



Ideologies of Diplomacy: Rhetoric, Ritual, and Representation in Early Modern England

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In 2008 John Watkins edited a special issue for the *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, “Toward a New Diplomatic History of Medieval and Early Modern Europe,” which initiated a necessary and meaningful assessment of diplomatic studies in premodern Europe.¹ The call for a more nuanced study of diplomacy in the period brought together a group of scholars with a common interest: their essays test and broaden conventional frameworks that generally isolate the study of premodern diplomacy within the confines of diplomatic documentation. In drawing on the multi-disciplinary expertise of the contributors, Watkins’s special issue reevaluates premodern diplomatic studies in a richer and more complex sociocultural landscape that acknowledges and examines the undocumented import of diplomacy-in-the-making. Using interdisciplinary frameworks that take up discussions of gender, semantics, patronage, and race, among others, scholars of New Diplomatic History look beyond the immediacy of documentary evidence to explain the variegated processes of creating and understanding diplomatic discourses in the premodern era. This special issue hews closely to Watkins’s cross-disciplinary aim in a number of ways, but it also offers a response in light of developments in the field since then. The proliferation of scholarly works on New Diplomatic History, quite possibly at its most exciting and dynamic phase, has introduced some very promising contributions, identifying strategic limitations that were considered but not yet thoroughly problematized before.

The current critical impulse for proponents of New Diplomatic History can be traced to a general dissatisfaction with a lapse of innovation and how, for many years, its development has remained out of sync with the wider and ever-growing interdisciplinary developments in the study of early modern Europe. Garrett Mattingly’s *Renaissance Diplomacy* (1955)

and Donald Queller's *The Office of Ambassador in the Middle Ages* (1967) continue to be cited as the pillars of premodern diplomatic inquiry. These works have made significant contributions to our understanding of premodern diplomatic discourse; they have created coherent narratives about how the diplomatic state came to be and how nation states and principalities adapted, utilized, and interpreted their political relationships with foreign princes. For Mattingly, the difference between "old" and "new" diplomacy is characterized by changes in diplomatic practice and thought. He observes, for instance, the emergent new institutions and modes of thinking in fourteenth- and mid-fifteenth-century Italy that formed the basis of early modern statehood. Yet, he is cautious in labeling "this bundle of ways of acting and thinking and feeling" as a "Renaissance State": "[t]o treat the label as if it were an entity, and say that it was generated by another entity, the spirit of the Renaissance, is explanation only in terms of mythology." Instead, Mattingly stresses "the spirit of the Renaissance [which] had among its causes the evolution of the new state."² Furthermore, he also attributes the "new" diplomacy to the transformation of medieval to early modern political frameworks that formalized the creation of the ambassador's office.³ The function of the different types of premodern diplomatic agents (from *nuncios* to resident ambassadors) and their authority, duties, and privileges are expertly covered in Queller's *Office of Ambassador*, though like Mattingly, Queller's primary concern is to trace the creation and then the evolution of the roles of premodern diplomats in relation to the changing needs of the masters they serve.

The various functions of premodern diplomatic agents as official messengers and the roles they play in representing and negotiating on behalf of princes are immensely complex. As New Diplomatic scholars have observed, confining our understanding to the figure of the premodern diplomat and to authorized and documented diplomatic practices can prove limiting and reductive. The preponderance of this methodological approach in earlier scholarship, which privileges power dynamics "*within* individual polities" over "relationships *between* and *among* polities," is not, as Watkins argues, sufficiently grounded in historical contingency.⁴ This one-dimensional perspective is most prevalent in the New Historicist tradition, where isolated and highly selective contextual events are often interpreted as representations of more complex historical realities. More rigorous frameworks for the study of premodern diplomacy must identify and address the nexus of ideas that accompany the subject at hand, keeping in mind that "[t]he history of diplomacy is finally inseparable from parallel histories of

education and literacy, technological innovations, economics, literature and rhetoric, gender, sexuality, and marriage. One story cannot be told fully without reference to others.”⁵

For Timothy Hampton, the symbolic resonances embedded in diplomatic narratives extend well beyond the more formalistic aspects of the ambassador’s office. Diplomatic writings, mediated by numerous explicit and implicit sociopolitical and cultural demands, were integral in framing international negotiations. Negotiation, mediation, and representation implicate “an entire panoply of customs, rituals, and laws governing the movement of bodies through space, the legal inviolability of the ambassador, the relationship between ambassadors and language.” Hampton is especially concerned with analyzing the representations of negotiation and how diplomatic agents used various rhetorical strategies to shape the “diplomatic moment,” or that encounter of “great fragility, when the future is open to chance.”⁶

The study of diplomatic action can also benefit from a broader awareness of premodern global interconnections. For Watkins, “crude” periodizations and the geographical emphasis on Europe as a region isolated from the rest of the world (and even conceptually divided from within religious and dynamic struggle) compromise the diverse, divergent, and overlapping agendas that often characterized international relations.⁷ Watkins’s outline of a new methodology is grounded in a cross-disciplinary approach that embraces international relations theory. This position has since evolved into a more rigorous, innovative, and nuanced version of New Diplomatic Studies. By incorporating various elements of international relations theory in their study of early modern diplomacy, the contributors to this special issue seek to complement existing analyses of early modern diplomatic discourse and the theoretical problems that have come to the fore in recent years.

The heightened interest in early modern diplomacy is highlighted by a number of ambitious international projects and conferences. In 2012, Toby Osborne and his collaborators launched the research network “Translating Cultures: Diplomacy between the Early Modern and Modern Worlds” at the Institute for Medieval and Early Modern Studies at Durham University, in partnership with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Society of Court Studies. The organizers of this project have produced a series of workshops that explore and refine the interdisciplinary study of diplomatic history and theory through early modern cultural exchanges. Robert Anderson (Bath Spa University) and Anna Kalinowska (Polish Academy

of Sciences) run the “Premodern Diplomats Network” (2012) and *Legatio: The Journal for Renaissance and Early Modern Diplomatic Studies*, the only peer-reviewed journal devoted to the field. In addition to its journal, the network has also been hosting scholars of early modern diplomatic studies at its annual conference, “Splendid Encounters,” going into its ninth year in 2020. More recently, Tracey Sowerby (Oxford) and Joanna Craigwood (Cambridge) spearheaded the research network “Textual Ambassadors—Cultures of Diplomacy and Literary Writing in the Early Modern World” (2014). Sowerby and Craigwood are especially keen on exploring the links among literary patronage, literary production, and early modern cultures of diplomacy.⁸ These research initiatives have been instrumental in mapping the rich interpretive possibilities in the communication and mediation of diplomatic practices within and beyond the European world.

The potential for investigating the possibilities and limitations of using diplomatic study as a methodological framework is reflected in the surge of publications produced in the last five years. The scholarship in this area is committed to reconfiguring the self-perceptions of early modern states in relation to an immensely complex global network. Tracey A. Sowerby and Jan Hennings’s *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World* stands out for its global range.⁹ This edited collection addresses the need for a more rigorous comparative approach to historical understanding through its focus on geopolitical tensions. The volume covers an impressive range, from the major stakeholders in Western Europe to Ottoman Hungary and the Principality of Transylvania; from the Adriatic Ragusa to the Mughal empires, and on to Russia. While the formal practices of diplomatic action are central to Sowerby and Hennings’s collection, the emerging importance of women as facilitators of diplomatic action is also highlighted. Florian Kühnel’s article on the ambassadresses Lady Elizabeth Trumbull and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu at the turn of the eighteenth century complements the existing scholarship on courtship and marriage in the interests of political and interdynastic ambitions.¹⁰ The unofficial and less-examined elements that facilitated diplomatic discourse are carefully examined in Robyn Adams and Rosanna Cox’s *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture*. The essays in this volume are distinctive for attending to the behind-the-scenes operations that influenced diplomatic action and contributed to foreign policies. Before rituals of diplomacy could be performed, and before instructions changed hands between royal councils and their diplomatic representatives, a whole cast of lesser-known figures had to gather intelligence; their counsel

and surveillance were instrumental in influencing the course of diplomatic action.¹¹

The less tangible and more symbolic elements of diplomatic relations come under the purview of literary studies. A remarkably active and vibrant literary practice has emerged since Watkins first remarked that “nothing could be stranger than the literary critic’s lack of attention to diplomatic theory and practice,” especially given the long list of writers who were themselves diplomatic agents of varying degrees.¹² Like-minded scholars in the first decade of the 2000s have produced foundational work on the study of literature and diplomacy. Timothy Hampton’s *Fictions of Embassies*, Carole Levin and John Watkins’s collection *Shakespeare’s Foreign Worlds*, and Brinda Charry and Gitanjali Shahani’s anthology *Emissaries in Early Modern Literature and Culture* have been especially influential in leading early discussions on the subject: their research provided a vocabulary for literary scholars and historians of early modern diplomacy.¹³ With this vocabulary, literary scholars have been more equipped to further refine the methodological and theoretical approaches to the study of literature and diplomacy. For instance, Jason Powell and William Rossiter’s collection *Authority and Diplomacy from Dante to Shakespeare* tracks the shifting continuities in late medieval and early modern England and Italy through romance, poetry, and drama. In doing so, the contributors underscore the development of the diplomatic imagination in the period. Rossiter extends this dialogue further in his monograph *Wyatt Abroad: Tudor Diplomacy and the Translation of Power*. Here, Thomas Wyatt’s ambassadorial experience is at the center of his literary accomplishments; Rossiter problematizes the understanding of Wyatt’s works through the prism of translation. He analyzes Wyatt’s rhetorical strategies, threading them through different geographical contexts—England, France, Spain, Italy, and Jerusalem—as he “marks the moment in which late medieval *translatio* meets early modern *imitatio*, where the political meets the poetical, and where the tradition meets the novel.”¹⁴

It has become increasingly clear that literature and diplomacy form a natural diptych of sorts in early modern discourse; where poetics meets politics in Wyatt’s works, representation meets practice in the links between literature and diplomacy. Humanist thought bridges one to the other. Alberico Gentili’s *De legationibus libri tres* (*Three Books on Legations*) (1585) is a seminal work within this context. The humanist emphasis on diplomatic conduct—writing, mediating, negotiating, and, not least, representing—

is echoed in his use of literary motifs and devices to describe diplomatic discourse. Like his fellow humanist predecessors, Gentili considers literary knowledge and understanding to be an integral part of diplomatic training.¹⁵ In literature and drama, prospective and practicing diplomats “found a descriptive vocabulary for diplomacy . . . because they perceived close resonances between the representational and performative nature of the two activities, resonances that helped them to understand the cultural relativism at play between their host and their home courts.”¹⁶ The ambassador’s role is essentially a performative one: he performs his role according to the instructions he is given, or, as Hampton notes, the diplomat “‘puts on’ the persona of his prince.”¹⁷ In fact, the ambassador is described as an “actor” in the early modern tradition. François de Callières, an eighteenth-century French diplomat, once remarked that “an ambassador resembles in some way an actor exposed on the stage to the eyes of the public in order to play great roles.”¹⁸ Nathalie Rivère de Carles’s *Early Modern Diplomacy, Theatre, and Soft Power* further explores this concept of performativity with a collection of essays that examines the fluidities of diplomatic thought between world and stage; the volume considers the roles of official and nonofficial state actors and how they were mediated and embodied on early modern stages.¹⁹ Drawing on the concept of “double vision”—characterized by a simultaneous awareness of fiction and reality—Rivière de Carles discusses the ways in which dramatic characters mirror diplomatic selves. Thus, within the context of peacemaking, “[t]he ambassador becomes the locus of an operative palimpsest merging the other and the self. Such a palimpsest is made of special, linguistic, commercial and material methods that create a dynamic of appeasement.”²⁰

Rivière de Carles’s delicate treatment of multivalency in diplomatic exchanges, more widely known as “soft power,” is examined from a different perspective in Tracey Sowerby and Joanna Craigwood’s new collection, *Cultures of Diplomacy and Literary Writing in the Early Modern World*. Given the remarkable research output on early modern literature and diplomacy over the last five years, their task of bringing together a collection of essays that not only assesses but pushes the boundaries of recent work on early modern diplomacy is ambitious and timely. The editors’ work and engagement with New Diplomatic scholars of different stripes extended from “Textual Ambassadors” and led to the publication of *Cultures of Diplomacy and Literary Writing in the Early Modern World*. The fine collection of essays in this volume acknowledges the importance of earlier studies and recognizes the

need to accommodate the interdisciplinary and global dimensions of a field that have somewhat blunted the force of emerging “diplo-literary” discussions.²¹ The volume goes some way toward addressing this problem. Rather than working with the broader thematic concerns that have come to characterize the study of New Diplomatic History, the editors’ strategic “compartmentalization” of the volume into sections on literary engagements, translation, dissemination, and diplomatic texts promotes a careful and coherent assessment of current intellectual cross-currents, while moving beyond the limitations of existing conceptual frameworks.

The guiding principle of this special issue, “Ideologies of Diplomacy: Rhetoric, Ritual, and Representation in Early Modern England,” addresses a concern that has been echoed several times in the aforementioned works: the methodological strategies of New Diplomatic History simultaneously demand both breadth and depth of historical and cultural knowledge, yet scholars are quite aware that accommodating both in equal measure requires a delicate balance that can be challenging to gauge. New Historicism is often used as a mirror to reflect the pitfalls of miscalculating this methodological equation. As Powell and Rossiter observe:

The shift from “history” to “culture” that partly defined [New Historicism’s] “newness” meant that each piece of historical evidence was treated as if it could on its own reconstruct historical realities—in short, as if any given text contained the DNA of the culture that produced it. While early new historicists employed “history,” their insistence upon reducing history to text paralleled the new critical treatment of literary text.

Quoting Kiernan Ryan, they further add that both New Criticism and New Historicism “contrive to make material history vanish: the one by severing the work from the world, the other by reducing the real to the written.”²² Powell and Rossiter are making a case for the lack of “material awareness” in New Historicism and refocusing its importance for the study of early modern diplomacy. Sowerby and Craigwood share similar sentiments when observing that recent research in diplomacy has “steered a course between the highly context-specific and isolated character of earlier historicist readings of literary works within diplomatic settings and the generalizing and imprecise New Historicist use of ‘diplomacy’ in its broadest social meaning to denote the negotiation of any power relations.”²³ Hence, the analysis of diplomatic practices and discourses that cuts across area studies in different

disciplines can be particularly valuable as a corrective to one-sided views of diplomatic study.²⁴ This may be so, but because the areas of coverage are so vast and diverse—in terms of disciplines, genres, and geographies—diplomatic research that attempts to draw together too many heterogeneous nodes can potentially spin off its own schematic model that replicates the shortcomings of New Historicism. While the global dimension of diplomatic cultural encounters tells us much about the sociopolitical, economic, and even religious exigencies in a particular region, they cannot be isolated from the contexts of their respective domestic spheres, where the fluidity of diplomatic thought and seemingly rigid and highly ritualized diplomatic practices are formulated, debated, adjusted, prescribed, and even undermined to reflect the prevailing ambitions and anxieties of a nation.

In addressing this concern, this current issue draws a conceptual boundary around late Elizabethan and Jacobean England. The rationale for this, of course, is not to isolate England from the rest of the world but rather to consider the driving forces within England that shaped, influenced, and determined the nation's approach to diplomatic thought and practice in relation to its ties with other nations. The following essays trace the continuities and discontinuities in early modern English diplomatic thought. In so doing they consider how diplomatic ideologies developed from England's self-perception of its position in the world, tracing the projection of those perceptions as they were received and interpreted beyond England. In keeping with the current dialogue on early modern diplomacy, the essays explore ways in which ideologies of diplomacy were produced and negotiated in England: How did diplomatic language, expression, and representation narrativize crisis, mediate competing interests, and broker peace? To what degree were these negotiations subject to the formal mechanisms of governmental proceedings beyond the traditional confines of diplomatic missions? How did patronage networks and literary culture facilitate or subvert diplomatic exchanges? The following contributors are interested in diplomatic thought, expression, and representation, and the ways in which diplomatic exchanges were perceived *within* early modern English communities—in courtly circles and on early modern stages. Taking up some of these concerns, among others, the contributors assert that ideologies of diplomacy in early modern England were as varied as they were contested; furthermore, diplomatic thought and initiatives were, to a large degree, subjected to prevailing political and cultural sentiments *within* England. While diplomatic exchanges attended to the demands of foreign reception, the performative aspects of these exchanges—in writ-

ing, speech, and action—often conveyed mixed messages to its own citizens: How did England generate ideologies of diplomacy? How did early modern English society respond to the repercussions of these ideologies, which were often fraught with ambiguities and contradictions?

This issue opens with two essays that explore the center of power and authority in early modern England and Scotland: Elizabeth I and James VI/I. Hannah Coates's essay takes England's diplomatic relations beyond the British Isles during the 1580s, when Scotland and Ireland demanded particularly delicate negotiations. Scotland's relationship with England was mediated through Tudor-Stuart tensions (particularly in the negotiations for royal succession), and England's ties with Ireland were strained to a breaking point with the outbreak of the Nine Years' War (1594–1603). The queen's troubles with her immediate neighbors attracted foreign attention and, more threateningly, foreign intrigue; the three major powers in Western Europe—France, Spain, and Rome—reacted to secure their interests accordingly. Diplomatic negotiations close to home had wide international repercussions.

Coates's discussion provides a behind-the-scenes view of the 1584 Anglo-Scottish crisis, and, more interestingly, her close reading of the correspondence of Elizabeth's two principal representatives, Francis Walsingham and Henry Carey, 1st Baron Hunsdon, exposes the divisions within the queen's council and their impact on diplomatic exchanges between England and Scotland. The pressure to secure a Scottish alliance became increasingly urgent in the lead-up to the 1584 negotiations as Anglo-Scottish relations began to unravel in the late 1570s and 1581; as Coates suggests, English attempts to salvage amity with the Scots were especially challenging. The development and implementation of Anglo-Scottish policy was subject to court faction, the negotiators' personal relationships with the queen, and their ideological disagreements in ecclesiastical matters. In this sense, diplomatic thought and action were not just prescriptive; they were bound up, first and foremost, with the negotiators' own interests and patronage networks. Of particular interest in this case are the ways in which Walsingham and Hunsdon set out to implement their respective policies, and how their imperatives were characterized by their personal views of religion and royal authority. The rhetoric and vocabulary in their reports and letters bear witness to the notion that diplomatic priorities are not always clear-cut and that the processes of achieving the queen's objectives were often mediated and contested well beyond the point of implementation.

The union of England and Scotland in 1603, which coincided with the end of the Nine Years' War in Ireland, marked a turn in English diplomatic thought. The consolidation of royal authority under James I and his conciliatory attitude toward Spain brought the long-standing Anglo-Spanish conflict to an end with the Treaty of London in 1604. Reading against dominant narratives that traditionally portray James as a Solomon archetype who favors peace over conflict, Malcolm Smuts's essay argues that James's theoretical political pronouncements on international relations in his writings were in reality more ideological than practical, flagging the tensions between text as diplomatic representation and action as diplomatic justification. From their early experiences with James in Scotland, foreign ambassadors were familiar with the king's use of intellectual and scholastic arguments in his diplomatic dealings. His publishing of political and theoretical tracts under his name was unusual among European monarchs. Smut's detailed study of James's treatises alongside the political and religious realities from which they emerged adds another dimension to our understanding of diplomatic representation. Smuts's observations of the connection between diplomatic history and diplomatic expression in James's writings and actions indicate that the king's philosophical musings on diplomatic statecraft belie the practical political calculations of a shrewd politician.

The three essays at the center of this issue focus more specifically on the material turn in diplomatic studies. Following Smuts's discussion on the impact of James's tracts within and beyond England, Jason Powell's essay discusses a work that has been a key source for early modern diplomatic inquiry but whose complex compilation is largely overlooked. Contrary to its title, *The Compleat Ambassador* (1655) is not a handbook on diplomatic conduct, but rather a compilation of correspondence among English ambassadors at French and English courts from 1571 to 1573, and in 1581. Published by Thomas Newcomb, the letters in this work are attributed to the English diplomat, Sir Dudley Digges. Powell's interest in this volume and its subsequent publications is twofold: he suggests that the correspondence in the volume was commonly copied in manuscript before the letters were circulated in print. More interestingly, he has located six extant manuscripts that were omitted from the volume. Powell's comprehensive and detailed analysis of these materials sheds new light on some of the most politically charged events of the Elizabethan era, including arrangements for successive matches between Elizabeth and the duc d'Anjou, the attempted assassination of the queen, and the St. Bartholomew's Massacre. A manuscript from Meisei University in Tokyo, for instance, indicates Lord Burghley's concerns

about sensitive materials that were possibly smuggled into England from Paris, and his complaint about the French ambassador's lapse in attending to these matters. Powell's comparative study of the six manuscripts omitted from *The Compleat Ambassador* produces a narrative about diplomatic tensions in the period that differs from the letters already included in the volume. Because they are not found in the State Papers, these manuscripts provide scholars with an otherwise inaccessible view of the "mysteries of state" and a rare glimpse of the varying diplomatic ideologies *among* the queen's chief advisors on diplomatic matters.

The significance of early modern "paper embassies" discussed in Powell's essay is apparent in the inclusions and omissions of materials in different published collections; similar fingerprints of those who copied and compiled diplomatic information bear upon the writing and translation of diplomatic events in the public sphere. Jan Hennings and Edward Holberton's study of the first Earl of Carlisle, Charles Howard's embassy to Russia in 1663–64 engages with the editorial aspects of public diplomacy. Carlisle was aware that accounts of ambassadorial affairs had a wide audience beyond the immediate confines of courtly circles; the representation of diplomatic events in the public sphere was important for controlling public narratives of the state. In this essay, the construction of public diplomacy can be found in the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts. Hennings and Holberton's interest in this archive demands meticulous comparative analysis: they trace the development of Carlisle's embassy from its original accounts—in the earl's conversations and correspondence—through his secretaries' renderings of its events. The first of these two secretaries is the poet Andrew Marvell, whose role in early diplomatic affairs is still overshadowed by his literary accomplishments; the second, Guy Miège, would later publish an adapted account of Carlisle's embassies in *A Relation of Three Embassies from His Sacred Majesty Charles II, to the Great Duke of Muscovie, the King of Sweden, and the King of Denmark*. In examining the tensions that surrounded the varying and at times conflicting ideas of representation, rhetoric, and translation in the construction of Carlisle's diplomatic mission, Hennings and Holberton decenter the ambassadorial figure as the sole image-maker of diplomatic affairs. Their discussion draws attention to the variegated interpretations of public diplomacy among the ambassador's personnel.

Danila Sokolov's essay on Giles Fletcher the Elder's embassy to Russia examines the writing and editing of diplomatic representation with a transcultural study of Anglo-Russian diplomacy in 1588–89 and the attempt to restore and secure trade privileges for the Muscovy Company.

Sokolov's study of the negotiations in Moscow is a fine model of New Diplomatic analysis; his contextualization of the political climate in England and Moscow provides an important framework for understanding the ways in which diplomatic recommendation was dispensed, received, and performed. The role of the early modern diplomat is epitomized by Fletcher's embassy: English perceptions of diplomatic ideology were neither intrinsically practical, nor were they universally applicable. Picking up the duties of his predecessor, Sir Jerome Bowes, who was poorly received in the Russian court for his arrogance, Fletcher was tasked with conducting negotiations with the anti-English Andrei Shchelkalov. Sokolov's careful reading of Fletcher's embassy demonstrates just how dangerous and delicate such cultural encounters were. From the Muscovites' reception of the English emissary to Fletcher's audience with the tsar, Fyodor I, every gesture was subject to symbolic calculation and interpretation. In his reports to England, Fletcher complained bitterly about not being afforded the prestige that matched the honor and dignity of his queen, and it is notable that some of his assumptions and expectations of how he should be treated were probably derived from earlier accounts of English embassies to Russia. Fletcher's perceived knowledge of the Russian court from these accounts was not entirely helpful; the symbolic and economic valuation of the ceremonial use of titles and the exchange of diplomatic gifts were largely determined by the prevailing political climate and, to some degree, the personality of the tsar and his advisors. Most strikingly, Sokolov's discussion of Fyodor's rejection of Elizabeth's gifts, in particular the gold objects (possibly plates or medals) that were perceived as coins in the Russian court, delineates the implications of symbolic misreadings in cross-cultural diplomatic exchanges.

Fletcher's predicament in Moscow of having to respond diplomatically to the deeply embarrassing encounter with Fyodor and then conveying the news of the humiliation back to his queen evinces, one could say, a classic diplomatic dilemma: his representation of the account had to accommodate the dignity of the two princes or risk their wrath. The first of the two final essays in this issue, focusing on early modern drama, addresses this diplomatic dilemma with a thoughtful examination of Jean Hotman's *The Ambassador* (1603) and Shakespeare's *Henry V* (1599). Nathalie Rivère de Carles's discussion is concerned with the concept of *parrhesia* in diplomatic expression, or rather, diplomatic speech. Rivère de Carles frames her essay with competing characterizations of the ambassador made by the English diplomat Sir Henry Wotton: his oft-quoted aphorism that an ambassador is "an honest man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country" is set against

his much less-quoted revision: the ambassador “should always, and upon all occasions speak the truth.” As Rivère de Carles’s analysis of *The Ambassador* asserts, these two observations do not necessarily contradict each other; she offers a compelling case for making a distinction between trustworthiness and sincerity. As a rhetorical device, Hotman’s ideas of truthful expression and his reintroduction of the classical concept of *parrhesia* are in fact far more nuanced than they appear. Applying her observations of Hotman’s theories to the diplomatic scenes in *Henry V*, Rivère de Carles demonstrates that *parrhesia* accommodates both the ambassador’s duty to speak truthfully and the monarch’s ability to accept frank and honest speech. The good *parrhesia* that results from this pairing is integral to the preservation of royal authority and dignity.

Rivière de Carles’s interest in the rhetorical strategies of diplomatic expression on the early modern stage pairs nicely with the symbolic resonance of diplomatic ideology in Jeri Smith-Cronin’s discussion of Thomas Dekker’s *The Whore of Babylon* (1605). Dekker’s play is traditionally interpreted as a dramatic allegory of Elizabethan nostalgia and a thinly veiled critique of the Jacobean court, while the antipapal and anti-Spanish sentiments in the play indicate a general disapproval of James’s warmer ties with Spain (and by extension, Rome) after his ascension to the English throne. Smith-Cronin observes that critics have long overlooked the significance of the play’s revival in 1619. Contextualizing Dekker’s concept of apocalyptic history (inspired by John Foxe) and the ways in which he casts chivalric imagery and language, Smith-Cronin discusses the play as a “diplomatic moment” in James’s dealings with the various interconfessional conflicts in this period. The lead-up to the Thirty Years’ War provides an important contextual framework for this study. Signs of James’s eagerness to further improve England’s political and religious position amid escalating interconfessional strife were indicative in the 1612 diplomatic arrangements to match his daughter, Elizabeth Stuart, to Frederick V, elector palatine of the Rhine. This alliance would later drag James into a difficult predicament: his son-in-law’s acceptance of the contested kingship of Bohemia in 1619 disrupted the precarious interconfessional balance in Europe, and James was reluctant to offer English aid. Furthermore, James was conducting diplomatic negotiations in the same year he attempted to match Prince Charles to the Infanta Maria. Smith-Cronin’s reading of *The Whore of Babylon* alongside the political and religious exigencies of this period yields a refreshing alternative interpretation of a play that has generally been understood within the confines of Tudor-Stuart transition. The timely revival of the play in

1619 also underscores how England's diplomatic ideologies, in relation to the major powers of Protestant and Catholic nations, had evolved since the play was staged in 1605. As Smith-Cronin suggests, the development of diplomatic ideologies in the first two decades of James's reign played an important part in shaping the popular imagination of England's diplomatic ambitions, and troubles, in the period.

Finally, I am pleased and honored to have John Watkins's "Afterword: Beyond the *Grand Récit*" to conclude this special issue. Watkins positions the essays in this issue in relation to current scholarship on international relations. He considers a redefinition of diplomacy beyond the conventional grand narrative that predictably sees early modern diplomacy move toward modern state bureaucracy according to clearly defined ideas and practices. Drawing together the overarching research interests of the essays in this issue, Watkins's afterword stresses that if the study of diplomacy is to move forward, "historians must develop better ways of recognizing, describing, and accounting for diplomatic provisionality." His assessment of the contributions in this issue is especially meaningful, as he discusses the ways in which they reveal early modern diplomatic experiences and how they resist theoretical concepts that emphasize regularity or predictability. Watkins's concluding commentary gives early modern diplomatic scholars an opportunity to reconsider his original call for new research frameworks; it affords scholars from a variety of related disciplines a moment to survey the evolving scholarship on the subject, and it fosters a new enthusiasm for problematizing and refining future developments in early modern diplomatic studies.



Notes

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- 1 See the introductory essay to this special issue by John Watkins, "Toward a New Diplomatic History of Medieval and Early Modern Europe," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38, no. 1 (2008): 1–14.
- 2 Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2010), 55.
- 3 Mattingly, 153–54.
- 4 Watkins, "Toward a New Diplomatic History," 1.
- 5 Watkins, 6.
- 6 Timothy Hampton, "The Diplomatic Moment: Representing Negotiation in Early

- Modern Europe,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (2006): 81–102, at 82; and Hampton, *Fictions of Embassy: Literature and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2009), 7.
- 7 Watkins, “Toward a New Diplomatic History,” 3. Also see Hampton, *Fictions of Embassy*, 4–5. On periodization, see Christian Windler, “Afterword: From Social Status to Sovereignty—Practices of Foreign Relations from the Renaissance to the Sattelzeit,” in *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World, c. 1410–1800*, ed. Tracey A. Sowerby and Jan Hennings (London: Routledge, 2017), 254–66.
- 8 See “Translating Cultures: Diplomacy between the Early Modern and Modern Worlds,” Durham University, at www.dur.ac.uk/research/directory/view/?mode=project&id=982; *Premodern Diplomats Network* at www.premodern-diplomats.org, where *Legatio* is also hosted; and *Textual Ambassadors—Cultures of Diplomacy and Literary Writing in the Early Modern World*, University of Oxford, at www.history.ox.ac.uk/cultures-diplomacy.
- 9 Sowerby and Hennings, *Practices of Diplomacy*.
- 10 Florian Kühnel, “‘Minister-like cleverness, understanding, and influence on affairs’: Ambassadors in Everyday Business and Courtly Ceremonies at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century,” in Sowerby and Hennings, *Practices of Diplomacy*, 130–46. See Susan Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (London: Routledge, 1996); Denis Crouzet, “‘A strong desire to be a mother to all your subjects’: A Rhetorical Experiment by Catherine de Medici,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38, no. 1 (2008): 103–18; Russell E. Martin, “Gifts for the Bride: Dowries, Diplomacy, and Marriage Politics in Muscovy,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38, no. 1 (2008): 119–45; James Daybell, “Gender, Politics, and Diplomacy: Women, News, and Intelligence Networks in Elizabethan England,” in *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture*, ed. Robyn Adams and Rosanna Cox (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 101–19; John Watkins, *After Lavinia: A Literary History of Premodern Marriage Diplomacy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2017); Valentina Caldari and Sara J. Wolfson, eds., *Stuart Marriage Diplomacy: Dynastic Politics in Their European Context, 1604–1630* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2018); and Estelle Paranque, *Elizabeth I of England through Valois Eyes: Power, Representation, and Diplomacy in the Reign of the Queen, 1559–1588* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
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- 13 Hampton, *Fictions of Embassies*; Carole Levin and John Watkins, eds., *Shakespeare’s Foreign Worlds: National and Transnational Identities in the Elizabethan Age* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2009); Brinda Charry and Gitanjali Shahani, eds., *Emissaries in Early Modern Literature and Culture: Mediation, Transmission, and Traffic, 1550–1700* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009).
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 - 24 Sowerby and Craigwood, 8.