

# Dynastic Marriage in England, Castile and Aragon, 11<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries

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## **Abstract**

Dynastic marriages were an important tool of diplomacy utilised by monarchs throughout medieval and early modern Europe. Despite this, no consensus has been reached among historians as to the reason for their continued use, with the notable exception of ensuring the production of a legitimate heir. This thesis will argue that the creation and maintenance of alliances was the most important motivating factor for English, Castilian and Aragonese monarchs. Territorial concerns, such as the protection and acquisition of lands, as well as attempts to secure peace between warring kingdoms, were also influential elements considered when arranging dynastic marriages. Other less common motives which were specific to individual marriages depended upon the political, economic, social and dynastic priorities of the time in which they were contracted.

An analysis of the marriages of the monarchs of England, Castile and Aragon, as well as their heirs who lived long enough to marry, but died before they could inherit their kingdoms, will show that most dynastic marriages were arranged with neighbouring dynasties. As well as political and geographic considerations, dynastic marriages had to fulfil a variety of social expectations, and this thesis will determine how potential spouses were identified from among the sons and daughters of Europe's ruling families, and the process through which the marriage was arranged.

Finally, by using the marriages of Catherine of Aragon with the Tudor princes, Arthur and Henry, as well as the dynastic marriages of their siblings: Isabel, Juan, Juana and María Trastámara and Margaret Tudor, it is possible to explore, in practice, how dynastic marriages were arranged and how they were influenced by wider trends in Western European politics and diplomacy. This thesis will therefore demonstrate that dynastic marriages were arranged for a variety of reasons, although the production of a legitimate heir and alliance building were the most important considerations. Further, as the discussion of Catherine of Aragon's marriages highlights, those arranging dynastic marriages had to take into consideration the shifting diplomatic situation in medieval Europe.

## **Statement of Originality**

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution in my name and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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## Abbreviations

- C. S. P. Simancas      Calendar of Letters and State Papers Relating to English Affairs, Preserved Principally in the Archives of Simancas, Volume I: Elizabeth, 1558-1567, ed. Martin A. S. Hume (London: 1892).
- C. S. P. Spanish      Calendar of Letters, Despatches, and State Papers, Relating to the Negotiations Between England and Spain, Preserved in the Archives at Simancas, and Elsewhere, Volume I, 1485-1509, ed. Gustav A. Bergenroth (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1862).
- C. S. P. Milanese      Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, Existing in the Archives and Collections of Milan, Volume I, 1485-1618, ed. A. B. Hinds (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1912).
- C. S. P. Venetian (+ Vol.)      Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, Relating to English Affairs, Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy, Volume II, 1509-1519, ed. Rawdon Brown (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1867).
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