

Early Stuart Diplomatic Service: Prosopography and Networks

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This project gathers, analyzes, and visualizes biographical, event, and network data associated with early Stuart diplomatic representatives (1603-1649) to achieve a greater understanding of English foreign policy and related government institutions. The patterns and connections in this data can help answer questions, for instance, related to the increasing professionalization of the diplomatic service. Learning more about factors such as the diplomats' educational preparation, social status and mobility, career paths, and religious and political affiliations and networks can provide a fuller and more nuanced understanding of the service's evolution as an institution and its role in operationalizing the foreign policy of monarchs in this key period leading up to the Civil War and Interregnum.

The core biographical data set for this study is sourced from the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*¹, which contains articles for two-thirds of the diplomatic representatives under study. Where possible, it will be supplemented on certain key data points, from a variety of additional biographical sources, for the other, less prominent figures in order to achieve the fullest possible picture of the service. The core event and professional network data for missions is sourced from *A Handlist of English Diplomatic Representatives*.² Epistolary data mined from the *Calendar of Clarendon State Papers*³ and the *State Papers Online* (Part IV: Stuart Period) are intended to supplement and provide additional context (geographical, temporal, and personal and professional connections) for these core data sets.

One of the project's goals is produce a combined, enhanced data set on early Stuart diplomats that can readily be linked to and shared with related projects, such as Six Degrees of Francis Bacon⁴ and Early Modern Letters Online⁵, through the use of standard identifiers and common data formats and structures. VIVO for Historical Persons (VIVO4HP) – an experimental offshoot using a portion of the early Stuart diplomats data set as a use case – is already furthering this goal through reuse of established ontologies and RDF data outputs.⁶ Further potential collaborations are under exploration.

¹ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004). Online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman (2005-13), <http://www.oxforddnb.com>.

² Gary M. Bell, *A Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives 1509-1688* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1990).

³ *Calendar of the Clarendon State Papers Preserved in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1869-1970).

⁴ <http://sixdegreesoffrancisbacon.com/>

⁵ <http://emlo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>

⁶ VIVO (<http://www.vivoweb.org/>) is an open-source semantic application that represents modern academic research communities. Its purpose as a researcher profile system is to represent scholars, their interests, activities, and accomplishments, and the networks among them. VIVO4HP is an experiment to investigate whether the VIVO-Integrated Semantic Framework ontology can be reasonably adapted to facilitate discovery of structured biographical data about historical persons.