

Anastasiia Ermolaeva

Hegelstraße 59, Raum 06-108 | 55122 Mainz |

eranasta@uni-mainz.de



Project description

This dissertation examines unsuccessful dynastic marriage projects of the Moscow court from the late fifteenth to the early seventeenth century as instruments of foreign policy. It argues that marriage negotiations were not merely ceremonial acts but key arenas in which claims to dynastic legitimacy, rank, and international recognition were formulated and contested. By focusing on unrealized or politically ineffective projects, the study highlights moments when Muscovy's ambitions to forge alliances and elevate its status encountered confessional, political, and cultural constraints.

The dissertation analyzes marriage diplomacy as a structured repertoire of practices that included spouse selection, diplomatic correspondence, embassy negotiations, and the strategic use of royal women in international politics. It is based on Muscovite diplomatic documentation preserved in the ambassadorial books and on foreign accounts that reflect how Muscovy's dynastic rhetoric was perceived and reinterpreted abroad. Methodologically, the study applies frame analysis to reconstruct how arguments were formulated and adapted to specific audiences.

By foregrounding failed negotiations, the project offers a new perspective on Muscovite foreign policy as a communicative and negotiated process. It demonstrates that even unsuccessful marriage projects shaped diplomatic relations by testing political boundaries and exposing the limits of dynastic strategy in early modern Europe.