

## **Conference Panel: How diplomacy was characterized in Ancient Greek historiography and oratory**

### **10th Celtic Conference in Classics, 19th – 22nd July 2017**

#### Panel Chairs

Cinzia Bearzot (Full Professor of Ancient Greek History, Università Cattolica di Milano)

Laura Loddo (Post-doc Researcher LabexMed-CPAM in Ancient Greek History, Université Aix-Marseille)

#### **Call for papers**

Overview: The Greeks made wide use of their ambassadors in relations with other states. These figures, at times main players of the political life of their city, and at times simple citizens occasionally assigned with diplomatic missions, were not entirely comparable to ambassadors in our sense of the term. Far from being individuals installed in a foreign country to carry out functions of representation and reference for the community of their fellow citizens residing there – a function partially absolved by the *proxenoi* – they had the task of delivering the proposals of the state they represented to their foreign counterparts, and possessed no real negotiating powers.

Although overall studies devoted to the role of ambassadors in the Greek world were published in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Heyse 1882, superseded by Poland 1885), the obligatory reference point for those who approach this topic is the work of Mosley (Mosley 1973). Adcock's and Mosley's numerous articles treated the phenomenon so fully that many of their conclusions are still considered valid. A useful contribution came from Piccirilli 2002. This notwithstanding, specific aspects of Greek diplomacy are still being investigated. We refer in particular to the role played by topics such as friendship (*philia*) or kinship (*syngeneia*) in the ambassadors' lexicon (Bauslaugh 1991; Mitchell 1997; Jones 1999; Bolmarcich 2010). Likewise, the role of the ambassadors has been investigated in the wider context of inter-state relations (Giovannini 2007). Attention has also been given to the legationary lexicon in Xenophon's *Hellenica* (Orsi 2002) or to specific episodes of Greek history in which legations operated (Brosius 2012), or yet again to the space that some authors have reserved for ambassadors (Gazzano 2002).

In spite of the interest that the topic has aroused among the moderns, some aspects have still been poorly investigated. This is the case of ambassadors' speeches.

Although our sources preserve traces of the speeches of those involved in the numerous diplomatic missions of the Greek world, anyone who wants to reconstruct the rhetoric of Greek diplomacy comes up against the problem of a lack of firsthand written records and accounts of those who took part in the legations, and of the accuracy of their speeches, since they were likely reworked and/or manipulated by the writers who transmitted them. Nevertheless, unlike what happened with the speeches made by political leaders, we believe that there is a less significant difference between what the ambassadors actually said and the (often) necessary reworking of the source, especially because, in the use that the historian or the orator made of these speeches, there was no need to draw a profile of the speaker or to attribute a distinct political vision to him, since the ambassador was not ultimately responsible for the message he was assigned to deliver. This means that the speeches of ambassadors, in both *oratio directa* and *oratio obliqua* form, can become a study topic for historians vis-à-vis both the issues dealt with (especially for the light it sheds on relations between states) and the arguments or tone it adopted.

The aim of this panel is to encourage discussion on the rhetoric of diplomacy in the broadest sense.

Consideration will be given to such questions as:

- Do expressive constants exist in ambassadors' speeches as reconstructed by ancient historians?

- Can an “authorial characterization” be pinpointed in ambassadors’ speeches as transmitted by historians?
- When an ambassador was also a prominent political figure, was the picture of him that emerged from his speeches consistent with the overall assessment of him in the work?
- What role does the reference to the content of a legation have within forensic or political discourses?
- Can one speak of local characteristics in the speech of ambassadors, by which it is possible to recognize a Spartan ambassador from an Athenian or a Theban one?
- How much did the speech of an ambassador influence the political role of his interlocutor?
- What was the significance of the quotation of literary texts or documents by ambassadors?
- To what extent do their speeches enable us to identify the powers of plenipotentiary ambassadors (*presbeis autokratores*) as opposed to ordinary ambassadors?
- How were ambassador speeches by Roman ambassadors, when they spoke in Greek contexts?

Talks that take into account these (and other) topics of inquiry will be particularly appreciated.

**Conference Information:** The 10th Celtic Conference in Classics will take place at the University of Montreal from July 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017. For this panel we are asking for 40-minute long papers, with 15 minutes for questions and discussion, though short papers (20 minutes with 10 minutes for discussion) are also welcome. The languages of the Celtic Conference in Classics are English and French.

Please send abstracts of no more than 500 words and a *curriculum vitae et studiorum* to [diplomacy.celticconference10@gmail.com](mailto:diplomacy.celticconference10@gmail.com) by January 8, 2017.