



# **Diplomacy in the Early Islamic World: A Tenth-Century Treatise on Arab-Byzantine Relations (Library of Middle East History)**

*Maria Vaiou*

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Arab messengers played a vital role in the medieval Islamic world and its diplomatic relations with foreign powers. An innovative treatise from the tenth century (Rusul al-Mulik, Messengers of Kings) is perhaps the most important account of the diplomacy of the period, and it is here translated into English for the first time. Rusul al-Mulik draws on examples from the Qur'an and other sources which extend from the period of al-jihiliyya to the time of the Abbasid caliph al-Mu'tasim (218-227/833-842).

In the only medieval Arabic work which exists on the conduct of messengers and their qualifications, the author Ibn al-Farri rejects jihadist policies in favor of quiet diplomacy and a pragmatic outlook of constructive realpolitik. Rusul al-Mulik is an extraordinarily important and original contribution to our understanding of the early Islamic world and the field of International Relations and Diplomatic History.

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