates to what I think is Galiani’s real objective in his last work. Galiani argued that by mixing history and morality, one automatically confused the issue of how to reform European international relations. His mission was to provide a different reading of how and why history got off the right path and indicate how to find the way back. In order to do so it was crucial, Galiani

8 These figures correspond to the page numbering of the 1782 edition.

9 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, p. 5 (see also pp. 32, 44).

10 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, p. 5.

11 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, pp. 6.

12 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, pp. 5–365, 369–84.

13 In his manuscript “Dell’amor platonico”, BSNSP, XXX.c.6., ff. 57–66 and also in Ferdinando Galiani, *Della moneta e scritti inediti* (eds. Alberto Caracciolo and Alberto Merola, Milan: Feltrinelli, 1963), pp. 39–40. See Stapelbroek, *Love, Self-Deceit, and Money*, pp. 143–52, 159–61.

asserted, to presuppose natural sociability and morality. We all feel these things inside, they need no fundamental (historical or philosophical-theological) proof. At least his was what Galiani told his readers.¹⁴ This, it ought to be noted, was not the same as asserting that natural sociability and commerce did not require to be accommodated in order to be protected against reason of state.

The second reason why the book is peculiarly structured is that Galiani (mainly in book one) rather chaotically jumped from treating philosophy and natural sociability to European social-economic and religious history, to legal issues of neutral trade and then to diplomatic history of treaties. In other words, the critique of merging historical fact and moral justification is also in some way internalised in the first book.

These shifts run parallel to the writing style and presentation of the book, which is often (though seemingly reluctantly) legally and philosophically technical as a study of the rights and duties of neutral states and belligerents in wartime. Based on a set of principles of justice and benevolence, Galiani rather systematically discussed what kind of behaviour suited belligerents and neutral states in certain situations. Looking at the chapter titles the book's layout appears to be dry, mechanical and in its systematic form to resemble previous works on natural law about international relations. Galiani himself acknowledged what this did to the book. While it was in progress he wrote to one of his French correspondents: "it will be boring up to the point that one will think that Wolff or Pufendorf is the author".¹⁵ Combined with the also included historical examples and interludes, to the reader Galiani's style and approach suggested distance from the highly polarised political debates on neutrality during the War of the American Independence in which Galiani presumably intervened.

To add to the complicated character of *Dei doveri*, Galiani added a massive amount of epigraphs taken from texts by ancient authors, something he did in none of his other works and which the classicist Galiani would in other writers have rejected as bad taste. Before considering some of these epigraphs, it is useful to discuss Galiani's way of treating antiquity in his political writings. In my opinion, Galiani's political thought and his studies of antiquity fed upon each other. Galiani was a prime example of an eighteenth-century figure who used historical analysis, and the heritage of antiquity in particular, as a method for gathering and ordering knowledge and thereby grasping the specificities and policy requirements of their own time.¹⁶

From a very young age, Galiani self-consciously used historical examples, ancient ones in particular, to shape the structures of his political thinking. Aged

¹⁴ Galiani, *Dei doveri*, p. 5, 7–8.

¹⁵ Ferdinando Galiani, *Correspondence avec Mme d'Épinay, Mme Necker, Mme Geoffrin, &c. Diderot, Grimm, d'Alembert, De Sartine, d'Holbach, &c* (2 vols., eds. Perey & Maugras, Paris: Lévy, 1881), vol. 2, p. 602.

¹⁶ See my forthcoming article, "Antiquity and the challenges of modernity: the political thought of Ferdinando Galiani reconsidered", *L'héritage de l'Antiquité dans la culture européenne du XVIIIe siècle. Le Siècle des Lumières 4* (Moscow: Naouka, forthcoming/ 2012) which has a brief discussion of Galiani's studies on Horace and the history of Christianity.

twenty-one, Galiani had written a number of manuscripts in which he offset the reality of his own time to the reality of the past. Drawing upon an even for that period unusually wide educational spectrum, Galiani, for instance, wrote about the geological rock formation of the Vesuvius echoing ancient poets, about the institution of money at the time of the Trojan War, the idea of Platonic love in relation to eighteenth-century moral philosophy and debates about human sociability, the history of canonical law and the natural history of the Christian religion compared with previous Roman belief systems. During his life Galiani would continue to reflect in an unusually free, playful even, style on the transformation of antiquity into modernity.

Galiani did not just know about antiquity, he grasped the logic of ancient belief system, institutions, social structures and mental dispositions. From the 1740s onwards in secret had worked on a treatise called *Dell'arte del governo*, an overview of the ruling manners and institutions in human history as well as a theoretical analysis of the principles of government. A mere three-page sketch of the work which he planned to write is all there is left of the manuscript of *Dell'arte del governo*. Yet, the project should be recognised as the platform from which Galiani developed his thinking in these formative years. Apparently, if we may believe Galiani's own words, his efforts to gain historical knowledge directly served to better understand the present:

The intent of this work is to open up understanding of the character of the ancient world, mainly by constant comparison with modern times. How much is new and useful, one will realise whilst reading.¹⁷

Dell'arte del governo was the overarching framework within which Galiani operated in these years in which he also delivered several lectures on the processes through which humans became social. The moral theory that Galiani developed in his lectures was the backbone of his overview of the history of mankind.

The project *Dell'arte del governo* was itself a spin-off of an intended work by Galiani on the ancient history of trade in the Mediterranean. In 1788, Galiani's first biographer Luigi Diodati referred to this lost manuscript, entitled *Sull'antichissima storia delle navigazioni nel Mediterraneo*, and *Della moneta* contains references to it.¹⁸

Galiani abandoned his projected *Dell'arte del governo*, his history of morality and civilisation, to write *Della moneta* (1751). He himself declared in the endnotes added to the second edition of 1780 that he had copied large parts of his main project into the text of *Della moneta*.¹⁹ Indeed, in his earlier paper *Sullo stato*

17 BSNSP XXXI.c.8, 1v. Also in Galiani, *Scritti di politica economica*, p. 3.

18 Luigi Diodati, *Vita dell'abate Ferdinando Galiani* (Naples, 1788), p. 6; Galiani, *Della moneta*, pp. 20–9, 308–9 (endnote IV of the second edition in which Galiani explained the nature of his project on trade in antiquity). See also *Lettera di Marchese Bernardo Natali-Galiani all'avvocato Giuseppe Maria Galanti* (Naples, 1794), p. 16.

19 Galiani, *Della moneta*, p. 326.

della moneta ai tempi della guerra trojana Galiani had explored, using philological techniques, how money emerged from religious beliefs and cultural forms.²⁰

Book I chapter 1 of *Della moneta*, which discusses the history of money and the rise and fall of states in antiquity and modern times, brings out Galiani's conclusions of his studies of trade in antiquity. It also shows how the young Galiani, following the lead of his uncle and Intieri, formulated the beginnings of a typical Enlightenment vision of commercial politics, which he used to set out a strategy for the economic regeneration of Naples. After describing how money first emerged and how it became a universal means of trade in the Mediterranean, Galiani explained shifts in power and wealth between states in history. Using historical facts, Galiani shaped the idea that commerce was neglected by political rulers throughout the whole history of humankind. States in history grew and became rich by means of conquest, but could not consolidate their power, territory and wealth.²¹

Building on his previous studies on the relation between the development of cultural institutions and the emergence of new commercial structures and the early history of trade in the Mediterranean, Galiani concluded that the separation between modern territorial trade competition and ancient conquest was not so definite. In “those centuries” of antiquity “wealth was companion to arms and therefore followed the vicissitudes of war”, whereas “today, wealth follows the path of peace”.²² Similarly, “whereas at that time the bravest of men were the richest, today the richest are the most unwarlike and peaceful.” However, the underlying difference was only a “different virtue of combat” [*diversa virtù nel combattere*]. Greed inspired “men’s minds” to turn “to thoughts of peace”.²³ Competition between states was as relentless and aggressive, even though in appearance it had been pacified. Consequently, the history of humankind, as “an uninterrupted history of errors, by and [self-inflicted] punishments of, the human race”,²⁴ had not come to an end. Galiani declared: “I find no other distinction between the centuries of antiquity and our own but that which runs from the great to the small. What was then Oceanus, is known today as the Mediterranean”.²⁵

So while *Della moneta* responded to a debate about the advantages and disadvantages of inflationary financial politics, and developed an outlook on the economic development of Naples a few years after it became an independent state, it was inspired by a much wider historical vision.

Following the publication of *Della moneta*, Galiani's star rose quickly and he became a diplomat in Paris in 1759. In the mid 1760s, Galiani set out to intervene

20 Published in Galiani, *Della moneta*, pp. 351–379. BSNP XXXI.a.9, ff. 170–197.

21 Galiani, *Della moneta*, pp. 27–9.

22 Galiani, *Della moneta*, p. 28.

23 Galiani, *Della moneta*, pp. 27–8, 30.

24 Galiani, *Della moneta*, p. 12.

25 Galiani, *Della moneta*, p. 24.

in a debate on natural religion that was instigated by his friend Diderot.²⁶ The fruit of Galiani's efforts, a manuscript entitled *De l'Opinion* was not only the start of Galiani's intended intervention in that specific debate, but also of a new version of his juvenile project *Dell'arte del governo*. The pages he wrote represent his sustained belief that modern sociability emerged from religion and that religion derived from a socialisation of man's original passions. Galiani explained this process in a way similar to how he had described the effects of Platonic love as a teenager and based his ideas on a similar epistemology. Thus, *De l'Opinion* was his second and last attempt to construct a full-blown theory of the history of mankind. Yet, again Galiani's labours were interrupted by the political context of the time. *De l'Opinion* was abandoned for Galiani to embark on his most famous work *Dialogues sur le commerce des bleds* (1770).

Other than for his *Dialogues*, published when Galiani had already been forced to return to Naples, Galiani was famous in Paris for his knowledge of Horace. Reconstructing Horace's poetry was the only project he worked on for longer periods of time and the only project Galiani wanted to be published after this death. At one level the bits and pieces that remain extant engage with the state-of-the-art Horace scholarship of the time. Simultaneously, Galiani's revisionist interpretation of the political meaning of Horace's writings added up to an ambitious contextualisation of the social, economic and religious upheavals at the time of Augustus, that, in its turn, reflected on eighteenth-century debates about the history of Europe after the fall of Rome, agricultural development in relation to trade, patriotism, virtue, inequality and luxury, monarchist institutions, and the causes of the decline of Empires, as well as of trade republics. In other words, Galiani's study of Horace continued his lifelong project of merging antiquity and the eighteenth century into one frame in order to better understand historical change and human nature.²⁷

Before Galiani returned for the last time to his Horace project he applied again his historical perspective to one of the most pressing issues of his age, the problem of neutral trade in the War of the American Independence, to which he dedicated his *Dei doveri*.

26 Fausto Nicolini, 'Un inedito di Ferdinando Galiani', *Biblion* (1959), pp. 139–56. The manuscript was held by the British Museum, Ms. J.6.VII.9 (currently by the British Library). It was written after 1766 because Boulanger's *L'antiquité dévoilée par ses usages* from that year is mentioned, and probably before 1768, when Galiani started on the *Dialogues sur le commerce des bleds*. See Girolamo Imbruglia, "My ecclesiastical history": Gibbon between Hume and Raynal', *Edward Gibbon: Bicentenary Essays* (eds. David Womersley, John Burrows, John Pocock, Oxford: Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, 1997), vol. 355, pp. 73–102, J.G.A. Pocock, "Gibbon and the primitive church," *History, Religion, and Culture, British Intellectual History 1750–1950* (eds. Stefan Colini, Richard Whatmore, Brian Young, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 48–68.

27 See the admirable and extremely useful reconstruction of Galiani's Horace studies by Fausto Nicolini, *L'Orazio dell'abate Galiani, Atti dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Memorie Scienze Morali* (serie VIII, vol. 22/ 2, Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1978), particularly pp. 178–182, 256–7, 263, 272. Galiani drew upon the same overarching perspective in his unpublished introduction to Neapolitan seventeenth-century writings on money. See Koen Stapelbroek, "To console and alleviate the human mind": Ferdinando Galiani's attempted re-publication of Serra in the 1750s", *Antonio Serra and the Economics of Good Government* (eds. Erik S. Reinert and Sophus A. Reinert, London: Anthem Press, forthcoming).

Against the background of this career overview, one must read the epigraphs that Galiani inserted into the chapters and parts of *Dei doveri dei principi neutrali*. To cut a long discussion short, most of these quotations from ancient texts were taken from ancient Southern-Italian writers who emphasised the links between Greek civilization and the connecting role that Southern Italy played in the passing on of learning, trade and power from Greece to Rome. In Galiani's hands, Virgil's *Aeneid*, passages from Horace and Lucretius's *De rerum natura* were transformed into a glorification of the peaceful trade and prosperity in the South-East Mediterranean and the Dardanelles strait that lay at the bedrock of modern European civilisation.²⁸

These epigraphs may be seen as the link between the policy advice documents written by Galiani and the main moral, legal and political argument of *Dei doveri dei principi neutrali*. While Galiani flirted with ancient myths and Aeneid's epiphany of the greatness of the Greek-Italian race,²⁹ Catherine the Great's Greek project assumed similar theatrical dimensions in projecting the envisaged placement on the throne of a restored Byzantine Orthodox Empire of Catherine's Grandson Konstantin Pavlovich as a rebirth of the spirit of Constantine. Towns conquered by Potemkin were given their ancient names. This curiously presented aggressive spread of the Russian empire Southwards had been prepared through the Russo-Austrian alliance against the Ottoman Empire of 1781 but also took place at exactly the same period in which the first League of Armed Neutrality was formed. As we will see, Galiani's *Dei doveri* presented Catherine's League and the active role that Naples could play politically in assisting Catherine as the only hope for Europe to undo the perverse influence that previous legal and political customs continued to have on European interstate relations. The function, it then appears, of Galiani's use of classical texts in *Dei doveri* was to make a rhetorical case for Naples being a natural accomplice in Catherine's Greek project.³⁰ Galiani's argument, mixing political reform vision, ancient myth and legal and philosophical argument was to lead the Italian people back to Troy to realize the ancient promise of the bright future of the Eastern Mediterranean.

28 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, pp. 1, 2, 8, 11, 365, 384 (apart from all the citations and allusions in the footnotes).

29 On 6.757 ("qui maneat Italia de gente nepotes", see Galiani, *Dei doveri*, pp. 365). In laying out his views for the reform of international relations and foreign trade Galiani passed over the same territory covered by archbishop Fénelon's *Telemachus* drawing upon the Aeneid and portraying Naples as leading the way for a revival of the Italian race in the Mediterranean. See Anna Maria Rao, "Tra erudizione e scienze: l'antiquaria a Napoli alla fine del Settecento", *L'incidenza dell'antico. Studi in memoria di Ettore Lepore* 3 (ed. Claudia Montepaone, Napoli: Luciano, 1996), p. 103, for readings of Homer in late eighteenth-century Naples.

30 Parellel to this on Galiani's flirts (assisted by Grimm) with Catherine's cultural-intellectual programme see Lucio Gambacorta, "Galiani e la Russia", *Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane* 106 (1988), pp. 335–45.

Friendship and benevolence and the protection of commerce

On a different level from his apparent tuning into Catherine the Great's parallel universe of ancient myth, Galiani in *Dei doveri* developed a conceptual outlook on how to disentangle war and trade, struggle for power and commercial exchange. To understand Galiani's technical argument better it is useful to look at it with his earlier work in the background. In 1751, in *Della moneta*, Galiani had defended commercial sociability on the grounds that it was the outcome of the historical progress of human nature, which was a process that realised its own objective moral criteria. He argued vehemently that societies that had come to be ruled by money were less corruptible by politics than earlier forms of society. The complex non-linear and often-interrupted history of money was directly related to the rise and fall of states in both antiquity and modernity and the development of cultural characteristics of the dominant societies in the course of time. Throughout history people constantly reshaped their fictional moral beliefs, thereby gradually creating the mental preconditions for commercial society.³¹

In the opening chapters of *Dei doveri dei principi neutrali* (and recurrently throughout the book) Galiani argued that people were naturally sociable.³² The driving principle of progress in the history of humankind and the rise of civilisation was beneficence, a natural love or friendship that people naturally felt and that held societies together. Beneficence was always related to commerce and the level of people's mutual understanding of their ideas. Galiani used "friendship" and "familiarity" as synonyms (and indeed referred a lot to Cicero).³³ Yet, Galiani was eager to distinguish his views from any kind of cosmopolitanism that stipulated that it was natural for people to have an equal amount of fellow-feeling, compassion and friendship for the whole of humankind. Being human was not the same as behaving in an unnaturally altruistic manner and Galiani illustrated his point through an anecdote in Don Quixote.³⁴ Beneficence was always a relative thing and related to virtue. Actions inspired by beneficence were subject to the moral judgement of others and could be deemed right or wrong.³⁵ When Don Quixote liberated prisoners the consensus of mankind was that this was misguided heroism and

31 Galiani, *Della moneta*, pp. 26–7. See Stapelbroek, *Love, Self-Deceit, and Money*, pp. 143–57.

32 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, pp. 5, 20, 28, 32, 34, 36, 39, 44, 117–118, 122–3, 172, 226, 235, 236, 365, 369, 374–5, 383.

33 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, p. 23, 80, 120, 124, 236, 315, 348 (in addition to the pages in the preceding note).

34 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, p. 38.

35 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, pp. 31–41, particularly on the relativity of vice and virtue on pp. 40–41. See also the long note on p. 47 on the reasonableness of self-sacrificing patriotism and dying for the country.

ultimately a vicious act for which he was directly punished by being immediately robbed by the same prisoners he set free.³⁶

Following the classical terminology, Galiani contradistinguished “beneficence” and “justice”. Galiani wanted to set the record straight and iron out a fundamental misconception within natural law discourse.³⁷ Justice properly understood, according to Galiani, was a completely different thing from beneficence. Beneficence was about giving and pushing the progress of commerce and human ideas by using the freedom to act upon your ideas; justice was *only* about not taking from others and thereby the ordering of social relations by reference to written or agreed fixed principles.³⁸

Applying these terms to the issue of war and neutrality, Galiani argued that beneficence was always relative but could create equally strong duties as justice to help a friend in need. The decision to enter a war or not was given in by a calculation of: 1.) degree of injustice (between the belligerents) in the reasons for which a friend was attacked. 2.) degree of friendship, 3.) the degree to which any help offered would actually make a difference.³⁹

In the absence of a strict obligation of justice, the most normal option was to do nothing, to remain neutral.⁴⁰ Thus, remaining neutral meant neither being obliged by justice, nor feeling any overwhelming moral duty to further the interest of humankind by helping a friend in need.

Yet, Cicero himself – the main source for arguing beneficence and friendship as source of progress of society and universal humankind – had been “more eloquent than precise”, Galiani believed, in his use of the terms and had applied the terms justice and injustice to matters of beneficence, thereby confusing law and morality.⁴¹ Confusing the idea of justice happened in every age and gave rise

36 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, p. 38.

37 From a legal historical perspective Galiani’s work has often been considered. See Gianfranco Miglio, *La controversia sui limiti del commercio neutrale fra Giovanni Maria Lampredi e Ferdinando Galiani* (Milan: I.S.P.I., 1942), Gennaro Maria Monti, *La dottrina de l’abate F. Galiani sulla neutralità e l’adesione di Ferdinando IV alla Lega dei Neutri* (Milan: I.S.P.I., 1942), Ernest Nys, “Les droits et les devoirs des neutres par Galiani”, *Revue de droit international et de législation comparée* 31 (1899), pp. 382–4. The most recent (ambitious) attempt to provide a schematic history of neutrality Stephen C. Neff, *The rights and duties of neutrals: A general history* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000) reserves a rather prominent role for Galiani, which fits with the fact that he was the most cited person in Georg Friedrich von Martens, *Précis du droit des gens moderne de l’Europe* as noted by Bernardini, ““Arte di governo” e “diritto di neutralità””, p. 21. Useful cases for comparison on legal issues have been Azuni and Lampredi: Ercole Vidari, “Ferdinando Galiani, Giovanni Maria Lampredi e Alberto Azuni”, *Scritti varii di Ercole Vidari*, (Milan: Hoepli, 1908), pp. 351–385, Angelo Piero Sereni, *The Italian Conception of International Law* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), Paolo Comanducci, *Settecento conservatore: Lampredi e il diritto naturale* (Milan, Giuffrè, 1981). A wider comparison of the political visions of these three figures could shed new light on the predicament and alternative foreign policy routes available to the old Italian states in the second half of the eighteenth century.

38 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, p. 19–20, 24–9 (and the following chapter 3).

39 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, p. 36.

40 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, p. 41 (in the footnote).

41 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, pp. 32–6.

to completely unclear and convoluted distinctions that Galiani all rejected – such as the division between perfect and imperfect justice.⁴² Galiani's main opponent in these criticisms was Grotius, but his accusation implicated the whole natural law tradition. To call reasons of beneficence 'just' causes for entering a war according to Galiani was a manipulation of the classical language of justice and beneficence, a deliberate misrepresentation of Roman law and, finally, simply not in line with the natural human principles of morality.

Parallel to his well-known critique of the contractualist theory of the origin of money in *Della moneta* Galiani argued in *Dei doveri* that the notion of "contract" used to define strict justice for Cicero had meant the same as "society": a measure of the development of moral obligation grown out of the way man was wired.⁴³ Likewise, in Roman Latin "contract" was related to the creation of universal society and the common ownership of the earth. It was the human realisation that other humans were fellow beings – belonging to the same family of humankind. As such "contract" was not a bridge between "justice" and "beneficence" and did not relate to law and property; or in Cicero's words, it was "a law not written, but born in us."⁴⁴

Galiani explained, however, that this confusion about the principles of natural law had a strong historical tradition. Since it developed an interest in conquest, Rome had considered itself the only civilised nation in the Mediterranean. Because it had transformed the exercise of primitive aggression towards other nations in a more structured professional military approach, Roman society saw itself as superior to others and held a moral and legal right over the entire world.⁴⁵ Where other tribes plundered ships in the Mediterranean driven by natural passions of revenge and desire for bloodshed, Rome did the same inspired by an ideology of empire and conquest, which gave it a series of self-declared rights and entitled it to the goods of other tribes.

Galiani emphasised that since the Romans did not consider themselves at the same level as any other nation, they had not cultivated public law, only civil law. Moreover, for a state that considered itself the only worthwhile nation in the world confusing law and morality was not such a big deal; it even was a second nature. It was truly a divine mission to impose the internal order onto the rest of the world.⁴⁶ Yet, modern natural law treatises and treaties ratified between states had made very little progress in developing public law on its appropriate foundations.

Supporting his argument by philological evidence (for instance through his discussions of the Roman Latin term "contract" and Cicero's definitions of duties and sociability), Galiani placed the origins of eighteenth-century confusion about

42 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, p. 45.

43 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, p. 44. Cf. Galiani, *Della moneta*, pp. 36–8.

44 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, p. 44.

45 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, pp. 323–30.

46 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, pp. 330–3.

international law in the history of Europe. International law and the treaty system had emerged not as independently as they should have from religious ideas, national ideologies and the primitive customs of maritime strife.

In *Dei doveri dei principi neutrali*, Galiani gave a number of historical accounts of the conditions that caused the uncertain development of modern natural law discourse and the European treaty system. What had happened was that since the collapse of the Roman Empire dominant states in Europe had frequently taken recourse to a modern polite version of ancient maritime customs couched in a kind of legal argument that had become part and parcel of international relations. Since the later Middle Ages powerful states in Europe crushed treaties that promoted a stable order, as Galiani saw it. An example was Louis XIV scuffing the Treaty of the Pyrenees of 1659, which had effectively created a reform of European public law.⁴⁷ In the eighteenth century the same technique was used by Europe's larger territorial states to violate the trade of smaller states, notably of mercantile republics. In so doing they drew upon the Roman legal precedent of not considering the commercial interests of other nations in the same frame as their own military-political concerns. Galiani argued that the practice of privateering was a prime example of a custom that was justified by Grotius, Bynkershoek and Vattel based on untenable legal views.⁴⁸ Ultimately, the defect of public law left space to neutrals and belligerents alike for the abuse of maritime commerce.

Dei Doveri directly derived from Galiani's understanding of the influence that antiquity continued to exert on eighteenth-century politics. The fundamental problem in devising a theory about the rights of neutral trade, Galiani argued, was that most modern writers had mixed into their legal treatises the facts, customs and traditions of human history. Grotius, Vattel, Pufendorf, Bynkershoek and others had wanted to civilize international relations, but let in from the start the very principles derived from Roman law that made reform of the interstate system impossible.⁴⁹

The further development of the history of mankind, Galiani held, was hindered by the imperfections in international law and the treaty system that stemmed from influences from religion, national sentiment and ancient customs. Galiani in this way compared the crusades (a primitive war fought in the name of Christian virtue) to eighteenth-century international law.⁵⁰

47 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, pp. 353–63.

48 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, p. 329–33.

49 Almost every mentioning of these writers on most pages of the book is critical for this reason. For perspective Richard Tuck, *The Rights of War and Peace: Political Thought and the International Order from Grotius to Kant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) and Isaac Nakhimovsky, "Carl Schmitt's Vattel and the *Law of Nations* between Enlightenment and Revolution", *Grotiana* 31 (2010/ forthcoming), who mentions Chambrier as agreeing with Galiani's views. Likewise Friedrich von Gentz appears to have agreed with a lot in Galiani's *Dei doveri*, see Raphael Cahen, "Frédéric Gentz et les publicistes Français, le droit de la mer en débat (1795–1815)", *Actes du colloque Navires et Gens de Mer Méditerranées* (eds. Philippe Sturmel and Jacques Bouineau, Paris: Harmattan, 2010/ forthcoming).

50 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, pp. 353–63.

To avoid misunderstandings, here it must be noted that Galiani did not believe that the rights of neutral states were to be extended or privileged. Rather than simply extending the rights of neutrals, and limiting the rights of belligerents to disrupt trade, the aim of the Armed neutrality on Galiani's account was much more precise and carefully targeted. The problem was not only that it was a given that in wartime the maritime trade of Europe's smaller states was hindered by French, Spanish and (particularly) English depredations. Galiani alluded to the controversies of the Seven Years' War and the war of the American Independence involving the United Provinces and Great Britain. These resulted from a confusion about neutral rights to trade with belligerents. In the latter case as well, the principles of natural law were manipulated. Neutrality on Galiani's perspective was the political equivalent of the social expression of "natural friendship" to whichever extent it had developed between people. Referring to the sympathy in the United Provinces for American Independence, Galiani called the Dutch "false neutrals", whose "occult" ideas of "friendship" served to "foment and support the rebels".⁵¹

According to Galiani, the casuistic style of reasoning deployed by natural lawyers in their arguments on the rights and duties of belligerent and neutral states in wartime had *created* many uncertainties. These were an inlet for abuse by belligerents and neutrals alike. What was needed was to come to a conceptual breakthrough in the interstate legal sphere with regards to ideas of 'right' and find a way to implement and stabilize them. A clear demarcation of the principles of justice and benevolence, according to Galiani, was a pre-requisite for this. Galiani associated the first with the domain of treaties and clearly defined and enforceable claims. In thinking along these lines, Galiani did neither invent a new legal, nor a new political-philosophical tradition. When he wrote to his French correspondent Madame d'Épinay in 1771 he echoed the same classical Epicurean principles that his view on neutrality derived from:

Nature has given man *force, liberty, property*, which the Latins call *occupation*. Society, that it to say the laws provide *right*. *Right* is an equilibrium of *utilities*. *Utilitas justi proper et aequi*. So right is an outcome of force; and the laws are proof of the antiquity of the world, because a number of centuries of *forces* have had to pass and the exercise of forces in the final instance has given rise to laws and right.⁵²

In thinking along these lines, Galiani did not stop at *reverting* to Epicureanism, but followed through the logic of his own thinking about the relations between morality and politics that he had defined for himself in the 1740s in his juvenile work *Dell'arte de governo* and in his lectures on love and Platonic love that in the final instance

51 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, pp. 290–2. See also the articles by Ere Nokkala and by Tara Helfman in this volume.

52 Ferdinando Galiani, *Correspondance*, vol. 1, p. 355 (Galiani to Mme. d'Épinay, 9 february 1771). Cf. Galiani, *Della moneta*, pp. 55–6 and 79–80 for the corresponding argument with regard to the emergence of commercial society and the subjection of human nature to the 'laws of commerce' [*leggi di commercio*].

served precisely to transcend Epicurean doctrine.⁵³ As he wrote in the first lines of *Dell'arte del governo*:

Human happiness depends upon a composite of internal and external causes, but sorrow can be caused by the absence of only one of the two. The purge of those defects of happiness that stem from internal causes pertains to moral philosophy,⁵⁴ and depends upon the practice and passion for virtue, the perfection of religion and upon faith.

Politics is concerned with the external causes. So the art of government is the art that prepares, rather than creates, happiness, by eliminating only the external causes of sorrow.⁵⁵

However much “right” might be derived from any internal human drives and social processes, “justice” still formed a separate sphere. The challenge was, particularly in the field of interstate trade and politics, to channel or transform “right” into “justice” and create an interface from the appropriate domain of morality to politics. Galiani argued that even those writers (Vattel and Hübner) who had genuinely attempted to curb the abuse of power politics in the realm of international trade had focused their basic idea of obligation too much on a principle of justice that neglected that beneficence was the actual moral source for their take on how to civilize the anarchical society of states. Galiani did not primarily accuse these authors of Epicureanism or Hobbesianism.⁵⁶ Instead their well-meaning characters had predisposed them too much to the juridical chimera of a stable international order based on the principle of moral justice. Thus Galiani sketched the whole history of natural law thought since Grotius as a proto-Kantian parade of “sorry comforters” [*leidige Tröster*].⁵⁷ Galiani argued that rather than to correct Grotius’s theory of justice and create further distinctions and sub-divisions, it was necessary to reconsider its relation to the idea of beneficence, the ultimate source principle for the creation of a stable “society” of sovereign states in which foreign trade could

53 Stapelbroek, *Love Self-Deceit and Money*, pp. 127–64 (chapter 4).

54 Galiani understood ‘moral philosophy’ as a tradition of thinking which included the counter-reformation, second scholastics and aristotelian natural law thought. The key idea against which Galiani reacts is the Christian emphasis on true internal pleasure and virtue as the foundations of society.

55 BSNSP XXXI.c.8, 1r.

56 *Dei doveri* can, incidentally, be read in this key, particularly with regard to Vattel the fundamental moral philosophy of whose voluntary law of nations resembled Galiani’s ideas, but who opted for a diametrically opposed perspective on the political implementation. See Galiani, *Dei doveri*, pp. 101–5 (and pp. 14, 54–5, 62, 99, 108–9, 131–2, 139, 242, 257).

57 Discussed by Tuck, *The Rights of War and Peace*, pp. 12–3, 209–25. For a wider discussion of Kant’s politics see Isaac Nakhimovsky, *The Closed Commercial State: Perpetual Peace and Commercial Society from Rousseau to Fichte* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011/ forthcoming). The relation between Kant’s ‘Sorry comforters’ and Galiani’s *Dei doveri* (with its German reception) may be further explored for instance through comparing Kant’s “Third Definitive Article in the conditions of a Perpetual Peace. The Rights of men as Citizens of the world in a cosmopolitical system, shall be restricted to conditions of universal Hospitality” with Galiani’s theory of beneficence and familiarity.

still exist.⁵⁸ This shift in focus would repair the inherent misconceptions of what people had started to call the Enlightenment, whereas Galiani bitterly joked that the only Enlightenment he saw were the “blazes of warfare” that set the skies over Europe on fire.⁵⁹

Galiani’s disqualification of the movement of the Enlightenment as a further layer onto existing confusions rather than a step forwards was but one of his rejections of political, legal and intellectual outlook on the predicament of eighteenth-century Europe. Another had been his rejection of physiocracy in his *Dialogues*. In general Galiani held that the actual causes of the situation in international politics that had emerged were not to be detected or repaired through any of the available combined political, legal and moral analyses of human nature and reconstructions of where its development had gone wrong. These kinds of intellectual exercises with regard to the law of neutrality had created groundless distinctions that confused and misrepresented the real problem. On Galiani’s account the actual issue was much simpler. Neither did its resolution require a moral education or grand reform of humankind.

Armed neutrality: the treaty based enforcement of the rights of commerce

The internal structure of *Dei doveri* made clear that the issue of neutral trade in the War of the American Independence in a sense was a mere occasion for the work and dealt with an issue that had been prominent in European politics since the War of the Austrian Succession and that had still much deeper historical roots. The real challenge was to respond to the problem by recognising these roots, which translated into a capacity for differentiating between and evaluating rival perspectives on how to align commerce and politics in the eighteenth century.

Seemingly remarkable in a work, which in its context could only be read as a manifesto in support of the Neapolitan accession to the League of Armed Neutrality, is that Galiani only referred three times to the League.⁶⁰ What stands out more is the fact that whereas Galiani throughout his life rejected virtually all outlooks and proposals for the reform of interstate politics, he considered Catherine the Great’s

58 In this light Galiani’s major put-down of Raynal can be understood. See Galiani, *Correspondance*, vol 2, pp. 114–5 (5 September 1772 to Mme. D’Épinay).

59 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, p. 241. In letters to his Parisian friends Galiani explained on numerous occasions his opinion that politics based on ‘foresight’ [*prévoyance*] was the cause both of the actual wars in Europe and of the dysfunctional ‘enlightened’ moralising about preventing them, which together suffocated the providential mechanisms of commerce to such an extent that Galiani predicted that in the future ‘there will be very little trade’. Galiani, *Correspondance*, vol. 1, pp. 390–1, vol. 2, pp. 554–5 (letters to Mme d’Épinay 1 August 1778 and 4 May 1771).

60 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, pp. 236–7, 300, 332. On page 236 the League of the Armed neutrality is mentioned for the first time and is presented not as a way to extend the rights of neutrals or dispute the validity and importance of strict justice itself, but as a political and moral claim that beneficence and friendship in the modern world translated into a precise idea of being truly neutral. The first Armed neutrality, Galiani wrote, came as unexpected “light from the skies”.

Armed Neutrality not only as an effective remedy to the problems of the neutrality of maritime trade during the War of the American Independence, but also as a starting point for a more general realignment of trade and war.⁶¹

Galiani presented the problem of the neutrality of trade as having a rather simple solution. One simply had to clear the discourse of natural law, the international treaty system and maritime customs from the remnants of previous times when maritime commerce took the form of piracy, plunder and unregulated avarice. Galiani answered the question how to erase the lasting impression of this history onto European public law by presenting the League of Armed neutrality as its remedy.

In terms of his own theory of justice and beneficence, Galiani presented the League as a collective positive agreement by neutral states, in the name of beneficence – but not by any moral appeal to justice or natural right – to consolidate and actively defend the state of international trade in times of war and reject the claim that the emergence of war generates any kinds of right on the part of belligerents to interfere with the trade of neutral states. Thus presented the League of Armed Neutrality was an interstate alliance that actively supporting natural friendship, commercial civilisation and progress of humankind. If it was naturally unprecedented, this was because commercial civilisation previously had not reached the degree that was required to create commonly understood duties.

Galiani argued that the Armed Neutrality could be the beginning of a process of universalisation and depoliticisation of the commercial treaty system. Such a process would lead not only to a cleaner (from the point of view of beneficence) treaty system, but as by-products generate rules that civilised naval warfare, got rid of privateering and allowed visits on board of ships at sea on a general scale.

The overall objective of Galiani's vision was to roll back the perversions that history had allowed to creep into the progress of humankind. Although these had disastrous huge consequences, the right response to them had to be measured and elegant. Here, Galiani can be taken to be in agreement with Vattel that the political problem of the European state system was not one that required the imposition of any international institution with coercive powers, or a set of legal principles that forced states to comply with rules of strict justice. Yet, Galiani was also a great critic of Vattel's legal-political vision that in many cases formally discharged states from performing duties that ensued from the principle of beneficence.⁶² Galiani, it seems, genuinely hoped that Catherine's League of Armed Neutrality would eventually result in a new global political equilibrium in which small states like Naples could more easily preserve themselves.

61 The obvious negative reference point was the 'sweet delirium' of the abbé de Saint-Pierre's project for Perpetual Peace. See Galiani, *Dei doveri*, p. 34 and Galiani, *Della moneta*, pp. 306–7.

62 Isaac Nakhimovsky, Vattel's theory of the international order: Commerce and the balance of power in the Law of Nations, *History of European Ideas* 33 (2007), pp. 157–173 and Nakhimovsky, "Carl Schmitt's Vattel and the *Law of Nations*". See also Stapelbroek, "Universal Society, Commerce and the Rights of Neutral Trade".

This interpretation would be in line with Galiani's efforts since the 1770s to reorganise Neapolitan foreign politics. Historians have often described Galiani after his return from Paris in 1769 as bitter, bored, lazy and cynical, but this is a myth. In fact, during the last period up till the final years of his life, Galiani dedicated great efforts to the same problems that *Della moneta* had addressed. Upon his forced return from Paris to Naples in 1769 and until his death, Galiani was officially (through the *Supremo Magistrato del Commercio* and the *Supremo Consiglio delle Finanze*) and unofficially, as an influential figure at court,⁶³ involved in the design of Neapolitan foreign policy and acted upon opportunities he discerned to recreate the position of Naples in the interstate system.⁶⁴

In 1751, Galiani had argued in *Della moneta* that Naples ought not try to found a national trade company, but instead modernise its agriculture, find new fishing grounds in the Mediterranean and explore the possibility of extending trade by cutting through the isthmus of Suez. It was best to gather strength by building up the domestic economy while Mediterranean trade was dominated by Europe's dominant states that even ratified treaties with the Barbary states of North-Africa in order to hinder the Italian states.⁶⁵

Around 1780, the situation suddenly changed. At the height of the War of the American Independence Russia had become a dominant power in Eastern Europe and Catherine II explored possibilities for accessing the Mediterranean and for

63 Raffaele Ajello, "I filosofi e la regina: il governo delle Sicilia da Tanucci a Caracciolo", *Rivista Storica Italiana* 103 (1991), pp. 398–454, 657–738. Tanucci withdrew Galiani under pressure from Choiseul after Galiani had taken too much liberties in explaining the Neapolitan position towards France in conversation with the Danish ambassador Gleichen, see Giuseppe Ferraioli, "Un fallo diplomatico dell'abate Galiani", *Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane* 5 (1880), pp. 690–8. On the culture of Neapolitan high politics, see Maria Grazia Maiorini, "Neapolitan diplomacy in the Eighteenth Century: Policy and the Diplomatic Apparatus", *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy: The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1450–1800* (ed. Daniela Frigo, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 176–209. On the mentioned Neapolitan institutions see Antonio Allocati, "La Soprintendenza Generale delle finanze nel regno di Napoli (1739–1789)", *Studi Economici* 9 (1954) and Antonio Allocati, "Il Supremo Magistrato del commercio del regno di Napoli (1739–1808)", *Studi economici* 10 (1955).

64 Useful for understanding the later eighteenth-century Neapolitan context and as a route into the interaction of Galiani with and the legacy of Bernardo Tanucci are Giuseppe Nuzzo, *A Napoli nel tardo Settecento. La parabola della neutralità* (Naples: Morano, 1990), John Robertson, "Enlightenment and Revolution: Naples 1799", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 10 (2000), pp. 17–44.

65 An insightful testimony of longstanding English concerns with the fate of British Mediterranean trade in the wake of the Charles of Bourbon's seizure of Naples in 1734 is John Campbell, *A view of the dangers to which the trade of Great Britain to Turkey and Italy will be exposed if Naples and Sicily fall into the hands of the Spaniards* (London, 1734). Italian attitudes to Mediterranean trade are discussed in Anna Maria Rao, "La Méditerranée: une frontière? Le cas de Naples au XVIIIe siècle", *International Review of Eighteenth-Century Studies* 1, special issue *Boundaries in the Eighteenth Century* (2007) pp. 91–107, Anna Maria Rao, "L'espace méditerranéen dans la pensée et les projets politiques des patriotes italiens: Matteo Galdi et la 'république du genre humain'", *Droit des gens et relations entre les peuples dans l'espace méditerranéen autour de la Révolution française* (eds. Marcel Dorigny and Rachida Tlili Sellaouti, Paris: Société des Études Robespierriennes, 2007), pp. 115–37. For the politicisation of Mediterranean trade see Eugenio Lo Sardo, *Napoli e Londra nel XVIII secolo: Le relazioni economiche* (Naples: Jovene, 1991), Eugenio Lo Sardo, "L'espansione economica statunitense nel mediterraneo e il regno delle Due Sicilie (1784–1812)", *Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane* 104 (1986), pp. 335–97.

setting up trade there.⁶⁶ Because Russia did not have a large enough merchant fleet itself, it had an interest in keeping shipping tariffs low. The Russian interest dictated that the Mediterranean became something of a neutral trade zone. In the Russian efforts to reform trade patterns in the Mediterranean, Catherine II found an ally in Galiani.

When, in 1780, in the midst of the War of the American Independence, Catherine launched the first League of Armed Neutrality to protect neutral ships against belligerent powers, Galiani started a major campaign to turn Naples into the dominant trading nation in the South-East Mediterranean. He republished *Della moneta* (1780, 2nd edition) to bring his earlier views on foreign trade politics back to the attention of his Neapolitan audience and started to write his last big work *Dei doveri dei principi neutrali* (1782) to prepare the Neapolitan accession to Catherine's League. The motive for Naples's accession to the League was clear enough. The main threat to Galiani's vision was interference by Europe's dominant states, but these would be kept at bay by Russia's Catherine the Great, which had great enough interests in cleaning up the trade of the South-East Mediterranean and to get rid of pirates and privateers.

Civilizing international trade in the manner that the League of Armed Neutrality stood for, according to Galiani, coincided with the joint Russian and Neapolitan interests. In his roles of secretary of the *Supremo Magistrato del Commercio* (from 1770) and assessor of the *Supremo Consiglio delle Finanze* (from 1782), Galiani drafted a number of policy advice memoranda that outlined the diplomatic strategy of his plan. Whereas Galiani rejected treaty with America and was wary of concluding a commercial treaty with France this plan included a commercial treaty with Russia. Galiani had been working on the Russo-Neapolitan treaty since 1780⁶⁷ and lived to see his labours bear fruit in the spring of 1787, months before he passed away.

Interestingly, even in his policy memoranda, one in particular, Galiani discussed the challenge of the reform of Naples (and giving the relatively new state a solid

66 For elements of Catherine's foreign policy see Claus Scharf (ed.), *Katharina II., Rußland und Europa: Beiträge zur internationalen Forschung* (Mainz: Institut für Europäische Geschichte, 2001), Aleksandr B. Kamenskii, *The Russian Empire in the Eighteenth Century: Searching for a Place in the World* (Armonk NY: Sharpe, 1997). Loads of Italian writers reflected on the rise of Russia as a European power in relation to Catherine's foreign and domestic politics. Russia features, for instance, as something of a model in Filangieri's *Scienza della Legislazione*. See also Francesco Algarotti, *Lettres du Comte Algarotti sur la Russie, Contenant l'état du Commerce, de la Marine, des revenus, & des forces de cet Empire* (Paris, 1769).

67 As can be concluded from Galiani, *Correspondance*, vol. 2, pp. 602–3 (letter to Grimm 9 December 1780). For Grimm's views on the subject see Leon Schwartz, "Melchior Grimm on War and Peace", *The French Review* 40 (1967), pp. 756–764. Important in this context is Georges Dulac, "L'abbé napolitain, le 'factotum' et l'impératrice de Russie: les huit dernières lettres de Ferdinando Galiani à Friedrich Melchior Grimm", *Les Archives de l'Est et la France des Lumières*. Guide des archives et inédits (eds. Georges Dulac and Sergueï Karp, Ferney-Voltaire: Centre international d'étude du XVIII^e siècle, 2007), vol. 2, pp. 641–72.

basis and a future on European map) in relation to and as a resultant consequence of the wider political and social history of humankind.⁶⁸

Galiani's *Considerazioni sul trattato di commercio tra il re el il re cristianissimo*, written in the late 1760s, was an incisive critique of the Third Bourbon Family Pact and started with a brief sketch of the history of commercial treaties since antiquity.⁶⁹ It might, Galiani asserted, seem "a marvel" [*meravigliosa*] that commercial treaties were virtually non-existent in ancient times and until recently very few of them were concluded among polite nations. On closer inspection, however, this made sense.⁷⁰

The fact that man is by nature bestially cruel to other unknown man was insufficiently known to metaphysicians and natural lawyers, Galiani argued. The ignorance and cruelty of fallen man caused that the first commerce between people was not inspired by the light of natural justice. Instead the belief reigned that justice only had to be done to one's family, while others were to be destroyed. However, wars between families made people familiar with one another. Peace, familiarity and a sense of brotherhood thus emerged.⁷¹ These were the original forms of what Galiani in *Dei doveri* described as natural friendship. Peace treaties originally were simply expressions of this idea of familiarity. Thus the idea of a Family Pact among Bourbon nations was best considered a variation on the practice among American Indians of smoking a peace pipe. A negation of this very basic principle of humanity was the fact that the parliament of Great-Britain (a powerful and glorious nation [*una nazione potente e gloriosa*]) had rejected by decree that no idea such as the "right of nations" [*dritto delle genti*] could be said to have any legal value in that state.⁷²

Treaties of commerce were of the same character as smoking the peace pipe, but never emerged in antiquity, Galiani explained. This made perfect sense as the only things required for commerce were natural freedom and peace.⁷³ In fact,

68 A comparison of Galiani's views with those of his contemporary Michele de Jorio who wrote on Neapolitan history, European politics and commercial maritime law would be helpful to reconstruct the internal dynamics of the Neapolitan debate on the options that existed to develop its political economy. The relationship between Galiani's *Dei doveri* and De Jorio's 'maritime code' is an obvious starting point for such a comparison. See Cesare Maria Moschetti, *Il codice marittimo del 1781 di Michele de Jorio per il Regno di Napoli* (Naples: Giannini, 1979).

69 Ferdinando Galiani, "Dalle Considerazioni sul trattato di commercio tra il re el il re cristianissimo", in *Scritti di politica economica*, pp. 99–113. See also Ferdinando Galiani, "Notes au pacte de Famille", *Illuministi italiani. VI. Opere di Ferdinando Galiani* (eds. Furio Diaz and Luciano Guerci, Milan-Naples: Ricciardi, 1975), pp. 704–9 and Raffaele Guariglia, "Un mancato trattato di commercio fra le Due Sicilie e un 'parere' inedito di Ferdinando Galiani", *Rivista di Diritto Internazionale* 7 (1914), pp. 3–21. For the first Family Pact and the development of Franco-Neapolitan relations see Rohan Butler, "The secret compact of 1753 between the kings of France and of Naples", *Royal and Republican Sovereignty in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of Ragnhild Hatton* (eds. Robert Oresko, G.C. Gibbs, H.M. Scott, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 551–79.

70 Galiani, "Considerazioni", p. 99.

71 Galiani, "Considerazioni", p. 99.

72 Galiani, "Considerazioni", pp. 99–100.

73 Galiani, "Considerazioni", p. 100. Cf. Galiani, *Dei doveri*, pp. 12, 120 where the same argument is made and the Family Pact is also mentioned.

any formalization itself of the conditions under which trade was to take place was detrimental to the freedom of commerce and caused the submission of one nation under another's power. Trade treaties that were concluded following a war tended to be not a celebration of human familiarity and natural commerce, but a creation of a degree of enslavement of one people to another. It was a cause of "embarrassment" [*vergogna*], Galiani argued, to still see these contracts being concluded in Europe where they were not the result of a primitive barbarism, but the remnants of those times that remained present in laws, customs and institutions. The only lawful entry in a commercial treaty that breathed the spirit of natural commerce between nations was the declaration of reciprocity. Whereas the English had respected the sovereignty of Neapolitan trade, the Family Pact, far from being an ideal neutral commercial treaty (and also clearly not a defensive alliance treaty) politicized trade by imposing French privileges onto Naples and turned Naples into an accomplice of French designs in foreign politics.⁷⁴

Galiani's *Considerazioni* formed the intellectual basis for Neapolitan resistance to the Third Family Pact. *Dei doveri* was cut from the same cloth and the system of international relations it advocated connected to Galiani's efforts to ratify basic commercial treaties with the Ottoman Empire and Russia and thereby create a basis for outcompeting other Italian states.⁷⁵

To be sure, Galiani's aim was not to devise a transition process to the creation of an a-political cosmopolitan sphere of exchange of goods that was entirely separated from the realm of power, but to create a framework that paved the way for a long-term viable interplay of national interests and political-economic logics.⁷⁶ Within a system of interstate trade relationships each state would act upon its relative natural and cultural capacities for complementing other states' national economies. In the case of Naples Galiani thought that it was cut out to be a commercial powerhouse. Precisely its economic potential had led to a history of successive conquests and

74 Galiani, "Considerazioni", on France p. 102–113, on England pp. 110–2.

75 Diaz, "L'abate Galiani consigliere di commercio estero" brings out neatly the way Galiani calculated the opportunities and risks of these treaties just like he did in other cases, for example when he rejected the reasons for concluding a commercial treaty with America as insufficient. It is well known, and discussed by Diaz, that Galiani took a plan by Giovanni Cristiano de Miller (copies of which somehow circulated throughout Europe) as a basis for leapfrogging a Piedmontese design for a commercial treaty with Russia. See Giovanni Levi, "Les projets du gouvernement sarde sur les relations économiques avec la Russie à la fin du XVIII^e siècle", *La Russie et l'Europe. XVI^e–XX^e siècles* (Paris-Moscow: SEVPEN, 1970), pp. 283–306 and Sergey Karp, "Un manuscrit de Diderot porté disparu: les Observations sur le traité entre la Russie et le royaume de Sardaigne", *L'édition du dernier Diderot. Pour un Diderot électronique* (eds. Gianluigi Goggi and Didier Kahn, Paris: Hermann, 2007), pp. 51–62, particularly on the Piedmontese-Russian diplomatic networks which ran via officials in the Hague, notably Prince Dmitri Alekseevič Golitsyn. The figure De Miller is discussed in Luigi dal Pane, *Lo Stato Pontificio e il Movimento riformatore del Settecento* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1959). For the process of the conclusion of the Neapolitan treaty and rival projects by other Italian states see Giuseppe Berti, *Russia e stati italiani nel Risorgimento* (Turin: Einaudi, 1957), Vincenzo Giura, *Russia, Stati Uniti d'America e regno di Napoli nell'età del risorgimento* (Naples: ESI, 1967), Maria Luisa Cavalcanti, *Alle origini del risorgimento: Le relazioni commerciali tra il Regno di Napoli e la Russia 1777–1815* (Geneva: Droz, 1979) and Franco Venturi, "I rapporti italo-russi dalla seconda metà del '700 al 1825", *Quaderni di Rassegna Sovietica* 2 (1968), pp. 6–30.

76 The law of nature in *Dei doveri* is always associated with states, see Galiani, *Dei doveri*, p. 118 for a clear statement.

subjections to foreign rule. Even in his analyses of Horace's poetry he noted that the forests of the Sila region provided a natural resource for shipbuilding that was as good as the Cypriot forests the use of which until Venice lost this territory had formed a cornerstone of Venetian maritime greatness.⁷⁷

Conclusion: the League of Armed Neutrality reconsidered

The above establishes *Dei doveri* as an important source for understanding the nature of the first League of Armed Neutrality. Galiani may have mentioned in a letter to Grimm that he only wrote the work for money, to survive and had already calculated how many copies would be sold.⁷⁸ Likewise, he announced in the first words of the dedication of the work that: "this book was produced by an irresistible command" (Galiani was ordained by the court to write the book).⁷⁹ Galiani also mentioned in the first "address to the reader" that "only the author himself knows how imperfect this work is".⁸⁰ Yet, despite Galiani's disclaimers *Dei doveri* might be the crowning achievement of Galiani's political writing career.

According to some of the letters surviving from the period, Galiani claimed that he wrote the book in a few months and was in a rush to complete it. While other documents show that he started on similar projects a number of years before, I believe that *Dei doveri* should be seen in the light of a lifelong project by Galiani to understand the problems of war and trade in the eighteenth century from the perspective of the progress of commercial exchange and the development of political institutions in the entire history of humankind. *Dei Doveri* in other words was a carrier of Galiani's general historical intellectual perspective. What makes Galiani's defence of the League of Armed Neutrality important over and above an interest that historians of Neapolitan political thought may find in *Dei doveri* is the fact that League of Armed Neutrality has never come to occupy a prime position in accounts of European history of international relations and public law and has been hard to categorize as a political project.

When the Armed neutrality was declared, it met with confusion and wonder. The Florentine biweekly magaziner *Notizie del mondo* reported that "from all parts one receives contradictory notices regarding the plan of Armed neutrality. While the Dutch and the French maintain that this plan will shortly be perfected, others believe that it will not have any effect and that is why it is also called the Armed nullity [the term was in fact Catherine's own]. In fact, the King of Denmark [which

77 Nicolini, *L'Orazio dell'abate Galiani*, p. 158, where he added emphasis to the strategic significance of Cuba in the War of the American Independence.

78 Galiani, *Correspondance*, vol. 2, pp. 602–3 (letter to F.M. Grimm, 9 December 1780).

79 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, p. 3.

80 Galiani, *Dei doveri*, p. 3.

with Sweden was the first country to subscribe to the Armed Neutrality] with this latest Treatise with Great Britain already seems to reject the principles of this plan.”⁸¹

That Europe was confused was perhaps less surprising, if it is considered that Catherine even left her own court puzzled. Nikita Panin, himself the architect of the Northern system, for instance, initially understood Catherine’s declaration as a victory of the pro-English faction at court. Panin expected Catherine to capitalise on Russia’s increased power towards England according to the logic of the balance of power, which the Armed neutrality seemed to fail to do.⁸² Alternatively, diplomats across Europe came to understand the League of neutrality as a clever interference with English hegemony, and saw the idea as originating either from France, or from Prussia.

These ideas contrast with Galiani’s, who felt Catherine the Great’s initiative was no anti-English scheme or early stage of a plan for a supranational state.⁸³ Galiani’s combined (or rather dual) historical-philosophical perspective enabled him to understand Catherine the Great’s Armed Neutrality not only as an effective remedy to the problems of the neutrality of maritime trade during the War of the American Independence, but also as a starting point for civilising European interstate relations, precisely because it was *not* aimed directly at checking the power of Europe’s dominant states or so wonderfully suited Catherine’s own hegemonic interests.

Possibly due to widespread confusion about its nature and objectives as well as its limited direct success,⁸⁴ the Armed neutrality faded as an explicit reference point in the ongoing discussion of solutions for creating a stable order of market societies. Similarly, it became a blindspot within Enlightenment historiography. However, even if the Armed neutrality was not a successful imposition on the eighteenth-century arena of national interests, reconstructing the different ways in which it was understood does help to bring into focus what are still the most pressing challenges of integrating states without political power in a sustainable global theatre of political and commercial competition.

In any case, as can be gleaned from the words of L.H. von Nicolay, who served under Catherine the Great and who in his *Erinnerungen* mentions a typical joke by Galiani, the prospect of the realization of Catherine’s Greek project in relation to Mediterranean trade were prominently on the Neapolitan’s mind:

During my last meeting with this Neapolitan in 1782 he interrupted a long eulogy on Catherine by exclaiming: “Oh, if only she would break the chains of Greece! If only

81 *Notizie del Mondo* (1780), p. 719 (news from Hamburg, 15 October 1780).

82 De Madariaga, *Britain, Russia and the Armed Neutrality*, pp. 162–5.

83 See also the articles by Stephen Neff, Isaac Nakhimovsky and Eric Schnakenbourg in this volume.

84 De Madariaga, *Britain, Russia and the Armed Neutrality*, pp. 439–58 argues the League was both more ambitious (over-ambitious in fact) and, also indirectly, more consequential than has been recognised. In that light may also be seen the ongoing diplomacy to realize Galiani’s vision after his death, see Nino Cortese, “La mediazione Napoletana nelle trattative di pace tra Russia e Turchia nel 1790–91”, *Russia. Rivista di Letteratura, Storia e Filosofia* 1 (1921), pp. 37–103.

she would restore this old fatherland of wisdom and art to its old glory. Tell her, that I pray to the heavens everyday for her to do that. But tell her as well that I offer myself in advance for a job in her new state to become the Bishop of Kythira.”⁸⁵

Catherine never conquered Greece and Galiani never became the Bishop of Kythira, but that takes away nothing from Galiani’s vision. In 1787, on his deathbed, Galiani still received a jewelled snuffbox from Catherine with a letter thanking him for his role in the Russian Neapolitan negotiations over a trade agreement that was concluded earlier that year.⁸⁶

85 Edmund Heier, *L.H. Nicolay (1737–1820) and his Contemporaries* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1965), p. 104, the text is from a note added to Nicolay’s epistle *An Vos’en*.

86 See Francis Steegmuller, *A woman, a man, and two Kingdoms* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1991), p. 242. Through his Parisian contacts, who repeatedly told Galiani to have himself sent to St.Petersburg as a Neapolitan diplomat, Galiani had also personally approached Catherine and had on previous occasions received gifts from the Empress, who also bought Galiani’s brother’s library. See the *Notizie del mondo* of 23 April 1782, pp. 366–7. Galiani had sent Catherine the Great a text for an inscription for the statue of Peter the Great.