Introduction

FRANCESCO MARI / CHRISTIAN WENDT

In the summer of 168 BC, when the Roman Republic put an abrupt end to the sixth and last Syrian War between Ptolemaic Egypt and the Seleucid kingdom, a suburb of Alexandria called Eleusis experienced the birth of "a new sort of diplomacy".[1] As Polybius and Livy narrate, Antiochus Epiphanes was advancing the siege of Alexandria when he was met by a Roman embassy led by the senate's legate Gaius Popilius Laenas, who ordered the Seleucid king to retreat from Egypt.[2] Antiochus desisted and withdrew, surprised at receiving this ultimatum regarding a war that did not involve the Romans, though unwilling to fight with them. So much for the *substance* of the meeting. Together with the Roman victory against Macedonia in the same year, the 'Day of Eleusis' marked a geopolitical turn in the history of antiquity.[3] Its ancient and modern commentators, however, have been more interested in the *form* of the encounter between the king of Syria and the former consul of Rome, that is, in Laenas' breach of diplomatic protocol.

Shortly after his accession to the throne, Antiochus had secured a friendship treaty with Rome, where he had spent part of his youth.[4] Upon the arrival of the Roman embassy, he stretched his hand out to Popilius, in response to which the latter held out not his hand, but rather the *senatus consultum* demanding that Antiochus retreat. To greet an ally by holding out one's right hand was not a mere reflex in antiquity. As a common preliminary to diplomatic talks, it signified a confirmation and renewal of the bond of good faith under which the concerned parties believed they were operating.[5]

1 BEVAN 1902: 145.

2 Polyb. 29.27.1–8; Livy 45.12. Cf. Diod. 31.2.

3 Cf. already Polybius, who took 167 BC as the lower limit of the fifty-three-year long period during which "almost the whole inhabited world was conquered and brought under the dominion of the single city of Rome" (1.1.5: σχεδὸν ἅπαντα τὰ κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην οὐχ ὅλοις πεντήκοντα καὶ τρισὶν ἔτεσιν ὑπὸ μίαν ἀρχὴν ἔπεσε τὴν Ῥωμαίων).

4 173 BC. Livy 42.6.6–12. See GWYN MORGAN 1990: 50–51.

5 On the handshake as a diplomatic practice, see ROLLINGER/NIEDERMAYR 2007; MARI 2018: 118–126.

Just as Polybius may have been right to suppose that Popilius Laenas refrained from "giving the usual sign of friendship until he knew the mind of the recipient, whether he were to be regarded as a friend or foe",[6] by neglecting the preliminary handshake, the Roman legate made clear that Rome's alliance with Syria could not be taken for granted. The lack of a handshake and the senate's orders startled Antiochus, who asked for time to consult with his advisors. But Laenas used a stick to draw a circle in the sand around Antiochus, and insisted that he respond before stepping outside of it. Only after Antiochus' acceptance of the Roman terms did Popilius shake hands with him. This is how a Roman legate forced a Seleucid king to capitulate.

Some one hundred and fifty years after the episode, Livy would ascribe Laenas' gesture to "the usual harshness of his temper" (*pro cetera asperitate animi*).[7] Modern scholarship too has emphasised the personal side by combining Livy's comment on the Roman legate's behaviour with a later (dubious) tradition about an old friendship between Popilius and Antiochus dating back to the latter's Roman years.[8] But Laenas' breach of diplomatic etiquette is far from anecdotal, and there are arguably downsides to keeping diplomatic substance separate from diplomatic form. Alongside the fact that diplomatic protocols are interesting for historians *per se*, the forms of ancient diplomacy were often meaningful. As we have just suggested, Laenas' refusal to shake Antiochus' hand conveyed a substantial message about the Syro-Roman alliance and the bond of good faith that underpinned it. Rather than supposing Popilius Laenas to have been genuinely untrained in Eastern Mediterranean diplomatic customs (or simply harsh of character), it is worth considering that, by deliberately altering diplomatic rituals, that is, the formal structure of negotiations and agreements, the Romans aimed to alter also their substance, namely the fundamental element of good faith upon which they rested, from both an ideological and a cultural point of view.[9]

6 Polyb. 29.27.3: μὴ πρότερον ἀξιώσας τὸ τῆς φιλίας σύνθημα ποιεῖν πρὶν ἢ τὴν προαίρεσιν ἐπιγνῶναι τοῦ δεξιουμένου, πότερα φίλιος ἢ πολέμιός ἐστιν.

7 Livy 45.12.5. Polyb. 29.27.4 says that the gesture was "exceedingly overbearing and insolent" (Ποπίλιος ἐποίησε πρᾶγμα βαρὺ μὲν δοκοῦν εἶναι καὶ τελέως ὑπερήφανον). He also describes Antiochus as "astonished by what had happened and by the ὑπεροχή" (ξενισθεὶς τὸ γινόμενον καὶ τὴν ὑπεροχήν, 29.27.6). However one translates ὑπεροχή, the complexity of the situation can be seen in Polybius' wording: a) Antiochus has expectations that are not met, for he is "astonished" (ξενισθείς) by Laenas' action; b) the imbalance of power is not only an existing fact that the Seleucid king acknowledges; it is the brutal display of it that seems to have a major impact on Antiochus' changing attitude – and this would lead us to understand ὑπεροχή not only as the real excess of authority represented by the magistrate bearing the will of the senate, but as the overwhelming supremacy made visible in Laenas' behaviour that alone can account for Antiochus' surprise (since he was already aware that Rome's influence and power easily outweighed his own); c) τὸ γινόμενον signifies the scene that the reader has just witnessed.

8 Just. *Epit.* 34.3.2. This detail helps to contextualise Livy's comment; the argument that Justin's account aims at discharging the senate from any accusation of undiplomatic conduct should also be taken seriously. On the episode, see GRAINGER 2019: 231–232; MITTAG 2006: 214–224; GRUEN 1984: 690 f.

9 See e. g. HUSS 2001: 559. On the episode, see also WENDT (CH.) in this volume, p. 187–188.

Born from the concluding discussion of a 2018 conference bearing the same name,[10] *Shaping Good Faith* aims to tackle the ideas that: 1) the fundamental element of ancient diplomacy was good faith (gr. πίστις, lat. *fides*), and 2) different kinds of good faith could be shaped by negotiators by means of their interpretation of diplomatic etiquette, that is, the codes of ritual communication that ancient civilisations developed. These two guiding ideas intersect in many ways and on specific points, which the various contributions of this volume explore. Our aim in this *Introduction* is to provide a general description of our enquiry and to show how it might lead to a better understanding of ancient diplomacy as a historical phenomenon. Let us begin by addressing the key concepts of 'good faith' and 'diplomacy'.

This volume deals mainly with the Greek, Persian Achaemenid, and Roman cultures, as well as their 'hybrids' such as the Hellenistic kingdoms or the Parthian Empire. Words associated with the idea of believing in someone else's reliability, honesty, or ability to accomplish a given task do not always share the same semantic field in Ancient Greek, Old Persian, or Latin. For example, the correspondence between Greek πιστός and Persian *bandakā* (as words for the King's trusted associates) is between words based respectively on the idea of persuasion and that of being bound.[11] And what about the idea of entrusting oneself to another, which is embedded in the Roman *fides*? This peculiarity of *fides* caused the Aetolian envoys, who in 191 BC had accepted a *deditio in fidem* request spoken in Greek (Polyb. 20.10.2: ἐγχειρίζειν εἰς τὴν Ῥωμαίων πίστιν), to complain that taking orders from the consul Glabrio was "neither just nor Greek" (Polyb. 20.10.6: ἀλλ᾽ οὔτε δίκαιον […] οὔθ᾽ Ἑλληνικόν ἐστιν). Although πίστις is used to translate *fides* both in literary texts and in epigraphic sources containing official formulas,[12] the Greek concept is often claimed to be based on a free decision by both contracting parties (whatever the power relationship between them), whereas the Roman concept of *fides* travels from the stronger party to the weaker, and can be defined as a promise to renounce one's right to destroy the other.[13]

Our choice of 'good faith' rather than 'trust' as a common English translation for all these ancient concepts depends on such complexities, and stems from the impression that 'trust' is a more egalitarian word than 'good faith', which has a wider semantic field and allows for inequality in the diplomatic relationship (because it can stand for both 'trust' and 'fidelity').

Let us now come to 'diplomacy' and its definitions. Diplomacy has not been the object of a dedicated epistemology until quite recently. With few exceptions, the topic

10 FU Berlin TOPOI, 11–12 October 2018.

11 See e. g. Hdt. 3.30; Aesch. *Pers.* 2; Xen. *Anab.* 1.8.28; DB §§ 25, 26, 29 *et al.* For πίστις and πιστός, cf. BENVENISTE 1969: 115; CHANTRAINE 1977: 968–969, *s. v.* πείθομαι. On *bandakā*, see EILERS/HERRENSCHMIDT 1988; TUPLIN 2010.

12 Cf. e. g. Livy 26.24.8–13 with *IG* IX, I² 2, 241. See also Polyb. 18.21 and Livy 33.13.

13 On πίστις and *fides*, see CALDERONE 1964; GRUEN 1982. On Glabrio and the Aetolians, see e. g. ECKSTEIN 1995; BURTON 2011: 116–117; MORENO LEONI 2014.

has been treated by either practitioners in manuals and memoirs or by scholars in the field of International Relations (IR). For centuries now, the first group has been producing an impressive amount of literature, which has provided the work of the second with valuable case studies. However, the latter have not deemed diplomacy worthy of a proper theory, considering it – alongside war – as a mere technique employed by polities to pursue their interests and gain power in the political sphere.[14] State and Power, not diplomacy, are the theoretical tenets of most IR models, whatever approach these adopt (e. g. Realism and Neo-Realism, Idealism/Liberalism, Structuralism).[15] This mirrors the long-lasting State-centred international (dis)order of the post-Westphalian era. During the last three decades, however, worldwide phenomena such as globalisation and the progressive crisis of multilateralism have been causing deep changes in international relations, as both States as well as new actors like NGOs have begun to target transnational audiences thanks to communicative media made available by the IT revolution.[16] In parallel with these changes, around the turn of the century, several IR scholars put forward some radically new views. IR Constructivists in particular have tried to go beyond Realist theories – which frame international relations by focussing solely on the calculations of power and advantage that motivate States as political actors – by complementing *Realpolitik* considerations with culturally determined values and principles. These factors impact especially upon the discursive and ceremonial frames of agreement-making, thus shaping the moral imperatives by which the parties believe themselves to be bound.[17]

Based around similar ideas on discursive practices, members of the so-called English School eventually proposed a thematisation of diplomacy.[18] In their view, diplomacy is not defined by the structures that make it (i. e. States), but rather emerges from their (conflicting) relationships, which shape, transform, and reproduce it. In other words, diplomacy is a social institution that structures relationships among polities, that is, "a collection of social practices consisting of easily recognised roles coupled with underlying norms and a set of rules or conventions defining appropriate behaviour for, and governing relations among, occupants of these roles. These norms and rules [...] provide a framework of shared expectations that facilitates purposive and predictable action among the occupants of certain roles, in our case diplomatic agents".[19]

14 Some classic references: MORGENTHAU 1966: 139; ARON 1966: 40; GILPIN 1981: 45. An often-quoted definition by G. Berridge also follows this perspective: "Diplomacy is an essentially political activity and [...] a major ingredient of power. Its chief purpose is to enable states to secure the objectives of their foreign policies without resort to force, propaganda, or law" (BERRIDGE 2015: 1).

15 Cf. the overview of these in LOW 2007: 22–30. See also JÖNSSON/HALL 2005: 15–23.

16 See STANZEL 2018 and the bibliography provided by GAZZANO in this volume, p. 53–55.

17 For a Constructivist approach to IR, see e. g. WENDT (A.) 1992 and 1999.

18 The English School was long regarded as a side-branch of Realism (cf. ALMEIDA 2003). However, later authors turned decidedly to Post-Structuralism (J. Der Derian) and Constructivism (Ch. Reus-Smit). For an overview of the English School, see NEUMANN 2002.

19 JÖNNSON/HALL 2005: 25.

In short, IR scholars have now come to define diplomacy as a form of language between polities, a shared code of communication featuring its own set of interaction rules and practices (to be sure, negotiators ought to follow the protocol, but can also exploit their counterpart's knowledge of it to convey specific messages, as in the case of Popilius Laenas and Antiochus). It is according to this definition that *Shaping Good Faith* will analyse ancient diplomacy and add some important nuances to its historical reconstruction. Needless to say, this does not mean that States, legal institutes, power calculations, and interest-driven behaviour will not be major constituents of our analysis. Yet we maintain that a focus on the diplomatic process itself has the advantage of allowing for an interpretation that takes into account more factors than most of the current approaches. The code of diplomatic communication was a highly important and influential channel for shaping politics (and good faith) and thus is a fruitful heuristic tool for analysing interstate encounters in antiquity.

In line with the models summarised above, scholarship on ancient interstate relations has, until recently, not devoted specific attention to diplomatic language, that is, to its ritual framework. According to Sheila Ager, the fact that it is "commonplace to characterize the diplomatic framework of antiquity as rudimentary and undeveloped" could be in large part due to "the absence of permanent diplomatic institutions", such as the embassies as well as the international organisations that facilitate contemporary interstate relations (the UN or the various G7, G20, BRICS, etc., but also NGOs).[20] Ager challenges this commonplace by emphasising the "styles and modes of ancient diplomatic communication that break the mold of modern popular conceptions about diplomacy. The fact that so many diplomatic interchanges in antiquity strike us as undiplomatic should not blind us [...]. They are 'diplomatic': it is just that diplomacy itself is not quite so polished as we suppose".[21] This surprising argument is an example of how the same restrictive understanding of diplomacy that is increasingly perceived as frustrating by IR specialists risks becoming even more problematic for ancient historians. Ager feels uncomfortable with those IR Realism-inspired ancient scholars who claim that a state of general anarchy was the rule among ancient polities and who for that reason deem ancient Mediterranean diplomacy to be primitive.[22] However, insofar as she considers diplomacy as a technique, Ager's perspective is in fact akin to that of IR Realism.

Contradictions of this sort require deeper reflection, since interpretative dead ends are less likely to depend on the ancient evidence than on one's theoretical approach. From a Realist perspective, the diplomatic framework of antiquity is naturally rudimentary, because as long as diplomacy is considered as a mere tool, it either does not

20 AGER 2017: 292.

21 AGER 2017: 310. But see also GRANT 1965, who on the basis of similar assumptions comes to very different conclusions.

22 ECKSTEIN 2006. See GAZZANO, this volume, p. 50–52 for further details and reflections.

need to be framed at all (it suffices to study diplomatic encounters and investigate their effects on geopolitical events) or should be described in terms of the treaties, organisations, and laws that polities use to deploy it. And indeed, vast and diverse as it is, scholarship on ancient diplomacy seems to have followed these two general paths.

On the one hand, many historians have focussed on the diplomatic history of selected periods and events or the role and prerogatives of ambassadors and envoys; these tendencies have framed research also in recent years, in several important studies of different regions and epochs.[23] Moreover, in line with the general tendency to see diplomacy as a field as well as a tool of politics that is opposed to war and conflict, scholars have sometimes equated it with peace initiatives,[24] or at least seen it as a contribution to non-violent politics.[25] Interesting as it may be, this perspective does not sit comfortably with the elements of conflict, threats or dishonesty that characterise several of the diplomatic encounters recorded in antiquity (which sometimes seem more suited to paving the way for, rather than preventing, armed conflict) and therefore requires reworking.

On the other hand, there exists a more legalistic perspective, which attempts to inscribe diplomatic contact within a widely acknowledged set of norms, a kind of early international law. This is true for all important forms of regulated interstate behaviour, beginning in the Bronze Age and spanning all antiquity, especially in Greece and Rome.[26] Broader approaches have tended to argue for the existence of a wider system that served as a legal framework for ancient diplomatic actors.[27]

Ancient understandings of diplomatic interaction, however, did not draw as sharp a distinction between laws, customs, religious rituals, and routinised behaviour as we do today. Some scholars have attempted more inclusive approaches for analysing the common features or patterns of ancient diplomatic encounters. In 2007, for example, Polly Low showed that to focus exclusively on the calculations of power and advantage that motivate political actors is inadequate for understanding ancient diplomacy.[28]

23 See e. g. LIVERANI 2001; PODANY 2010 (on the Near East); RUBERTO 2009; BROSIUS 2015; HYLAND 2018 (on the Achaemenid Empire); PICCIRILLI 2002; WILKER 2012; GAZZANO 2020 (on Greece); GRAINGER 2019 and AULIARD 2006 (on the Hellenistic kingdoms and the Roman Republic); WENDT (CH.) 2008 (on Rome between the 1st c. BC and the 1st c. AD).

24 BILLER/OLSHAUSEN 1979: 1: "[D]ie Gesamtheit der Bemühungen souveräner Staaten um die friedliche Gestaltung internationaler Beziehungen".

25 AGER 2017: 293, for instance, chooses to define 'diplomacy' as "the mostly nonviolent means by which inter-polity relations are established and managed"; cf. the definition of BERRIDGE 2015: 1 (note 14 above).

26 See e. g. PALLAVIDINI 2016 on Hittite diplomacy, *proxenia* (e. g. MAREK 1984), *symmachiai/foedera* (e. g. BALTRUSCH 1994; RICH 2008), *xenia/hospitium* (e. g. HERMAN 1987; NICOLS 2016), *philia/amicitia* (e. g. KONSTAN 1997; BURTON 2011), *pistis/fides* (e. g. CALDERONE 1964; GRUEN 1982); *syngeneia/consanguinitas* (e. g. JONES 1999; CURTY 2005; FRAGOULAKI 2013).

27 See in general BALTRUSCH 2008; BEDERMAN 2009.

28 LOW 2007: 7–32. Cf. also the balanced approach of GIOVANNINI 2007.

Paul Burton has used a more constructivist model to introduce an ideological variable (*amicitia*) into his analysis of Graeco-Roman relations between 353 and 146 BC, and study its impact on diplomatic negotiations alongside considerations of *Realpolitik*.[29] Signs of a renewal have also recently emerged in the legalistic branch of scholarship: Emiliano Buis has undertaken a redefinition of 'international law' as applied to ancient Greek diplomacy, now understood in terms of 'normativity' through an interdisciplinary perspective that combines legal, religious, moral, political, and performative dimensions.[30] These theoretical impulses have accompanied a renewed interest in the practices, gestures, and formulas that regularly appear in ancient diplomatic encounters, an interest that has been growing for the last two decades.[31]

Shaping Good Faith draws on both these strands, combining attention to the ritual and discursive practices that comprised ancient diplomacy as a code of communication with an approach to diplomatic good faith informed by newer IR research perspectives. In other words, 'diplomacy' will be understood not as a simple instrument for conducting international relations or as a mere 'practice',[32] but rather as a diversified toolbox, a system of meaningful procedures with a variety of options that the actors can select from, but also need to weigh against one another. Legal institutions play as important a role as gestures, performative aspects as important as political calculations. To be sure, one does not need to shift attention entirely away from either *Realpolitik* or power ideologies if one's focus is diplomatic ritual language. It is clear that the goals pursued by diplomats shaped diplomatic etiquette as much as diplomatic etiquette shaped their path to those goals. From the historian's point of view, it is the tension between the diplomatic actors, the protocols they had to follow, their concrete goals, the roles they play (that is, their performances), and their personal psychological attachment to such roles that set events in motion. In the next paragraph, we shall show how diplomatic good faith can be used as a theoretical pivot for an enquiry into this tension.

Good faith between parties, whether genuine or simulated, is a *sine qua non* of diplomatic agreements. To pledge good faith means that one promises to be honest and

29 BURTON 2011. Burton's reading of Roman *amicitia* might be considered over-optimistic. Nonetheless, he has demonstrated that concepts in ancient foreign policy can benefit from being studied within their wider cultural framework. See also BALTRUSCH 2008: 113, 168; COŞKUN 2017. Cf. LEBOW 2001 for a constructivist reading of Thucydides.

30 BUIS 2018.

31 See BAYLISS 2013 and SCHARFF 2016 on oath-ceremonies in Greek diplomacy; GRAINGER 2019: 9–72 on the Hellenistic states; GRASS/STOUDER 2015 on Rome. With regard to Greece, see also the seminal works on interpersonal ritual practices that appear in political interactions by HERMAN 1987 (on Greek *xenia*), MITCHELL 1997; WAGNER-HASEL 2000 (on Greek gift-making). Cf. FARAONE 1993 and LAFONT 1997 on oath-ceremonies and their political use in the ancient Near East; KNIPPSCHILD 2004 and MARI 2012 for Achaemenid Persia.

32 Cf. e. g. VLASSOPOULOS 2013 who, although proposing a refreshing approach to ancient intercultural communication, still treats diplomacy as a "practice" (p. 135–138).

reliable with regard to an agreement that one has committed to honour. This notwithstanding, good faith is a concept that changes depending on one's perspective. On the one hand, the multi-faceted character of good faith is often exploited by ancient authors who relate specific diplomatic encounters to convey partisan impressions, and was surely exploited as well by diplomatic actors themselves (according to the context in which they operated). On the other hand, it is the complexity of the concept that provides the historian with many angles of enquiry, including its legal implementation, its effectiveness in creating lasting bonds, its moral implications, its psychological impact, and so forth. In order to use diplomatic good faith as a working category, it is useful to proceed from its performative aspect.[33] Seen in this light, good faith benefits greatly from a general understanding of diplomacy as a social institution (that is, as the social representation with actors, rules, and roles made up of ritual and discursive practices as outlined above). To provide an illustration of how this can work, let us present a hypothetical successful agreement (that should, of course, be used as a pattern against which to contrast more complicated cases).

1.– When the parties meet, they first need to distribute the roles, acknowledge reciprocal positions, and hence define a space of safe, if temporary, communication. The establishment of such a basis for preliminary understanding, which we might call 'operational good faith', is shaped through a set of practices and formulas that show reciprocal respect and an openness to negotiate (e. g. a handshake or the use of respectful forms of address). Good faith between polities accordingly emerges from a performance. At this stage, it does not require any link to the emotional or moral spheres, for these values depend on an attribution that each negotiator makes depending on their degree of psychological identification with the powers and culture they represent.[34]

2.– Assuming that these preliminaries are successfully carried out, the parties start negotiating in order to determine possible agreements. One's objective, to be sure, does not need to be an agreement. Sometimes, for example, the parties can use diplomacy to establish common frameworks and rules within which to wage war against each other. Yet more often, dialogue is pursued either because the parties genuinely prefer a peaceful settlement over conflict, or in order to delay conflict so as to gain some advantage. In either case, the outcome indicated by negotiators as their main goal is likely to be the conclusion of a lasting arrangement. Indeed, if and when the latter is achieved, it can in turn consolidate good faith and make it long-lasting by institutionalising the space for peaceful dialogue that it represents.[35]

33 On performance in ancient (Greek) diplomacy, see RUBINSTEIN 2013; GAZZANO 2016: 123–140.

34 Consider, for example, the Athenian Alcibiades acting on behalf of the Persian satrap Tissaphernes (PETIT 1997: 140–144).

35 Social space – it has been argued – can be called 'institutionalised' when "there exists a widely shared system of procedures to define who actors are, how they make sense of each other's actions, and what types of action are possible" (STONE SWEET/FLIEGSTEIN/SANDHOLTZ 2001: 12). JÖNSSON/HALL 2005: 40 argue that modern formal organisations (the embassy system, the

3.– Negotiations consist of a fabric of discourse and behaviours that rest on a bedrock of expectations, which in turn depend on each party's assessment of the existing power relationship. Negotiators embed their tangible reasons for seeking an agreement (real mutual benefit, fear of losing a potential war, wish to delay a war, etc.) into a number of rhetorical, legal, and often moralistic arguments in order to add ethical, emotive, and psychological constraints to the treaty as well as to prepare the ground for casting moral responsibility on the other party in case of breaches. The achievement of concrete goals relies on the discourse that surrounds them, while interests and performance intersect and become irreversibly intertwined. From an interpretative point of view, there is no way of keeping an actor's tangible reasons and aims entirely separate from the role they perform during the diplomatic interaction. The preservation of that role, that is, the need to show that their discursive and behavioural practices represent the truth becomes itself a crucial goal for the negotiator, both during the talks and later, when it comes time to account for negotiations and their outcomes.

4.– Through this process, having arisen from ritual, good faith is understood *a posteriori* in ideological, moral, and emotive terms as a *value* that ought to be maintained for any agreement to persist (assuming that the parties want it to persist). Yet as we have seen above when comparing Persian, Greek, and Roman concepts of good faith, values are often culture-specific. This is why, heuristically, the circle only closes when culturally divergent conceptions of good faith become basic components of the 'operational good-faith' formula that negotiators need as a basis for diplomatic contact (pt. 1 above).

To sum up, diplomacy can be regarded as a ritual and discursive script through which to shape, challenge, and synthesise different concepts of good faith from various cultural representations. The role of ritual practices in the process is crucial to this understanding of diplomatic good faith. As a performative principle, diplomatic good faith can be studied through the diplomatic practices that forge it. These can enable effective communication between the parties and provide a basis on which to reach lasting agreements; they may also fail to do so due to cultural misunderstanding(s) or calculated duplicity intended to make the most out of the other party's good faith; and, of course, depending on the parties' goals, an inherent ambiguity may simply allow negotiators to retain flexibility and later disown a covenant while placing themselves in a position of moral superiority. Accordingly, an effective method for assessing the importance of enduring good faith in early 'international relations', alongside the guar-

UN, etc.) are merely one possible form of diplomatic institutionalisation; another is a set of enforced laws and regulations; yet another is "a set of shared symbols and references". We should add that such forms of institutionalisation do not correspond to phases of an evolutionary process: positive law is not necessarily more sophisticated than ritual or routinised behaviour; moreover, the edges of these concepts overlap, and in practice different forms of institutionalisation always exist simultaneously.

antees that were used to inspire fear in potential wrongdoers, is to search for traces of disturbances (or the opposite, that is, successful relationships based on good faith) in the documented negotiating processes. The contributions of this volume try to achieve this result while analysing different diplomatic situations and adopting various original perspectives on them.

Sebastian Scharff opens our survey with an analysis of the role of ritual oaths in ancient Greek treaty-making, beginning from the diplomatic oath's first attestations in the *Iliad*. Scharff breaks down the oath-ceremony into its basic constituents and explains these in terms of their religious, anthropological, and social function as deterrents to future breaches of the agreement. On this basis, Scharff questions the effectiveness of oaths as a diplomatic guarantee as well as their ability to mirror the power relationship between the contracting parties. By highlighting the way the constraints added by oaths were often flexibly designed in order to fill potential loopholes in treaties, Scharff's paper elucidates the double nature of ritual diplomatic practices, which gave negotiations a religious dimension while also having a tangible impact on the resulting treaties.

Francesca Gazzano extends the same questions to discursive practices, the enquiry of which she embeds in a theoretical discussion of different IR theories. Her focus is Greek envoys' persuasive speeches before foreign audiences of other *poleis*, which she compares to a recent trend in 21st-century scholarship on diplomacy, namely Public Diplomacy. Insofar as it relies on an impression of credibility, persuasion of the other party is the key to good faith (as the very etymology of Greek πειθώ and πίστις shows). Yet Gazzano insists on the circular nature of this relationship, as credibility can also stem from continuous good faith between the parties. This is why her study is centred on an especially suggestive and recurrent rhetorical strategy: recalling the past in diplomatic speeches. Greek envoys, she argues, attempted to create bonds of diplomatic good faith by evoking selected memories shared by the concerned communities. The picture grows more and more stimulating as Gazzano adds layers of complexity to her reasoning by assessing the role of historiographical biases in the narratives of the ancient sources for the speeches under investigation.

Intercultural diplomacy and diplomatic rituals shared by an area larger than mainland Greece enter the discussion with *Dominique Lenfant*'s assessment of the role of personal guest-friendship bonds (Gr. ξενία) in relationships between Greeks cities and the Achaemenid Empire. A social institution akin to that which had filled Greece with a network of mutual obligations and exchanges among elite members of different *poleis* did exist in the Achaemenid Empire, as the numerous examples of guest-friendships between Greeks and Persians surveyed by Lenfant attest. These went beyond official hierarchies, linking Greek personalities with Achaemenid satraps, princes, and even kings, and were also exploited to pave the way for diplomatic encounters.

The dialogue between the Greeks and the Persians or their Anatolian client peoples was rich in diplomatic practices, as shown by *Christopher Tuplin* in his survey of

diplomatic events in Xenophon's *Anabasis*. Tuplin provides a catalogue of no fewer than seventy diplomatic interactions, which he surveys to illustrate the great variety of combinations that the ritual framework of diplomacy allowed. Once again, diplomatic etiquette shows up as a flexible script that negotiators could adapt to both the contexts in which they operated and to their own goals. Ancient authors, while narrating the events, can also exploit this flexibility for various purposes: in the case of *Anabasis* (as Tuplin suggests) it allows Xenophon not only to produce an engagingly variegated literary texture but also to make us question how far 'diplomacy' is actually distinct from other types of political enterprise.

With *Edith Foster*'s paper, we enter the realm of written diplomacy and its conventions. Her paper focusses on Thucydides' record of a letter that the Great King Artaxerxes I addressed to the Spartans, but which was intercepted by the Athenians. Foster analyses Thucydides' summary of the King's language to show that the King uses an insistence on the proper performance of diplomatic protocols to create a context of 'operational good faith' for his future negotiations with the Spartans. She also questions the adequacy of previous interpretations of this letter, which do not take its diplomatic strategies into account.

This topic is continued by *Francesco Mari*, who examines the exchange of letters between Alexander the Great and the Persian king Darius III after Alexander's victory at Issus. Written diplomacy between kings implied the observance of a customary protocol made up of respect formulas. Returning to the issue of public diplomacy and the role held by the expected audiences of the letters, Mari reflects on the way intentional breaches of protocol (with special attention to forms of address) could be exploited to cast propagandistic images of the parties involved when the letters were made public. Prior to that, however, Mari questions the reliability of the extant traditions surrounding the events, weighing the historical facts (as far as we can reconstruct these from the sources) against propagandistic elements deliberately embedded in the narrative of Alexander's campaigns.

The troubled relationships among the Hellenistic kingdoms were thrown into greater disarray by the arrival of Rome on the international scene. As we have seen, the Roman view of good faith and diplomatic commitment did not always coincide with that of her Eastern interlocutors. *Felix Maier* offers an insightful interpretation of the sudden outbreak of the third Macedonian War. Neither Rome nor king Philip V wanted war, Maier argues, yet they ended up opening hostilities as a result of multiple failings in diplomatic understanding. Drawing on modern decision theory and its cognitive models, Maier shows how, in the months that preceded the war, various factors coincided to distort mutual perceptions in Rome and Macedonia, leading each party to doubt the other's good faith and hence any pre-existing agreements (without any actual diplomacy taking place).

It is not impossible that intentional breaches of diplomatic etiquette outnumber misunderstandings in Rome's diplomatic history. Popilius Laenas is not an isolated case. As

Christian Wendt claims in the final paper of this collection, the Roman envoy to Alexandria may be merely one link in a chain of individual actors who, depending on the political developments of their times, consciously disregarded expectations in an attempt to redefine a diplomatic relationship in Rome's (or their own) favour. Wendt uncovers this pattern by juxtaposing three case studies of Romano-Parthian diplomacy from Sulla to Augustus, where deliberate alterations of ritual or discursive protocols led to a role redefinition among the concerned parties (of which diplomatic failure was a side effect). Wendt's analysis not only highlights the importance of individual performances of the ritual script – performances that could be interpreted or altered to convey meaningful messages – but also stresses the importance of the narrative frameworks in which the accounts of relevant diplomatic encounters are embedded. In addition to the events themselves, these frameworks can contain cultural and even ideological elements that weave distinct episodes or individual choices into a greater story – in this case, the story of Rome's ascension thanks to, or despite, the special character of her leaders.

The contributions gathered within *Shaping Good Faith* provide a multi-faceted, albeit preliminary, identikit of ancient diplomatic good faith. We hope that, taken together, they will underscore the benefits that a vantage point on ancient diplomacy through good faith can offer. While keeping the focus on a single element and its components, the research perspective that we propose has allowed the contributors to investigate good faith from many different angles: it combines *Realpolitik*, the initiative and personality of individuals, as well as cultural beliefs and ideology, into a complex whole that is bound together by ritual and discursive patterns. We hope that this will provide a more complex and nuanced picture of ancient diplomacy.

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