

Alberico Gentili's Idea on Just War:
Causa Efficiens and *Causa Materialis*
in the First Book of *De Iure Belli Libri Tres*

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Alberico Gentili (1552–1608) was an Italian jurist who spent most of his academic life in England after fleeing there in 1580. He devoted a lot of ideas to modern international law through several literary works on issues of the same area. This article focuses on the first book of *De iure belli libri tres*, Gentili's most important work, and investigates his particular structure of just war. Under the influence of Aristotle's Four Causes, Gentili composed a new concept of *iusta causa*, a term which had been used by medieval scholastics as a required condition of just war, and divided it into four types, two of which, *causa efficiens* (who may justly be the originators of wars) and *causa materialis* (those which furnish the material for war), are examined in detail in this article. Compared to the scholastic tradition of just war theory, Gentili's structure places greater emphasis on *causa efficiens* by restricting it to states only and lowers the importance of *causa materialis* by a broader and more lenient interpretation. By those means Gentili reduced theological and moral affection, and established a legal perspective to discuss issues on war. Gentili has a tendency to admit that states may engage in war under political and utilitarian decisions, but also hopes for their moderation and autonomy. This combined attitude is exhibited well in his structure of just war and indicates his idea on the relationship among international law, natural law and positive law.