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A COMPARATIVE INVESTIGATION OF ANAPHORIC REFERENCE DEVICES IN ANGLO-NORMAN AND MIDDLE ENGLISH PERSONAL LETTERS

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ABSTRACT

This paper compares the use of anaphoric reference terms, such as *le dit* (and its English equivalent *the said*), a characteristic feature of 'curial style', in Anglo-Norman (hence AN) and Middle English (hence ME) personal letters. Whilst we know that this style was prevalent in the official AN letters that were used to conduct English parliamentary business until the end of the 1300s, we do not yet have a clear understanding of the extent to which it was prevalent in both AN and ME personal letters, defined here as being written to one addressee who was known to the writer. The results show that there more anaphoric reference terms in the AN epistolary material than in the ME, and that the difference is statistically significant. However, these anaphoric reference devices are very much in evidence in the ME material as well, albeit in smaller numbers, suggesting a degree of influence, or emulation, or both. It is furthermore suggested that the use of anaphoric reference devices in both the AN and ME personal letters is more similar to their use in the literary texts discussed by Burnley (1986) than to their use in their more official, administrative epistolary forebears, i.e., they are often used in a looser, relaxed way, as a kind of 'connective convenience' (Burnley 1986: 610). Results relating to diachronic variation demonstrate that the reference terms are most common in the latest (1380s) AN letters and earliest (pre-1431) ME letters, perhaps suggesting a period of overlap. In relation to geographic distribution, ME anaphoric reference terms appear to be used more in letters written in London and Oxfordshire than in the East Anglian or Northern letters. Finally, in the AN corpora, the anaphoric reference devices are most frequently used by writers from the gentry and professions, a finding mirrored in the ME material. Overall, the paper highlights the importance of taking different discoursal contexts, and the deliberate emulation of styles within those contexts, into account when investigating the interaction between Anglo Norman and Middle English during the medieval period.

Keywords: Curial style; anaphoric reference; Anglo-Norman; Middle English; personal letters.

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1. Introduction

Contact between Anglo-Norman and Middle English in Britain in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was highly complex. It varied according to user, text type, and mode, and it changed over time. However more studies are needed which dig down into this detail in order to produce fine-grained analyses of the interaction between English and French linguistic and stylistic practices during the medieval period. This paper addresses this issue by comparing the use of anaphoric reference devices, characteristic of an elaborate prose style referred to by Burnley (1986, 2001) as 'curial style', in a sub-corpus of Anglo-Norman and a sub-corpus of Middle English personal letters. Originally used in Latin documents within Latin chancelleries throughout Europe, curial style was first employed in Britain in the official Anglo-Norman (henceforth AN) letters that were used to conduct parliamentary business until the end of the 1300s. These documents were written by Chancery scribes. When English began to re-assert itself as the language of governmental administration in the late fourteenth century, the Chancery scribes switched to English and curial style transitioned from French into English. Burnley (1986, 2001) notes its presence in parliamentary records written in English from the late 1300s onwards.

However, whilst we know that curial style was prevalent in public, official AN letters, such as those written by the Chancery scribes mentioned above or the Mayor and Citzenry of London to Henry V, who reigned from 1413–1422, we know less about the extent to which the style was prevalent in AN personal letters, defined here as being written to one addressee who was known to the writer. Furthermore, we do not yet have a clear understanding of the extent to which the style is prevalent in Middle English (henceforth ME) personal letters. It has been established that as well as its appearance in parliamentary records, it was sometimes adopted in ME literary prose. It is replicated in epilogues and prologues of ME literary works by authors such as James Yonge and William Caxton, in literary works translated into late ME from French, such as Chaucer's *Tale of Melibee,* which was based on a translation of Christine de Pizan's *Livre du corps de policie* and *Livre de Mellibee et Prudence* (cf. Bornstein 1977, 1978), and in a group of chronicles called the *Brut* and the *Chronicles of London*. Burnley (1986: 614) points out that characteristic features of the style are found in formal Chancery correspondence written in English from roughly 1386 onwards and in two official letters received by Caxton from the Mercers Company in London dating from 1465 and 1467. He notes the absence of the curial style from the Cely and Paston letter collections, which are largely composed of personal letters between two individual correspondents. However, there have not to date been any empirical historical linguistic studies exploring this absence. This paper therefore aims to

empirically explore the stylistic choices available to writers of both AN and ME personal letters in medieval England and contribute to our understanding of the exact nature of Anglo-Norman influence on vernacular English epistolary prose writing, especially post-1400.

2. The contact situation

The present study is based on the analysis of language contained within two sub-corpora. The first consists of Anglo-Norman letters dating from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (although most are from the fourteenth) and totals 15,544 words. The other consists of Middle English letters, dating from the fifteenth century, which totals 14,253 words. Royal letters and letters to more than one recipient were excluded from both sub-corpora. The latest Anglo-Norman letter in the Anglo-Norman sub-corpus (which will be discussed in more detail in section 6.1 below) dates from 1380 and the earliest Middle English letter from 1424.[2]

Anglo-Norman was "a coherent, if constantly changing, entity from 1066 to the middle of the fifteenth century" (Rothwell 2001: 559). It became, in the years following the Norman Conquest, not only "the obvious language for secular business and the affairs of the noble household" (Putter 2009: 403; see also Legge 1941), but also "a badge of cultural superiority" (Putter 2016: 134). As a result, having a certain level of proficiency in both spoken and written forms of it became "a matter of practical urgency" (Stein 2007: 26) for many people in Britain during the thirteenth century. Moving into the fourteenth century, Anglo-Norman was still very much a part of everyday life, demonstrated by the huge quantity of mixed language texts from this period, most of which, as Wright notes, were composed "in varying proportions of Medieval Latin, Anglo-Norman and Middle English" (2020b: 5). Before the fifteenth century, Latin tended to be used most commonly in ecclesiastical and academic circles. Baswell states that "while English continued its slow and uneven ascent to political and literary prominence across the fourteenth and earlier fifteenth centuries, French remained an important presence, and in places a dominant one" (2007: 38). In addition to use in mercantile and noble circles, it was used in a range of practical contexts; Jefferson & Putter cite such purposes "as proclamations, government administration, law, letter writing, and estate management" (2013: 15). There is also evidence that practical French was used across a range of other occupational domains up until at least the end of the fourteenth century, including manufacture,

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trade, building, food preparation, architecture, medicine, shipping and farming (cf. Ingham & Marcus 2016; Ingham, Sylvester & Marcus 2019).

Putter & Busby note that there was a similar linguistic situation outside the British Isles, specifically in “the north-west and parts of Italy and the Levant to the south-east”, and “the western domains” of France “(Normandy, Anjou, and Touraine)” (2010: 8). They note that in these “other countries where French was not usually the mother tongue” (Occitan was used in the other parts of France), “it was nevertheless the language of the princely courts and the courts of law, of high culture (secular and religious), and of bourgeois aspiration and trade. As such, it continued to be spoken (and not just written) by the ‘respectable classes’ for rather longer than has sometimes been thought” (Putter & Busby 2010: 3), i.e., well into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Contemporary French conversation manuals outlining how best to speak to the butcher and the baker (Putter & Busby 2010) provide evidence of its use in everyday spoken interactions. However, it was not just English, French, and Latin in the mix; in Britain there were also Old Norse, Scots Gaelic, Irish, Welsh, Cornish, and Dutch speakers, and outside Britain, French was spoken and written alongside “German, Occitan, Catalan, and Italian” (Putter & Busby 2010: 7).

England continued to be an intensely multilingual place into the fifteenth century, and Anglo-Norman continued to be used in a variety of practical and professional contexts until around 1450. Rothwell (2001) draws attention to the various Anglo-Norman grammatical works “such as the *Orthographia gallica* which survives mainly in manuscripts of the fifteenth and even sixteenth centuries, the *Liber Donati* from around the middle of the fifteenth century, the early fifteenth-century *Donait* published by Merriless and the first real French grammar in French compiled for the Englishman John Barton in 1409, together with the legal and commercial texts in French contained in the manuscript of the *Liber Donati*” (2001: 546). These examples demonstrate that texts in or about Anglo-Norman continued to have a readership in England well after the 1362 Statute of Pleading, a date which scholars used to draw attention to as its death knell. In addition, despite a degree of snobbery aimed at, and mockery of, Anglo-Norman, French continued to be a marker of prestige. Machan (2009: 370) notes that in Trevisa’s translation of Higden’s *Polychronicon*, printed in Westminster by Caxton in 1482, “French serves as a proverbial way for the non-courtly and non-noble to mask their origins and presume another social status”.

However, Ingham (e.g., 2012) has shown that the transmission system for the survival of the grammatical systems of Anglo-Norman started to become disrupted around the mid-fourteenth century, meaning that people stopped learning it as a native language in childhood around that time. This educational situation had a knock on effect; by the start of the fifteenth century, many English scribes were no longer writing in Anglo-Norman, and those who were using it

were making errors because they were adult second-language learners (Wright 2020a). Wright also notes that ‘mixed-language’ writing also shows systemic disruptions around the 1420s (2020a: 516).

Wright (2020b: 520) has shown that “over the fifteenth century, use of French diminished but use of Latin did not, so that the fifteenth century can be characterized as the century when Anglo-Norman fell into disuse, rather than the century when English took over” (2020a: 520). Stenroos & Schipor (2020) find a lack of French in a corpus of fifteenth and early sixteenth century documents from the Hampshire record office. The two main languages are English and Latin; French only occurs five times, and always in Chancery documents; it is not present at all in other administrative documents. In related work, Stenroos (2020) has shown that when English did appear in specific kinds of fifteenth century administrative documents, namely “correspondence, ordinances, oaths, conditions of obligation, occasional leases and sales” (2020: 51) “it appeared above all in the functional slots that had been occupied by French” (2020: 55). Until the early fifteenth century, Anglo-Norman tended to be used in these local documents for “the more unpredictable components that needed to be understood by non-professionals” (Wright 2020a: 520), with English becoming the language of choice for these components after this time. The law was one area in which Anglo-Norman was still being used prolifically, but even there it was mainly used for lexis which had no English equivalent. Therefore whilst it is possible to say that Anglo-Norman was still around in England after the early fifteenth century, it was most definitely on the decline.

Finally, it is worth noting that when we talk about the multilingual environment of England in the later medieval period, we tend to speak of the different languages involved, in the manner above. Whilst this is a useful conceptual and categorial tool, which is used for the purposes of the analysis presented in this paper, it is important to note that for people at the time, there would not necessarily have been hard divisions between English and Anglo-Norman. As Jefferson & Putter point out: “are the divisions among languages in such a society as acutely experienced as they would be were the society monolingual?” (2013: 21). The answer is most probably no; the boundaries between the languages would have been experienced as fuzzy at best, if they were even recognized as separate languages. As Rothwell notes, recording in Anglo-Norman “could hardly be called translating in the full sense of the word, because much of the necessary terminology had already been assimilated into English and the boundary with English was harder to determine as the years went by, to such an extent that in many fifteenth-century records it is virtually impossible to state categorically whether a term is French or English” (2001: 555) (cf also, e.g., Trotter 2013; Ingham, Sylvester & Marcus 2021).

3. Correspondence

So the boundaries between Anglo-Norman and English were blurred, and we know that there was a huge amount of code-switching and borrowing in both directions. We also know that "habits acquired by scribes writing in the long traditions of Anglo-Norman and mixed-language worked their way into written English over the course of the fifteenth century" (Wright 2020a: 529). This trend is noticeable in correspondence data, which is not that surprising.

As Putter points out, "English was a very late developer" (2009: 402) in the domain of letter writing. English clerks were still being taught the art of composing letters and other documents in French and Latin in the second half of the fourteenth century by "*dictatores* such as Sampson and Kingsmill" (Rothwell 2001: 545) and there was a huge amount of correspondence between English and French diplomats being composed in French during this time.

The earliest surviving letters we have with English as the dominant language of the text date from the end of the fourteenth century. An example is Troilus' love letter to Criseyde in Chaucer's *Troilus*, which demonstrates "the influence of French conventions of polite correspondence" (Rothwell 2001: 545). The aforementioned John Barton remarks on the primacy of French within letter writing in *Donait francois* (1414), one of the earliest vernacular French grammars; he points out that correspondence was a "discursive field where French reigned supreme" (Putter 2009: 405) in the early fifteenth century.

Conde-Silvestre (2020) explores communities of practice, proto-standardisation and spelling using the Stonor letters, specifically exchanged between Thomas Stonor II (1424–1474) and other cofeoffees. He finds a prevalence among the cofeoffees of spelling-focussing in words of Romance origin, which reflects the pragmatics of law and administration – which were usually written in Anglo-Norman, Medieval Latin and mixed-language. This "is a direct indication that the conventions of Anglo-Norman and Medieval Latin business writing had an effect on written English" (Wright 2020b: 11). Meanwhile, Romero-Barranco (2020) compares the usage of nine French and English nominal suffixes in Early English correspondence from 1420 to 1681, using the *Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence* as a data source. He finds that "the gentry and the professionals were the main users of French suffixes, leading their diffusion at the beginning of the Early Modern English period" (Wright 2020b: 11). Like Conde-Silvestre's study, therefore, Romero-Barranco's work shows how instrumental both the discourse domain of correspondence and "the mercantile, legal and other business communities of practice" (Wright 2020b: 11) were in disseminating French linguistic features in English in the later medieval period.

It is important to note here that there was not just one French of England; there was Anglo-Norman and Northern continental French. It appears that in relation to these two varieties of French, people did seem to know the difference. As Machan notes, "as Anglo-French diverged from northern French, the two varieties assumed different roles in England's linguistic repertoire. The native variety may well have been what people spoke, but the continental variety was the one to which they aspired" (2009: 368) and the one which they "sought to learn" (2009: 369). The conversation manual *Manières de langage* (published in 1396, 1399, and 1415) advertises that it will help readers "bien adroit parler et escrire doulz franceoys selon l'usage et la coustome de France" ("to speak and write properly sweet French according to the practice of France") (2009: 369).

However, Burnley (2001: 17–18) argues that the 'simple division' between Anglo-Norman and Northern continental French "is only really the beginning. The discernible varieties within Anglo-French may be far more complicated. Use in distinct contexts creates distinct styles". One such context was correspondence, in which Putter states that "even when fifteenth century letter writers did venture to coin lexical words with English roots, their terms continue to acknowledge the prestige of French epistolary style through their conscious mimicry of romance equivalents" (2009: 406). He cites the examples of *right well beloved* and *my most entirely beloved* and how they imitate *tresame* and *treschier* in French. This imitation is extremely relevant to the current study because as Burnley notes, "rather than translate into English structures" English scribes "sought to imitate recognisable surface patterns in French" (2001: 23). This emulation "was not syntactical modification of English at a deep level, but the calquing of a style" (2001: 23), specifically curial style. Therefore, despite French being written with "varying degrees of skill" Burnley (2001: 19), there is a chance that writers of Middle English personal letters carried over not just the formulaic features of the Anglo-Norman letter writing model, but also potentially some of the cohesive features of Anglo-Norman curial style, which will be explored in more detail below.

4. Curial style

'Curial style' is a term borrowed from Burnley (1986, 2001), who in turn borrowed it from Jens Rasmussen (1958). Diane Bornstein referred to it as 'clergial style' (1977, 1978), although this paper adopts Raumussen and Burnley's term. Curial style is a combination of formal features originally used in "legal and diplomatic documents with the purposes of precision in reference and ceremony of tone" (Burnley 1986: 595).

The style is characterized by lexical features such as the use of Latinate constructions and synonymous doublets and syntactic features such as extremely long sentences, which often feature a heavy amount of lexical repetition. However, it also makes use of anaphoric reference devices for the purposes of cohesion within the text. Burnley states that “this technique of cohesion” is “essential to curial style” (1986: 597). Anaphoric reference is a term used for words and/or phrases in a given stretch of text that refer back to other ideas in the text for their meaning. Its opposite is cataphoric reference, which is a term for words or phrases that refer to ideas that appear further on in the text. It is curial style’s emphasis on precision in reference, a sense of what Burnley (1986: 596) calls “continuous clarity”, which makes the use of these devices its key feature[3]. In order to achieve continuous clarity, writers sought to clearly specify the meaning relationships between nominal and verbal groups/phrases, and they tended to do this by using anaphoric reference terms. The use of these terms created a “cohesive chain of reference” (Burnley 1986: 600) for the reader to follow throughout the text. The coherence of the text therefore depended more upon this chain of reference than upon clause relationships and structures.

In curial style, anaphoric reference devices are normally phrasal in nature, and are typically determiners in the form of demonstrative phrases, articles, and/or pronouns with demonstrative or relative function followed by a noun or noun phrase. Burnley (1986: 597) gives the following examples in AN curial style, with their ME equivalents: *le dit* (*the seyde*), *l'avant dit* (*the forseyde*), *le devant dit* (*th'aforeseyde*), *celle meismes* (*that same*), *liquels* (*the whiche*), and *duquels* (*of the which*). He goes on to describe common forms in the Rolls of Parliament, the earlier of which include terms of reference such as *lavauntdit* +N, *les devantdiz*, “a connection between *un* and *ceste* to introduce and continue reference to an individual is exploited” (1986: 599), with examples *cestie Robert* and *cele Custance* being given. These *ceste* forms are “sometimes further specified with *meismes*” (1986: 599).

Curial style was often used, in an epistolary context, in conjunction with AN letter models, which specify the use of particular epistolary formulae. In English, the AN model was an alternative to the Latin Chancery model, although they are very similar. The Latin Chancery model is based on the *ars notaria*. Chancery letters such as letters patent were usually structured along the lines of what Hall (1908: 270–280) and Richardson (1984: 213– 214) identify as the Latin dictamen style. The structure, as outlined by Richardson (1984), is as follows: Address (*Right trusty and…*), Salutation (*We greet you well/after hearty commendations*), Notification (*And we let you wit that*), Exposition (*Whereas*), Disposition/

[3] For cohesion in Present Day English, see Halliday & Hasan (1976); in a medieval context, see Burnley (1983) and Horobin (2012).

Injunction (*We are pleased with these presents to grant*), Final clause (Injunction: *For it is our pleasure, wherefore we will and command*; Provisio: *Provided that/and these letters shall be a sufficient warrant*), Valediction and Appreciato (*And so we bid you heartily farewell which knoweth Almighty God, who have you ever in his keeping*), Attestation (*written at*), and finally, the Date.

Although basically similar in outline, the AN model suggested by Davis (1965) differs from the typical Chancery model put forward by Richardson (1984) in certain important respects. The primary difference between the two models is that the AN model includes an extended health formula. Davis suggests that the full model distinguishes seven divisions, some with subdivisions, and is best seen in letters from children to parents. After the address, it includes what Davis describes as "a formula commending the writer to the recipient, often accompanied by an expression of humility and, if the letter is to a parent, a request for a blessing – this usually introduced by a present participle and strengthened by an adverb or a phrase" (Davis 1965: 236). This formula is then followed by five related items, described collectively by Davis as "the health formula" (1965: 236), including, for example, an expression of desire to hear of the recipient's welfare.

In medieval Britain, writing letters in French was an indication of social status. People such as Thomas Sampson of Oxford wrote model letters in both Latin and French. However, the extent to which the guidelines found in the AN formularies permeated letter-writing in English is contested. Davis (1965) and Richardson (1984) both contend that both official and personal fifteenth century English letters follow certain formulaic conventions related to the Latin *ars dictaminis* tradition that started in Europe in the eleventh century. Davis (1965: 240–241) argues that there was also an unbroken French tradition in England, with AN formularies in use in both governmental and private circles. By contrast, Richardson (1984: 213) argues that the Latin-based Chancery model was more closely followed in private correspondence in the fifteenth century[4]. Whilst this paper cannot delve into this particular debate, what can be said with certainty is that the use of curial style in combination with these formulae create a sense of decorum and emphasized the relative social status of the sender/s and recipient/s. Therefore, the style was associated with both continuous clarity and a sense of ceremony.

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[4] See Nevalainen (2001) for a discussion of these issues in relation to sixteenth century correspondence data.

5. Research questions

Given that curial style was ubiquitous in AN public letters and records written in French up until the end of the 1300s, and that the most fundamental feature of curial style is the way it creates textual cohesion, specifically through the use of anaphoric reference devices, the analysis focuses on these linguistic features. As the AN personal letters are therefore closer to the root source of the style in a British context, i.e., the earlier AN official correspondence, the paper asks: do AN personal letters contain a higher frequency of anaphoric reference devices than the ME letters? Secondarily, is there any variation in their use in the Middle English sub-corpus according to the primary communicative function (e.g., reportage) of individual letters, their date, where they were written, or who they were written by? These questions feed into a larger question. We know Anglo-Norman had uncharacteristic longevity within the discursive domain of correspondence in comparison with other domains. What was the impact of this relative longevity, if any, on the development of English in the fifteenth century?

By using a comparative, empirical linguistic approach to authentic primary source data, the study complements and builds on the earlier work carried out by Burnley (1986, 2001) and Bornstein (1977, 1978). It also builds on research by Durkin (2014) that shows how most of the French loanwords in English entered the language between 1350 and 1500, as well as recent work by Conde-Silvestre (2020), Romero-Barrano (2020), Stenroos & Schipor (2020), and Wright (2020a). It considers a group of texts that have been less explored than official documents and literary works in relation to Anglo-Norman influence on Middle English prose, i.e., personal letters. Furthermore, whilst there have been many studies on connective particles in the history of English and Scots (cf., e.g., van der Auwera & Ó Baoill 1998; Kortmann 1997; Couper-Kuhlen & Kortmann 2000; Kohnen 2007; Sorva 2007; Lenker 2010, 2014; Meurman-Solin 2011; Molencki 2012) and some work on connectives in AN (cf., e.g., Ingham 2011), there have been fewer which investigate anaphoric reference devices on the sentence level, especially from a comparative perspective.

6. Methods

Given the centrality of anaphoric reference devices to curial style, this paper investigates their frequency in both sub-corpora. Space constraints prevent a fuller exploration of curial style's other features, such as the use of synonymous doublets. To find instances of relevant individual lexical items and/or phrases in both ME and AN, the concordance software tool *Antconc* was employed to search for the devices listed in Bornstein (1977, 1978) and Burnley (1986: 597).

This approach was combined with manual reading of the data. This combined approach was needed because there is a large amount of orthographic variation in both data sets. For example, the definite article in the ME phrase *the which*, one of the anaphoric reference devices considered, takes the form of both *þe* and *the*, so both forms needed to be searched for. Similarly, the word *which* has six orthographic variants in the ME data: *which*, *weche*, *wyche*, *wheche, whycche*, and *wycche*. On the AN side, there are over twenty variants of the AN version of *the which*, i.e., *lequels*, listed in the AND, such as *lekel* and *lequeu*. All spelling variants in both languages were considered. Manual reading was also adopted in case items not on Burnley's list were present in both sub-corpora. In order to deal practically with the shifts in function and meaning of individual anaphoric reference devices, the study focuses on those current in both language varieties at the time, rather than their present day counterparts. Standard grammars and dictionaries were consulted, e.g., Mustanoja (2016) and the *Middle English Dictionary* (henceforth MED) for ME, and Einhorn (1974) and the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* (henceforth AND) for AN.

As well as raw and normalized frequencies in both sub-corpora, the analysis investigates the patterning of the features according to the primary communicative functions of individual letters in the ME sub-corpus. The term 'primary communicative function' refers to the main purpose which a ME letter is aiming to achieve in a social context. Although Bergs (2007) argues that it is possible to sub-divide Middle and Early Modern English letters into 'socio-pragmatic subtypes' such as requests, orders and reports (2007: 27), the current study adopts the term primary communicative function (cf. Marcus 2017), as opposed to simply communicative function, because these early English letters often have more than one communicative function. This is because they often have what Palander-Collin calls "mixed purposes" (2009: 652) (cf. also Palander-Collin & Nevala (2006), and Sairio (2009)). As a result of this, it is often difficult to identify the clear, singular purpose or function of a ME letter. The term 'primary communicative function' accounts for the fact that although a ME letter may have more than one communicative function, it is usually possible to identify a primary function that a letter is aiming to fulfil. Each of the ME letters were classified according to what was considered to be their primary communicative function. The primary communicative function categories are: petition/suit, request, which is similar to a petition but less formal, instruction, reportage, defence, complaint, thanks, congratulation, and miscellaneous. Variation according to the diachronic, geographic, and social distribution of the letters and their senders is also considered.

7. Data

7.1 The Anglo-Norman correspondence sub-corpus

The letters in the AN sub-corpus come from two sources: the *Anglo-Norman Correspondence Corpus* (ANCC), which was compiled by Ingham (2008) and is available online, and the Stonor Letters and Papers, which includes letters in both AN and, later ME (Kingsford 1919). The ANCC letters in the sub-corpus are all 'personal' in the sense that they are from one person to another. The vast majority of these ANCC letters are written by ecclesiastical writers, predominantly bishops or upper clerics such as John Peckham, Archbishop of Canterbury. They come from a select number of collections: Cantuarienses, Grandisson, Kellawe, Peckham, and Northern (there are also some miscellaneous letters). These letters can most usefully be classed as private, business correspondence, although as Richardson points out, "business" in the medieval period was "very different from modern business" (1980: 26). Private, personal matters, financial and legal matters, predominantly related to real estate and trade, were very much inter-related, as they often hinged on interpersonal relationships between individuals. There are some letters taken from the ANCC that date from the 1280s, but most date from the fourteenth century (1300–1400).

The Stonor letters were accessed via the online *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* (hence CME). They date from 1377–1380 and are therefore earlier in date than the Stonor letters composed in English. The AN Stonor letters are also from one person to another and are all addressed to Edmund de Stonor (c.1347–1382), who was at one time the Sheriff of Oxford and Berkshire, with the exception of one, which is written by Stonor himself. The senders are predominantly male (although there is one letter from Margaret Countess of Devon), and are either members of the nobility, members of the local gentry such as Michael Skyllyng, or members of the clergy such as the Abbot of Abingdon. There are no letters from Stonor family members to Edmund, which means that although these letters are not official and public, they can also be classed as business correspondence. Table 1 below details the makeup of the AN correspondence sub-corpus and Appendix 1 details the AN sub-corpus in full.

Table 1. Breakdown of the Anglo-Norman correspondence sub-corpus

Data set	Word count
Cantuarienses (approx. 1318–1333)	3,153
Grandisson (1320s)	3,911
Kellawe (1313–1315)	2,215
Peckham (1280s)	1,421

Northern (1320s)	1,369
Misc. (1267–1344)	702
Stonor letters (1370s–1380s)	2,881
Total	15,652

There was some evidence of switching into Latin in a small number of the AN letters in the sub-corpus, although the Latin sections are short. Therefore, these letters could be classed as mixed language documents, although Anglo-Norman is dominant. Herbert Schendl (2013: 161) has shown that code-switching in sermons is not an isolated practice in medieval England, and has noted the phenomenon in medieval letters among other texts, although no Latin was found in the ME letters investigated for this study (cf also Schendl & Wright 2011). As this study focuses on comparing AN specifically with ME, the Latin sections of the AN letters have not been included in the analysis.

7.2 The Middle English correspondence sub-corpus

The Middle English sub-corpus is made up of personal letters from the Paston, Stonor, Cely, and Plumpton collections. The Paston letters included in the sub-corpus date from 1449 to 1469, and are taken from Norman Davis's 1971–1976 edition, accessed electronically via the CME. They include letters sent from one Paston family member to another, and to individuals outside the family, such the lawyer Walter Writtle, who was involved in a legal dispute about the ownership of Caister Castle that went on for twenty years. The Stonor family correspondence sample included in the corpus dates from 1424 to 1471 and was taken from Charles Kingsford's 1919 edition, also accessed via the CME. All the letters are addressed to members of the Stonor family, and often the letters are from one family member to another, although there are also letters to people outside the family, such as Thomas Mull and Thomas Hampden. The Cely letters, which detail the business dealings and lives of a family of London wool merchants, date from 1472 to 1488 and were sourced from the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (hence CEEC). The collection as a whole consists of 247 letters, which were only preserved because they were used as evidence in a lawsuit. Various members of the Cely family were involved in the family business, so their letters often concern issues to do with wool and payments, even if the letters are between father and son Richard and George Cely, for example. The Plumpton letters in the sample, which date from 1461 to c.1488, were also accessed via CEEC. They include letters from servants and concern a range of matters. Table 2 below sets out the relative sizes of the different samples within the ME sub-corpus and Appendix 2 details the ME sub-corpus in full.

Table 2. Breakdown of the Middle English correspondence sub-corpus

Data set	Word count
Paston sample (1449–1469)	4,061
Stonor sample (1424–1471)	3,692
Cely sample (1472–1488)	4,406
Plumpton sample (1461–c.1488)	2,094
Total	14,253

7.3. Scribes

Appendices 1 and 2 provide metadata about the scribal status (autograph, copies or scribal, unknown) of the individual letters in both the Anglo-Norman and Middle English sub-corpora. William Rothwell, in relation to scribes writing in Middle English, makes the point that "this whole question of the 'decay' of Anglo-French turns in considerable measure on the role played by the scribal class in England in the later Middle Ages" (Rothwell 2001: 553). Unfortunately, there is no available information in the ANCC about the scribal status of the Anglo-Norman letters, and there has not been the space in this paper to carry out extensive scribal profiling, so I do not have any information about how many of the AN letters are scribal. However, given that a large proportion of them are from bishops and archbishops, it is likely that many of them were composed by scribes.

We do have some information about the use of scribes in the Middle English Paston, Stonor, Cely, and Plumpton collections, which is taken from CEEC, the CME, and Davis's 1971–1976 edition of the Paston Letters, and is included in Appendix 2. There are four Paston letters in the ME sub-corpus, two of which (sent by John Paston II) are autographs and one of which (again sent by John Paston II) is scribal (in the hand of Wykes, an estate servant). The remaining letter is a draft from John Paston I, which starts as an autograph, before becoming scribal, with corrections in Paston's hand. Eight of the twelve Stonor letters are classified as 'unknown', which means there is no solid information to hand about their scribal status. Three are autographs (letters by servants John Frende and John Yeme and legal advisor Hugh Unton) and the remaining letter, by Thomas Mull, a legal advisor and relative through marriage, is scribal. All of the Cely letters included in the study are autographs, which fits with Richardson's assertion that the majority of their letters were "personally written by members of the family and business associates rather than by professional scribes" (1980: 27). The five letters from the Plumpton Collection, each from a different sender, are all scribal.

The ME sub-corpus therefore contains letters with a range of different scribal statuses. These letters were predominantly chosen on the basis of sender and date, in order to get a comprehensive range of senders and letters from different dates.

However, the presence of scribes, and indeed the fact that we do not have any ready information about scribal status for several of the ME letters and all of the AN letters, is worth acknowledging in relation to the analysis of geographic and social distribution. The geographical origin of the ME letters is based on the area where the family associated with them was based, but any observations about geographic distribution in relation to scribal letters within those collections must be qualified with an acknowledgement that, unless a researcher has access to the scribe's biographical profile, it is not possible to be completely certain where they may have composed a particular letter, although a certain proximity to the sender, who may well have dictated the letter, or provided a note or draft as a basis, can be assumed to have been likely. Equally, observations about social distribution can only be made with absolute certainty if a scribe's biographical profile provides information about the origin and rank of the scribe in question. These issues are even more pronounced in relation to letters with an 'unknown' scribal status, because biographical information cannot be drawn upon if we do not know if the sender is the person who composed the letter itself.

Any conclusions reached in the analysis of geographical and social distribution in relation to scribal and letters of unknown scribal status included in the AN and ME sub-corpora are necessarily affected by these issues, which is why they are being acknowledged before the results are presented. Wherever possible, any biographical information about scribes has been taken into account in the relevant sections (8.6 and 8.7), and references to those letters which are autographs have also been made. If further studies are conducted, scribal status will be taken into account and investigated as a variable that may affect language use. For that reason, scribal letters by unknown scribes, or letters whose scribal status is unknown, will be omitted from the analysis.

8. Results

8.1 Middle English compared to Anglo-Norman personal letters

Table 3 below is an overview of the frequencies of all the anaphoric reference devices investigated in both sub-corpora. It shows that overall, there are more anaphoric reference terms in the Anglo-Norman material, both in terms of raw and normalized frequencies.

Table 3. Overview of initial results (raw and normalised frequencies per 1000 words)

	Middle English letter corpus	Anglo-Norman letter corpus
Number of words in corpus	14,253 words	15,652 words
Anaphoric reference devices	89 (6.2)	139 (8.9)

This result was to be expected, given that the AN letters are closer to the linguistic root source of curial style in Britain, namely the earlier official letters composed in AN used to conduct parliamentary business. When a log likelihood test was conducted using the Lancaster University log likelihood calculator (https://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html), a -29.67 effect size difference between the two corpora was found, which mean that the anaphoric reference terms in the AN corpus were 29.67% more frequent than the English terms in the ME corpus. The log likelihood score was 6.81. The higher this value is, the more significant the difference between the two frequency scores. A p value of < 0.05 gives a critical log likelihood value of 3.84, but this p value is rarely used because it is not considered reliable enough. However a p value of < 0.01, which gives a critical log likelihood value of 6.63 is a reasonable level of statistical significance, considered to be dependable. My log likelihood score is 6.84, which is above 6.63. Therefore whilst this result is not wildly significant (a critical value of 10.83 or above would be considered more dependable), and therefore should not be overstated, it equally cannot be disregarded. The result is especially notable given that the corpora used are of a small size. There is therefore a case to be made that the 29.62% difference between the frequency of these anaphoric reference devices in the AN corpus and ME corpus is statistically significant.

8.2 Anglo-Norman

Table 4 below provides a breakdown of the different kind of devices present in the AN material. When the data was read manually, some devices not listed by Bornstein and Burnley were found, e.g., *de dit/z* ('of said'), so these were included in the final count.

Table 4. Frequency of individual AN anaphoric reference devices

Anaphoric reference device	Raw and normalized frequencies per 1000 words
le dit ('the said')	52 (3.3)
les ditz ('the said')	11 (0.7)
vostre dit ('your said')	5 (0.3)

noz dites (‘our said’)	7 (0.5)
mon dit (‘my said’) (all Stonor)	7 (0.5)
de/des ditz (‘of said’)	4 (0.3)
a dits (‘to the said’)	0 (0)
au dit (‘at the said’)	7 (0.5)
du dit (‘of the said’)	7 (0.5)
l'avant dit (‘the forsaid’)	2 (0.1)
avantdit/e / avant dit (‘aforesaid’)	9 (0.6)
a meisme (‘a(fore)said’)	0 (0)
de meismes (‘of same’)	9 (0.6)
de quele/s (‘of which’)	15 (1)
le/s quel/les/queux (‘the which’)	4 (0.3)
Total	139 (8.9)

By far the most frequent feature is *le dit* (‘the said’). See for instance example (1), from a letter from Michael Skyllyng to Edmund de Stonor, c. 1380:

(1) ‘Mes, treshonore seignur, purceoqe **les ditz** tenauntz’
‘But, very honourable Sir, for that reason **the said** tenants’

Le dit is frequently used before nouns referring to places or people, as in *le dit chastel* (‘the said castle’) or *le dit Frere Wyllam* (‘the said Brother Wyllam’). *Avantdite*, meaning ‘aforesaid’, is often used in post-position after a noun or noun phrase. See example (2):

(2) Sire, et de autres bons amys, nous puissoms estre deliverez de la dette **avantdite**
‘Sire, and other good friends, we may be released from the debt **aforesaid’**.

There are very few examples of the AN equivalent of *the which*, i.e., *liquels*, which in these data was written as *le quel*, *les quell*, *les queux*, unlike in the ME material, where *the which* was the most frequent of all the anaphoric devices present.

8.3 Middle English

How does Table 4 above compare to Table 5 below, a breakdown of individual Middle English anaphoric reference devices? Table 5 includes all items that were found in the data. Absent forms include *of the which*, *that same*, and *desusdit*.

Table 5. Frequency of ME anaphoric reference devices

Anaphoric reference device	Raw and normalized frequencies per 1,000 words
the same/this same	18 (1.3)
the said	26 (1.8)
your said	3 (0.2)
my said	5 (0.4)
the which	31 (2.2)
the forsaid	1 (0.07)
your forsaid	1 (0.07)
which said	1 (0.07)
which same	1 (0.07)
at which	2 (0.14)
Total	89 (6.2)

As can be seen, there are higher numbers of *the which* and *the said* and *the/this same* (including all orthographic variants), which are used to refer back to something already mentioned. See, for instance, example (3), from a letter by Richard Quatermayns to Thomas Stoner and Humfrey Forster.

(3) Worshipfull Sirs, with all recommendacion due hadde, wille ye wete that it is so that I was at Oxonford as uppon Fryday next byfore seint Thomas day for diverse maters by the Kynges commaundement for **the seid** Towne of Oxonford
'Worshipful Sirs, with all recommendation due had, this is to let you know that I was at Oxford on Friday next before Saint Thomas day for diverse matters by the Kings' commandment for **the said** Town of Oxford'
The which is used to refer to both inanimate and animate objects. For an example of the former, see example (4) from the Cely letter collection:

4) Fordyrmor, plesythe yt yow to vndyrstonde I hawe resseywyd an letter ffrom yow, **the wheche** I hawe rede and do whell vndyrstonde /
'Furthermore, please understand that I have received a letter from you, **the which** I have read and do well understand'

Example (5) below shows *the which* being used to describe a person, rather than *who/whom*. It comes from a letter by John Yeme, a servant, to his master Thomas Stonor:

(5) that ys Menwynnycke, a felow of Corte of his, ys doyng, **the whycche** ys Steward ther.
'but that is Menwynnycke, a fellow of his at Court, **the which** is Steward there.'

Forsaid is uncommon, but it is used, once with *the* (see example (6) from the Cely letters) and once with *your* to refer to a person (see example (7) from the Stonor letters):

(6) then Y wovld that Thomas Kesten and you mytht acorde and agree togedere for **the forsayd** fell
'then I would that Thomas Kesten and you might accord and agree together for **the forsaid** fell'

(7) And seeth that **yowre forseyde** son Rychard duly ensele the same endenture
'And see that **your forsaid** son Richard duly enseal the same endenture.'

If we dig into the detail there are some interesting differences between the AN and ME sub-corpora in relation to individual words and phrases. *Le dit* ('the said') is by far the most frequent anaphoric reference device in the AN material (55 occurrences, with a normalized frequency of 3.3 per 1,000 words) and is clearly a preferred form in the particular extracts chosen from the AN sub-corpus. By contrast, *the which* is the most common anaphoric reference device in the ME sub-corpus (31 occurrences, with a normalized frequency of 2.2 per 1,000 words) despite the fact that its AN equivalent *liquels* is not present at all in the AN sub-corpus. This finding suggests that different reference terms appear to be favoured in the two different languages. However, it should be pointed out that *the said (*the equivalent of *le dit)* is the second most frequent anaphoric reference term in the ME material (26 occurrences, with a normalized frequency of 1.8 per 1,000 words), so there is a parallel with the AN material there.

Keeping the focus on the ME material, the data suggests it is not enough to simply agree with Burnley's statement that the Cely and Paston collections of personal letters are "largely free of the devices of curial style" (1986: 611). Both collections contain the anaphoric reference terms investigated, an essential element of the style, and constitute 55%, so more than half, of the total number of these terms identified in the data overall. Furthermore, it can be seen in Table 6 below that certain anaphoric reference devices cluster in particular ME letter collections. Most notable is the pronounced use of *the which* in the Cely letters compared to its infrequent use in the other collections. As can be seen below, the Cely letters contain a much higher frequency of *the which* than the other collections; collectively, the Cely letters contain 71% of the total number of this particular item across the whole ME sub-corpus.

Table 6. Raw figures and percentages (of the total number) of the three most frequent anaphoric reference terms across the four ME letter collections

	The same/ this same	*The said*	*The which*
Paston	4 (22%)	5 (19%)	1 (3%)
Stonor	10 (56%)	14 (54%)	6 (19%)
Cely	4 (22%)	4 (15%)	22 (71%)
Plumpton	0 (0%)	3 (12%)	2 (7%)
Total in sub-corpus	18 (100%)	26 (100%)	31 (100%)

According to Burnley (1986: 611) *the which* is in decline as a construction and is rare by around 1450. Its infrequent use in the Paston, Stonor, and Plumpton letters lends support to this observation. However, the writers of the Cely letters, which date from 1472 to 1488, seem to have maintained a preference for it well into the fifteenth century. This preference can be seen in example (8) below, an extract from a 347 word letter from Richard Cely to his son George dating from 1477, where there are six occurrences of *the weche*, all preceded by *for*:

(8) I grete the wyll, and I understand there com no marchauntys to Caleys for to bye woll nor fellys , for **the weche** ys ryght heuynese for the marchauntys of the Stapyll , for **the weche** I fere me euery man wyll fende the mene for the sale and delyuer ys woll and fellys into svre men ys handys be the mene of sale to marchauntys strangers the weche haue repayryd to Caleys afor thys tyme , for **the weche** I wolde ye hadde commyngaschon wyt syche marchauntys as ye haue fonde svre men and good men.

This high frequency of *the which* does not correlate with a higher number of, for example, letters of reportage in the Cely collection, because there are roughly equal numbers of letters of reportage, petition/request, and instruction in the four collections. However it does show that there is variation in the use of these anaphoric reference terms between letter collections and that personal preference, as well as variation between individual writers and letter collections, need to be taken into account. A similar but less pronounced finding is that 56% of all the examples of *the/this same* and 54% of all examples of *the said* are in the Stonor letters.

8.4 Diachronic distribution in AN and ME letters

There are very low frequencies of anaphoric reference terms in the late thirteenth century Anglo-Norman material compared to the letters dating from the fourteenth century. There does then appear to be an increase in the frequency of these features over time (with some variations, for example there are fewer instances per hundred words in the material dating from the 1320s). However the latest letters, those dating from c.1380, are also those which contain the most anaphoric reference words and phrases per 100 words[5].

Table 7. Diachronic analysis of anaphoric reference devices in the AN sub-corpus (raw figures and normalised figures per 100 words)

	1260s (133 words)	1280s (1421 words)	1300s (193 words)	1310s (2957 words)	1320s (6182 words)	1330s (1219 words)	1340s (460 words)	1350s (206 words)	1370s (1323 words)	c.1380 (1558 words)
le dit ('the said')				14	13	8		1	6	8
les ditz ('the said')				4	2	2		1		3
vostre dit ('your said')				1	3					2
noz dites ('our said')				2	3	2			1	
mon dit ('my said') (all Stonor)									1	6
de/des ditz ('of said')				1	1	1				
a dits ('to the said')										
du dit ('of the said')				5	1		1		3	
au dit ('at the said')				4	1					2
l'avant dit ('the forsaid')	1									
avantdit/e / avant dit ('aforesaid')		1		2	2	1	3			1
a meisme ('a(fore)said')			1	1						
de meismes ('of same')			1	1	2	1				

[5] The figures were normalized per 100 words in certain cases because some of the sub-corpora used in particular analyses (e.g. letters from the 1260s, 1300s, 1340s, 1350s in Table 7) were less than 1000 words, and you can't normalize per 1000 words if some sub-corpora are less than 1000 words in total. When there were more than 1000 words across all sub-corpora, normalization was done per 1000 words.

de quele/s ('of which')				7	2	1	2			2
le/s quel/les/queux ('the which')				1	1					2
Total	1 (0.75)	1 (0.07)	2 (1)	42 (1.4)	31 (0.5)	16 (1.3)	6 (1.3)	2 (1)	11 (0.8)	26 (1.7)

The opposite pattern can be observed in the Middle English material. These terms are much more common in the earliest ME letters, i.e., those dating pre-1431 (see Table 8 below). This could maybe suggest a degree of influence or overlap between AN and ME, because of the close proximity in time of these earliest ME letters to the latest Anglo-Norman letters.

Table 8. Diachronic analysis of anaphoric reference devices in the ME sub-corpus (raw figures and normalised figures per 100 words)

	Pre 1431 (431 words)	1450s (1408 words)	1460s (6215 words)	1470s (4665 words)	1480s (1200 words)	1490s (236 words)
the same/ this same	5	1	8	4		
the said	1	4	11	9	1	
your said				1	2	
my said			5			
the which	2	1	4	22		2
the forsaid				1		
your forsaid	1					
which said	1					
which same			1			
at which			2			
Total	10 (2.3)	6 (0.4)	31 (0.5)	37 (0.8)	3 (0.3)	2 (0.9)

8.5 Primary communicative function of ME letters

The letters in the ME sub-corpus cluster into three 'primary communicative function' (cf. Marcus 2017: 233–236) categories: reportage, petition/request, and, very occasionally, instruction. It is likely that the letters clustered in these three categories because they are predominantly private business correspondence, and business often involves asking people to do things for you, or asking for advice, reporting on what has happened, and telling people to do things for you. There were, perhaps unsurprisingly given the nature of the correspondence, no letters

with a primary communicative function of thanks, congratulations, defense, complaint or letters with an unclear primary function. Table 9 is provided below in order to ascertain whether certain letter types contain more anaphoric reference words or phrases. It shows raw and normalized frequencies of individual anaphoric reference devices across the three different letter types present in the ME sub-corpus.

Table 9. Raw and normalized frequencies per 100 words of individual ME anaphoric reference devices across different letter types

	Total across ME sub-corpus (14,253 words)	Total in letters with primary comm. function of reportage (6,480 words)	Total in letters with primary comm. function of petition/request (6,893 words)	Total in letters with primary comm. function of instruction (880 words)
the same/ this same	18	6	12	0
the said	26	10	15	1
your said	3	3	0	0
my said	5	5	0	0
the which	31	13	16	2
the forsaid	1	0	1	0
your forsaid	1	0	1	0
which said	1	0	1	0
which same	1	1	0	0
at which	2	1	1	0
Total	89 (0.6)	39 (0.6)	47 (0.7)	3 (0.3)

Table 9 demonstrates that letters with a primary communicative function of petition/request have the highest number of the devices when the raw frequencies are normalized per 100 words. This result perhaps suggests that when asking for something, letter writers slipped slightly more into the style associated, historically, with administrative documents even when writing private letters, because it lent their request an air of legitimacy. However, further study of a larger data sample would be needed to substantiate that claim. It is also not possible to test for statistical significance on these results (or on any that are presented in the following sections), because the sub-corpora sizes are not large enough for the results to be dependable. There is also not much difference between the normalized frequencies in letters of reportage and petition/request presented above (0.1).

8.6 Geographic distribution in AN and ME letters

All of the AN letters are of unknown scribal status, so nothing can be said with certainty about their place of actual composition, which qualifies any comment made on geographic distribution. If we assume that letters sent by clergymen (which make up the bulk of this sub-corpus) were likely to have been composed either by them or by scribes working for them in their respective spheres of ecclesiastical influence, it is possible to group them into Kent, Exeter, Durham, and various other locations in the North. The Stonor letters have been assigned to Oxfordshire as in the ME sub-corpus, because that is where the Stonor family was based. Of the senders, Edmund de Stonor was likely to have been Oxfordshire-based, because that is where his family seat was, as was the Abbot of Abingdon, because Abingdon is in that county, Gregory, Parson of Bourton (Bourton on the water being in the Cotswolds), and Johan de Nouwers (described as of Churchill, Oxfordshire). However, Richard Scrope was the first Lord Scrope of Bolton, in the North, Gilbert Talbot had a connection to Goodrich in Herefordshire, Waryn del Isle was commissioner for the peace in Berkshire, Thomas Dru was commissioner of peace for Wiltshire, Michael Skyllyng was on the commissioner of peace for Wiltshire and Hampshire, Margaret Countess of Devon had links to Devonshire, William Wykeham was Bishop of Winchester and was therefore likely based in Hampshire, and the other Stonor senders are not assigned any kind of geographical location in the Kingsford edition. Therefore not all of the senders can be most definitely pinned to Oxfordshire, and neither can their scribes (if they had any).

Possibly because of the lack of clarity around where these letters were composed, and by whom (i.e., sender or scribe), there is not really any discernible clustering in a particular geographical area (see Table 10 below). A case could be made for the anaphoric reference terms being more present in letters from the midlands (Oxfordshire) and the North of England (Durham), although Oxfordshire is not that close to Durham.

Table 10. Geographic distribution of AN anaphoric reference words/phrases (raw figures and normalised figures per 100 words)

	Cantuarienses – Kent	Peckham – Kent	Grandisson – Exeter	Stonor – Oxfordshire	Kellawe – Durham	Northern – Carlisle, Durham, York	Misc – various locations
le dit (‘the said’)	15		5	15	14	3	
les ditz (‘the said’)	4			3	2	2	
vostre dit (‘your said’)	1			2			1
noz dites (‘our said’)	1		3	1	1	1	
mon dit (‘my said’)				7			
de/des ditz (‘of said’)	1		2				1
a dits (‘to the said’)							
du dit (‘of the said’)			1	2	3	1	
au dit (‘at the said’)			1	2	4		
l'avant dit (‘the forsaid’)		1					1
avantdit/e / avant dit (‘aforesaid’)	1		4		1	1	2
a meisme (‘a(fore)said’)							
de meismes (‘of same’)	4		1			2	2
de quele/s (‘of which’)	1		2	1	6		5
le/s quel/les/queux (‘the which’)				2	1	1	
Total	28 (0.9)	1 (0.07)	19 (0.5)	35 (1.3)	32 (1.5)	11 (0.8)	12 (1.7)

Table 11. Geographic distribution of ME anaphoric reference words/phrases (raw figures and normalised figures per 100 words)

	Cely (London) 4,406 words	Paston (Norfolk) 4,061 words	Stonor (Oxfordshire) 3,692 words	Plumpton (Yorkshire) 2,094 words
the same/this same	4	4	10	
the said	4	5	14	3
your said	3			
my said		4		1
the which	22	1	6	2
the forsaid	1			
your forsaid			1	
which said			1	
which same		1		
at which			1	1
Total	34 (0.8)	15 (0.4)	33 (0.9)	7 (0.3)

The Cely letters are all autographs, so would likely have been composed in London, so the observations about them can be said to be the most reliable. There are also three either wholly or partially autograph Paston letters (likely to have actually been composed in East Anglia) and three autograph Stonor letters (likely to have actually been composed in Oxfordshire). Nine of these ME letters are scribal. Of the two in the Paston collection, the first is listed as scribal or a copy but no further details are provided about the scribe in question. The second scribal Paston letter, sent by John Paston I to Walter Writtle, is in the hand of Wykes, identified by Davis (1971–1976: lxxviii) as an estate servant, who would therefore most likely have also been Norfolk based. The 1919 Kingsford edition of the Stonor letters notes in relation to the letter sent by Thomas Mull to Thomas Stonor II that it was not an autograph, unlike most of Mull’s other letters, but does not provide any information about who the scribe was who was writing for Mull. Mull was a lawyer, so it could have been one of his legal clerks, but this is conjecture.

There is also no information provided in CEEC about the scribes writing for the senders of the Plumpton letters. Five senders are represented from the Plumpton collection, namely Brian Rocliffe, Godfrey Greene, Godfrey Beaton, Henry Percy, and Robert Plumpton, none of whom would necessarily have been based in the North, although Godfrey Beaton was, as a clergyman, the steward of abbey property in Yorkshire. Henry Percy was the 4th Earl of Northumberland, march warden, and king's lieutenant in the North, so he was likely to have been

based in the North of England, and the same can possibly be said of his scribes, although again the latter statement cannot be made with absolute certainty. Brian Rocliffe was a third baron of the king's exchequer, gentleman, and for a period of time the Commissioner of the Peace in West Riding in Yorkshire. He was granted the manor of Forcett in North Riding, Yorkshire in 1483, so was likely to have been at least partially Yorkshire-based, although the same cannot be said for certain of his scribe/s for the letter in question. Robert (also known as Robenett) Plumpton was the illegitimate son of Sir William Plumpton and an attorney. He had a family seat in Yorkshire but could have been based anywhere, as could his scribe/s. The same can be said of Godfrey Greene, a lawyer and distant relative of the Plumptons by marriage, and of his scribe/s.

There are also eight letters of unknown scribal status in the Stonor collection, so nothing can be said with certainty about their place of actual composition. However, despite these philological qualifications, it can be tentatively observed that these ME anaphoric reference terms do appear to be used more in letters composed in London and the county of Oxfordshire (which is geographically close to London), than in the East Anglian or Northern letters. This finding fits with London being the centre of administrative (and other kinds) of business and where letter writers might have been more likely to come across curial style in official contexts. However, it may be more to do with other factors, such as the fact that there are lots of writers belonging to the professions and the gentry in the Cely and Stonor collections.

8.7 Social distribution in AN and ME letters

The last variable considered is social group or rank of the person who sent the letter, i.e., the person who signed it, although we do not have any information about scribal status of the AN letters, and any scribes who were involved may not have shared the same rank as those who signed them. With this acknowledgement of the limitation of the data in mind, the AN data appear to show that the anaphoric reference terms are used the most by senders from the gentry and those working as professionals outside the clergy, whilst the clergy used these anaphoric reference terms the least per 100 words, despite the fact that their letters form by far the largest sub-corpus.

Table 12. Distribution of anaphoric reference terms across AN letters from writers belonging to different social groups (normalised per 100 words)

	AN Clergy 12,373 words	AN professional, non-clergy 402 words	AN Gentry 807 words	AN nobility 1,127 words	AN uncertain 943 words
le dit (‘the said’)	38	1	5	5	3
les ditz (‘the said’)	8		3		
vostre dit (‘your said’)	1			3	1
noz dites (‘our said’)	6			1	
mon dit (‘my said’)		1	5	1	
de/des ditz (‘of said’)	3				1
a dits (‘to the said’)					
du dit (‘of the said’)	4	3			
au dit (‘at the said’)	7				
l'avant dit (‘the forsaid’)	1			1	
avantdit/e / avant dit (‘aforesaid’)	8				1
a meisme (‘a(fore)said’)					
de meismes (‘of same’)	9				
de quele/s (‘of which’)	13		1		2
le/s quel/les/queux (‘the which’)	2				1
Total	100 (0.8)	5 (1.2)	14 (1.7)	11 (1)	9 (1)

Table 13. Distribution of anaphoric reference terms across ME letters from writers belonging to different social groups (normalised per 100 words)

	ME clergy 242 words	ME professional, non-clergy 5,500 words	ME gentry 6,495 words	ME nobility 1,368 words	ME servants 648 words
the same/this same		4	13	1	
the said		4	17	4	1
your said		3			
my said		1	4		
the which	2	22	5		2
the forsaid		1			
your forsaid			1		
which said				1	
which same			1		
at which		1	1		
Total	2 (0.8)	36 (0.7)	42 (0.7)	6 (0.4)	3 (0.5)

In the ME letters, letters by members of the nobility contain the lowest number of the anaphoric reference terms per 100 words. Two of these, by Robert Plumpton and Henry Percy, are scribal or copies, and the other, sent by Alice Sudeley is of unknown scribal status. It could therefore be suggested in relation to the two scribal letters/copies at least, that the scribes were not familiar enough with curial style to reproduce one of its most characteristic features. The second lowest frequency per 100 words is found in letters by servants. The two letters by servants John Frende and John Yeme are both autographs, so the low frequency result is to be expected given that they may not have received the same levels of formal education and therefore may have had less awareness of curial style. The highest number of these reference terms per 100 words are in a single scribal letter or copy consisting of 242 words sent by Godfrey Beaton, a clergyman. However the sample from the clergy is so small (compared to 5,122 words for the professional, non-clergy, for example), it cannot be said to be hugely representative, and the figure per 100 words is still under 1.0. Aside from the clergy, the highest proportion per 100 words of these reference terms are in letters by members of the gentry and those working as professionals outside the clergy, which was also found to be the case in the AN material. Of the twelve letters sent by members of the gentry, only three are autographs, which must be taken into account. However twelve of the fifteen letters sent by professionals are autograph, which adds some weight to the suggestion that professionals were fairly keen users of these lexical items (the Celys' preference for *the which* can be seen within this context).

9. Discussion

The main finding of the paper is that, if we go by normalized frequency count per 1000 words, there are anaphoric reference devices in the AN than in the ME material (8.9 versus 6.2), a difference found to be statistically significant at the level of $p < 0.01$. The Anglo-Norman letters do therefore seem to be more reflective of curial style than the Middle English letters, according to the measures used. However, whilst there are more anaphoric reference devices per 1000 words in the AN sub-corpus, it is only by 2.7 per 1000 words. In other words, whilst there may be fewer of them in the ME sub-corpus, they are still very much in evidence, and not in much smaller numbers than in the AN sub-corpus. Furthermore, the Cely and Paston collections contain 55% of the total number of anaphoric reference terms identified in the ME material, which problematizes Burnley's statement that the letters from these collections are "largely free of the devices of curial style" (1986: 611).

Secondly, if we move away from the purely quantitative results to look at the correspondence data qualitatively, certain similarities between personal letters as a text type and some of the other text types and functions discussed by Burnley begin to emerge. Whilst curial style was originally thought of as an essentially technical style, employed in administrative documents, which often took the form of letters, Burnley states that by the end of the fourteenth century, curial prose in Britain develops a "stylistic range from plain to elevated, and varying from fully structured formalism in official documents to the gratuitous use of the occasional curial forms in texts of looser construction" (1986: 607). He mentions discursive literary prose, noting that 'curial features occur not as a structural foundation but as an occasional connective convenience or a stylistic coloring, supported by other rhetorical devices of ordering" (1986: 610). It is not just writers of literary texts that take this more relaxed approach to the style. This idea of curial features "playing some structural role" whilst simultaneously being part of "a richer stylistic matrix" (Burnley 1986: 611) is one that arguably also applies to the ME personal letters under investigation. ME anaphoric reference terms such as *the said* and *the which* are used, but in a looser, less precise way than in official documents.

As was mentioned above, public, official letters were excluded from both data sets. However, for comparative purposes here, it is worth briefly considering example (9) below, an extract from a petitionary letter written by John Paston I to Henry VI sometime before 1449. The letter can be classed as an example of a public, official letter because it is addressed to the monarch. Despite only being 209 words in length, it contains seventeen examples of the anaphoric reference devices *the said* and *your said* (in bold).

(9) And how be it that **the seyd** John Paston after **the seid** entré sued to **the seid** Lord Molyns and his councell, in the most louly maner that he cowde, dayly fro tyme of **the seid** entré on-to the fest of Mihelmes than next folwyng, duryng which tyme diuers communicasyons were had be-twix the councell of **the seid** lord and the councell of **your seid** besechere; and for asmych as in **the seid** communicasions no titill of right at any tyme was shewed for **the seid** lord but that was fully and clerly answeryd, so that **the seid** lordes councell remitted **your seid** besechere to sewe to **the seid** lord for his finall and rightfull answere, and after sute mad to **the seid** lord be **your seid** besechere, aswell at Salysbery as in oder places, to his gret coust, and non answere had but delays, which causyd **your seid** besechere the vj day of Octobre last past to inhabite hym in a mansion with-in **the seid** town, kepyng stille there his poscession on-tille the xxviij day of Januarij last past **the seid** lord sent to **the seid** mansion a riotous peple to the nombre of a thowsand persones, with blanket bendes of a sute as riseres a-geyn your pees

It therefore adheres much more faithfully to curial style's characteristic technique of coherence than the personal letters included in the sub-corpus. It shares this adherence to the constraints of the style with, for instance, a 1429 petition of the people of Tewkesbury, mentioned by Burnley (1986: 611). The high concentration of the anaphoric reference devices *the said* and *your said* in the extract from this official letter to the monarch could potentially suggest that, given the fundamental importance of these devices to curial style, the more public and official the letter, the greater the use of curial style. However, a greater range of features found in the style such as synonymous doublets and more letters of an official, public nature would need to be scrutinized before making any firm conclusions. What this finding does show is that when considering issues of stylistic influence and emulation in medieval correspondence it is important to break down collections into public and personal letters where possible, and to consider each group separately.

By contrast, example (10) is a personal letter dating from 1454, also written by John Paston I to the Earl of Oxford. It has a primary communicative function of request, consists of 214 words but only contains one example of 'the seid' (in bold).

(10) And this considered in your wise discrecion, I trost, my lord, thow here prisonyng were of oderes labore ye wuld help here; and if she be distroyd be this mariage my conscyens thynketh I am bownd to recompense here after my pore and sympill power. My lord, ye know I had litill cause to do for Thomas Denyes, savyng only for your gode lordshep. Also, my lord, I know wele that Watere Ingham was bete, the matere hangyng in myn a-ward, right fowle and shamefully; and also how **the seid** Thomas Denyes hath this last terme, a-geyn your nobill estat, right vn-wysely demened hym to his shame and grettest rebuke that euer he

had in his lyve; where-fore it is right wele do his person be ponysshed as it pleaseth you. But this not withstondyng, for Goddes loue, my lord, remembre how the gentilwoman is accombred only for yowre sake, and help here; and if aught lyth in my powere to do that that myght please yowre lordshep, or cowde fynde any wey for Water Ingham a-vayll and wurchep, I wull do it to my powere, and the rathere if your lordshep support the jentilwoman, for I know the matere and that longe plee is litill a-vayll, and euery thing must haue an ende.

Examples (9) and (10) demonstrate that there is variation in the usage of anaphoric reference devices within the Paston letter collection. It also shows how potentially important the 'official' versus 'personal' status of a letter is in relation to the frequency of anaphoric reference devices.

Letters like example (10), only written a few years after John's letter to the King, appear to employ anaphoric reference terms occasionally, as what Burnley (1986: 610) calls a 'connective convenience'. It is clear that John, and quite possibly other letter writers like him (and their scribes) were familiar with the tight cohesive structure of prose written in curial style, but chose not to imitate its formulaic repetitiveness as rigidly as they could have done when writing personal letters. Personal letters between a sender and recipient who know each other are more likely to contain vernacular language use than official letters. Writers were normally trying, primarily, to communicate a message, rather than create a sense of elevation or a ceremonious tone. Furthermore, because they likely knew the recipient, they would probably be less likely to use such a tone.

Can anything be said about the impact of the longevity of AN within the discoursal domain of correspondence on the development of English in the fifteenth century, specifically in relation to the emulation of curial style?

Wright has argued that written English did not triumph over French until the middle of the fifteenth century, and when it did, "it took over qualities from written Anglo-Norman, visible in supralocal Englishes of around 1500" (2020a: 529). She writes about AN exerting pressure on written English within the realms of law and money management, but it could also be argued that something similar was going on stylistically within the discourse domain of correspondence, both official and personal. Different discoursal contexts, and the deliberate emulation of styles within those discoursal contexts (especially in the later medieval period), need to be taken into account when tracing this adoption of AN qualities into English.

As Burnley argues, during the late fourteenth century, the influence of Anglo-Norman on English, whether in the form of "emulated styles", which this particular paper focuses on, "grammar, characteristic word-order, adopted phrases", "or patterns of linguistic behaviour" (2001: 28), was affected by language user's perceptions of the various different modes and varieties of the French of England, and their potential desire to invoke them in order to convey eloquence. French-influenced modes of discourse formed part of what Burnley calls "the stylistic

architecture" (2001: 28) of later medieval England, and these modes of discourse include literary sources, official, public correspondence, but also, this paper argues, more personal, private letters, the latter more so than has been previously suggested. It also, arguably, extends beyond the fourteenth and into the fifteenth century, as is attested by the ME epistolary data investigated for this paper.

Furthermore, the findings of the current paper agree with those of Romero-Barranco (2020). When comparing French and English nominal suffixes in early English correspondence, Romero-Barranco finds that the main users of the French suffixes were the gentry and the professionals. The suffixes were much less frequent in letters by members of the nobility of those belonging to social ranks below the gentry. Similarly, in both the AN and ME sub-corpora used for the current paper, the anaphoric reference terms investigated are used most frequently by senders from the gentry and those working as professionals outside the clergy, and are of lower frequency in letters sent by members of the nobility and by servants. Given that the category 'professionals working outside the clergy' includes the mercantile Celys, these findings also lend support to Wright's argument about the centrality of trading and professional communities to multilingual dissemination during the later medieval period (2020b: 11).

10. Concluding remarks

The comparative analyses carried out in this paper have hopefully provided some new insights into the stylistic influence of curial style, first used in Anglo-Norman, in official contexts, on a particular Middle English text type, personal correspondence. They have shown that there are more anaphoric reference terms in the Anglo-Norman epistolary material than in the Middle English, and that the difference is statistically significant, a result to be expected given the AN correspondence's linguistic proximity to the AN governmental documents in which the style originated in a British context. However, these anaphoric reference devices are very much in evidence in the ME material as well, albeit in smaller numbers, suggesting a degree of influence, or emulation, or both.

Furthermore, it is suggested that the use of anaphoric reference devices in both the AN and ME personal letters examined is more similar to their use in the literary texts discussed by Burnley (1986) than to their use in their more official, administrative forebears, i.e., they are often used in a looser, relaxed way, as a kind of "connective convenience" (Burnley 1986: 610).

The analyses have gone some way to problematize Burnley's 1986 suggestion that the Cely and Paston letters are mostly free of the characteristic features of curial style, because these reference terms, a key component of the style, are present in both collections. They also call into question the assertion that the

construction *the which* was rare by around 1450, highlighting instead a more complex, nuanced picture involving variation according to individual letter writer. In relation to the time dimension, the finding that the reference terms were most common in the latest (1380s) AN letters and earliest (pre 1431) ME letters perhaps suggests a period of overlap, and possibly therefore of greater influence and/or emulation. In relation to geography, ME anaphoric reference terms appear to be used more in letters written in London and Oxfordshire than in the East Anglian or Northern letters. However, a limitation of this particular aspect of the analysis is the fact that several letters are of unknown scribal status, and, in relation to scribal and autograph letters, not all scribes and senders would necessarily have been based in the same place as the families who give their names to the four Middle English letter collections from which sample letters are taken. In terms of the social dimension, it was found that in both the AN and ME corpora, the anaphoric reference devices are frequently used by writers from the gentry and those working as professionals outside the clergy, which supports the findings of Romero-Barranco (2020), although again the presence of scribal letters and letters of unknown scribal status must be acknowledged as a limitation of the data, and as a result, the findings in relation to social variation.

Further work could consider the presence of the devices of curial style in other ME prose writing, such as that contained in chronicles and treatises. Other features of curial style such as lexical elaboration could also be considered. However, despite the chronological mismatch of the data sources, a result of the paucity of pre-1400 correspondence composed in English, this comparative study using late fourteenth century Anglo-Norman and fifteenth century English personal letters has hopefully added something to our understanding of the nature of Anglo-Norman influence on vernacular English prose writing, especially post-1400.

Appendix 1. Anglo Norman sub-corpus metadata

Collection	Sender	Recipient	Dates	Number of words	Autograph (A), copies or scribal (C), unknown (D)	Social rank of sender	Place of composition
Cantuarienses	Prior Henry	Cloth merchant	24th Feb 1318	150	D	Clergy	Kent
Cantuarienses	Prior Henry	Edmund de Passele	24th August 1322	254	D	Clergy	Kent
Cantuarienses	Prior Henry	Agnes de Courtenay	May 1323	129	D	Clergy	Kent
Cantuarienses	Prior Henry	J. Pecche constable of Dover	1323	173	D	Clergy	Kent
Cantuarienses	Prior Henry	legal advisor	11th January 1325	200	D	Clergy	Kent
Cantuarienses	Prior Henry	John de Dene	1325	184	D	Clergy	Kent
Cantuarienses	Prior Henry	Archbishop of Cant	1325	91	D	Clergy	Kent
Cantuarienses	Prior Henry	John de Dene?	5th Feb 1326	230	D	Clergy	Kent
Cantuarienses	Prior Henry	Hugh le	6th March	235	D	Clergy	Kent
Cantuarienses	Prior Henry	Hugh le Despenser	6th March 1326	162	D	Clergy	Kent

Cantuarienses	unknown	unknown	unknown	126	D	Clergy	Kent
Cantuarienses	Prior Richard	John Laung	24th July 1331	330	D	Clergy	Kent
Cantuarienses	Prior Richard	Th.de Medmenham	25th July 1331	139	D	Clergy	Kent
Cantuarienses	Prior Richard	James Frizzell	26th July 1331	171	D	Clergy	Kent
Cantuarienses	Prior Richard	James Frizzell	15th August 1331	155	D	Clergy	Kent
Cantuarienses	Prior Richard	H de Bradway	24th July 1333	240	D	Clergy	Kent
Cantuarienses	Prior Richard	John Doo	9th August 1331	184	D	Clergy	Kent
				3153 (total)			
Grandisson	John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter	Roger de Mortimer	7th April 1328	207	D	Clergy	Exeter
Grandisson	John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter	Sir Hugo de Courtenay	1328	108	D	Clergy	Exeter

Grandisson	John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter	Robert de Bilkamore	1328	161	D	Clergy	Exeter
Grandisson	John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter	Earl of Devonshire	6th Sept 1328	300	D	Clergy	Exeter
Grandisson	John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter	Duke of Lancaster and Roger de Mortimer	12th October 1328	242	D	Clergy	Exeter
Grandisson	John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter	Sir John John Maltravers and Sir William of Whitfield	12th Janurary 1329	199	D	Clergy	Exeter
Grandisson	John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter	Sir Hugo de Courtenay	24th January 1329	152	D	Clergy	Exeter
Grandisson	John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter	Sir Hugo de Courtenay	27th January 1329	878	D	Clergy	Exeter

Grandisson	John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter	Lady de Courtenay	1329	246	D	Clergy	Exeter
Grandisson	John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter	Sir John Maltravers and William of Whitfield	1329	119	D	Clergy	Exeter
Grandisson	John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter	Roger de Mortimer	5th March 1329	141	D	Clergy	Exeter
Grandisson	John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter	Lord Gauchier of Chatestelion	1329	151	D	Clergy	Exeter
Grandisson	John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter	unknown	1329	210	D	Clergy	Exeter
Grandisson	John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter	Lady Alice de Mules	23rd July 1329	229	D	Clergy	Exeter

Grandisson	John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter	Sir John de Stonor	10th Oct 1329	185	D	Clergy	Exeter
Grandisson	John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter	John Billyoun, Lord's steward	28th Oct 1329	56	D	Clergy	Exeter
Grandisson	John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter	Sir James de Aldithley	1329	159	D	Clergy	Exeter
Grandisson	John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter	Sir Hugo de Courtenay	19th October 1329	168	D	Clergy	Exeter
				3911 (total)			
Kellawe	Richard Kellawe, Bishop of Durham	Sheriff of Durham	23rd Oct 1315	121	D	Clergy	Durham
Kellawe	Richard Kellawe, Bishop of Durham	Patrick Kellawe	4th April 1312	189	D	Clergy	Durham

Kellawe	Richard Kellawe, Bishop of Durham	Robert de Sokepeth	4th April 1312	107	D	Clergy	Durham
Kellawe	Richard Kellawe, Bishop of Durham	Guy, Earl of Warwick	11th Nov 1312	208	D	Clergy	Durham
Kellawe	Richard Kellawe, Bishop of Durham	Robert de Sokepeth	17th Sept 1312	128	D	Clergy	Durham
Kellawe	Richard Kellawe, Bishop of Durham	Alexander de Morley	Sept 1312	127	D	Clergy	Durham
Kellawe	Richard Kellawe, Bishop of Durham	John Waryn coroner of Sadberge	23rd Feb 1313	277	D	Clergy	Durham
Kellawe	Richard Kellawe, Bishop of Durham	Lady Margaret, widow of Sir Robert Hansard	23rd May 1313	154	D	Clergy	Durham

Kellawe	Richard Kellawe, Bishop of Durham	Walter de Goswick	16th May 1314	213	D	Clergy	Durham
Kellawe	Richard Kellawe, Bishop of Durham	unknown	August 1314	289	D	Clergy	Durham
Kellawe	Richard Kellawe, Bishop of Durham	William de Denum, Sir Geoffrey de Edenham, and Robert de Sokepath	5th August 1314	242	D	Clergy	Durham
Kellawe	Richard Kellawe, Bishop of Durham	Adam de Boghes, Sheriff of Durham, and others	18th August 1314	160	D	Clergy	Durham
				2215 (total)			
Peckham	John Peckham, Archbishop of Canterbury	John of Somerset	14th April 1280	190	D	Clergy	Kent
Peckham	John Peckham, Archbishop of Canterbury	Th. Weyland	20th January 1281	190	D	Clergy	Kent

Peckham	John Peckham, Archbishop of Canterbury	Earl of Gloucester	9th March 1284	371	D	Clergy	Kent
Peckham	John Peckham, Archbishop of Canterbury	Earl of Gloucester	4th June 1289	319	D	Clergy	Kent
Peckham	John Peckham, Archbishop of Canterbury	Robert Malet	22nd Nov 1289	351	D	Clergy	Kent
				1421 (total)			
Northern	William Greenfield, Archbishop of York	John de Mowbray	14th April 1315	251		Clergy	Carlisle, Durham, York
Northern	William Greenfield, Archbishop of York	The sheriff of Yorkshire	3rd Dec 1306	193		Clergy	Carlisle, Durham, York
Northern	Richard de la Pole	Archbish Melton	4th May 1326	217		Professional, non-clergy	Carlisle, Durham, York
Northern	Henry Earl of Lancaster	Archbish Melton	15th Feb 1327	270		Nobility	Carlisle, Durham, York

Northern	William Greenfield and Richard	William de Roos of Hamelk	26th Dec 1314	232		Clergy	Carlisle, Durham, York
Northern	Gilbert, Bishop of Carlisle	Thomas de Lucy etc.	27th Oct 1359	206		Clergy	Carlisle, Durham, York
				1369 (total)			
Misc.	Hamo Bishop of Rochester	Lora Abbess of Malling	2nd Oct 1344	351		Clergy	Various locations
Misc.	Lora Abbess of Malling	Hamo Bishop of Rochester	13th Oct 1344	109		Clergy	Various locations
Misc.	Thomas, Earl of Lancaster	Prior of Durham	6th Oct 1315?	109		Nobility	Various locations
Misc.	William of Valence	Lady Valence	29th May 1267	133		Nobility	Various locations
				702 (total)			
Stonor	Gilbert Talbot	Edmund de Stonor	1st Sept 1378	186		Nobility	Oxfordshire
Stonor	Sir Nicholas Sarnesfield	Edmund de Stonor	1377-78	92		Nobility	Oxfordshire

Stonor	Abbot of Abingdon	Edmund de Stonor	15th June? 1379	140		Clergy	Oxfordshire
Stonor	Phelippot Boot and Walter Estram	Edmund de Stonor	c.1380	163		Uncertain	Oxfordshire
Stonor	Gregory, Parson of Bourton	Edmund de Stonor	c.1380	201		Clergy	Oxfordshire
Stonor	Richard le Scrope	Edmund de Stonor	c.1380	185		Nobility	Oxfordshire
Stonor	Walter Rous	Edmund de Stonor	c.1380	291		Uncertain	Oxfordshire
Stonor	Michael Skyllyng	Edmund de Stonor	c.1380	260		Gentry	Oxfordshire
Stonor	John Stoke	Edmund de Stonor	c.1380	195		Uncertain	Oxfordshire
Stonor	Edmund de Stonor	unknown	c.1380	213		Gentry	Oxfordshire
Stonor	Margaret, Countess of Devon	Edmund de Stonor	c.1380	50		Nobility	Oxfordshire
Stonor	John de Welton	Edmund de Stonor	4th Nov 1377	185		Professional, non-clergy	Oxfordshire

Stonor	John de Beverle	Edmund de Stonor	1st Jan 1378	168		Uncertain	Oxfordshire
Stonor	William of Wykeham	Edmund de Stonor	11th Jan 1378	116		Clergy	Oxfordshire
Stonor	Johan de Nouwers	Edmund de Stonor	Jan 1378	102		Nobility	Oxfordshire
Stonor	Thomas Dru	Edmund de Stonor	11th March 1378	186		Gentry	Oxfordshire
Stonor	Waryn del Isle	Edmund de Stonor	12th April 1378	148		Gentry	Oxfordshire
				2881 (total)			
				Total of whole AN sub-corpus: 15652			

Appendix 2. Middle English sub-corpus metadata

Collection	**Sender**	**Recipient**	**Dates**	**Number of words**	**Autograph (A), copies or scribal (C), unknown (D)**	**Social rank of sender**	**Place of composition**
Paston	John Paston II	Margaret Paston	1469	968	A	Gentry	Norfolk
Paston	John Paston II	Walter Writtle	1469	349	A	Gentry	Norfolk
Paston	John Paston II	Walter Writtle	1469	1324	C (in Wykes hand, estate servant)	Gentry	Norfolk
Paston	John Paston I	John De Vere	1454	462	C	Gentry	Norfolk
Paston	John Paston I	Richard Southwell	1452	958	AC (draft; starts as autograph, rest in scribal hand with corrections by Paston)	Gentry	Norfolk
				4061 (total)			
Stonor	Thomas Stonor I	Sir John Fortescue	1424	265	D (draft)	Gentry	Oxfordshire
Stonor	Alice Sudeley	Thomas Stonor I	1425	171	D	Nobility	Oxfordshire
Stonor	John Frende of Ermyngton, Boucher.	Thomas Stonor II	1462	233	A	Servant	Oxfordshire

Stonor	Thomas Hampden	Thomas Stonor II	1462	596	D	Gentry	Oxfordshire
Stonor	Thomas Hampden	Thomas Stonor II	1462	443	D	Gentry	Oxfordshire
Stonor	Hugh Unton	Thomas Stonor II	1462	201	A	Professional, non-clergy	Oxfordshire
Stonor	Thomas Mull	Thomas Stonor II	1463	242	C	Professional, non-clergy	Oxfordshire
Stonor	Thomas Hampden	Thomas Stonor II	1465	258	D	Gentry	Oxfordshire
Stonor	John Yeme	Thomas Stonor II	1466	407	A	Servant	Oxfordshire
Stonor	Robert Medford	Thomas Stonor II	1466	313	D	Gentry	Oxfordshire
Stonor	Richard Quatermayns	Thomas Stonor II	1467/68	273	D	Gentry	Oxfordshire
Stonor	Richard Quatermayns	Thomas Stonor II	1471	290	D	Gentry	Oxfordshire
				3692 (total)			

Cely	Richard Cely	Robert Cely	1474	273	A	Professional, non-clergy	London
Cely	Robert Cely	George Cely	1476	141	A	Professional, non-clergy	London
Cely	George Cely	Richard Cely	1476	367	A	Professional, non-clergy	London
Cely	William Maryon	George Cely	1476	330	A	Professional, non-clergy	London
Cely	William Maryon	George Cely	1476	340	A	Professional, non-clergy	London
Cely	Richard Cely	George Cely	1477	347	A	Professional, non-clergy	London
Cely	John Dalton	George Cely	1478	267	A	Professional, non-clergy	London
Cely	Richard Cely (senior)	George Cely	1478	429	A	Professional, non-clergy	London
Cely	Robert Cely	George Cely	1478	326	A	Professional, non-clergy	London
Cely	George Cely	Richard Cely	1478	639	A	Professional, non-clergy	London

Cely	George Cely	Richard Cely	1480	929	A	Professional, non-clergy	London
				4406 (total)			
Plumpton	Brian Rocliffe	William I Plumpton	1461	298	C	Professional, non-clergy	Yorkshire
Plumpton	Godfrey Greene	William I Plumpton	1464	365	C	Professional, non-clergy	Yorkshire
Plumpton	Robert Plumpton	William I Plumpton	1477	923	C	Nobility	Yorkshire
Plumpton	Godfrey Beaton	Robert Plumpton	1499	242	C	Clergy	Yorkshire
Plumpton	Henry Percy	Robert Plumpton	1488	266	C	Nobility	Yorkshire
				2094 (total)			
				Total of whole ME sub-corpus: 14253			
Paston	John Paston I	Henry VI	Pre 1449	1062	C (in James Gloys's hand, priest and clerk, likely to be a local man)	Gentry	Norfolk

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