

## Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



### Adams, Robyn, ed. and technical director. The Diplomatic Correspondence of Thomas Bodley, 1585–1597. Database

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occurrence. Optimistically, the existence of this information already does at least present a cost-effective opportunity to improve this situation in a possible future iteration of the site.

Notwithstanding the suggestions for improvement noted above, this is an admirable resource that combines excellent traditional scholarship with a genuinely exciting use of electronic media. Its continuing functionality suggests a fairly robust initial design, and it is to be hoped both that its own existence and use will continue and expand, and that other comparable resources devoted to less-well-known early modern authors will build on this model in future.

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**Adams, Robyn, ed. and technical director.**

***The Diplomatic Correspondence of Thomas Bodley, 1585–1597. Database.***

Centre for Editing Lives and Letters. London: University College London, 2011.

Version 5. Accessed 20 May 2019.

[livesandletters.ac.uk/bodley/bodley.html](http://livesandletters.ac.uk/bodley/bodley.html).

Before retiring to found the well-known library that bears his name, Thomas Bodley (1545–1613) was appointed by Queen Elizabeth as a representative of the Council of State and, in that capacity, went on several missions to the United Provinces of the Netherlands, as well as to various locations in Germany, Denmark, and France, where he conducted negotiations in relation to the Protestant revolts and to the mercantile issues deriving from those political conflicts. The difficulties of these negotiations increasingly cast doubts on the efficacy of his actions, and this in turn led to increasing reciprocal dissatisfaction, so that he did not get further employment at the end of his missions and subsequently retired from political life.

The database of his diplomatic correspondence, previously unedited and unpublished, is now available. Produced by the Centre for Editing Lives and Letters in cooperation with the Bodleian Library, and licensed as open source under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License, the collection is a significant contribution not only to several fields of study—religious, social, cultural, linguistic, geographical, military, and political

history—but also to our understanding of the information networks between official and semi-official diplomatic agents and their patrons in the late sixteenth-century. The project includes important information for documentary research on the history of international relations, as there are various allusions that go beyond the immediate context and correspondents. These allusions are easily retrievable, as all the people and geographical locations mentioned in the letters have been tagged in XML since the beginning of the project. In the many cases in which references are indirect or obscure, they have been identified through cross-checking of several different sources.

The editor and project director of the *Diplomatic Correspondence of Thomas Bodley* is Robyn Adams, with Elizabeth Williamson as research assistant. Technical aspects of the project, including the website, are the responsibility of Matthew Symonds, CELL's technical research officer. (Technical consultant: Jan Broadway; for DM2E / Open Humanities: Lieke Ploger and Sam Leon.)

The database in its present state (Version 5) includes 990 letters in English written to and by Bodley between the years 1585 and 1597. The majority of Bodley's original extant correspondence is in the British Library (Cotton MSS) and The National Archives in London, but several letters are also held at Hatfield House in the Cecil papers, in the Bodleian Library, in the Lambeth Palace Library, and in the Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone, while others are scattered in other libraries across the world. The letters include those sent, those only in draft form, and additional copies. Also included are Bodley's letters of diplomatic instruction and papers relating to the bureaucratic apparatus of his posting (his cipher and passport, for example), and the copies and minutes associated with the administration of his role as diplomatic agent. The concept of "correspondence" is therefore employed in a wide sense here.

Bodley's main correspondent is William Cecil, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Burghley, who was at the time Lord Treasurer and had previously been secretary of state, leader of the Privy Council, and creator of a vast network of intelligence. Burghley died in 1592 and was succeeded in office by his son Robert Cecil, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Salisbury, also addressed as "my Lord Treasurer," or even "Lord Burghley" in some of the later letters. Another important addressee is Sir Francis Walsingham, principal secretary to Queen Elizabeth as well as her "spymaster" from 1573 to his death in 1590, who supported the Protestant cause in the Netherlands even more strongly than Lord Burghley. Further correspondents, marginally present in the corpus, include Robert Devereux (who was later to be the protagonist, as earl of

Essex, of a famous rebellion), as well as various representatives of the Company of the Merchant Adventurers, who were in conflict with the Hanseatic League.

One interesting feature of the database is that people and places mentioned are weighted as to their relevance in terms of mention. For people, there are several diagrams that show the links between different correspondents and individuals mentioned in terms of their centrality within network models, which could be very useful for studies employing methodologies related to social network analysis. For places, the website includes detailed statistics about frequencies of mention, as well as two case studies on place-names, a feature that could provide a useful support for historical analyses. The contemporary use of two calendars, until the Gregorian calendar was unanimously adopted in 1572, could create doubts as to the succession of letters, an important element for historical research. Usually, however, the letters themselves employ different devices to disambiguate this element, such as references to festivities and specific events as “time anchors,” or cross-reference to other letters.

This edition of the correspondence features a unique transcription method that allows readers to custom-build their own transcripts, according to their research preferences, whether in complete, non-abbreviated form, or with all orthographic and material features of the period reproduced in the transcripts. The letter transcripts have been stored as XML files in order to facilitate online publication, searching, hypertext linking, customization, and generation of multiple versions; the format also allows the possibility for future exchange, and is suitable for long-term preservation and storage. Images of the documents are stored as high-resolution TIFF files, optimized as JPEGs for online viewing. All the elements of the encoding and transcription are made completely transparent in the website, which even includes a blog on the project's progress, methodologies, and case studies from the time when it was selected for the DM2E Open Humanities Awards. This second step produced ample documentation on the methodology and the results of this further elaboration. The project data are stored on a MySQL database, which powers the project website. The data are drawn from a Microsoft Access database, in which the data were stored during the editorial and transcription process.

Several abbreviation expansions, and all emphasis marking as well as marginalia, have been included and marked by special encoding in the transcripts; these are in UTF-8, and use innovative techniques, as well as the Transcriber's Workbench software. It is this software that permits the choice

of different options when accessing the transcriptions, since all abbreviations and contractions have been encoded, as well as other material and textual features of the letters, such as marginalia. This flexibility in access modes, which is typical of all of the centre's databases, is an innovative and highly desirable feature, since readers may choose to view the different details of the transcriptions through a user-friendly menu under the "Settings" section of the main page. Transcriptions follow the original spelling, word and line spacing, and punctuation of the letters, apart from u/v, i/j and Ff/ff, which have been modernized. Special symbols and additional characters (ampersand, apostrophe, asterisk, caret, dagger, em dash, en dash, and quotation marks) are encoded using the appropriate character entity codes according to Unicode standards.

The database is accompanied by an exhaustive apparatus of materials; these include a select bibliography featuring both traditional publications and electronic sources, a contextual essay that explains the historical background of Bodley's missions, and a biography, as well as the elaborations on mentions of people and places illustrated above.

The transcripts are accompanied by a series of indexes and an editorial apparatus that introduces, illustrates, and enhances the ability to navigate the corpus. The indexes are automatically generated as XML queries from a database containing a complete catalogue of the letters. The search facility is a custom-written utility developed at CELL that enables free-text searching of the online content.

Users can browse the database through the "Browse" section by Archive, Date, Author, Recipient, Location, People mentioned, Place mentioned, and Letter ID. The texts can be searched in both expanded and non-expanded forms, although the simple and Boolean searches possible within the browser are clearly insufficient for many types of linguistic research. For more detailed linguistic analysis, the only option is to download the relevant text portions and feed them into word-crunching programs. However, the XML transcripts are available to download, and a link to a GitHub repository is provided on their website.

I employed the database for research on linguistic strategies such as conveying different degrees of certainty about the information transmitted (modal verbs, evidentials, impersonals) or showing different levels of deference to the interlocutor (terms of address, periphrasis, indirectness), and I found the

database very user-friendly. One problem concerned the several discrepancies in labelling copies: on more than one occasion, I found that the indication of one letter as “copy of” another letter did not correspond to the ID number of the copy. Another problem is the fact that some letters have multiple addressees and correspondents, while others may be said to have been produced by “multiple hands,” as in the letters officially written by the Privy Council. While this presents no problem for the historian, as the multiple nodes indicating different authors in the graphs allow for these possibilities, for linguists this could raise issues about the inclusion of such data, given the remaining uncertainty concerning the “speaker” that produced these letters.

Apart from this, however (and from any remaining inconsistencies, which will certainly be amended within the database maintenance), the database turned out to be a good resource to open a new line of research, as it will certainly be for any other similar research and many more in the future.

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**Roger Clegg, principal investigator, and Eric Tatham, developer.**

**Reconstructing the Rose: 3D Computer Modelling Philip Henslowe’s Playhouse. Other.**

De Montfort University, 2019. Accessed 21 August 2019.

[reconstructingtherose.tome.press](http://reconstructingtherose.tome.press).

Roger Clegg proposes early on in this impressive website that “[w]e are never going to fully understand the interior arrangements of the [Rose] playhouse” (in “Chapter 4,” 4.5.2), but the research that he has gathered and presented here goes some ways towards demonstrating many aspects of the venue, including its dimensions, its construction, and its aesthetics. *Reconstructing the Rose: 3D Computer Modelling Philip Henslowe’s Playhouse*, produced by Clegg with computer models by Eric Tatham and Mixed Reality Ltd, is, from the beginning, a very impressive digital output. Using Unreal Engine and funded by a Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) grant from De Montfort University, it combines a detailed study of the Rose, an early modern theatre in London, from multiple perspectives. This graphically attractive model will likely be