

Diplomacy in the Modern Era. Between Ideology and Practice

Research Group: Diplomacy: Theory and Practice
Research field: History of International Relations

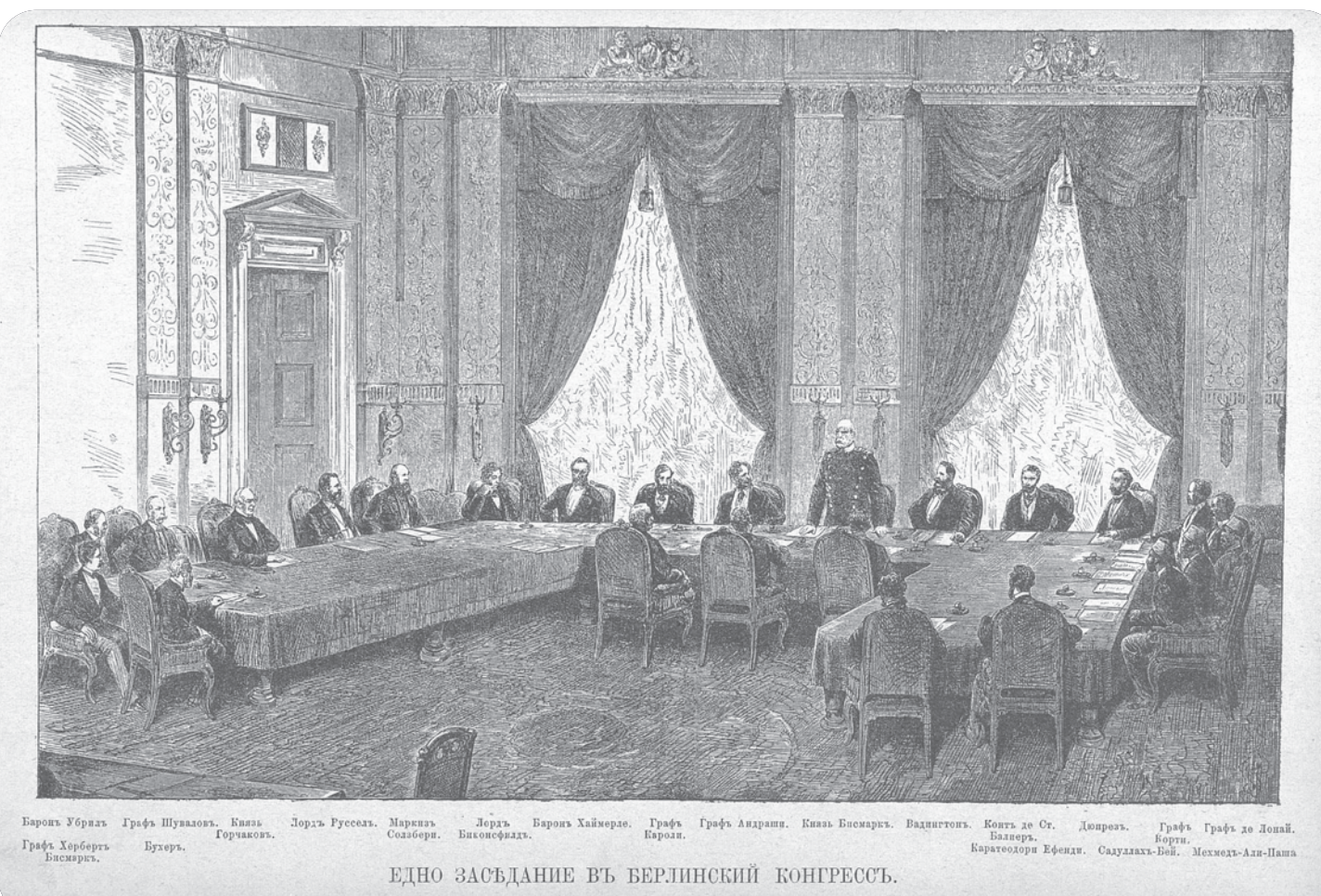
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Project guidelines

The Modern Era marks the period of the emergence of modern diplomatic practice in Europe. Diplomacy gradually becomes an integral part of international relations, and its role was continuously growing.

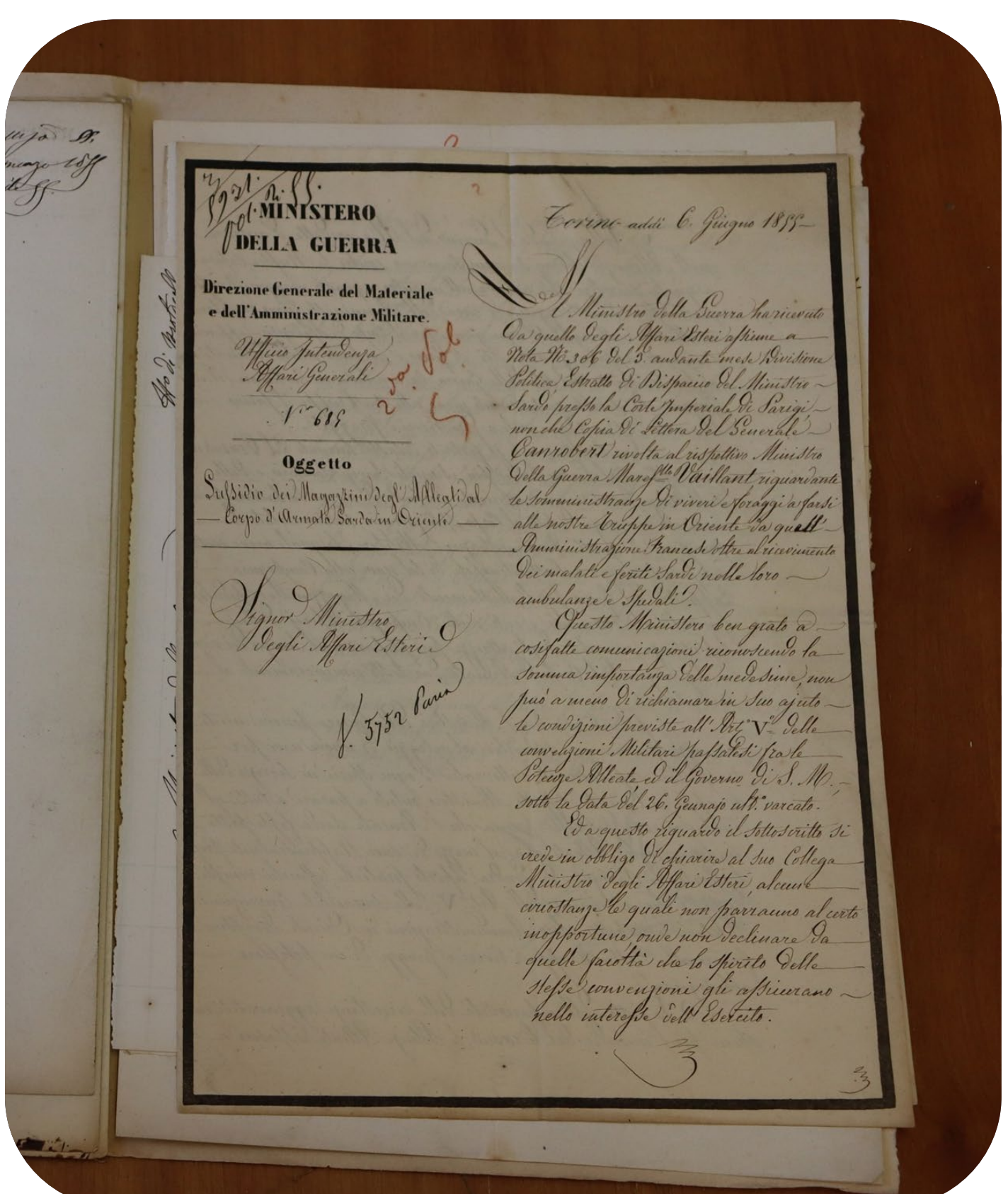
Technological advancements, social, and cultural changes occurring in Europe between the 16th and 20th centuries contribute to more active communication among European nations. They also lead to significant changes in the dialogue between the continent's states. Diplomatic contacts became more intensive, the means of achieving political success became more diverse and sophisticated. Moreover, ideology was increasingly used as an ally or adversary to the policies pursued.

A hallmark of the Modern Era is the profound shift from bilateral relations and agreements towards congress-type diplomacy. Now, major international forums are emerging, complementing traditional practices as a means to resolve conflicts and maintain the balance of power in Europe.

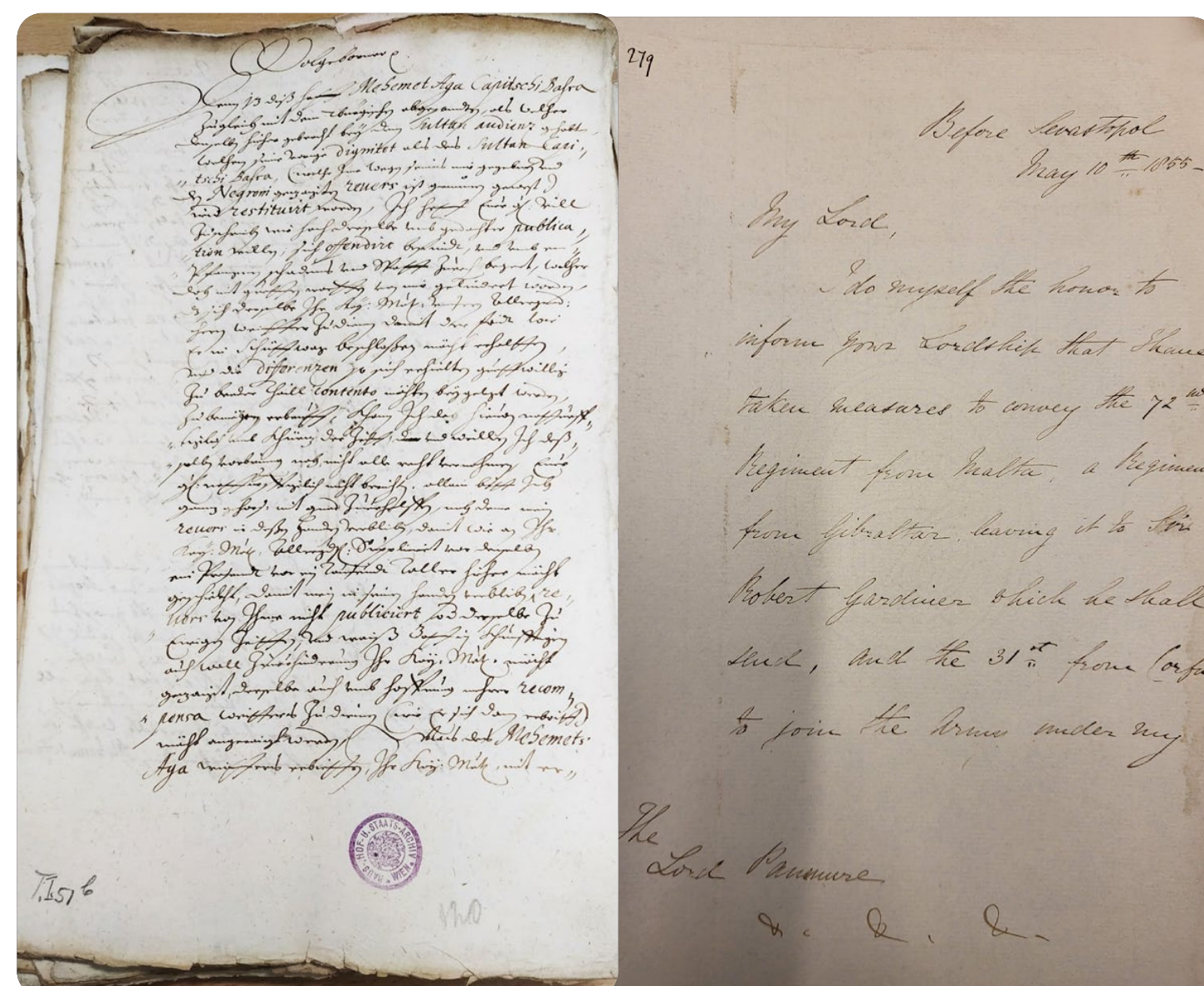


Introduction

The main goals of the project are: to explore the various aspects of diplomacy in the Modern Times and to identify those issues that remain particularly significant in diplomatic activities to the present days. Members of the project team intend to focus on diplomatic practice; to analyze the role of ideology in the diplomatic process, on examples of the relationship between ideology and politics in the Modern Era, as well as the influence of "ideology-policy" connection on international relations. One of the topics is related to the connection between present day AI language models and historical research and teaching.

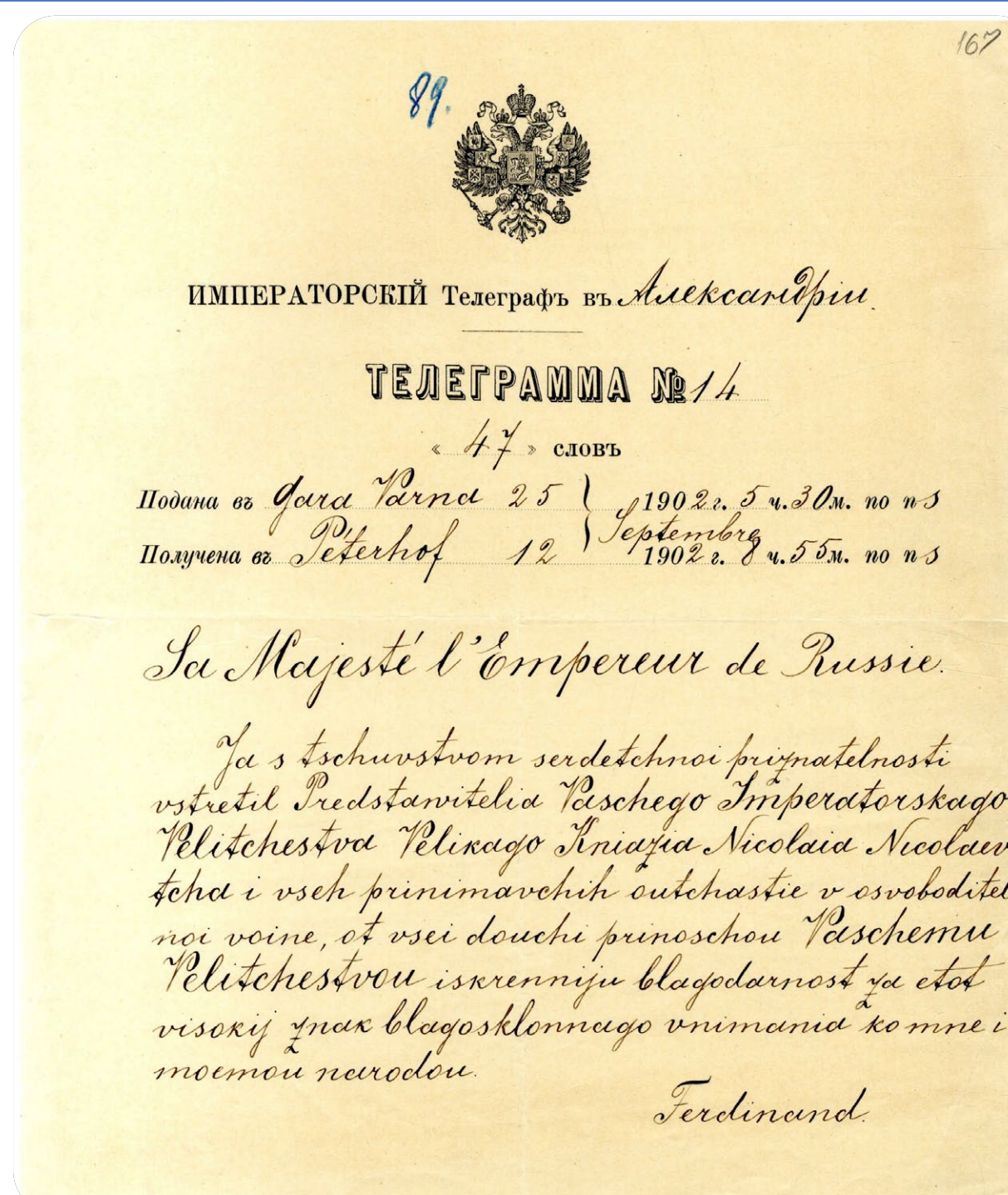


Methodology



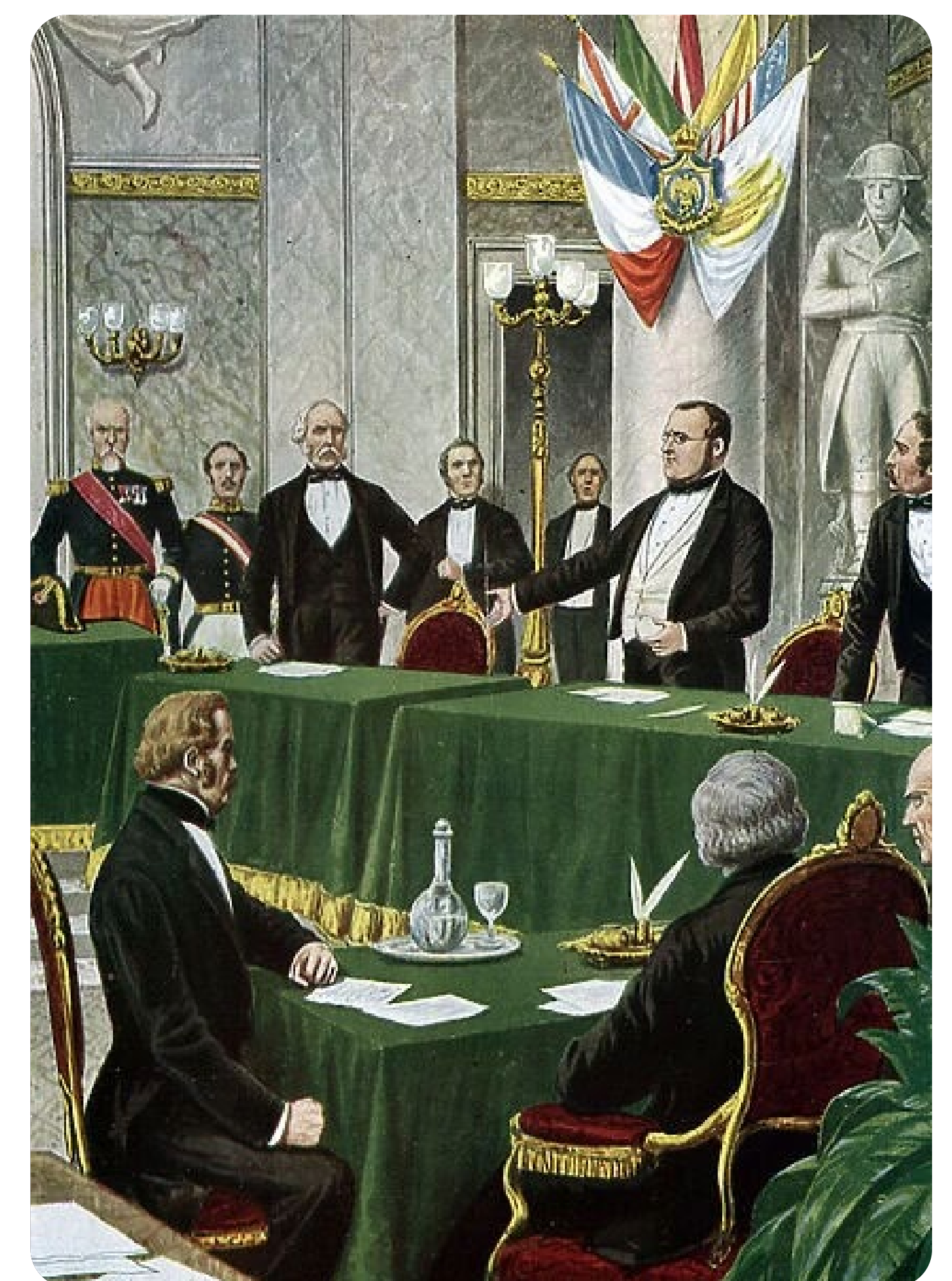
The project team consists of historians - professors and researchers from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" as well as scholars from the Institute for Historical Studies (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences). The members of the team are accomplished specialists in various fields of diplomatic history and ideology of the Modern Times, employing an innovative interdisciplinary approach in their research of the topic and issues at hand.

The methodology used by the members of the project is based on in-depth examination of historical sources, analysis of primary materials, and synthesis of broader trends in diplomatic practices throughout the Modern era.



Results

Within the project activities, team members had the opportunity to work at the Austrian State Archives in Vienna (österreichisches staatsarchiv), the Italian National Archives in Rome (Archivio centrale dello Stato), and the Slavonic Library (part of the National Library) in Prague. Working in these archival repositories enabled them to discover important documents, many of which are unpublished. Based on this, the team prepared several articles dedicated to various aspects of diplomatic activities of European states. These articles have been published in scholarly journals indexed in Web of Science.



Conclusion

Diplomacy is the study of the unknown, conversations with the Others, but it is also a "cost-effective" means of achieving results. It facilitates dialogue between governments, supports peaceful resolution of international issues, and guarantees the easier communication between different societies. From the 16th to the early 20th century, contacts between states on the Old World significantly increased, and the role of diplomacy grew. The diplomatic apparatus developed and expanded, and the diplomatic service complicated its structure. Beyond traditional, official diplomatic contacts, European states increasingly resort to new means to achieve their national goals. So-called soft diplomacy provides broad opportunities for long-term influence on societies. On the other hand, in modern times, diplomacy is increasingly forced to conform to ideology, which is often used to explain or justify a particular policy.

The members of the project team, depending on their personal competencies, explored various issues from the history of diplomacy in the Modern Era. The leading topics they investigated were: the complex diplomatic relations between Vienna, Madrid, and Constantinople in the 16th-17th centuries, Italian foreign policy in the mid-19th century, British coercive diplomacy and its long-term effects, the characteristic features

of Russian diplomacy and of its policy towards the Balkans.

The analysis of specific case studies provided an opportunity to highlight several key issues that remain relevant to this day: the diverse manifestations of diplomacy in the Modern Era, successful and unsuccessful diplomatic approaches, as well as the cost incurred to achieve the national priorities of states.

The activity of the project team allowed its participants to broaden and enrich their understanding of diplomacy in the Modern Times and to identify new topics and issues related to the international relations of the continent and the diplomatic activities of the European states. The founded archival materials and the scholarly texts prepared by the members of the team pose questions to the audience such as: the collision of diplomacy with political ideologies in the era of Modern Europe, the development of "cultural diplomacy" as a means to conduct successful national policy.

They shed new light on the processes of formulating and implementing national policies, on the evolution of diplomatic practice, and on the role of ideology – both state and religious – in international contacts and efforts to maintain the balance of power in Europe.