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A Community of Councillors: Tudor Government and Prosopography

The general public and most historians perceive the Tudor court as having been a hostile and bloodthirsty place. David Starkey claimed factional struggles were ‘omnipresent at court’ and that courtiers and councillors were engaged in ‘restless struggles for power and profit.’¹ Similarly, Eric Ives described faction as a pervasive force which divided the Tudor elite into various groups, all of which competed for spoils and preferment.² Undoubtedly, the Tudors could be capricious and ruthless with those who failed them, and their relations with their servants were often unpredictable. However, this does not mean that relations between their courtiers and councillors were always hostile. In fact, they were more bound together by shared characteristics and mentality than previously appreciated. Prosopography, a form of collective biography which investigates the common characteristics of a group of historical actors, offers one of the best ways of revealing these connections. In this article, it will be contended not only that such an approach revises previous thinking of Tudor politics but also that it has important implications for how we view other historical communities.

The privy council, the English state’s executive board, is an ideal focus for an examination of the nature of Tudor politics. Its purview covered all aspects of national government, from foreign and financial policy to the makeup of the royal household and private land disputes. While it was sometimes possible to exert some influence from outside the council either through the monarch directly or in a highly localised manner, to be a councillor was recognised as the pinnacle of a political career in this period and was the only way to ensure a role in the discussion and implementation of royal policy. Given their unrivalled role in policy implementation and their authority to settle disputes, in order to understand Tudor government and politics it is vital to understand the relationships between the privy councillors.

Narratives of Tudor political history are often constructed in a monochromatic way. Factions are rarely identified as isolated responses to particular events but rather are treated as endemic to Tudor politics.³ In attempting to place councillors into factional units or treating an individual in isolation, historians miss the essential fluidity of personal relationships. This narrow focus fails to consider the whole range of interpersonal relationships and biographical details that characterise human interaction. Several historians have proposed alternative models which embrace social and cultural approaches to history.⁴ However, the relationships and connections between the Tudor elite still receive little attention outside of individual biographies and factional narratives. In a classic article, Steven Gunn identified several

different political structures in which individuals operated.⁵ These included a small intimate group, perhaps based around kinship or royal service; a looser, predominantly local, structure of affinities; another court-based ‘political unit’; and a fourth, even more informal, affiliation which one might call a ‘faction’.⁶ Only within the context of an individual’s interaction within and across these structures can a political narrative that spans multiple decades be accurately constructed. This paper builds on Gunn’s structural framework and advocates prosopography as the best method for understanding political action and institutional change.

That is not to deny the importance of factionalism, at least as a means of explaining specific relationships and episodes. For example, the rivalry in the 1590s between Robert Cecil (1563-1612) and Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex (1565-1601), both of whom sought Elizabeth I’s favour, did result in the creation of rival parties at court.⁷ The two men strove to have their supporters appointed to key offices and tried to neutralise the influence of their rival. This particular conflict resulted in an emphatic victory for Cecil, whereas Essex was executed for treason in 1601.⁸ It would be wrong, therefore, to reject entirely the concept of factionalism as a way of explaining specific political developments.

However, too often, the interpretation of one event is extrapolated to the rest of the period without appreciating how circumstances or personalities had changed. For instance, John Neale described Elizabeth I’s reign as factional but drew most of his evidence from the 1590s.⁹ By characterising Elizabeth’s 45-year reign based on the circumstances of a single decade, he created a somewhat misleading picture. Research by Simon Adams has revealed that Robert Devereux was the disruptive element, and that before his rise to prominence the Elizabethan establishment was broadly agreed on public policy.¹⁰ Prosopography can add a personal dimension to these political conclusions, further strengthening the argument for a more united body politic.

Prosopography gathers biographical information pertaining to a defined group of individuals and then analyses this data in order to uncover broader trends and patterns. What sets prosopography apart from collective biography is its focus on multivariate analysis.¹¹ Whereas collective biography focuses on full-length biographies of a small number of individuals, prosopography is concerned with multiple variables across many individuals. Its purpose is to identify particular groups and explain what binds them together.¹² Subsequent analysis can then explore how members interacted with each other, and with members of other groups. Such an approach reveals the inner workings of a society or political system much more clearly than

taking an individual or institutional approach. Human interaction lies at the heart of all systems and societies, and prosopography reveals these interactions and allows historians to understand their significance.

Using these principles, I constructed a database of all the privy councillors active between 1485 and 1603. The goal was to reconceptualise how historians view the characteristics and interactions of Tudor privy councillors. The tool which facilitated this reappraisal was a relational database containing all the primary biographical factors of the approximately 320 councillors who held office across this period. Digital relational database software, such as Microsoft Access, allows a researcher to collect and store a vast quantity of data in an easy-to-use format. This data can then be modified and organised in a vast array of different ways to answer the project's specific research questions.

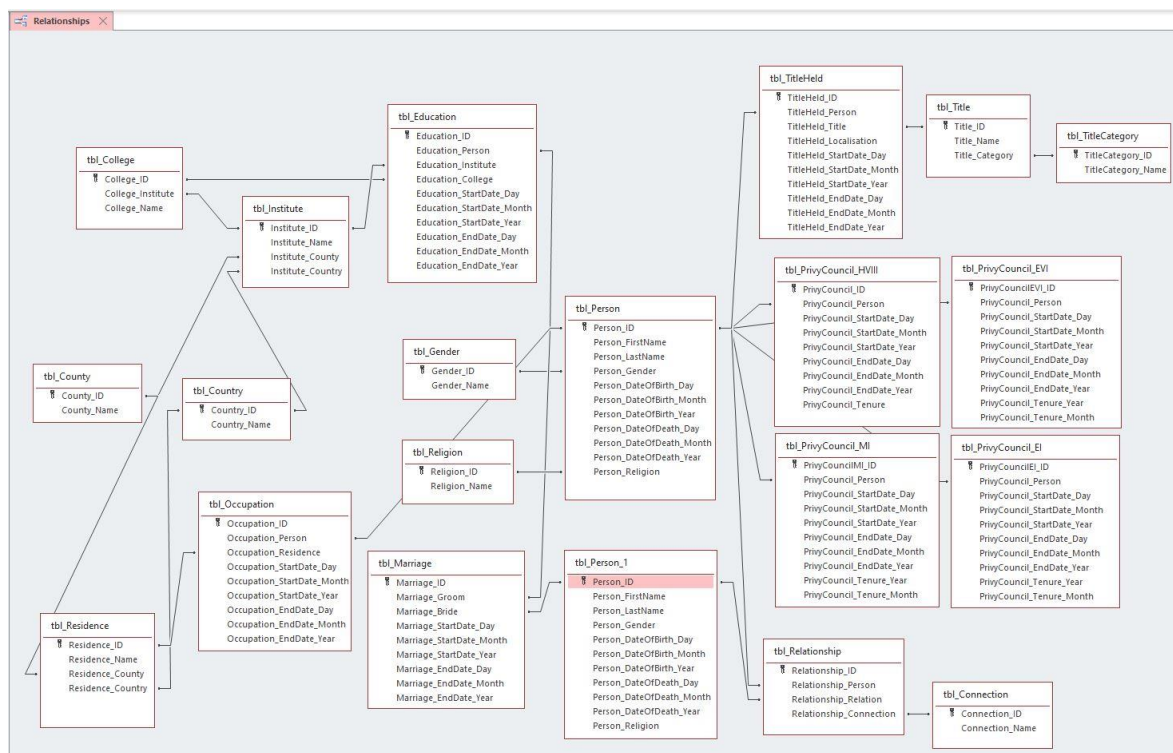


Figure 1. The relationship map of the Tudor Privy Council Database. It shows the different tables containing biographical information and how they are linked together.

The first step to constructing a relational database is the identification of the ‘population’. The ‘population’ is a group of individuals to be studied: in this case, Tudor privy councillors. Identifying the ‘population’ is not always a straightforward exercise, and for historical communities, research and standardisation are often required. For instance, the privy council’s official register did not begin until 1540, so councillors before this date were identified from correspondence contained within the government’s ‘state papers’.¹³ A further issue that had to

be addressed for this group was the many ways – names, nicknames, titles and so on – by which its members were known. As demonstrated by figure 2, a standardised format for referring to individual councillors was created.

Person	Person_FirstName	Person_LastName	Persor	Per	Per	Persc	Pe	Persor
161	William	Parr	14	8	1513	28	10	1571
257	Thomas	Parry	0	0	1515	15	12	1560
224	Amias	Paulet	0	0	1532	26	9	1588
162	William	Paulet	0	0	1474	0	0	1572
74	John	Peche	0	0	1450	0	0	1538
172	Edmund	Peckham	0	0	1495	29	3	1564
203	Robert	Peckham	0	0	1516	10	9	1569
41	Henry	Percy	0	0	1478	19	5	1527
168	Henry	Percy	0	0	1502	29	6	1537
241	John	Perrot	7	11	1528	3	11	1592
301	William	Peryam	0	0	1534	9	10	1604
163	William	Petre	0	0	1505	13	1	1572
142	Thomas	Pigott	0	0	1478	0	0	1519
9	Arthur	Plantagenet	0	0	1472	3	3	1542
84	Lewis	Pollard	0	0	1465	20	10	1526
100	Richard	Pollard	0	0	0	10	11	1542
242	John	Popham	0	0	1531	10	6	1607
75	John	Port	0	0	1472	14	3	1540

Figure 2. An extract of the population table of the Tudor Privy Council Database. It shows the standardised names of each councillor, their unique ID number and their birth and death dates. This table serves as the foundation of the database and links all the records together.

Following identification of the target population, the creation of a uniform ‘questionnaire’ is required. The ‘questionnaire’ is the list of biographical factors or fields that the researcher wishes to include for each individual. In the case of the Tudor privy councillors, this included fields such as birth and death dates, educational institute attended, offices held, property owned, and familial relations.¹⁴ Once the database has been created, it is possible to focus on specific fields within it, or to conduct queries which combine different factors. A relational database’s particular strength is that the data can be accessed and reassembled in many different ways swiftly, and without requiring a reorganisation of the underlying data. For instance, as shown in figure 3, officeholding can be filtered by education to see if alumni of a particular institution dominated a particular position. A more targeted query is shown in figure 4: here the data has been searched for those councillors who served Henry VIII and held property in Kent, Sussex and Surrey. Such a query has the capacity to identify relationships and dynamics between councillors in the localities. Thus, connections and patterns can be discovered in seconds rather than after weeks of combing through each individual’s data set. Similarly, the database’s modular nature allows new fields to be added and existing ones modified without overhauling the underlying structure.

Councillor Name	Office	Entered Office	Left Office	University Attended	University Start Date	University End Date
Richard Foxe	Principal Secretary	1485	1487	University of Cambridge	N/A	N/A
Richard Foxe	Principal Secretary	1485	1487	University of Oxford	N/A	N/A
Oliver King	Principal Secretary	1487	1495	University of Cambridge	1449	1465
Thomas Ruthall	Principal Secretary	1500	1516	University of Oxford	1488	1493
Thomas More	Principal Secretary	1518	1526	University of Oxford	1492	1494
William Knight	Principal Secretary	1526	1529	University of Oxford	1491	1495
Stephen Gardiner	Principal Secretary	1529	1534	University of Cambridge	1511	1525
Thomas Wriothesley	Principal Secretary	1540	1544	University of Cambridge	1522	1524
William Paget	Principal Secretary	1543	1547	University of Cambridge	1522	1526
William Petre	Principal Secretary	1544	1557	University of Oxford	1519	1535
Thomas Smith	Principal Secretary	1548	1549	University of Cambridge	1526	1547
Nicholas Wotton	Principal Secretary	1549	1550	University of Oxford	1515	1520
William Cecil	Principal Secretary	1550	1553	University of Cambridge	1535	1541
John Cheke	Principal Secretary	1553	1553	University of Cambridge	1526	1544
John Boxall	Principal Secretary	1557	1558	University of Oxford	1540	1554
William Cecil	Principal Secretary	1558	1572	University of Cambridge	1535	1541
Thomas Smith	Principal Secretary	1572	1576	University of Cambridge	1526	1547
Francis Walsingham	Principal Secretary	1573	1590	University of Cambridge	1548	1550
Thomas Wilson	Principal Secretary	1577	1581	University of Cambridge	1542	1549
William Cecil	Principal Secretary	1590	1596	University of Cambridge	1535	1541
Robert Cecil	Principal Secretary	1596	1612	University of Cambridge	1581	1581
John Herbert	Principal Secretary	1600	1617	University of Oxford	1558	1565

Figure 3. Results from a database query that shows where principal secretaries received their education. It is striking that four out of the five secretaries of Elizabeth I were educated at Cambridge.

Councillor Name	Residence	County	Ownership Start	Ownership End
Robert Rede	Bore Place	Kent	1489	1519
John Ernley	Cakeham Manor	Sussex	1498	1520
Edward Poynings	Westenhanger Castle	Kent	1488	1521
John Fyneux	Hawe Manor	Kent	1494	1525
Henry Guildford	Hadlow Manor	Kent	1522	1532
George Neville	Birling	Kent	1469	1535
George Bolyen	South	Kent	1535	1536
Henry Wyatt	Allington Castle	Kent	1492	1536
Thomas Bedyll	Otford	Kent	N/A	1537
Thomas Boleyn	Hever Castle	Kent	1505	1537
Henry Courtenay	West Horsley	Surrey	1533	1538
Richard Weston	Sutton Place	Surrey	1521	1541
William Fitzwilliam	Cowdray House	Sussex	1528	1542
Anthony Browne	Battle Abbey	Sussex	1538	1548
Anthony Browne	Cowdray House	Sussex	1542	1548
Edmund Walsingham	Gomshall Towerhill	Surrey	1539	1549
Edmund Walsingham	Scadbury Manor	Kent	1541	1550
John Gage	Firle Place	Sussex	1479	1556
Thomas Cheyne	Shurland Hall	Kent	1510	1558
John Baker	Sissinghurst Castle	Kent	1489	1558
Nicholas Heath	Chobham Place	Surrey	N/A	1578
Henry Fitzalan	Arudnel Castle	Sussex	1544	1580

Figure 4. Results from a database query that shows councillors with major residences in the counties of Kent, Sussex and Surrey, and their dates of ownership.

A further benefit of the prosopographical approach is that it does not rely on one set of sources to generate its connections. Often factional narratives are based on a narrow evidence base that draws on a single source or a single author. For instance, the supposed rivalry between William Cecil (1520-1598), Elizabeth I's chief minister, and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (1532-1588), the Queen's first favourite, in the 1560s and 1570s, has become part of historical tradition.¹⁵ At first glance, this enmity would appear to be the origin of the later feud between their offspring, Robert Cecil and Robert Devereux, as outlined above.¹⁶ However, the evidence to support this interpretation is thin, and accounts fail to consider the changed personalities of the 1590s. Most of the evidence of animosity is drawn from contemporary polemical works such as *Leicester's Commonwealth* and *A Treatise of Treasons* written by the Elizabethan regime's Catholic enemies. It suited the authors of such accounts to portray the Elizabethan establishment as factional, and so one should treat them with considerable caution.

When the full range of the two men's backgrounds and interactions are considered, moreover, no outright hostility is visible. William Cecil and Robert Dudley received a similar education, held the same religious views, exchanged gifts and hospitality regularly, and broadly agreed on domestic and foreign policy. It would not be surprising if there was an element of professional rivalry between the Queen's two leading servants, but to call them enemies locked in a factional struggle is an overstatement. In this way, prosopography can overcome the deficiency in material for individuals and overcome reliance on a narrow source base. By drawing all the strands of an individual's life together, we can discover a more nuanced picture of their relationships.

Digital tools and methodologies enable the modelling of relationships which deepen understanding of historical communities. The following case studies utilise data collected for Tudor privy councillors: they demonstrate how trends and patterns can be identified within the whole cohort and then how that data can be refined to identify specific groups. Additionally, they demonstrate the applicability of prosopography to other historical communities and how explorations of identified trends can prompt a reconceptualisation of past societies, structures, and events.

The changes in the makeup and characteristics of the privy council become visible when their members are subjected to multivariate analysis. The privy council was never a representative body, but it had contained individuals with a variety of societal and cultural experiences. The

clergy were one such subset. However, over the course of the sixteenth century, there was a precipitous drop in the number of clergy who were members of the council. Henry VIII admitted 31 bishops to his privy council over the course of his reign, a sizable contingent. The reigns of his children almost entirely eliminated this clerical component. Edward VI had three bishops and Mary I four. Elizabeth I only permitted one cleric to join her council, and this was her third and final Archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift, in 1586. Using the data available in the database, we can track this trend across the period.

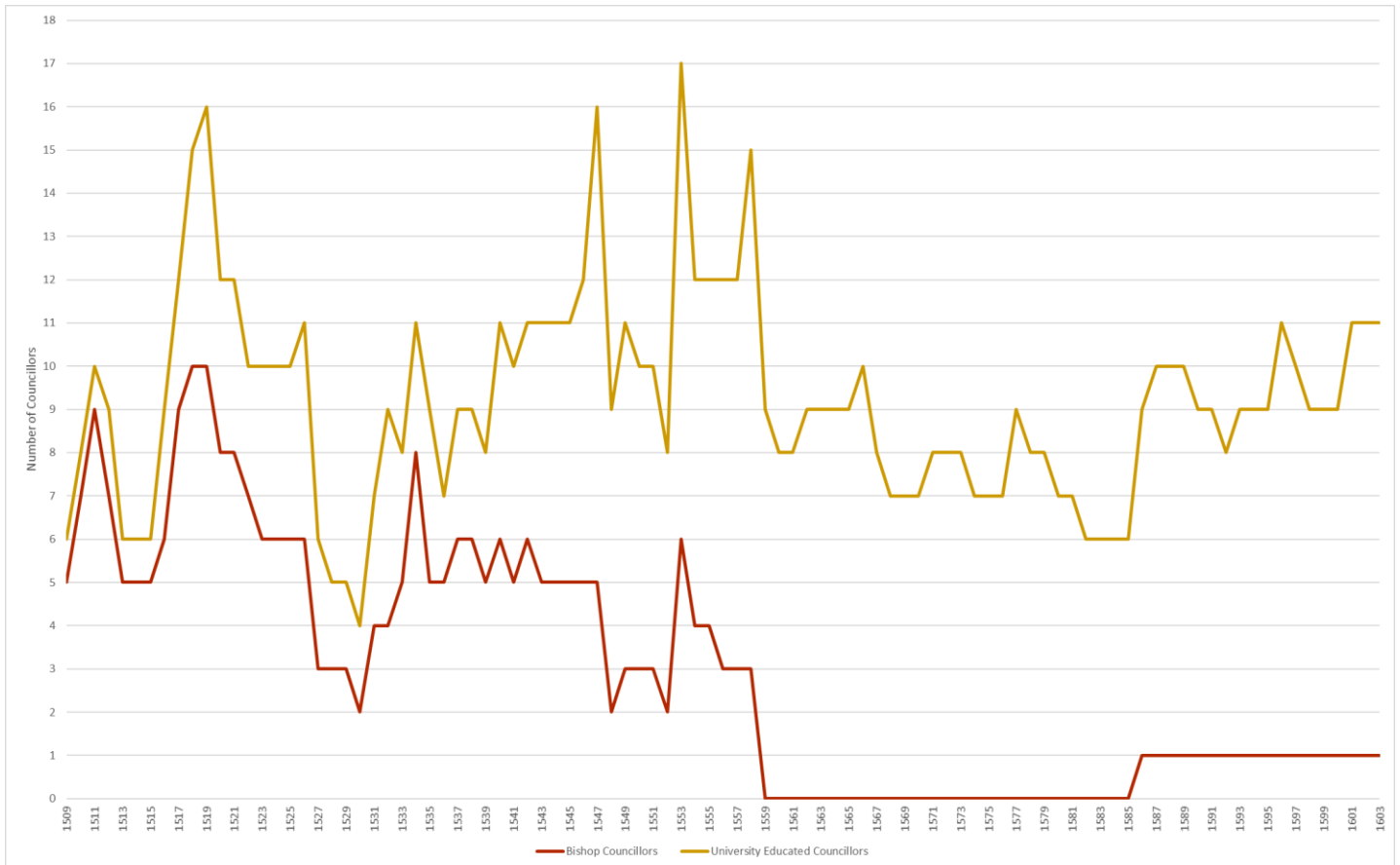


Figure 5. Number of Bishops and number of university educated councillors on the Privy Council 1509-1603.

Conversely, sorting the data by university attendance reveals that the percentage of university-educated councillors rose significantly across the period. Of the 167 privy councillors of Henry VIII's reign, 52 (31%) had attended a university; during the reign of Elizabeth I, this had risen to 32 out of 59 councillors (54%). Therefore, despite Henry VIII having a large number of university-educated men on his council, they actually constituted a minority because of the far larger size of this group. Also, it should be remembered that all bishops were university educated. Thus, in the latter half of the century, councillors were overwhelmingly educated, wealthy, lay males.

This had implications for the relations between members as they were all drawn from the same cultural milieu. Councillors with the same outlook and experiences could more easily develop a collegiality. The restriction of membership to laymen also meant that the majority of councillors were linked together by familial connections as marriage and family preferment were the primary means of growing a political following. It is only through the systematic analysis of the dataset and the application of prosopographical techniques that these trends are fully revealed.

This data can be pushed further to reveal more specific features and groups within it. Not only can we see who attended university at all, but we can also identify who attended specific institutions, and when. This has the potential to identify different clusters of people who studied alongside each other, and who may well have formed relationships and shared experiences in that context. One such cluster was a group of Henrician bishops who were active in the 1530s during the Break with Rome and the institutionalisation of the Reformation. They included Edward Lee, archbishop of York (c.1482-1544), John Stokesley, bishop of London (c.1475-1539), John Longland, bishop of Lincoln (died 1547), and John Veysey, bishop of Exeter (c.1464-1554). All had attended Magdalen College, Oxford, between 1486-1510, at a time when the University was a hotbed of humanist teaching. Traditionally, these bishops have been judged as conservatives and enemies of church reform.¹⁷ However, this is hard to square with their enthusiastic support for the Break with Rome and the Royal Supremacy. They all preached in favour of Henry VIII's Supreme Headship of the English Church and voted for the legislation that abolished papal authority.¹⁸ This apparent contradiction is more easily understood when viewed in relation to their shared educational background. The humanism to which they were exposed at university emphasised that the church had fallen below the standard expected and thus required radical reform. The Royal Supremacy presented a chance to implement these reforms and so support for it was entirely consistent with humanist principles. By attempting

to force these clerics into a conservative religious faction, historians have missed the nuance of their theological beliefs.

Councillor Name	First Bishopric Appointed to	Appointed	Died/Translated	University Attended	University College Attended	Entered University	Left University
Nicholas Heath	Bishop of Rochester	1540	1543	Cambridge	Christ's College	1520	1524
Nicholas Heath	Bishop of Rochester	1540	1543	Cambridge	Clare College	1524	1532
Charles Booth	Bishop of Hereford	1516	1535	Cambridge	Pembroke College	N/A	1485
Cuthbert Tunstall	Bishop of London	1522	1530	Cambridge	King's Hall	1496	1499
Cuthbert Tunstall	Bishop of London	1522	1530	Oxford	Magdalen College	1491	1493
Edward Fox	Bishop of Hereford	1535	1538	Cambridge	King's College	1512	1527
Edward Lee	Archbishop of York	1531	1544	Cambridge	N/A	1502	1515
Edward Lee	Archbishop of York	1531	1544	Oxford	Magdalen College	1495	1501
Edward Vaughn	Bishop of St David's	1509	1522	Cambridge	N/A	1474	1487
Geoffrey Blythe	Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield	1503	1531	Cambridge	King's College	1483	1496
John Capon	Bishop of Bangor	1533	1539	Cambridge	N/A	1512	1517
John Clerk	Bishop of Bath and Wells	1523	1541	Cambridge	N/A	c.1498	1502
John Fisher	Bishop of Rochester	1504	1535	Cambridge	Michaelhouse	c.1480	1491
John Kite	Archbishop of Armagh	1513	1521	Cambridge	King's College	1480	1495
John Longland	Bishop of Lincoln	1521	1547	Oxford	Magdalen College	1491	1511
John Stokesley	Bishop of London	1530	1539	Oxford	Magdalen College	1495	1516
John Veysey	Bishop of Exeter	1519	1551	Oxford	Magdalen College	1486	1496
Nicholas West	Bishop of Ely	1515	1533	Cambridge	King's College	1483	c.1500
Richard FitzJames	Bishop of Rochester	1497	1503	Oxford	Merton College	1465	1507
Richard Foxe	Bishop of Exeter	1487	1492	Oxford	Magdalen College	N/A	N/A
Richard Foxe	Bishop of Exeter	1487	1492	Cambridge	Pembroke College	N/A	N/A
Richard Nykke	Bishop of Norwich	1501	1535	Oxford	N/A	N/A	N/A
Richard Nykke	Bishop of Norwich	1501	1535	Cambridge	Trinity Hall	N/A	1473
Richard Rawlins	Bishop of St David's	1523	1536	Oxford	Merton College	1480	1490
Richard Sampson	Bishop of Chichester	1536	1543	Cambridge	Trinity Hall	N/A	1506
Stephen Gardiner	Bishop of Winchester	1531	1551	Cambridge	Trinity Hall	1511	1525
Thomas Cranmer	Archbishop of Canterbury	1533	1555	Cambridge	Jesus College	1503	1515
Thomas Cranmer	Archbishop of Canterbury	1533	1555	Cambridge	Buckingham College	1515	1516
Thomas Goodrich	Bishop of Ely	1534	1554	Cambridge	Jesus College	1510	1529
Thomas Ruthall	Bishop of Durham	1509	1523	Oxford	N/A	1488	1493
Thomas Thirlby	Bishop of Westminster	1540	1550	Cambridge	Trinity Hall	1521	1530
Thomas Wolsey	Archbishop of York	1514	1530	Oxford	Magdalen College	c.1486	1502
William Atwater	Bishop of Lincoln	1514	1521	Oxford	Magdalen College	c.1476	1482
William Warham	Bishop of London	1501	1503	Oxford	New College	1475	1488

Figure 5. Results from a database query that shows councillors of Henry VIII who were bishops and the university they attended.

In addition, it is highly possible that these bishops, all of whom were contemporaries at university, had formed a social connection there. No more than a few hundred students attended England's two universities at this time. The fact that these men all attended the same college makes it even more probable that they knew each other. Veysey is recorded as a fellow from 1486 and remained at Magdalen until 1496. Lee and Stokesley were both admitted in 1495, with the former migrating to Cambridge in 1501 and the latter leaving in 1515 to become chaplain to Bishop Richard Foxe. Longland moved from Eton to Oxford in 1491 and was awarded his doctorate of theology in 1511.

On several occasions during their careers, we have evidence of them working together. For example, in February 1537, Lee, Stokesley, and Longland were appointed to a commission to devise a permanent religious settlement.¹⁹ They were also often found on the same diplomatic assignments: most notably all four were present at Henry VIII and Francis I's famous meeting at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520.²⁰ It is evident, therefore, that these men formed a coherent group within the Henrician episcopate; and it is also clear that they were united more

by their shared educational experience and social connections than their membership of a conservative religious faction.

Thus, the combination of prosopography and digital tools allows historians to reveal underappreciated patterns and trends relating to the 320 men who served the Tudor monarchs as their privy councillors. As the sixteenth century progressed, the privy council became increasingly dominated by educated, wealthy, laymen. These characteristics had the capacity to create coherent groupings of councillors united by shared education, experience and outlook. Such connections would be invisible if only dealing with individuals or institutions and cut across previous assumptions regarding political factions.

While the Tudor privy council represents but one group, the trends discovered suggest a revision of our notions of interpersonal relations more broadly in the early modern period. Historical actors operated within overlapping structures, such as family, social circle, and professional network, and it is only by exploring these connections that an accurate picture of political life can be revealed. It is now widely recognised that an approach focused on people and their interactions is the most fruitful way of understanding historical communities and societies. The use of new digital tools combined with prosopography presents a highly effective method to achieve these aims. The same data gathering and analysis techniques employed here can easily be extrapolated onto other groups and communities. Such an approach can facilitate new questions and interpretations of previously well-trodden fields.

¹ David Starkey, *The Reign of Henry VIII Personalities and Politics* (London: George Philip, 1985), pp.27-8.

² Eric Ives, 'Faction at the court of Henry VIII: The Fall of Anne Boleyn', *History*, 57 (1972), pp.169-88 (p.181).

³ For the factional view of Tudor politics see G.R. Elton, 'Tudor Government: The Points of Contact III. The Court', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 26 (1976), pp.211-228; David Starkey, 'Court and Government', in *Revolution Reassessed: Revisions in the History of Tudor Government and Administration*, ed. by David Starkey and Christopher Coleman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 29-59; Starkey, 'Intimacy and innovation: the rise of the privy chamber, 1485-1547', in *The English Court: from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War*, ed. by Starkey (London: Longman, 1987), pp.71-118; Eric Ives, *Faction in Tudor England* (London: Historical Association, 1979); Ives, 'Henry VIII: The Political Perspective', in *The Reign of Henry VIII: Politics, Policy and Piety*, ed. by Diarmaid MacCulloch (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1995), pp.13-34. An overview of factional historiography can be found in Robert Shephard, 'Court Factions in Early Modern England', *The Journal of Modern History*, 64 (1992), pp.721-45.

⁴ Historians have explored concepts of political culture, affinities and the structures of power which provide valuable context to the relations between individuals. These included Steven Gunn, 'The Structures of Politics in early Tudor England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5 (1995), 59-90; *Tudor Political Culture*, ed. by Dale Hoak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Simon Adams, *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); Greg Walker, *Persuasive Fictions: Faction, Faith and Political Culture in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996).

⁵ Gunn, 'Structures', p.59.

⁶ Gunn, 'Structures', pp.60-1.

⁷ Simon Adams, *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p.35.

⁸ Janet Dickinson has presented an alternative interpretation that questions the scale of factionalism in the 1590s but acknowledges that a rivalry existed between Robert Cecil and Robert Devereux. Janet Dickinson, *Court politics and the Earl of Essex, 1589-1601* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012).

⁹ J.E. Neale, 'The Elizabethan political scene', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 34 (1948), pp.97-117; reprinted in Neale, *Essays in Elizabethan history* (London, 1958), pp.59-84.

¹⁰ Simon Adams, *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp.18-19.

¹¹ K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, 'Introduction', in *Prosopography: approaches and applications* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.7.

¹² Dion Smythe, 'Prosopography', in *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, ed. by Robin Cormack, John F. Haldon, and Elizabeth Jeffreys (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.177-181 (p.180).

¹³ London, National Archives, State Papers 2-7: Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII. Calendared in *Letters and Papers Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII* (21 volumes), ed. by J S Brewer, J Gairdner and R H Brodie (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1862-1932). SP10: State Papers Domestic, Edward VI (19 volumes). Calendared in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic Series of the Reign of Edward VI 1547-1553*, ed. by C S Knighton (London: HMSO, 1992). SP11: State Papers Domestic, Mary I (14 volumes). Calendared in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic Series of the Reign of Mary I, 1553-1558*, ed. by C S Knighton (London: HMSO, 1998). SP12: State Papers Domestic, Elizabeth I (289 volumes), SP13: State Papers Domestic, Elizabeth I: Large Documents (9 volumes). Calendared in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth I, and James I*, ed. by R Lemon and M A E Green (London: Longman, 1856-1872). London, National Archives, Privy Council: Registers (26 volumes). Archival material accessed through State Papers Online.

¹⁴ Biographical information was obtained from the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and relevant monographs, where available. Further and additional material provided by individual searches of the State Papers Online archive. For instance, grants series of Letters and Papers provided valuable information regarding officeholding and property sales.

¹⁵ Conyers Read, 'Walsingham and Burghley in Queen Elizabeth's Privy Council', *The English Historical Review*, 28 (1913), 34-58 (pp.42-3); Neale, 'Elizabethan Political Scene', p.70; Ives, *Faction in Tudor England*, p.22; William MacCaffrey, *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy, 1572-1588* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp.443-5, 448.

¹⁶ Robert Dudley married Lettice Devereux, dowager countess of Essex, in 1578 and became stepfather to Robert Devereux.

¹⁷ Andrew Allan Chibi, *Henry VIII's Bishops: Diplomats, Administrators, Scholars, and Shepherds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.26-7. Also, the articles on each of these figures in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (ODNB) mention their conservatism and apparent lack of enthusiasm for reform.

¹⁸ Longland was recorded denouncing the Pope here Letters and Papers Henry VIII, vol.13, I, 804; Lee preaches against the injuries the Pope has done to the king and has the word Pope struck out of the hymn *Exultet Angelica* here L&P HVIII, vol.8, 869; Stokesley preached a sermon on the invalidity of the Pope's authority to prevent Henry's divorce from Katherine of Aragon here L&P HVIII, vol.8, 1054; Veysey ordered all the canons of Exeter to set forth the King's title of Supreme Head here L&P HVIII, vol.13, 75.

¹⁹ The commission ran between February and July 1537. Each cleric submitted a written statement of their view on a particular topic and then they debated and agreed on a position. A surviving manuscript of the Bishops' opinions on confirmation outlines this setup: London, British Library, MS Cotton Cleopatra E V, f.75.

²⁰ Attendance list for the Field of Cloth of Gold: SP 1/19, f.235 and L&P HVIII, vol.3, I, 704. Stokesley, Veysey and Lee at the meeting between Henry VIII and Charles V in 1520: SP 1/20, f.118 and L&P HVIII, vol.3, 906. Lee and Stokesley sent on tour of European capitals as commissioners for a general peace: SP 1/56, f.199 and L&P HVIII, vol.4, III, 6178.