

## Alberico Gentili's Ideas on Just War :

*Causa Formalis* in the Second Book of  
*De Iure Belli Libri Tres*

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In his main work *De iure belli libri tres* (Hanau, 1598) Alberico Gentili states, fully in the tradition of Thomastic scholasticism, that a just war must be furnished with four types of *iustae causae*, namely, *causa efficiens*, *causa materialis*, *causa formalis* and *causa finalis*. As I have already written an article investigating the former two types of *causae*, I focus here on the third, *causa formalis*, which is described in the second book.

According to Gentili's definition, *causa formalis* concerns "everything connected with the conduct of a war". Gentili places greater emphasis on it than any of his predecessors who wrote about the rules for waging just war. In relation to declarations of war, he values the Roman formality in *ius feciale*. With respect to conduct during warfare, he calls for *bona fides* between enemies and distinguishes combatants from non-combatants and many types of former combatants, against whom he argues violence should not be committed. Furthermore, he discusses the right way to deal with non-military targets, such as temples and crops.

Gentili demonstrates a very modern and humanitarian view of all the above issues and establishes for the first time in early modern Europe an independent and systematic standard to judge right conduct during warfare. Through the second book of *De Iure Belli Libri Tres* we can also comprehend Gentili's conceptions of modern nations and the international society composed of them.