



The development of international relations in ancient times and its legal and philosophical foundations

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Abstract

Studying the evolution of international relations in ancient times is an essential introduction to understanding the foundations upon which modern political and diplomatic practices are built. The early historical experiences of city-states and empires reveal the origins of laws, alliances, and balances that still form the core of realist and liberal theories in international relations. Therefore, this paper aims to analyze the philosophical and legal roots of international relations in three pivotal civilizations: Paranoiic Egypt, Greek Greece, and ancient Rome. The aim is to highlight how intellectual and value-based foundations shaped patterns of interaction between states and peoples in ancient times and established diplomatic and legal traditions that remain influential today. The study concludes that these three civilizations produced distinct philosophical and legal foundations: universal justice in Egypt, the balance between idealism and realism in Greece, and the legal institution in Rome. Together, these foundations formed the first building blocks of concepts that continue to constitute the core of modern international relations, such as sovereignty, legitimacy, international law, and the balance of power. Hence, the researcher believes that re-reading these experiences offers cognitive value for understanding the continuity of the interaction between power and values in global politics across the ages.

Keywords: International Relations; Philosophical Foundations; Ancient Times; Paranoiic; law ; Greek; ancient Rome

Received: 05 Jan 2023

Accepted: 20 Feb 2023

Received: 27 feb 2023

Introduction

Studying the evolution of international relations in ancient times and its philosophical foundations is of central importance for understanding the origins of practices and assumptions that continue to influence diplomatic thought and contemporary global politics¹.

The study of international relations in the Pharaonic era is an important entry point for understanding the roots of diplomacy and political organization in ancient civilizations. Since the beginning of the Old Kingdom (c. 2700 BC), Pharaonic Egypt contributed to shaping patterns of interaction with neighboring powers, reflecting an early understanding of the concepts of national security, regional balance, and economic and cultural exchange. Surviving documents and inscriptions—particularly from the New Kingdom—have shown that the Egyptians did not limit themselves to using military force to secure their borders, but also developed mechanisms for negotiating and concluding treaties. Perhaps the most famous of these is the Treaty of Kadesh, concluded between Ramesses II and the Hittites in the thirteenth century BC, which is considered one of the oldest written peace treaties in history. On the other hand, Pharaonic Egypt's foreign relations were driven by economic motivations.

¹Malchow, H. L. (2020). *History and international relations: From the ancient world to the 21st century*. Bloomsbury Publishing

Trade with Punt, Nubia, and the Levant represented a vital means of securing scarce resources such as timber, minerals, and incense. These exchanges were also linked to patterns of cultural and religious interaction, confirming that international relations were not limited to political or military aspects alone, but encompassed broad civilizational and human dimensions.

The diplomatic texts discovered at Tell el-Amarna—correspondence between Pharaoh Akhenaten and the kings of the ancient Near East—reveal the existence of an advanced diplomatic network in which a unified language (Akkadian cuneiform) was used to facilitate communication. This demonstrates an early understanding of the concept of "international order," albeit within a limited regional context².

Tracing international relations in Pharaonic Egypt provides researchers with a deeper understanding of how the concepts of alliance, balance, legitimacy, and sovereignty evolved thousands of years ago, and demonstrates that the roots of diplomacy are not a modern phenomenon, but rather the product of extensive civilizational interaction. Therefore, studying this period contributes to enriching the academic debate on the history of international relations and opens up horizons for understanding the continuity and change in patterns of interaction between states across the ages³.

The Greek period (approximately the eighth to the fourth centuries BC) occupies a prominent place in the history of international relations. It witnessed the emergence and evolution of complex patterns of interaction between city-states (polities) such as Athens, Sparta, Corinth, and Thebes, which represented independent political units with relative sovereignty. This political pluralism produced a microcosm of international environment characterized by diverse interests and constant competition, creating the need for mechanisms for cooperation and alliances, as well as strategies for war and deterrence⁴.

The Greek system provided a fertile ground for early diplomatic experimentation, with the emergence of defensive and offensive conferences and alliances, such as the Delian League, led by Athens, and the Peloponnesian League, led by Sparta, representing prototypes of international organizations with shared objectives. On the other hand, the Peloponnesian Wars (431–404 BC) reflected political practices based on the logic of balance of power and the struggle for hegemony, concepts that remain present in modern international relations theories⁵.

Greek thought also contributed to establishing the philosophical foundations for the debate on international behavior. In his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides addressed the nature of power and interest as the primary determinants of relations between states, an early reference to the realist school of international relations. Meanwhile, Plato and Aristotle presented ideas related to justice, virtue, and modes of governance, which can be expanded to understand the legitimacy of authority and relations between political units⁶.

The importance of studying international relations in the Greek era lies in its ability to reveal the roots of many concepts that today form the core of academic discussions about global politics, such as sovereignty, legitimacy, diplomacy, and alliances. Furthermore, the Greek experience, with its balance of practical practice and theoretical formulation, provides a model for understanding the relationship between political thought and action in an early international context.

² Pirie, F. (2021). *The rule of laws: a 4000-year quest to order the world*. Profile Books

³ Rosenboim, O., & Hartnett, L. (2021). International Political Thought and Historical International Relations. *Routledge Handbook of Historical International Relations*, 99-110

⁴ Aissaoui, A. (2020). Diplomacy in ancient times: The figure of Udjahorresnet: An international relations perspective. *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections*, 26, 12-34.

⁵ Yun, B. (2022). Persia and Pericles' Grand Strategy. Was the Peloponnesian War a Bipolar Hegemonic War?. *The International History Review*, 44(1), 206-224.

⁶ Malchow, H. L. (2020). *History and international relations: From the ancient world to the 21st century*. Bloomsbury Publishing

Thus, research in this field is not limited to revisiting scenes from ancient history; rather, it contributes to illuminating the historical background from which many contemporary theoretical assumptions in international relations emerged.

Furthermore, the study of international relations in the Roman era (from the third century BC to the fifth century AD) is an essential entry point for understanding the major transformations in the history of the ancient international system. The rise of Rome and its transformation from a small city-state to a sprawling empire represented a unique model for the mechanisms of expansion, administration, and management of interactions with other peoples and states. Rome's foreign relations were characterized by a combination of military power and legal regulation. It relied on expansionist wars to extend its influence, while simultaneously devising systems of treaties and laws to regulate the status of subject peoples and alliances with independent entities.

The most notable feature of the Roman experience is the formulation of the concept of "Roman law," which was not limited to domestic relations but extended to establish what later became known as "the law of peoples (*Jus Gentium*)," the framework that regulated transactions between Romans and foreigners and established early principles of what could be considered the nucleus of international law. Through these legal principles, Rome sought to legitimize its political and military practices and justify its expansion as a means of achieving order and peace (*Pax Romana*)⁷.

Roman diplomacy also played a pivotal role in managing its international relations, using diplomatic missions, bilateral treaties, and trade agreements as complementary tools to hard power. This was reflected in the nature of its relationship with regional powers such as Carthage in the West and the Hellenistic kingdoms in the East, as well as with the Germanic peoples and later the Persians⁸.

In addition, Roman philosophies, and Stoicism in particular, reflected ethical and legal concepts of justice, virtue, and universal duty, giving international relations a value-based dimension alongside its material dimension. These ideas contributed to shaping a new view of the world as an interconnected entity governed by common rules, a vision that left a profound impact on subsequent European thought⁹.

An analysis of international relations in the Roman era demonstrates that the empire was not merely a dominant military power but also an early laboratory for concepts of sovereignty, legitimacy, and international law. Understanding this period thus contributes to tracing the intellectual and institutional roots of contemporary global politics and reveals the continuity of issues of power, interest, and legitimacy in international thought and practice across the ages.

Hence, this study aims to examine the evolution of international relations in the Pharaonic, Greek, and Roman eras, while clarifying their philosophical foundations.

(1) Definition of international treaties

There are many definitions of international treaties. Fenwick defines it as "agreements concluded between two or more states relating to a subject of a legal nature, and aiming to create new rights and duties or clarify existing rights and duties"¹⁰. Barry believes that a treaty is a source of legal obligation voluntarily assumed by an international person towards another international person or persons, creating reciprocal rights with this other person or others¹¹. A treaty may be more than that, as it may impose the same obligation on a large number of states, such as the obligation to amicably settle

⁷ Rigó, B. (2021). Ancient Roman History as a Means for Legitimacy in the English Early Modern Political Thought. *ELTE LJ*, 17

⁸ Vrana, V. (2021). Roman diplomacy in ancient Rome. *Glossa Iuridica*, 8(3), 123-140.

⁹ Fernandes, A. G. (2022). Professional ethics, legal deontology and judicial ethics. *Quaestio Iuris*, 15(3), 946-986.

¹⁰ Charnovitz, S. (2006). Nongovernmental organizations and international law. *American Journal of International Law*, 100(2), 348-372.

¹¹ Pavel, C. E. (2021). *Law beyond the state: dynamic coordination, state consent, and binding international law*. Oxford University Press

international disputes. Thus, it may pave the way for amending public law and have a quasi-legislative character. A treaty may also be the founding document of an international organization, such as the Charter of the United Nations, and thus be part of the public law of the world¹². Finally, pursuant to an internal text such as the US Constitution, a treaty may have the character of internal law regardless of its international nature. This definition is considered one of the most comprehensive definitions that clarify the meaning of a treaty and its role as an agreement between states or international organizations and the rights and obligations it may create, whether between its parties or between states not party to it¹³. This definition also warns Minds have been drawn to new types of treaties, such as treaties establishing international organizations. Thus, all types of treaties resulting from the gradual evolution of international law can be included under it. Article 1/1 of the Draft Convention on the Law of Treaties prepared by Harvard University states that a treaty is a formal instrument of agreement by which two or more states establish relations between them in accordance with international law¹⁴. Paragraphs 2 and 3 of the paper add that the term "treaty" does not include an agreement concluded by an exchange of memoranda, nor does it include a document whose party is a non-state person. The term "treaty" has been used without arrangement as a general term to describe any form of international agreement, such as: agreement, protocol, declaration, system, settlement agreement, arrangement, covenant, agreement, regulation, law, declaration, texts, etc¹⁵.

(2) The evolution of International Relations in Ancient Times

Treaties have been known since ancient times, with treaties discovered dating back four thousand years to the Christian era. One such treaty, inscribed in cuneiform on stone, was concluded by Eannatum, the victorious ruler of the city of Lagash, with the men of the city of Umma around 2100 BC¹⁶. It stipulated the sanctity of the borders recognized by the people of Lagash, confirming this recognition by swearing an oath by six or seven of the gods of Samaria. The treaty also included conditions for arbitration in disputes that might arise between the two states. King Solomon, son of David, departed from the strict rules of Moses and concluded a peace and trade treaty with Hiram, the Phoenician king of Tyre, in which they were equal equals. The kings of Israel and Judah also made treaties with the kings of Aram in Damascus and other princes of the Levant, Egypt, and the Arabian Peninsula. As a result, agreements aimed at ending fighting were not unknown to ancient peoples. Rather, they were commonly resorted to in order to end fighting between belligerents, temporarily or permanently, in order to minimize the damage to the fundamental and essential interests for which war was waged, and to limit the resulting losses as much as possible. This is what actually occurred during the eras of the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Persians, and even in the ancient East, in China¹⁷.

First: International Relations in the Pharaonic Era

To begin, we must return to ancient history, which archaeological researcher Ahmed Amer confirms. He argues that ancient Egyptian civilization was not devoid of political diplomacy and international relations in its dealings. This was part of a broader effort to achieve the balance sought by some kings during a period of their reign. He points out that a number of peace treaties were concluded in ancient times, but they were not officially recorded. Rather, they were based on the assessments and views of each party toward its adversary, including achieving gains or offering concessions at that time. Furthermore, these treaties were concluded during the New Kingdom, due to the frequency of wars during that period. We find King Thutmose III recording his victories over the Miyati state on the Gebel Barkal tablet in the thirty-third year of his reign. This was achieved over the Assyrians, Babylonians, and

¹² Golia, A., & Peters, A. (2020). The concept of international organization. *Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law & International Law (MPIL) Research Paper*, (2020-27).

¹³ Brölmann, C. M. (2020). Specialized rules of treaty interpretation: international organizations.

¹⁴ Halabi, S. (2021). Executive Authority under the US Constitution to Enter a Pandemic Treaty or International Agreement. *Harvard International Law Journal*, 62.

¹⁵ Chukwu, R. D. A Review of International Law and Treaty Relationship in International Relations

¹⁶ Kulesza, J. (2022). Peaceful settlement of interstate online disputes. *Laws*, 11(3), 49.

¹⁷ Lanni, A. (2008). The laws of war in ancient Greece. *Law and History Review*, 26(3), 469-489

Hittites, as they pursued a policy of peace and treaties to gain the approval of the Egyptians. The same applies to the reign of King Thutmose IV. The texts also indicate the existence of a treaty concluded between King Thutmose IV and the Mitanni king as a form of strengthening their power against the Khati state. This treaty was concluded through a diplomatic marriage. The pharaoh's son, Artatama I, King of Mitanni, was born. During the reign of Amenhotep III, Egypt experienced a period of military relaxation, marked by political marriages between Amenhotep III and princesses from Babylon and Mitanni¹⁸.

One of the most prominent agreements to end hostilities in history, and the oldest complete international treaty ever found, was the one concluded in 1280 BC between the Pharaonic king of Egypt, Ramesses II, and the Hittite king, Hattusil III, at the end of the war that broke out between them. This treaty was found written in large hieroglyphs on the walls of the Temple of Amun at Karnak and was called a "Treaty of Perpetual Peace." It included a renewal of the friendship treaties concluded between the two countries before the war, stipulating a permanent abstention from war and the formation of a defensive and offensive alliance between the two countries¹⁹.

This treaty was based on religion and derived its binding force from the gods of each of the two states involved. These gods guaranteed its implementation, respect, and adherence to the rights and obligations it entailed. They also imposed penalties on those who violated its provisions. The treaty also included a text or form similar to the procedure for ratifying treaties known today. On the main side of the tablet on which the treaty was written appeared the figure or face of the Hittite god, Sutish, kissing and embracing the Hittite king. Surrounding this god were words indicating that he, the god of the heavens, was putting a seal on the treaty concluded by the Hittite king.

This indicates that, in keeping with the religious basis and religious character of the treaty, the gods of each party were responsible for its implementation and respect, while simultaneously ensuring the implementation and respect of its terms²⁰.

It is considered the most important treaty preserved from the second millennium BC. It was written in Babylonian—the language of politics and diplomacy at the time—and in it, both parties pledged to provide mutual assistance against internal enemies, who must be handed over if they sought refuge in the other party's territory. The treaty also included a provision stipulating the punishment of political criminals. This treaty is the oldest complete treaty found, having been written in large hieroglyphs on the southern wall of the Temple of Amun at Karnak in Luxor. It is considered an international covenant and constitutes a permanent defensive and offensive alliance, as it renewed the old friendship treaties that existed between the two states before the war between Ramesses II and Khatyazar's predecessor, which stipulated abstention from war. These renewed treaties dated back to 3000 BC and were considered binding and could not be violated by either party. This respect and loyalty to the agreement was guaranteed by the thousands of gods of both states, as mentioned above²¹.

The treaty included provisions for the surrender of fugitives among civilians, including the gods of the Hittites and Egypt, as witnesses to the treaty, the language of those who broke the treaty, and mercy for those who upheld it, as well as pardon for fugitive offenders. From this, we find that the peace treaty achieved its goals, and letters were exchanged between the two kings. We find that the Hittite king, in the thirty-fourth year of his reign, married his daughter to King Ramses II, who was named the King of War and Peace under this treaty. As for the philosophical foundations for the evolution of the relationship during this period, they can be discussed as follows: International relations in the Pharaonic era were based on a set of philosophical and religious foundations that formed the frame of reference for the Egyptian state's behavior toward its neighbors. Foremost among these foundations was the concept of

¹⁸ Porter, A. M. (2012). Pharaohs, Nubians, and Antiquities: International Law Suggests it's Time for a Change in Egypt. *Howard LJ*, 56, 541

¹⁹ Liverani, M. (2015). *International relations in the ancient Near East*. Springer

Kolb, R. (2016). The law of treaties: An introduction. In *The Law of Treaties*. Edward Elgar ²⁰ Publishing

²¹ Ponchia, S., & Rollinger, R. Making Peace in the Ancient World

"maat," the principle of truth, justice, and universal harmony, which was considered a standard for regulating relations between humans and states alike. The pharaoh, as the representative of the gods on earth, was committed to maintaining this universal order, not only within Egypt's borders but also in its foreign relations. Hence, political and military decisions acquired moral and religious legitimacy, as military campaigns or treaties were viewed as means of achieving balance and restoring order when it was disturbed²².

In addition, Egyptian religious philosophy embraced a universal vision based on the interconnectedness of earth and heaven, which gave a cosmic dimension to relations with other peoples. Treaties with regional powers were not merely political deals; rather, they were expressed in sacred texts as contracts witnessed by the gods, giving them a morally binding character. The inscriptions documenting the Treaty of Kadesh between Ramesses II and the Hittites also highlighted this value dimension, as they repeatedly referenced justice and peace as supreme goal²³.

In practical terms, these philosophical foundations were reflected in the view of diplomacy as a means of maintaining global stability. The diplomatic correspondence in the Tell el-Amarna archives used a unified language (Akkadian cuneiform) and expressed a spirit of balance and mutual recognition among kings, which can be read as an early seed for the idea of "international order." Religious rituals and rites also played a role in legitimizing trade and political marriage between ruling families, establishing a philosophical concept of commitment that transcended material interest²⁴.

This philosophical vision, based on the integration of religion, politics, and ethics, created a distinctive conception of international relations in Pharaonic Egypt, where conflict or alliance were not merely tools of domination, but rather part of a broader process aimed at achieving "maat" and ensuring the continuation of cosmic balance. Thus, it can be said that the philosophical foundations of international relations in the Pharaonic era represented an early formulation of the concept of international legitimacy and established a distinctive pattern of interaction between power and values that remained influential even in later eras.

Second: International Relations in the Greek Era

Greece entered history in the first millennium BC and quickly developed a multifaceted civilization. Before the Macedonian conquest, Greek society was composed of multiple independent cities. This, over time, established a system of rules governing their relations in peace and war. The Greeks knew how to use arbitration to resolve disputes between Greek cities. Thus, relations between Greek cities were characterized by stability and order, especially in times of peace. Treaties and temporary missions were common, and whenever disputes arose between them, they resorted to arbitration, as we mentioned earlier, as stated in the Treaty of Peace between Sparta and Regos concluded in 470 BC. However, between Greek and other cities, there were no treaties, and relations were limited to war and exclusion²⁵.

The Greeks were a community composed of several cities inhabiting a peninsula surrounded by numerous islands, connecting them to Asia Minor, the Italian peninsula, and the coasts of Phoenicia and North Africa²⁶.

²² Sulyok, Gabor. "Treaties, Origin." (2015): 1-12.

²³ Ramiz, R. (2020). New perspective for the philosophy of religion: New era theory, religion and science.

²⁴ Humphrey, T. H. O. M. A. S., Furlan, U., Husøy, T. A., & Bohun, H. (2022). Power and Diplomacy in the Amarna Letters: Cypro-Egyptian Relations in the Mid-Fourteenth Century BCE. *Narratives of Power in the Ancient World*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 23-46

²⁵ Mikelis, K., & Tsardanidis, C. (2022). International Relations Scholarship in Greece: The Uncertainty of Influence. *European Review of International Studies*, 9(1), 3-27.

²⁶ Feeney, D. (2022). Carthaginian Laws of War. In *The Laws of Yesterday's Wars 2* (pp. 45-109). Brill Nijhoff.

The Greeks viewed the peoples of the other world as barbarians with whom peaceful relations should not be established. Relations between these city-states, however, were based on complete equality, as if each were an independent state, despite their shared language, faith, and traditions. Wars frequently broke out between Greek city-states, the most famous of which was the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta. This war lasted for thirty years until a "peace" agreement was concluded to end the conflict²⁷.

Occasionally, truces were concluded between these city-states for the purpose of burying the dead, exchanging and releasing prisoners, or as a prelude to peace. Violating these truces was considered a violation of the principle of good faith. Greek history reveals that they had several types of negotiators. Some carried initial peace proposals and were called heralds or messengers, while others negotiated these proposals, known as ambassadors. Others were delegated to conclude or sign treaties. These were the delegates or negotiators of the treaty. Usually, an oath was taken to ensure the treaty's implementation, as were the exchange of ratifications by the parties. The treaty was then recorded on bronze or marble tables placed in public buildings for the public to view. For the most part, these procedures, and the subsequent implementation of treaty obligations, only took place between Greek city-states. As for other states or groups, the Greeks viewed themselves as a people superior to other peoples who must be subject to their control. Consequently, none of these peoples had any right to oppose them, nor were they obligated to honor their covenants with them²⁸.

This civilization witnessed the emergence of philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, and the emergence of a great leader, Alexander the Great, who was able, by force, to unite all the Greek city-states under his banner into a single state, organizing and stabilizing it during his time. History indicates that Greek civilization passed on to other civilizations that came after them the principles, rules, and organization of diplomacy, such as the method of selecting ambassadors and dispatching embassies, and the evolution of the concept of diplomatic immunities, such as the non-subjection of a diplomatic envoy to the internal laws and judiciary of the state to which he was sent. They also created the title of consul, adopted the olive branch as a symbol of peace, and established modern methods for negotiations, convening conferences, alliances, and deliberations through "parliaments." They also established international organizations. Let's not forget that the verb "diploma," from which the word diplomacy is derived, is Greek. Nicholson says that the Greeks developed a precise system of diplomatic communication. They recognized the principle of amicable settlement, or reconciliation, which refers to the cessation of hostilities. They also knew of the agreement, i.e., temporary local truce, and adopted the system of public agreements. Treaties, along with the agreement, i.e., the sacred truce concluded during the Olympic Games, were the most familiar terms and uses for the Greeks²⁹.

As for their philosophical foundations, they are: The philosophical foundations of international relations in the Greek era are based on the combination of political thought and practical action in the environment of independent city-states. Plato focused on the role of virtue and justice as criteria for good governance, values reflected in assessing the legitimacy of wars and alliances. Aristotle developed a classification of forms of governance and linked them to the concept of the common good, creating a basis for discussing relations between political units based on common interest. Conversely, Thucydides offered a realistic analysis of the nature of power and interest in the Peloponnesian War, laying the foundations for the realist school of international relations. Stoic philosophy also contributed to the crystallization of the concept of "natural law," which transcends the boundaries of cities to encompass all of humanity, an early conception of universal values in relations between peoples. Thus, Greek thought combined political

²⁷ Zakhartsev, S. I., Maslennikov, D. V., & Sal'nikov, V. P. (2021). *The logos of law: Parmenides–Hegel–Dostoevsky*. Europa Edizioni

²⁸ Arenson, K. E. (Ed.). (2020). *The routledge handbook of hellenistic philosophy*. New York/London: Routledge.

²⁹ Sempill, J. (2020). The rule of law and the rule of men: History, legacy, obscurity. *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law*, 12(3), 511-540

realism and idealism. Morality, and formed an intellectual basis that deeply influenced the evolution of international relations theories later³⁰.

Third: International Relations in the Roman Era

The Romans established a vast empire that transformed the Mediterranean into a Roman lake. They were the first global state in history, subjugating numerous peoples and countries. As a result, the identity of these countries and peoples faded within this empire, and the Roman state became known³¹.

The Roman policy toward the inhabitants of the countries subject to them and within their empire was based on the application of the principle of personal law. This resulted in the application of Roman law to those who possessed Roman citizenship, although naturalization was initially difficult. As for the inhabitants of the countries subject to Rome, they were considered foreigners to the Romans, even though their lands had become Roman provinces. Therefore, they could not apply Roman law. In application of the principle of personal law, the Romans allowed the inhabitants of the Roman provinces to apply their local laws in the relations that arose between them, without requiring them to apply the rules of Roman law. However, they distinguished between the inhabitants of the provinces that had not known the political system based on the organization of the population in a *civitas* before the Roman conquest, or who had known the *civitas* but had not submitted to Rome until after their defeat in war and unconditional surrender to the Roman army, and the inhabitants of the provinces who had organized themselves into *civitas* but submitted to Rome without resistance. Both were considered foreigners by the Romans, but the former were described as *capituli alieni*. They were of a lower rank than the latter, who were called ordinary foreigners. The Egyptians were considered *capituli alieni*³².

Capituli alieni enjoyed fewer rights than ordinary foreigners. They were deprived of political rights and were not permitted to apply their local laws and customs in their dealings except to the extent permitted by the Roman governor of the province. They were, *a fortiori*, not permitted to use the rules of Roman civil law, although they were permitted to use the rules of the law of nations³³.

As for ordinary foreigners, called *peregrini alicuius civitatis* (citizens of the cities), the Romans allowed them a degree of political rights and retained their local laws and customs. They did not impose Roman laws and customs on them³⁴.

This situation continued until the early third century AD, when Emperor Caracalla granted Roman citizenship to all residents of the Roman Empire with his famous constitution issued on July 1, 212 AD. As a result, all residents of the empire acquired Roman citizenship, which necessitated the application of Roman law in their relations. However, the practical application of this constitution revealed significant differences between the provinces. The western provinces generally abandoned their laws and customs and adopted Roman rules and regulations, while the eastern provinces adhered to their previous customs and laws. These laws were a mixture of local and Roman rules, forcing emperors, especially Emperor Diocletian, to intervene to force the empire's residents to adhere to Roman law. However, this attempt was unsuccessful, forcing his successors to be lenient and allow the implementation of some local

³⁰ Holmes Jr, O. W. (2020). *The common law*. Routledge.

³¹ Brouwer, R. (2021). *Law and Philosophy in the Late Roman Republic*. Cambridge University Press

³² Carrai, M. A. (2020). The Politics of History in the Late Qing Era: William AP Martin and a History of International Law for China. *Journal of the History of International Law/Revue d'histoire du droit international*, 22(2-3), 269-305.

³³ Horky, P. S., & Johnson, M. R. (2020). On Law and Justice Attributed to Archytas of Tarentum. *Early Greek Ethics*, 455-90

³⁴ Horky, P. S., & Johnson, M. R. (2020). On Law and Justice Attributed to Archytas of Tarentum. *Early Greek Ethics*, 455-90

systems. They eventually adopted some local legal rules and incorporated them into their legislation, which led to Roman law at that time taking on a distinctly Eastern hue³⁵.

The unified Roman state reached its peak with Caesar in the first century BC and lasted until 476 AD, the year of the collapse of Rome and the division of the empire. The Romans, like the Greeks, believed in their superiority over other peoples and their right to control the world by force. Rome's relationship with other peoples was based on perpetual warfare, so the idea of equality among nations was not recognized by the Romans. The unified Roman Empire encompassed most of the advanced countries of the world at the time, and the Roman Emperor was considered its supreme leader³⁶.

This military republic established friendly trade and diplomatic alliances between Rome and several independent political units for the simple reason that these units were located in what was known as the Italian lands. Therefore, the goal was defensive, allowing them to occupy other peoples of different races. After the Roman rulers had established their authority and their state was stable, they broke their alliances with their neighbors and transformed them into agreements of submission and subordination, demonstrating their strength and greatness, and thus their complete dominance over all neighboring peoples. The unified Roman Empire is considered the only state existing at that time in Europe, North Africa, and the eastern Mediterranean. Theoretically, the Romans contributed much to diplomatic relations through their various laws and through their various practices with the peoples they subjected to them, as they lived on the borders of their empire. Among other things, we note that they established the profession of archivist and diplomatic protocol by enacting laws specific to the reception of ambassadors, determining their residence and treatment, and granting them certain privileges and immunities similar to those granted to heads of missions and their accompanying employees and servants. Diplomatic mail, however, enjoyed no immunity at all; rather, it was searched and monitored³⁷.

The Romans contributed more to the evolution of diplomatic theory than to its practice. They were conquering warriors, and their military superiority allowed them to impose their will on defeated peoples and tribes. This was reflected in their view of treaties, their methods of concluding them, and their insistence on respecting them. For the Romans, treaties were not an expression of the will of the victor over the vanquished, but rather a document recognizing their interests and adhering to their services³⁸.

The Romans had their own international law, called Jus Fécial. This law was not accepted by other states or peoples in the sense commonly understood today. Rather, it was a set of rules of a religious nature imposed by the Romans in their relations with other peoples. A group of monks called the Feciaux were charged with ensuring their implementation. The Romans concluded numerous agreements to end hostilities following their wars with other states, some of which were called peace treaties, and others were called treaties of alliance. These so-called "peace treaties" were not of a reciprocal or consensual nature in the strict sense. Rather, they were concluded with defeated states, and the Romans imposed whatever conditions they saw fit. The defeated state was required to surrender itself and its property to the Roman people. Therefore, they were imposed treaties³⁹.

On the other hand, alliance treaties were only true peace treaties through which the Romans obtained certain gains, such as the cession of territory, payment of land costs or an annual tribute from the other

³⁵Horky, P. S., & Johnson, M. R. (2020). On Law and Justice Attributed to Archytas of Tarentum. *Early Greek Ethics*, 455-90

³⁶ Spickermann, W. (2021). The Roman Empire. *The Limits of Universal Rule. Eurasian Empires Compared*, 111-140

³⁷ Yacos, S. (2021). Empire on Trial: The Rise and Fall of Republican Resistance in Early Augustan Rome.

³⁸ Graham, S. P. MOTIVES FOR IMPERIALISM: A CASE STUDY OF ROME (510-272BC)

³⁹ Graham, S. P. MOTIVES FOR IMPERIALISM: A CASE STUDY OF ROME (510-272BC)

parties, and the release of prisoners without exchange. However, these treaties were never unilaterally imposed, resulting in the other party's complete submission to the Romans⁴⁰.

Therefore, the peace treaties the Romans concluded with other states were not treaties in the strict sense, but rather unilaterally imposed. Unlike what were called alliance treaties, they were considered true peace treaties, even if this did not prevent the Romans from obtaining gains from the other parties under them. Among the most notable peace treaties concluded by the Romans were those concluded by Emperor Justinian signed a treaty with the Persian king, Chaosrus, in 562 BC. Both parties affirmed their desire for peace and pledged to abide by the terms of the treaty. Upon concluding this treaty, each party submitted a draft of the text in its own language. Both versions were then translated to ensure that the two texts were identical. Each state subsequently retained a copy of the treaty written in the other party's language, in addition to the copy written in its own language. It is evident from the procedures that accompanied the conclusion of this treaty that a procedure similar to the ratification procedure commonly used today was followed. The Persian king issued a declaration announcing his desire for peace and agreeing to its terms. At the same time, Justinian sent him a letter of the same meaning. Furthermore, the Romans concluded numerous truces with other states, for the purpose of burying the dead, exchanging and releasing prisoners, or paving the way for the conclusion of peace treaties. Some of these agreements extended for long periods, up to a hundred years⁴¹.

The basis of our topic is the Roman viewpoint. To foreigners and also to all other nations The foreigner in general was seen by the ancient peoples and also in Rome as a follower and there was no means to protect him in the eyes of the law and he was often viewed as an enemy and as such he was killed as enemies are killed since their blood was permissible or his life was kept as slaves but this hostile view soon changed and was replaced by the meaning of protection, loyalty, friendship and full recognition of the foreigner and in the end the way was opened for him in many cases to disappear in the guise of Roman pastoralism that pastoralism which was a sacred characteristic of the most important characteristics of the Romans in the field of Roman racism. The following explains this as follows: The status of foreigners in Rome⁴²: In Rome I found an indissoluble bond between the right of citizenship and the enjoyment of liberty. Rome did not view its citizens as anything but free, and thus the loss of freedom was automatically revoked from the holder of citizenship. As for the foreigner, in the eyes of the Romans, he had no right to Rome, no law to protect him, no society to shelter him, no family, and no religion. Consequently, he was completely deprived of all rights, both private and public. Consequently, it was permissible to kill them, seize them, and enslave them. Thus, slavery became an alternative to death. However, this situation began to change. The transformation began individually at first, and established a human and moral meaning more than a legal one. This situation was then confirmed through special agreements concluded between the foreigner and a Roman, as follows⁴³:

(1) **Special legal protection:** This included granting guarantees for the foreigner's residence in Rome. This included temporary residence, whether for the purpose of tourism or trade in the markets of Rome, for a specified period. These guarantees were what the Romans called *Hospirium privatum*, which actually meant "the two answers," meaning "tourists." The Roman who hosted a foreigner was responsible for protecting him under a type of friendly agreement concluded between Roman and foreign families, and under the terms of these agreements. The main agreements were "reciprocal protection," meaning that the Roman enjoyed the same protection in the foreigner's country. The Roman might undertake to provide all amenities and facilitate the residence of the foreigner he hosted, and then undertake to provide all facilities for him in all his business, since the foreigner was unable to engage in buying and selling according to legal procedures.

⁴⁰ Ando, C. (2020). Public Law and Republican Empire in Rome, 200–27 bce. In *Empire and Legal Thought* (pp. 105-124). Brill Nijhoff

⁴¹ Ando, C. (2020). Public Law and Republican Empire in Rome, 200–27 bce. In *Empire and Legal Thought* (pp. 105-124). Brill Nijhoff

⁴² Scullard, H. H. (2021). *From the Gracchi to Nero: a history of Rome 133 BC to AD 68*. Routledge

⁴³ Czajkowski, K. (2020). Law and Romanization in Judaea. *Law in the Roman Provinces*, 84-100.

Also, the Roman was often the "guarantor" of the foreigner and guarantor of his actions. The Roman also represented the foreigner in court, based on his guarantee of the foreigner.

(2) **General legal protection:** This meant the protection of the Roman state. Agreements were concluded between Rome and a foreign city-state, and under these agreements, each city-state took upon itself to provide all guarantees and the same privileges to the other state's patronage. Naturally, the granting of rights to patronage varied from one state to another, based on what was stipulated in the core terms of the agreement concluded between these states. Often, the agreements concluded by Rome in this regard included granting foreigners three rights considered among the most important and important rights granted to foreigners: the right to marry, the right to conduct business, and the right to (Recourse to the judiciary) This last right does not mean benefiting from the legal claims systems, as they are only for the Romans alone, but rather means their ability to present their disputes to a court chosen by foreigners, and this body is responsible for settling disputes, whether those that occur between foreigners and Romans or between some of them and others⁴⁴.

Conclusion

Living in peace is the goal of humanity. Peace can only be achieved through international treaties, whether in times of peace to avoid potential disruptions or during armed conflicts to regulate them and avoid maximum harm. Through this research, we have discovered the existence of international treaties since the beginning of human settlements. International treaties also emerged in the Pharaonic era. The Greeks began concluding truce agreements between Greek city-states for various purposes. The Romans similarly turned to international treaties after their perception of foreign affairs changed.

This paper aims to analyze the philosophical and legal roots of international relations in three pivotal civilizations: Pharaonic Egypt, Greek Greece, and ancient Rome. The aim is to highlight how intellectual and value-based foundations shaped patterns of interaction between states and peoples in ancient times and established diplomatic and legal traditions that remain influential today.

The study demonstrated that in the Pharaonic era, international relations were based on the principle of "Maat," which represents justice and universal harmony, with the pharaoh considered a guarantor of balance between internal and external realms. Religious philosophy gave a value-based dimension to relations with other powers. Treaties—such as the Treaty of Kadesh with the Hittites—were considered sacred contracts witnessed by the gods, giving them legitimacy that transcended material interests. The Tell el-Amarna correspondence reflected a spirit of mutual recognition between kings and demonstrated that Egyptian diplomacy was not merely a political tool but part of a broader moral-cosmic system.

In the Greek era, the city-state environment emerged as a philosophical and practical framework for international relations. Plato's political vision addressed the relationship between virtue and justice as the basis for legitimacy in governance and alliances, while Aristotle presented his classifications of forms of government and the concept of the common good, which helped crystallize notions of justice among political units. In contrast, Thucydides presented a realistic perspective that focused on power and interest in explaining wars and alliances, which constituted the nucleus of the realist school. Stoicism later contributed to expanding the philosophical horizon through the concept of natural law and universal justice, establishing an ethical framework for law and international relations that transcended the boundaries of the city-state.

The Roman era was characterized by the combination of military power and legal regulation. The Romans developed the concept of "Jus Gentium," which regulated relations between Romans and foreigners and laid the foundations of international law. Treaties and alliances were used alongside force to manage the empire's relations with other powers. Stoic philosophy and Roman law contributed to the crystallization of concepts such as justice, legitimacy, and peace (Pax Romana) as principles governing

⁴⁴ Czajkowski, K. (2020). Law and Romanization in Judaea. *Law in the Roman Provinces*, 84-100.

international interaction. Thus, Rome became an early model for the idea that international relations could be built on an institutional and legal framework that transcended mere military dominance.

The paper concludes that these three civilizations produced distinct philosophical and legal foundations: universal justice in Egypt, the balance between idealism and realism in Greece, and the legal institution in Rome. Together, these foundations formed the first building blocks of concepts that continue to form the core of modern international relations, such as sovereignty, legitimacy, international law, and the balance of power. Re-reading these experiences provides valuable insights into understanding the continuity of the interaction between power and values in global politics throughout the ages.

Hence, the study recommends the need to increase commitment to the rules of security and peace, on the one hand, and to ensure that states refrain from provoking other states by threatening their security or interfering in their affairs. On the other hand, all states must adhere to the rules of international law at the international level and refrain from violating its rules, which are often violated.

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