

## *The Great Powers' Club*

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### International Relations in the Amarna Age: Some Interpretive Trends

Since the discovery of the Amarna Letters in 1887, it has become clear that the ancient Near Eastern polities maintained intensive and sophisticated relations among themselves, and that such relations were formalized according to standard procedures. Not by chance, the first presentation of those documents to the English-speaking world bore the title “Oriental Diplomacy,” and the obvious similarity of ancient and modern procedures was emphasized.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of the nineteenth century, nothing similar was known for other periods of ancient Oriental history. When additional documents were recovered—in the Hittite capital of Boghazköi<sup>2</sup> and in the Syrian city-states of Ugarit<sup>3</sup> and Alalakh<sup>4</sup>—the label “Amarna Age,” besides referring to its precise chronological limits, was also used in a wider sense, in order to define the entire Late Bronze period (ca. 1550–1200 B.C.E.), especially when dealing with international relations.

In the meantime, however, other international networks, especially from earlier periods, happened to be brought to light by the discovery of rich archives, so that scholars started speaking about a “Mari Age” in the eighteenth century<sup>5</sup> and, more recently, of an “Ebla Age” in the twenty-fourth century.<sup>6</sup> The Amarna Letters cannot any longer be considered exceptional: a formalized system of international relations existed through the entire course of ancient Near Eastern history, while the quality and amount of the extant data varies, due to the obvious vagaries in the archaeological recovery of cuneiform tablets.

While the interpretation of the Amarna Letters as diplomatic documents

has always been current among ancient Near Eastern historians, scholars in the field of international relations, dealing basically with our contemporary world, had and still have obvious problems with awareness of the existence of such remote material and with acceptance of its relevance to their own discipline. Nevertheless, use of the Amarna (and similar) texts in the framework of general histories of ancient diplomacy has been an established fact at least since Numelin's *Beginnings of Diplomacy*.

The problem has become more relevant after World War II and the subsequent process of decolonization. As a side effect of major political and economic changes, the historical and social sciences had to change their paradigms, transforming themselves from Eurocentric to multicentric. This is true both of ancient history and of international relations: the emergence of different traditions, the enlargement of data in space and backward in time, require a complete rethinking of the very bases of those disciplines. The study of international relations in the framework of political sciences had been founded on contemporary data and a strictly Eurocentric tradition — both presuppositions now about to be put in doubt. The study of the Amarna Letters is just one contribution (and a minor one at that) that can help us to generate an enlarged and historically deepened view of interstate relations.

In such a transformation, it might be useful to make reference to a well-known historiographical debate about the interpretation of ancient economies in terms that have been labeled “modernist” and “primitivist,” a dilemma that can be applied to the study of ancient political relations as well.<sup>7</sup> The modernist approach, largely predominant in the first half of our century, presumed that the “laws” regulating economic (or in our case, political) relations, and reconstructed on the sole basis of modern (or even strictly contemporary) evidence, are valid for the history of mankind. The primitivist approach, on the other hand, presumes that every society, or at least every evolutionary stage, has its own laws, so that an analysis of ancient economy in terms of modern market would be largely deceptive.

To some extent, this is also true for our topic: an implicitly modernist approach, especially by scholars with juridical training, considered the legal documents, including international documents like treaties and letters, in the framework of a juridical terminology and conceptualization that had been built on a tradition continuing from Roman law to modern laws and procedures.<sup>8</sup> Oriental diplomacy received rather poor treatment in such a context, as characterized by a prevalent despotic (and therefore selfish) form of rule and by an endemic bent for bargaining and deception.

It was during the 1960s, in connection with already mentioned trend toward decolonization and multipolarity, that new vistas were transferred

from disciplines such as semiotics, political anthropology, and economic anthropology to the study of ancient Near Eastern texts, including the Amarna Letters. A part of those studies, however, were produced by our "Rome school" and published in Italian, so that they remained partly unknown or undervalued in the English-speaking world.<sup>9</sup> Only recently have they been more widely accepted and used.

The previously mentioned dilemma between a modernist and a primitivist reading of our data, is also related to the literary form of the texts. A strictly juridical analysis has obviously been privileged in the case of international treaties, whereas letters would appear better suited to a kind of decoding that takes due account of their embeddedness in the social setting of their time. The discussion below shows that the Amarna Letters are basically built on a small-scale model, are of a rather primitive outlook and of a social rather than a properly political nature, so their interpretation can reach a deeper level by taking into account such an anthropological approach. However, recourse to ethnographic parallels, while certainly useful for enlarging the set of possible scenarios and for understanding alien behavior,<sup>10</sup> should not be used to lower the level, scale, and formalization of the ancient Near Eastern states so as to assimilate them to much simpler and smaller tribal communities or embryonic polities. Comparison must be a tool for understanding, not a rationale for leveling.

The peculiar character of the epistolary documents is more easily understood by contrasting it with other kinds of texts.<sup>11</sup> On the one hand, the concepts of border, tribute, alliance, political dependence, etc., are defined in the properly juridical texts (especially the international treaties) in precise and unequivocal terms and with the evident aim of establishing fixed reference points for possible litigation. On the other hand, different kinds of texts have different purposes, different semiological configurations, and deserve a different kind of analysis. Royal inscriptions, as is well known, deal with the very same subjects of war and peace, border and tribute, but with the aim of getting political acceptance. Therefore, they are best analyzed in terms of propaganda or, more generally, of persuasive messages.

As for letters, they also belong to the class of persuasive messages (although quite distinct from the royal inscriptions), and their statements cannot be taken at face value, as statements of fact.<sup>12</sup> In decoding a letter, especially a diplomatic letter, the logic and procedures of bargaining, of rhetorical argument, of emotional metaphors, are much more apposite than a strictly juridical logic.

### Family Metaphors and the “Enlarged Village”

It is immediately evident, even on a cursory reading of the Amarna Letters exchanged between “Great Kings,”<sup>13</sup> that international relations were shaped on the model of interpersonal relations currently obtaining at the level of face-to-face communities: family or village or neighborhood.<sup>14</sup> Since time immemorial, we presume, relations with external groups had taken place in forms like hospitality, intermarriage, and exchange of services and goods, whereby the procedures of inner relationships in daily life were reused, in a slightly modified form, in order to fulfill a new and rarer purpose.

The family metaphor is immediately evident in the pervasive use of the term “my brother” (*ahī*) to address the partner (the “my father” (*abī*) metaphor being reserved for a more aged partner). Yet the most suitable model for external relations could not be the nuclear family or the self-sufficient household but rather the small community, the village or neighborhood or clan within which the individual families would interact. From the most trivial but socially meaningful usage, to “ask (news of) the health” (*šulma ša’ālu*) of the partner (plus his wife, children, belongings, etc.),<sup>15</sup> to the most demanding negotiations for interdynastic marriages, the interpersonal level is the only one in use. No other “code” has been introduced to regulate interstate, strictly political relations.

Such a state of affairs is only too obvious in the case (the only one attested in antiquity) of patrimonial states, belonging to the person and family of the king and identified with him. It is also true that the actual practice of intermarriage among the royal houses made the “brotherhood” terminology something more than an abstract metaphor.<sup>16</sup> Yet sometimes we get the impression that the “enlarged village” syndrome was conditioning the relationships well beyond its expressive use.

EA 7, from the Babylonian king Burna-Buriash to Akhenaten, is representative of such a syndrome. The usual exchange of greetings (the above-mentioned *šulma ša’ālu* formula), which was normally perceived as a pure formality, is here enlarged and elaborated as if Pharaoh should in fact know that the Babylonian king had been sick.<sup>17</sup> The distance (more than 2,000 km) is eliminated in order to address the partner with a complaint (for not sending any message wishing him a quick recovery) that would be perfectly appropriate for social interrelationships in the limited environment of village or neighborhood but is only paradoxical in a long-distance epistolary exchange.

Exactly the same oddity is to be found in EA 3, the protest by the Babylonian king Kadashman-Enlil at not having been invited to a feast in the

Egyptian residency at Amarna, and in his demonstrative counterinvitation of Pharaoh to a feast at Babylon.<sup>18</sup> This kind of failure of reciprocity, impoliteness, and lack of regard is a constant problem in a small-scale society but is odd when transferred to relations between such distant courts.

The same could apply to the refusal by the Babylonian king in still another letter (EA 11:21–22) to send the bride with too small an escort: “My neighboring kings [would say], ‘They have transported the daughter of a Great King to Egypt in five chariots (only)!’ ” It is as if the other kings were looking out of their windows at the wedding party passing by and judging its economic and social relevance.

Did Burna-Buriash really think that Pharaoh lived in the next block? The problem of real distance is in fact raised in the same letter, and “specialists,” that is, messengers (both Egyptian and Babylonian) have to confirm to the apparently ignorant Babylonian king that Egypt is indeed a distant country, and that it takes months to send news and receive answers. Burna-Buriash officially accepts the messengers’ testimony and consequently decides to pardon Pharaoh’s lack of regard. Of course, he must have been well aware beforehand that the messengers’ trip took months and that Egypt was quite a distant country. And of course the whole *mise-en-scène* is aimed at the usual business of bargaining, arguing, and so on. All this is quite obvious, but the small-scale model was so pervasive as to make people imagine that such unbelievable doubts were, if not true, at least likely.

### Theoretical Outline

Whatever expressive level is adopted, ranging from strictly juridical formulations to common-life metaphors, the existence of a theoretical reference system seems evident. Since I have dealt at length with such a system elsewhere, I provide here only an essential outline.

#### *Time*

The basic pattern “from good—through evil—to good” is present, even pervasive. This means in practice relegating the positive model of behavior to a past that is largely atemporal, even when apparently set in historical events.<sup>19</sup> Possible negative incidents are set in the intermediate phase of a recent past and must now be quickly surmounted. Present (and future) relationships must be better than before (e.g., gifts must be multiplied, love must be increased).<sup>20</sup> This becomes particularly evident when a new part-

nership was established or renewed, following the enthronement of a new king—a case especially well documented in the Amarna archive, whose time span includes the enthronement of Akhenaten.<sup>21</sup>

### *Space*

The border, both in its technical definition and in its “cosmological” implications, has a paramount relevance in treaties and royal inscriptions.<sup>22</sup> But in letters dealing with the normal conduct of affairs, the most evident spatial feature is territoriality. The practical principles of territoriality, in a multi-centered world, are monopoly of taxation and monopoly of responsibilities.<sup>23</sup> The latter is especially represented in the Amarna Letters, in connection with international lawsuits (EA 7:73–82; EA 8; EA 16:37–42; EA 38).

### *Protagonists*

The two-level arrangement of polities (great vs. small kingdoms), which is clearly reflected in the procedures regulating the above-mentioned lawsuits,<sup>24</sup> sets the stage for a limited membership of the so-called Great Powers’ Club.<sup>25</sup> Problems of diachronic change (especially the decline of Mittani and the rise of Assyria) and of marginality (e.g., the Mycenaean world) receive considerable attention in other documents from the Late Bronze Age, in its wider sense, but are present only incidentally in the Amarna Letters because of the restricted time span of that archive.

### *Content of Relationships*

Lévi-Strauss’s trio of items of exchange in human relationships—messages, gifts, and women—is well represented in the Amarna Letters. In a sense, it might seem that the exchange of messages is instrumental in the conduct of the other two; goods are also exchanged especially in connection with marriage. Yet every kind of exchange has a worth of its own; moreover, all are ultimately pursued as part of the supreme purpose (see below).

### *The Basic Principle*

The exchange makes pervasive even obsessive reference to the basic principle of reciprocity.<sup>26</sup> The very obsessive insistence on the reciprocal nature of relationships has probably something to do with doubts about its effective

observance. The evident existence of mental reservations (by the Egyptian side; see below), however, does not affect too much its theoretical acceptance as the only possible starting point for the functioning of an international community.

### *The Purpose*

We could rationalize that the supreme purpose is to avoid wars, but this is not evidenced by the Letters. These point to keeping in contact as the final end of diplomatic relations, as an end endowed with a value of its own.<sup>27</sup> In the definition of the supreme purpose, some theoretical contradictions appear between self-sufficiency and exchange, between centralism and multipolarity, and between prestige and interest.<sup>28</sup>

### *Sanctions*

Divine sanctions are in the fore in the treaties and other normative texts; and a military sanction is attested in royal inscriptions as the obvious outcome for major disagreements. Note that the “trial by battle” theory of war as a divine judgement strictly connects the two kinds of sanctions.<sup>29</sup> Yet in the Letters, divine and military sanctions do not feature. The only apparent sanction is the end of relationships themselves (EA 8:30–33). This is due, first, to the letters being related to the normal conduct of affairs and, second, to a conceptual inability to deepen consciousness beyond the simple ascertainment of the existence of the system itself (see above).

### *Operative Procedures*

The enlargement of the village perspective to include the entire Near East—the entire *oikumene* as conceived in the Late Bronze age—brings about the solution of practical problems. First is the pace of diplomatic contacts.

In comparison with the strictly seasonal structure of Pharaoh's relations with the Syro-Palestinian vassals,<sup>30</sup> the exchange of letters among Great Kings is more flexible, both because the distance is longer and because matters are less essential. However, a basically seasonal pace is necessarily in use, because travel has to avoid the bad season of winter rains. Covering the distance between Amarna (or Thebes) and the Asiatic capital cities cannot take less than a month (to Washukanni) or a month and a half (to Hattusha or Babylon) for a fast courier, and around twice that (two to three months) for a caravan of

loaded donkeys. So it is evident that a two-way trip, including time for negotiating and for preparing the return caravan, took an entire year, unless there was a particular reason for pressure.<sup>31</sup>

Flexibility is mostly related to an even slower pace of journeys, with messengers/ambassadors detained for an entire year or even for several years.<sup>32</sup> The rules of hospitality that protect the messenger during his stay abroad also prevent him from leaving without the host's consent: "What are messengers? Unless they are birds, are they going to fly and go away?" (EA 28:2). Should detention be protracted, however, contacts were pursued by different persons.

The objective slowness of the journeys, basically for technological reasons, and the possible additional delay for political reasons, are exacerbated by the practice of repeated bargaining, which makes it almost impossible to resolve a transaction in only two "moves," request and acceptance. Such a problem is in fact perceived as dramatic by those partners of Egypt who were interested in the commercial aspects, namely, Assyria and Alashia. (The Assyrian king explicitly protests against a system so overelaborate that "it does not even cover the cost of the journeys.")<sup>33</sup> The other partners, however, seem happy enough with the current slow pace, being interested rather in the political aspects of the relationship, aspects that are better satisfied by endless negotiations than by efficient and fast arrangements.

An economy of journeys is also evident in the occasional habit of entrusting merchants with official state letters, a use attested for Babylonia (Šalmu is a "merchant" in EA 11:Rs. 8, but a "messenger" in EA 7:73) and for Cyprus (EA 39–40). The precise status of the personnel entrusted with carrying letters seems variable but generally proportionate to the matter in hand: dynastic marriages are discussed by high-ranking "ambassadors" (like the famous Keliya and Mane who negotiated the Mittanian marriage), whereas trivial problems can be entrusted to merchants. Routine letters are delivered by anonymous professional couriers.<sup>34</sup> A mismatch between the rank of the messenger and the relevance of the subject matter gives rise to open disputes.<sup>35</sup>

Messengers and ambassadors, when leaving the territory of their own community and traveling through a hostile or at least ambiguous space, were to a reasonable extent protected by the laws of hospitality (especially at their final destination) but nevertheless subject to claims of interception and tolls by local potentates (especially during the journey). Petty kings and tribal chieftains would want to profit from the international trade passing through their lands, and we have explicit attestations of similar attempts (cf. esp. EA 7:73–82; EA 8:13–29). But the Great Kings were generally able to reaffirm their higher authority by granting the messengers a protection that was the

practical outcome of their “monopoly of responsibility.” Safe conducts and letters of warning are the customary tools for preventing problems with the local chiefs (EA 30; EA 255).

Similar “normal” tools were not always enough, however. Even the local kings were not (or not always) in full control of their respective territories. Remote villages, pastoral tribes, and bands of outcasts were not infrequently responsible for robberies and murders—and the merchants’ caravans were, of course, an especially tempting prey. These incidents were dealt with by the principle of objective responsibility (according to whose territory is in question) and of a hierarchical pyramid of judicial competence. In the Amarna Letters, we have hints at this system, which is more extensively documented in the texts from Ugarit.<sup>36</sup>

In the practical running of the entire system, written documents, ranging from formal treaties to letters, also play a role. That role does not contradict the customary nature of rules, nor their family or neighborhood models, nor the mostly oral channels of negotiation. The material aspect of a written document provides an additional feature for validation and use. Texts are stored in archives, to be retrieved, checked, and even quoted in case of need, to enforce the burden of tradition with a more precise apparatus of quotations. The frequent recourse in written replies to literal quotations from the original message, on the one hand, emphasizes the oral (dialogue-like) model of negotiation but, on the other, makes the relevance (in terms of juridical validation) of the written words evident.

Without doubt, recourse to written documents and to a “third” language of common acceptance (Babylonian) singles out the inner core of the civilized *oikumene* from its looser periphery, where barbarian peoples do not write, do not keep archives, and practically do not speak (because they speak incomprehensible languages), so that the most convenient pattern for interaction is the extreme model of “silent trade”—the exact opposite of the verbose negotiations of the Amarna letters.

### Coping with Contentiousness

In the framework of the theoretical principles and practical procedures outlined above, the Amarna Letters are largely concerned with the management of disputes between partners. Contentiousness of this nature is partly ceremonial, if intended to establish one’s superior role in the negotiation, and partly utilitarian, if intended to obtain major economic benefits.<sup>37</sup> In any case, it is so pervasive that it must be considered not simply a deviation from the norm but a feature (and a characteristic one at that) of the system itself.

We can distinguish between a “micro-contentiousness” within a single negotiation and a “macro-contentiousness” that is the result of a confrontation between major traditions and different ideologies. Micro-contentiousness is best evidenced by comparing the norms of hospitality and gift exchange (and of human interaction in general) with their practical application — or, rather, inversion — in the Amarna Letters.<sup>38</sup> The fundamental norms are that gifts, like hospitality, cannot be asked for, must be given, must be accepted and appreciated, and must be reciprocated, in an increased amount.

*Gifts Cannot Be Asked For*

In the Amarna Letters there is an insistent recourse to direct requests for gifts. A “guilty conscience” is evident in the alleging (or fabrication) of excuses, which in a sense allow the disqualifying act of asking to be bypassed.<sup>39</sup> The extreme point is reached by stating that the requested item will be refused if delivered too late to be used for the alleged purpose (EA 4:36–50). The fictional character of the alleged purposes is apparent from their long use through time, even their inheritance from king to king.

*Gifts Must Be Given (in a disinterested way)*

In the Letters and related documents, besides and in contrast to general statements of a disinterested attitude in gift-giving, a true and proper stereotyped procedure is in use for not giving, or at least for postponing giving.<sup>40</sup> Also, in this case, a guilty conscience is made apparent by the use of obvious “diplomatic” excuses, excuses so obvious that the addressee must have been fully aware of their falsity.<sup>41</sup> The procedure is evidently used in order to match the official model of gift-giving with the real matter of commercial transactions. Delay is, in fact, used to negotiate more favorable terms of exchange.

*Gifts Must Be Accepted and Appreciated*

In the Letters, gifts obviously are accepted but are rarely appreciated. The quality and amount of the items received are frequently disputed, especially Egyptian shipments of gold or golden objects, the Egyptian gold being dismissed by the Asiatic kings from the outset as “common as dust,” “to be simply gathered up from the ground” (EA 3:15; EA 7:69–72; EA 10:19–20; EA 20:46–59; EA 29:70–75). Also, in this case, it is evident that a strictly commercial evaluation interferes with a gift-exchange fiction: the Egyptian gold objects smelted into ingots and weighed on their arrival in Babylon or

Washukanni are the clearest cases of a much-debased ceremoniality. Yet the gift-giving ideology is perceived in the fact that the dispute is not framed in terms of financial value but of pride and renown.<sup>42</sup>

*Gifts Must Be Reciprocated*

The utopian norm of increased returns is well known and explicitly enunciated as a statement of purpose (EA 35:50–53; EA 19:68–69); in practice, however, the counter gifts seem to be carefully balanced and are postponed in time by slowing down the messengers' journeys. It has been noted that in pre-monetary societies, delay in counter gifts (or counterprestations) fulfills a function analogous in financial terms to interest on capital.<sup>43</sup> Of course, in a long chain of reciprocated gifts and counter gifts, both partners try to get quickly and reciprocate slowly, so that their opposed strategies cancel each other out.

Macro-contentiousness is especially apparent between Egypt on the one side and all the Asiatic kingdoms on the other. This is partly because the Amarna archive, by its very nature and location, polarizes the position of Egypt vs. the rest of the world. If we had letters exchanged between Hatti and Assyria (as we do in the thirteenth century B.C.E.) or between Mittani and Babylonia, we could perhaps point out other motifs of ideological conflict. But it is also true that a basic difference between Egypt and Asia is the real result of long-established different traditions and of unbalanced demographic, military, and economic weight.

The Egyptian refusal to grant its Asiatic partners complete parity in rank is quite evident and is, in fact, a central feature of the entire system. I have already noted that its application to the exchange of women emphasizes its properly ideological character—because women are, of course, available everywhere and do not share the possible ecological idiosyncrasies of other items.<sup>44</sup> In the discussions among the concerned parties, we notice at this point a progressive clarification of the social and ideological reasons, from the Amarna correspondence to the Egyptian-Hittite correspondence at the time of Ramesses II.

In the Amarna Letters the reasons are rather grossly stated. On the one hand, Pharaoh states in absolute terms that “an Egyptian princess has never been given to anybody” (EA 4:6–7) and accuses his Babylonian partner of selling his daughters off for money (EA 1:61). On the other hand, the Babylonian king has recourse to the disqualifying suggestion of disguising a commoner “as if she were a princess” (EA 4:12–13). Both sides seem far from a real understanding of each other's reasons. A century later, in the negotiations

between Ramesses and Hattusili (and especially the latter's wife Pudu-Hepa), the Egyptian refusal of matrimonial reciprocity is duly explained as a symptom of a refusal of parity in rank ("brotherhood," in the terminology of the time). The purpose of an interdynastic marriage, on the other hand, is duly explained by political and social values.<sup>45</sup>

Although the movement of princesses from Egypt to Asia always constituted a problem, the movement of princesses from Asia to Egypt was current practice. But also in this case, two distant ideologies gave rise to misunderstandings and conflicts. The Asiatic princesses, sent to Egypt in order to become first-rank wives and queens (as was usual in inter-Asian dynastic marriages), were added to the pharaonic harem once they arrived and were mixed with a variety of nonroyal wives and concubines. The discussion between Amenhotep and Kadashman-Enlil (EA 1:10–52) about the fate and status of the Babylonian princess raises a central problem — although in practice the discussion is on a rather banal level, the one side raising the question of the "visibility" of the princess, while the other side raises the question of the adequacy of the messengers.

The very same problem of visibility as an expression of correct political relations (i.e., parity) is evident in the parallel discussion about the Babylonian chariots (loaded with gifts) having been mixed with the vassals' chariots (loaded with tribute) in a parade at the Egyptian capital (EA 1:89–92).<sup>46</sup> Here, there is no doubt a problem of audience and media, with a sharp distinction between internal and external messages that is quite revealing as to the aims and implications of the various political texts of the time. But there is also the problem of an ideology (namely, the Egyptian one) that is so deeply rooted in a centralized worldview that it is practically incapable of fully accepting real parity in rank and a real reciprocity in the exchange of goods.

## Conclusions

In summary, apart from possible terminological problems (whereby "inter-state relations" might perhaps be less anachronistic than "international relations"), it is quite evident that the Amarna Letters are the product of an international community of mutually independent polities, whose long-lasting and rather intensive contacts generated precise norms regulating their interactions.

The procedures in use — with a twofold level of formalization, to be used in the juridical and epistolary documents, respectively — are perfectly suited to the level of complexity and the pace of interaction. In particular, the "family" or "neighborhood" metaphors are perfectly suited not only to the

personalized nature of relationships but also, and more significant, to the mix of friendship and rivalry, concord and competition, that is characteristic of similar situations.

The frequent quarrels function as a way of discharging hidden aggressiveness. This is especially connected with a difficult compromise between the motives of prestige regulating the relations of every king with the inner public of his own kingdom and the motives of interest regulating interstate relations. As compared with the purely utilitarian model of barter (or its extreme form, silent trade), the model of "endless quarrel" is better suited to keeping alive sociopolitical relations than to the efficient conduct of affairs.

Recourse to ceremoniousness, to a conventional (and more or less explicitly accepted) code of stereotyped behavior, is effective in singling out a civilized center from a barbarian periphery. A correct way to do things is clearly regulating peace and war, trade and marriages, border disputes and exchange of messages. Such a code of behavior cuts across different cultural traditions, and is the result of a time-honored selection of adjustments and compromises.