

Abstract: The article analyzes circumstances, achievements and particular qualities of the diplomatic activity of the English poet Matthew Prior. The international situation in Europe of the late XVII – early XVIII centuries generated a storm of emotions in public opinion and stimulated intellectuals to take an active part in the political life of their country and the continent as a whole. Prior was one of the few Englishmen of his time who was able to combine a political and poetic career. He met the main criteria for climbing the career ladder in the era of “courts and alliances”, because he had professional abilities, excellent knowledge of languages, art knowledge, wit and the ability to write well. At the same time, fulfilling most of the duties of the plenipotentiary ambassador, he was behind the representatives of the aristocracy because of his simple origin. As a diplomat, Prior successfully proved himself during two European wars – the Augsburg League war and the War of the Spanish Succession. As secret agent, embassy secretary and ambassador extraordinary, he was prominent in all negotiations with France. In his experience, Prior realized that a particular situation needs to be rethought and interpreted in the light of constantly changing circumstances. The most important achievement of his diplomacy was the conclusion by Britain of the Utrecht peace with Versailles. The author believes that diplomacy defined his most successful and mature works, and poetry perfected his art of diplomacy.

Keywords: diplomacy, poetry, ambassador, the Peace of Ryswick, the Peace of Utrecht