Writing and Reading in the Circle of Sir John Fastolf (d. 1459)

In 2 Volumes: Volume 1

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

University of York
Medieval Studies

December 2011
Abstract

This thesis is a study of all aspects of writing and reading connected with Sir John Fastolf, a military captain and steward of the household of John Duke of Bedford, who returned to England from the later battles of the Hundred Years War in 1438. Using the circumstantial, palaeographical, and codicological evidence contained in the letters, documents, and literary texts associated with Fastolf, the thesis performs a survey of the men who wrote for Fastolf, their interactions with him and with each other, and their positions in what might be deemed a ‘readership community’. The thesis takes a detailed look at letter and document composition, delivery, and storage, then relates this administrative writing to the production and reception of texts in manuscript books. It argues that there was a close relationship between these two types of work, finding that the administrators of the Fastolf circle were also the scribes of literary texts. The thesis consistently reinforce the importance of oral communication within this circle, emphasising that though there is a substantial amount of surviving written material associated with this circle, the written word was not the sole form of communication within it.

The first section of the thesis is an introduction to the circle of Sir John Fastolf, since it is necessary to comprehend this complex and multitudinous group before considering reading and writing within it. Chapter One gives biographical information about Fastolf and the associates who were most involved with writing and reading. It then reconsiders the highly-contended issue of Fastolf’s relations with these men: was Fastolf a harsh master, or badly-served by his men? Chapter Two explains the choice of the word ‘circle’ to describe this group, and considers potential subdivisions within it according to responsibilities or linguistic descriptions. It emphasises the individuality within the master-servant relationship, as is indicated by the evidence that Fastolf’s servants maintained various levels of proximity and permanence of service.

In the second section, Chapter Three is a detailed examination of the writing of letters and administrative documents. It opens with a discussion of the interplay between oral conversation and written correspondence. It then looks at the evidence for the way in which Fastolf’s letters (none of which were autograph) were composed, and argues that they were not dictated. It progresses to examine the practicalities of correspondence and administration: drafting, copying, letter delivery, and storage. Finally, there is a look at the watermarks of paper associated with Fastolf. This leads into Chapter Four, which is a study of interactions between the men who wrote for Fastolf. It shows that there was consistent co-operation between Fastolf’s scribes, and suggests that collaboration had an effect upon the linguistic features of their work. Finally, Chapter Five looks at Fastolf’s collection of literary manuscript books, and considers the evidence about who read literary texts, as indicated by circumstantial evidence, as well codicological evidence such as annotations within the books themselves. It provides case studies of the men who can be shown to have written these books, and a focused study of one of these books in particular, the hitherto under-studied manuscript, College of Arms, MS. Arundel 48. Finally, there is an overview of the formation of a sub-section of Fastolf’s readership community in the west country, especially in Bristol, Glastonbury and Wells, which was facilitated by Fastolf’s Bristol-born secretary William Worcester.
List of Contents

Volume 1
List of illustrations and tables v
Accompanying Materials:
Text formatting principals vi
Timeline of Events vii
Acknowledgements viii
Author’s Declaration ix

SECTION ONE: The Circle of Sir John Fastolf

Chapter One: Introduction 1
Chapter Two: A case study of the Fastolf circle 81

Volume 2

SECTION TWO: Writing in the Circle of Sir John Fastolf

Chapter Three: The writing and transmission of letters and documents for Sir John Fastolf. 125
Chapter Four: Interactions between writers in the Fastolf circle 219
Chapter Five: Fastolf’s circle as the readers and writers of texts in manuscript books. 260

CONCLUSION 338

APPENDICES

Appendix A: A table of the property acquisitions of Sir John Fastolf. 343
Appendix B: William Worcester’s scribal hand in Manuscript books 345
Appendix C: A diagram of the Paston network, and a diagram of their external links. 346
Appendix D: Evidence of a hired messenger being employed to carry letters by Mercers 347
Appendix E: The hand of Luket Nantron in Basset’s Chronicle. London, College Arms, Ms. M.9, folio 35 recto. 348
Appendix F: A draft petition by Sir John Fastolf, in hand of Luket Nantron. 349

Appendix G: A draft petition by Sir John Fastolf in hands of Luket Nantron and William Barker. 350

Appendix H: The hand of William Barker in a letter from Sir John Fastolf. 351

Appendix I: Excerpt from the inventory of Caister Castle, FP 43. 352

Definitions 353

Bibliography 354
List of Illustrations and Tables

Figure 1. A drawing of Sir John Fastolf
Figure 2. A map of East Anglia, showing the distribution of Sir John Fastolf’s major property acquisitions
Figure 3. A table of the associates of Sir John Fastolf.
Figure 4. A sample of William Barker’s hand from his early career
Figure 5. A sample of William Barker’s hand from his later career
Figure 6. A sample of John Bokkying’s hand from his early career
Figure 7. A sample of John Bokkying’s hand from his later career
Figure 8. A sample of Geoffrey Spirleng’s hand from his early career
Figure 9. A sample of Geoffrey Spirleng’s hand from his later career
Figure 10. Fastolf Paper 43, page 15, describing ‘Inglose Chamber’ (the chamber of Henry Inglose) and its contents.
Figure 11. C. M. Woolgar’s floorplan of Caister Castle.
Figure 12. A Venn diagram of the location of Fastolf’s associates in the period before 1454.
Figure 13. A Venn diagram of the location of Fastolf’s associates in the period after 1454.
Figure 14. The Signature of Sir John Fastolf (Oxford, Magdalen College, Hickling 130).
Figure 15. Four examples of Fastolf’s signature in Oxford, Magdalen College, Fastolf Paper 19. Items 4, 5, 6, and 8.
Figure 16. A scribal signature on the behalf of Sir John Fastolf.
Figure 17. An example of a strip of previously-used paper being used to seal another letter.
Figure 18. Watermark of a bull in profile, with added annotation to define the shape, FP 26.
Figure 19. Watermark of a bull’s head with star protruding from forehead, with added annotation to define the shape, FP 77.
Accompanying Materials

Text formatting principles:

Expansions of Contracted words:
Where a word from a medieval source has been expanded, the letters that have been added are indicated by underlining. For example: ‘accomptis’. Norman Davis, Richard Beadle, and Colin Richmond used italics to signify expansions of contracted words, and this principle has been preserved when the thesis refers to their edition. For example: ‘bokes of Frensche, Latin, and Englyssh’
Timeline of Events

The following timeline lists each event that is mentioned in the course of this thesis, especially events that had an impact upon Sir John Fastolf and his associates.

1409- Marriage of Sir John Fastolf and Millicent Scrope
1415- Battle of Harfleur
1416- Battle of Valmont
    - Fastolf granted the lordship of Frileuse, north of Harfleur
1418- 1419 Sieges of Caen and Rouen
1421- Battle of Baugé
1422- Fastolf appointed lieutenant in Normandy for a year
    - Fastolf appointed steward of the household of John, duke of Bedford
1424- Battle of Verneuil
    - Fastolf made knight banneret in 1424
1425- English capture Le Mans
1429- Battle of the Herrings at Rouvray, Battle of Patay (Lord Talbot taken prisoner)
1435- Death of John, Duke of Bedford
    - Fastolf sent a report to Henry VI’s Great Council, about the English failures since 1433
1436- Capture of Paris by the Valois army
1439- Fastolf returned to England
1444- Fastolf entered Hickling Priory’s manor at Palling, claiming for rent arrears. Began a dispute between Fastolf and the priory that lasted until 1447.
1446- Death of Millicent Fastolf
1448- Construction of Caister Castle completed
    - Compilation of the only extant inventory of Caister Castle, Fastolf Paper 43.
    - Jack Cade’s Rebellion.
1454- Fastolf retired to Norfolk from London
1455- Additions made to the inventory of Caister Castle, Fastolf Paper 43.
1459- Death of Sir John Fastolf
Acknowledgements

The real credit for this PhD should go to three people who have been my constant emotional, practical, and financial, support throughout this Ph.D. Without my Theresa Thorpe (‘mum’), David Thorpe (‘dad’) and Thomas Thorpe, this would all have been a dream for me. They stumped up the cash when times were hard, taxied me around when I forgot my train tickets, and were there for me whenever I needed to hear a friendly voice.

My friends have been equally as important. I’d like to thank Victoria Van Hyning for being my hostess when I needed a place to stay in Oxford. I’ve had many an intellectual (and not-so-intellectual) chat with her and Zoe Hopkins over coffee, and that’s when some of my best ideas were born. Thanks go to all the ‘Walmgaters’ of the first year of my Ph.D: Rose Leithall, Chelsea Shields-Mas, Emma Borg, Jessica Taylor, Melanie Rousseau, Ward van Laatum, Lindsey Smith, Ian Little, and Sathaporn Thiangtham (‘Tha’) for all our historical trips – with you, my Ph.D. got off to a great start. I’d like to thank Marijana Cerovic for our study sessions together, and for being a sympathetic ear whenever I needed one. Kate Thomas and Ellie Bird were my housemates during the ‘no-mans-land’ of the second year of my Ph.D., we enjoyed many a dinner party and that kept me somewhat in the real world. Finally, Katharine Bilous gave me a place to live when my research crept over the three-year mark. My friends in the Get Your Boots On walking group always had a friendly word of encouragement, and I am ever grateful for that. Last but absolutely not least, thanks to David Stather, for always making me laugh.

Robin Darwall-Smith, the archivist of Magdalen College in Oxford, has been ever-helpful in the frequent times that I’ve needed to look at a manuscript there. He organised microfilm copies of the Fastolf Papers, so I could consult them from my abode in the North of England. For this I am very grateful. On the topic of Oxford, I would not have had the ideas or motivation to begin this PhD if it were not for my brilliant supervisors during my Master’s year at Oxford. Dr. Simon Horobin guided me in deciding to research Fastolf, and Dr. Sally Mapstone gave me the confidence in my academic abilities whilst she supervised my masters dissertation.

Most importantly, I’d like to thank Professor Linne Mooney and Dr. Craig Taylor, my inspiring supervisors at the Centre for Medieval Studies. I found supervision meetings with Linne and Craig to be always a challenge and a pleasure, and always the source of new momentum and supportive advice.

Financial support for this PhD was provided by a scholarship from the Centre for Medieval Studies, as well as grants from the Baylies Educational Foundation in my hometown of Dudley, and the Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust. I would like to thank them for their trust in me.
Author’s Declaration

I confirm that this thesis is my own work, except where it contains work based on collaborative research, or input from other scholars, in which case this is clearly indicated by special reference in the text. Any material that I have had published is also labelled clearly in the footnotes of the text.
Section One: The Circle of Sir John Fastolf

Chapter One: Introduction.

Sir John Fastolf:¹

Sir John Fastolf was born in 1380.² On 13th January 1409 he married Millicent Scrope, who was born in 1368. Millicent was the daughter of Robert, Lord Tiptoft³ and the widow of Sir Stephen Scrope of Bolton in Yorkshire.⁴ Fastolf greatly improved his fortunes by marrying Millicent, since she brought to the marriage the estates that she had inherited from her father.⁵

Figure 1. A drawing of Sir John Fastolf.
Clamp, Oxford Almanack for the Year 1731.

¹ Many studies have been made of the life of Sir John Fastolf. The research of this thesis has rediscovered the earliest account of his life, which has been cited relatively infrequently in scholarship about him: The Life of Sir John Fastolf, published in 1731. One copy of this biography is pasted into the back of BL, MS. Additional 39848, which otherwise consists of miscellaneous letters concerning the Paston Family and Sir John Fastolf. The Life of Sir John Fastolf contains the only portrait of Fastolf to be found in any primary or secondary material concerning him. This was subsequently reproduced in the Oxford Almanack for the Year 1731. See R. Clamp, Oxford Almanack for the Year 1731 (London: S. E. Harding, 1798). For an overview of the life of Sir John Fastolf see G. L. Harriss, ‘Fastolf, Sir John (1380-1459),’ ODNB online edn. 2004, http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/9199 [accessed October, 2009]. Anthony Smith gave a detailed account of his life in his thesis, ‘Aspects of the Career of Sir John Fastolf,’ (D.Phil diss., Oxford University, 1982).
² See FP 65 (the will of Sir John Fastolf).
³ Robert Tiptoft died in 1372, without male issue, leaving three daughters. G. Poulett Scrope, History of the Manor and Ancient Barony of Castle Combe in the County of Wils (London: 1852), 78. See BL, Additional MS. 28206, folio 6b for Robert Tiptoft’s division of his estates between Millicent and his two other daughters.
⁵ Millicent’s lands were in Yorkshire (Bentley and Wighton), Wiltshire (Castle Combe and Bathampton) and Gloucestershire (Oxenton) (FP 69).
Fastolf and the Hundred Years War (up to 1439).\textsuperscript{6}

By 1411-1413, Fastolf was in France, serving under the duke of Clarence in Aquitaine as deputy constable of Bordeaux.\textsuperscript{7} Fastolf’s first command of importance was as lieutenant of Harfleur in 1415.\textsuperscript{8} On 29\textsuperscript{th} January 1416, Fastolf was granted the lordship of Frileuse, north of Harfleur.\textsuperscript{9} He was knighted at Harfleur in the same month.\textsuperscript{10} Fastolf participated in the battle of Valmont in March 1416 and was present at the sieges of Caen and Rouen in 1418-1419.\textsuperscript{11} He was made captain of the Bastille

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\textsuperscript{7} William Worcester stated that Fastolf took this position ‘ad terminum vite Willelmi Faryngdon militis anno xii\textsuperscript{a} regni regis Henrici quarti’ (at the end of the life of William Faryngdon, 12\textsuperscript{th} year of the reign of Henry IV [1411]) (FP 69). He held the position only temporarily; it was taken by William Clifford in 1413. See J. H. Wylie, \textit{History of England Under Henry the Fourth} (London: Longmans, 1894), 4: 86; J. H. Wylie, \textit{Reign of Henry the Fifth} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), 1: 122-123; McFarlane, ‘Profits of War,’ 94 (note 1).

\textsuperscript{8} \textit{Basset’s Chronicle} in London, College of Arms, MS. M.9 begins with the capture of Harfleur. Fastolf took part in the campaign in the retinue of William de la Pole senior, earl of Suffolk, and was eventually invalided home. See Anne Curry, \textit{The Battle of Agincourt: Sources and Interpretations} (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 86, citing TNA, E 101/46/24. See also John Fern, ed., \textit{Paston Letters: Original Letters Written During the Reigns of Henry VI, Edward IV and Richard III} (London, 1789), 4: XCIII, which details the costs that Fastolf bore whilst lieutenant of Harfleur in 1415.


\textsuperscript{10} For Fastolf’s knighthood at Harfleur, see Smith, ‘Aspects,’ 2.

de St. Antoine and defended it during disturbances after the battle of Baugé in 1421. Also in 1422, Fastolf was appointed lieutenant in Normandy for a year in 1422. Also in 1422, Fastolf distinguished himself by being appointed steward of the household of John, duke of Bedford. He was made knight banneret in 1424 following his part in Bedford’s victory over the Dauphinst-Scottish force at Verneuil. Fastolf’s secretary, William Worcester, later recorded Fastolf recounting the spoils of this battle: ‘he says’, wrote Worcester, ‘that on the said day [17 August 1424]... he won by the fortune of war about 20,000 marks’. Together with Lord Scales, Fastolf reduced French-held fortresses in Maine and captured Le Mans in 1425. Fastolf was knight of the Garter by 1426.

12 See Norfolk Record Office, Phi/612/6 578 x 6, which is an eighteenth-century translation of an indenture between Henry V and Sir John Fastolf for the keeping by the latter of the Bastille in Paris for one year, 1420.
13 See FP 69, m.4.
14 For Fastolf’s appointment as steward of the household of John Duke of Bedford, see BL, MS. Harley 782, folio 52v, written in 1435, which recorded Fastolf’s position in the year of the duke of Bedford’s death. As cited by Joseph Stevenson, who translated it as follows: ‘John Fastolf, knight banneret, baron of Gilliguillam high senescal, otherwise called maister of houshold to the regent, gouvernour of Angiou and of Maine for meny yeres’ (from a list of the retinue of the duke of Bedford in the French wars, in Harley 782, folio 52v, printed in Stevenson, ed., Letters and Papers, 2.2: 433-434). Sir John Fastolf’s 1435 report of the management of the war in France upon the conclusion of the Treaty of Arras opened with a description of his position as ‘baron of Cyllygyyllem, and graunt maister of the famouse and gret housold of the Regent of the royaume of Fraunce, Johne, duc of Bedford’ (William Worcester’s collections in LPL, MS. 506). See Stevenson, ed., Letters and Papers, 2.2: 575-576. I have found additional primary source evidence in FP 69 describing Fastolf as, ‘Senscallus hospiciij ducus Bedfوردie’. Also, Fastolf’s appointment as steward of the household of John Duke of Bedford is described in Anthony Emery, Greater Medieval Houses of England and Wales, 1300-1500: East Anglia, Central England and Wales (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 60.
15 For a fifteenth-century account of the battle of Verneuil (August 1424) see Jean de Wavrin, Recueil de Croniques et Anciennes Istories de la Grant Bretagne a Present Nommé Engleterre,1399-1422, 1422-1431, ed. William Hardy, Rolls Series 39 (London: 1864-1891), 107-122. See also the account of the battle of Verneuil in Anne Curry, ed. The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England 1275-1504, Vol. 11, Henry V 1432-1445 (London: The Boydell Press, 2005), 83, item 17; ‘the which was the grettest ddeo by English men in our dayes, save the bataille of Agyncourte’. For research on Verneuil see Martin A. Simpson, ‘The Campaign of Verneuil,’ English Historical Review 49 (1934): 93-100. Anne Curry presented a map of garrisons sending detachments for the battle of Verneuil in Anne Curry, The Hundred Years’ War: 1337-1453 (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2002), 66. For Fastolf’s promotion to knight banneret see the following statement by William Worcester in his Itineraries: ‘Dominus Johannes Fastolf chivaler fuit ad suum Banerettum dignatem prefertur’ (Sir John Fastolf, already a knight, was promoted to the rank of Bannaret). Worcester, Itineraries, 334-335.
16 FP 69, m. 4, as translated by McFarlane in ‘Profits of War,’ 95.
18 See Edward Hall, Chronicle (London: J. Johnson, 1809), 125. For a document concerning Le Mans
In February 1429, while bringing supplies for the siege from Paris, Fastolf won the ‘Battle of the Herrings’ at Rouvray, using barrels of the fish as a stockade.\footnote{\text{20}} However, Fastolf’s good fortune overturned: when retreating from Beaufency with Lord Talbot and Lord Scales four months later, the rearguard was overwhelmed. Lord Talbot was taken prisoner, for which he later charged Fastolf with cowardice (though Fastolf was later vindicated).\footnote{\text{21}} The chronicler Enguerrand de Monstrelet was among the critics of Fastolf’s conduct on the field of Patay.\footnote{\text{22}}

A report from Fastolf to Henry VI’s Great Council, written in 1435 about the English failures in operation since 1433, seems to have advocated a harsher form of war, directed at those who had defected from the English side, especially members of


\footnote{\text{20}} BL, MS. Additional 2812 folios 10-16v. As cited in Hughes, ‘Stephen Scrope and the Circle,’ 112.


\footnote{\text{22}} See L. Douët-D’Arcq, ed., \textit{La Chronique d’Enguerran de Monstrelet} (Paris: Société de l’Histoire de France, 1890), 4: 332: ‘Et par ce que, comme dit est, ledit Fastoq s’en fuy de la bataille sans cop fèrîr, fut pour cesle cause grandement approchë quand il vint devers le duc de Belfort son seigneur, et par conclusion lui fut ostée l’ordre du blanc jartière, qu’il portoil entour la jambe’. This depiction of Fastolf by Monstrelet was discussed by C. A. J. Armstrong in ‘Sir John Fastolf and the Law of Arms,’ 46-56. Another account of the battle of Patay was made by Wavrin in \textit{Anchiennes Cronicques d’Engleterre}, 1: 291-295. There is strong evidence that Wavrin and Monstrelet met, and also that Monstrelet used the work of Wavrin as a source for his \textit{Chronicle}. See ‘Enguerran Monstrelet, Jean Wavrin, and Jean de Fèvre (1444-1460s),’ in Curry, \textit{The Battle of Agincourt}, 135-136.
the clergy: ‘frome hensforthe al manere of traitours attaint of treson be ponysshed regereuslie’. Despite Fastolf’s strong words, his plan was not put into practice, following negotiations at the congress of Arras of 1435, England eventually entered into a truce with Burgundy. The events of 1435 brought great losses to Sir John Fastolf: for example a peasants’ revolt of that year reduced the annual value of his holdings in the Pays de Caux, Normandy, from £200 to £8 Sterling. John, duke of Bedford’s death in September 1435 left Fastolf engaged in disposing of the duke’s effects for the next four years, before returning to England in 1439. Following the death of the Duke, Fastolf alienated lands in France that had been bringing him a steady income, due to his fears that a heavy investment in France was not wise when English fortunes there were looking increasingly uncertain. So, upon his return to England, Fastolf began to re-invest his profits of war, focusing his spending on his primary property, Caister Castle in Norfolk, which he began to construct in the 1430s. By 1448, it was completed and furnished, and he had spent over £6,000 in all at Caister by the 1440s.

In the 1430s Fastolf was engaged in a dispute with one of his chief servants, Thomas Overton. Fastolf alleged that Overton had been cheating him out of money due to him, and that Overton had refused to produce the accounts by which the charge

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25 See McFarlane, ‘Profits of War,’ 106.
26 See Stratford, The Bedford Inventories, 30-54, esp. 51-53.
27 Ibid.
might have been disproved.\textsuperscript{29} C. T. Allmand and C. J. Armstrong’s introduction to the suit put before the parlement of Paris argued that above all, ‘[i]t was as denigration of character that both men excelled, Fastolf depicting his servant as a man of mean birth, bigamous, a player of dice whom he had helped to promote from his lowly origins, while Overton was alleged to have stated that his master was a “chevalier Fuitif”, a reference to Fastolf’s flight from the field at Patay’.\textsuperscript{30} This suit lasted more than three years and, as Allmand and Armstrong concluded, ‘whether a settlement was finally reached, or whether it was the capture of Paris by Charles VII on 13 April 1436 which put an end to the affair, may never be known’.\textsuperscript{31} 


\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Ibid.}
Fastolf in England (the 1440s):

By the time of Fastolf’s return to England, he had amassed an impressive cluster of properties in East Anglia and London. The residences that were referred to most frequently in Fastolf’s letters and documents are labelled on Figure 2 below:

Figure 2. A map of East Anglia, showing the distribution of Sir John Fastolf’s major property acquisitions, which are named in the list in Appendix A. As can be seen on the map, the major clusters were in the vicinity of Norwich, and around Great Yarmouth on the south-east coast of Norfolk.

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32 The following studies are particularly rich in biographical information about Sir John Fastolf during the 1440s: McFarlane, ‘Profits of War,’ 91-116; Anthony Smith, “‘My Confessors Have Exorted Me Gretely Ther Too…’” Sir John Fastolf’s Dispute with Hickling Priory,’ in St. George’s Chapel, Windsor, in the Late Middle Ages, ed. Colin Richmond and Eileen Scarff (Windsor: Dean and Canons of Windsor, 2001), 57-70; and Peter S. Lewis, Essays in Later Medieval French History (London: Hambledon Press, 1985), 215-234.
Fastolf's Properties in England:\(^{33}\)

Fastolf had bought Dedham in Essex for £1,068 in 1428\(^{34}\) and Titchwell for £400 in 1431.\(^{35}\) He had acquired Hickling Netherhall in Norfolk from Henry Barton, in 1441.\(^{36}\) These were the three properties whose maintenance and defence, between the years of 1440 and 1450, generated the most administrative written material.\(^{37}\) The momentum of Fastolf’s purchasing continued after his return to England in 1439. He built himself a residence in Southwark in 1439, at his recently purchased Boar’s Head Tavern. In 1442 he purchased the lease of Horselydown in St. Olave’s parish, Southwark, and four years later he purchased it outright for £139, 6s. 8d.\(^{38}\) Over the years, Fastolf became a prominent landlord in Southwark: Martha Carlin has pointed out that by the time of his death, ‘he had constructed two long frames of houses containing 28 tenements, had built or renovated another 11 tenements and had paved the roadway in front of these properties’.\(^{39}\) He also enhanced the properties that he already owned to meet his own requirements: one of the most important of these requirements was that his properties at Caister and Southwark were equipped to store his legal documents. Anthony Smith noted that there was evidence for a central archive at Caister Castle by 1446 since Fastolf, in that year, sent an order that deeds should be brought to London from the tower at Caister.\(^{40}\) Peter Lewis observed that the documents associated with Fastolf Place at Southwark had notes on them that

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\(^{33}\) For a full list of Fastolf's properties, and the dates of their acquisition, see Appendix A.

\(^{34}\) Smith, ‘The Acquisition,’ 138.

\(^{35}\) See FP 69, m. 2; James Gairdner, ed., *The Paston Letters 1422-1509 A.D. (London and Exeter: Chatto & Windus, 1904)*, 2: 188; and Oxford University, Magdalen College, Titchwell 34.

\(^{36}\) Oxford University, Magdalen College, Hickling 58. See Smith, ‘The Acquisition,’ 30.

\(^{37}\) See for example letters 986, 994 and 995 of the year 1450, which concerned the damages done at Fastolf's property of Dedham in Suffolk by the Duke of Suffolk’s officers. The following letters each contain some reference to the dispute between Fastolf and the prior of Hickling: letters 542, 554, 560, 951, 952, 958, 960, 965, 981, 985, 991, 992, 996, 1004, 1010, and 1011.


\(^{39}\) Carlin, *Medieval Southwark*, 52. See FP 69.

assisted the arduous process of sorting and storing them.\footnote{Lewis pointed out that each of the documents associated with the Lovel family (the owners of Titchwell before Sir John Fastolf), had accompanying notes written on them, which might help with the interpretation of the document: ‘On the files survive clear and accurate extracts from the Feudal Aids (Oxford University, Magdalen College, Lovel Papers 9-11), a copy of the inquisition post mortem of Sir Edmund Clevedon, the grandfather of Thomas I Lovel of Clevedon’s wife (Lovel Papers 15) and a copy of a writ to the sheriff of Worcester which has endorsed a note of its genealogical content (Lovel Papers 17)’. Lewis, ‘Lawsuit over Titchwell,’ 11.} This evidence shows that Fastolf had his property acquisition recorded meticulously and, as a consequence, needed to create well-organised archives at each of his primary residences.

In total, Fastolf spent £13,885 purchasing property in England and another £9,495 on improving it.\footnote{Ibid. See FP 9, m. 5.} For the year 1433-1434 alone, he spent some £1,222 on land.\footnote{See letters 986, 994 and 995 concerning the damages done at Fastolf’s property of Dedham in Suffolk by the Duke of Suffolk’s officers.} Fastolf’s purchases leading up to, and upon, his return to England entered him into a number of battles on his home soil. Fastolf had an ongoing dispute with the Duke of Suffolk in the 1440s over his manor of Dedham.\footnote{See Smith, ‘Sir John Fastolf’s Dispute with Hickling Priory,’ 65-69.} The Duke of Suffolk also lent his support to other enemies of Sir John Fastolf, such as Thomas Lord Scales, who was instrumental in Fastolf’s failure to obtain a private arbitration against the prior of Hickling during his dispute with the priory.\footnote{Colin Richmond observed that Fastolf was forever being, ‘twisted out of East Anglian property by the thoroughly bent politician who was running the} Fastolf was unlikely to win these conflicts over property when his enemies, such as the Duke of Suffolk, were supporters of a government of which Fastolf had been a committed opponent since the 1440s.\footnote{Colin Richmond, ‘Hand and Mouth: Information Gathering and Use in England in the Later Middle Ages,’ \textit{Journal of Historical Sociology} 1 (1988): 233-252 (238). G. L. Harriss pointed out that Sir John Fastolf had been a committed opponent of the Duke of Suffolk ever since he criticised Suffolk’s peace policy, then denounced the ‘dissimuled’ truce of Tours. Harriss, ‘Fastolf, Sir John,’ citing William Worcester, \textit{The Boke of Noblesse: Addressed to King Edward the Fourth on his Invasion of France in 1475}, ed. John Gough Nichols (London: Roxburghe Club, 1860; reprinted New York, 1972), 41.}
government by that time (the mid 1440s), William, duke of Suffolk’. The Duke of Suffolk’s negative influence over Fastolf’s matters only ceased when he fell out of royal favour in 1450, charges being levied against him, ‘accusing him of inducing the king to pursue various policies “withoute deliberation and avyse of youre Counseill”’. 

The 1440s were also marked by Fastolf’s ongoing disputes with Hickling Priory near his manor in the village. On 30th October 1444, Fastolf entered the priory’s manor at Palling, claiming for rent arrears. In the process, he distreigned (i.e. seized) three horses valued at twelve marks. The priory disputed this and Fastolf was forced to investigate the legal grounding for his actions.

Fastolf’s wife, Millicent, died in 1446. Her final consultation with her confessor Friar Carelltoy, her death, and her burial in St. Benet’s Abbey by the Abbot of Langley were described by William Worcester on folio 140v of his epitaph to her in BL, MS. Additional 38692. An inventory of Caister Castle that was compiled in 1448, and then altered in 1455, mentions Millicent many times. A poignant example is the inclusion of a gown belonging to Millicent, which was kept in Fastolf’s wardrobe. The inventory of 1448 records that by two years after Millicent’s death, this gown (‘I blewe gowne’) was still in situ at Caister. Interestingly, the 1455 additions to the inventory record that the garment was still in place nine years later in 1455. However, they also reveal that by then it was ‘motheted’ (moth eaten).

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49 See Smith, ‘Sir John Fastolf’s Dispute With Hickling Priory’.
50 The evidence for this comes from letter number 958, which was sent by two of Fastolf’s legal advisors, William Wangford and William Jenney.
51 FP 43.
Fastolf in England (the early 1450s): 52

Fastolf’s estates continued to be troubled by the political situation in England from the late 1440s into the 1450s. Fastolf’s London properties were threatened by Jack Cade’s rebellion in 1450. 53 Fastolf found that his residence in Southwark was endangered by the rebellion, and so he furnished it with men and artillery to defend it. 54 This was evidently a damaging time for these men, as well as Fastolf: many years afterwards one of the men, John Payn, appealed to John Paston for help in seeking to recover the losses that he incurred whilst protecting Fastolf: ‘Pleasyth it your gode and gracious maistershipp tendyrly to consedir the grete losses and hurtes that your pouter peticioner haeth and haeth j-had evyr seth the comons of Kent come to the Blak Heth’. 55 For example, he wrote that he had used his own personal supplies of food and drink in the defence of Fastolf Place whilst Fastolf went to the Tower of London: ‘it cost me of my novne propre godes at þat tyme more than vj mark in mete and drynke’. 56

The early 1450s were also consumed by Fastolf’s efforts to be compensated for the damage that William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, and his allies did to his interests in East Anglia. In 1450, the Duke of Suffolk was imprisoned in the tower, and he was murdered in May 1450, 57 and so Fastolf began to collect evidence to reinforce his claims for recompense. 58

52 The following studies are particularly useful for information about Fastolf’s life in the 1450s: Colin Richmond, ‘Hand and Mouth,’ esp. 235-239; Colin Richmond, The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century: The First Phase (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Lewis, ‘Sir John Fastolf’s Lawsuit Over Titchwell’; Smith, ‘Sir John Fastolf’s Dispute with Hicking Priory’.


54 See John Payn’s description of the defence of Sir John Fastolf’s defence of his property at Southwark: ‘Syr John Fastolf had furnysshyd his plase with the olde sawdyors of Normandy and abylments of werr to destroy the comens of Kent when they come to Southewerk’ (Letter 692, ll. 31-32, 1465). See also Charles L. Kingsford, English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 201.

55 Letter 692, ll. 6-8, 1465.

56 Ibid, ll. 49-50.

57 For a description of the duke’s murder see letter 450 from William Lomner to John Paston I, of 5th
Fastolf’s later years, ill health, and death (the late 1450s): 59

Fastolf’s health began to decline in the late 1450s. His ill health prompted his retirement from London to his residence at Caister Castle in Norfolk in 1454. This retirement meant that Fastolf was separated from his legal matters in London, and resulted in an increased volume of correspondence to John Paston, who was acting as his representative in the city. A letter from Fastolf to John Paston indicates that Fastolf was very ill around 18th June 1456 (letter 553). Davis dated the letter to 1456 based on a reference within it to a visit by the Duchess of York, which happened, ‘very probably’ in late 1456.60 Fastolf complained sorely that he was ‘so vysyted by the hande of God’ that he could not deal with the matters he had been discussing with Paston lest ‘hit should be to greet hurt to [his] bodyly weelfare’ (letter 553, ll. 7-9).

He went on to express his concerns that due to his poor health, he could not entertain the duchess as he ought (letter 553, ll. 11-15). Despite this, if Davis’s dating is correct, Fastolf was once again on form just six days later: he wrote to Paston on ‘probably 1456, 24 June’ about matters such as Sir Simond Brayles’s apparently false claim that he had already paid some money that he was supposed to give to Fastolf (letter 554). 61

May 1450.

58 Most of Fastolf’s letters of 1450-1451 sought financial recovery in the aftermath of his disputes over the manors of Hickling and Dedham. The Duke of Suffolk was Fastolf’s enemy in both of these disputes (see pages 9-10 above). For example, in letter 979 of April 1450 Fastolf instructed his servants to inform him of how much financial damage John Heydon had done to him. John Heydon was in the service of the Duke of Suffolk as his chief agent in Suffolk, along with Thomas Tuddenham. See Anthony Smith, ‘Heydon, John (d. 1479),’ ODNB, online edn. 2008, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/52787 [accessed August, 2011]. See Richmond, The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century: The First Phase, 227.

59 The most useful studies of the very latest years of the life of Sir John Fastolf, and the period after his death are: Colin Richmond, The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century: Fastolf’s Will (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Helen Castor, Blood and Roses: The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century (London: Faber, 2005), 116-144.


61 Fastolf sent proof that Brayles had agreed to pay him the money: ‘And therfor I sende a letter wyth my trusty seruant Colyn how the seyd Sir Simond and I be accorded for deleyuercence of it’ (letter 554, ll. 5-7, 24th June probably 1456). Simon Brayles was chaplain to Alice, Duchess of Suffolk. See also letter 555 of the same date which repeats much of what was said about Brayles in letter 554.
There is evidence that as Fastolf declined into ill-health and neared his death, he began to rely upon the personal presence and advice of his servants and advisors. For example, a letter that William Paston II wrote to John Paston I in July 1454 revealed that Sir John Fastolf had decided to ‘dwelle at Caster’ and that he asked that Paston move from London to the nearby Paston residence in Norfolk to be near him: ‘He wulde haue 3ow at Mawdeby dwellyng’.\(^62\) However, Colin Richmond was keen to stress that, ‘[t]here was no loss of grip: the two letters he dictated to William on 24 June 1456 witness to that; or the three he dictated to John Bocking the following November’.\(^63\)

After several lapses into ill health throughout the late 1450s, and an extended decline into his deathbed, Sir John Fastolf died on 5th November 1459 and was buried in the chapel at the abbey of St Benet’s, Hulme, which was built especially for him.\(^64\) After a prolonged dispute over Fastolf’s will, the Bishop of Winchester, William Waynflete, settled that Caister Castle would pass to the Paston family and the remainder of Fastolf’s estate would pass to Magdalen College, Oxford.\(^65\)

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\(^{62}\) Letter 83, ll. 4-7. For a further example of the need for Fastolf’s servants to attend to him in person see letter 559 of around 1456: William Worcester recommended that John Paston should attend to Sir John Fastolf in person, since he had begun to dispute with his servants and would not listen to certain of them.

\(^{63}\) Richmond, *The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century: The First Phase*, 248. The letters that Richmond referred to were letter numbers 554, 555, 568, 569, and 570.

\(^{64}\) See letter 1049, in which William Worcester described Fastolf’s building of the south quire of Saint Benet’s, Hulme. See also FP 63, an early draft of the will of Sir John Fastolf, which detailed his intended establishment of a foundation of six religious men at Hulme upon his death. Fastolf later altered the location of his ‘college’ to Caister Castle (see FPs 64, 65, and 66). For an explanation of the establishment of the college see Hanham, ‘The Curious Letters of Friar Brackley,’ *Historical Research* 81 (2008): 29-51 (32). For more information about the death of Sir John Fastolf on 5\(^{th}\) November 1459, see letter 885, a declaration by one of Fastolf’s servants, Robert FitzRawff, about Fastolf’s will, which includes a description of the discussions that occurred between Fastolf and his associates on his deathbed. See also letter 900 (an inquisition post mortem on John Paston), which gives the date of Fastolf’s death (l.171) and John Paston’s actions in the immediate aftermath of the death (ll. 171-190).

\(^{65}\) See letter 252, an indenture of agreement between John Paston and William Waynflete, which detailed the lands that would pass to the Pastons (ll. 46-66), and the establishment of Fastolf’s chantry at Oxford instead of Caister (ll. 195-203). See also letter 914, ll. 102-165, a statement on the transfer of Fastolf’s foundation, written in ‘about 1470’. The document made it clear that though ‘all the lyvelode of the seid Ser John Fastolf lyeng in Norffolk, Suffolk, and Norwych’ should pass to the Paston family, it also stressed that Fastolf’s ‘<perpetuall> exhibition of xiiij personez’ would be established ‘with-in the vniuersité of Oxenfor<d...>’ (letter 914, ll. 76-81).
Fastolf’s Character:

This overview of Fastolf’s life has drawn attention to the impressive portfolio of properties that Fastolf built up in East Anglia and London. The Fastolf Letters reveal that Fastolf’s strength of character manifested itself in the manner in which he acquired and managed these properties. Letter 956, from Fastolf probably to Sir William ap Thomas in 1448 illustrates the speculative nature of his property acquisition and the proactive way in which he acquired these properties. In this draft letter drawn up for Fastolf by his secretary William Worcester, the recipient was told that Fastolf had been ‘enfourmyd’ that Cardinal Beaufort was ‘avysyd to syll the manere and the lordshyp of Caneford in Dorsetshyre’ (letter 956, ll. 5-6). Fastolf wrote ‘for to purchasse it, yeff the mater be such’. Even though Fastolf did not know whether the Cardinal was going to sell it or ‘yeff it to the Erle of Dorsett’, he ensured that Beaufort knew that he was waiting in anticipation, just in case (letter 956, l. 9).

The aforementioned letter to William ap Thomas was written as early as 1444. By the 1450s, Fastolf had built up his cluster of properties and was concerned with protecting these properties and his servants from attacks by hostile individuals. The vigour with which he did so is recorded in the postscript to a letter he sent to Thomas Howes in 1450. He wrote that: ‘And I pray you sende me word who darre be so hardy to berk ayen you in my ryght, and sey hem on my half that they shall be qwyt as ferre as law and reson wolle. And yff they wolle not drede ne obey that, then they shall be quyt by Blacberd or Whyteberd, that is to sey by God or the Devyll’ (letter 982, ll. 32-38, 27th May 1450).

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Fastolf was equally proactive about protecting his own reputation. He claimed that he was more concerned with being perceived to be righteous than with receiving immediate financial rewards or compensation. He stated this explicitly in a letter to Berney, Howes, and Bokkyng: ‘I haue leuere it were knowen in the contré howe I haue be don too, thanne to be recompensid of all myn losses ṭat I haue hadde by them, for me thinkith it more myn worship, by whiche I sette more than by ought elles’ (letter 1002, ll. 49-52, 3rd January 1451). The preference for a good reputation over financial gains, or at least the claim for such a preference had its foundations in the Bible. Proverbs 22 states that: ‘A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold’.

In 1455, Fastolf questioned John Paston I about a report that had come to him of ‘skornefull language’, heard about him at a dinner table in Norwich (letter 514). Fastolf quoted this ‘language’ directly and thus preserved the tone of oral gossip: ‘there were certeyn personez, jentylmen, whiche vttered skornefull language of me, as in thys wyse wyth more, seyeng “War the govnne, war, and goo we to dyner, goo we. Where? To ser John Fastolffez, and there we shall well paye there-fore”’ (letter 514, ll. 1-6, 7th February 1455). One can imagine the proud Fastolf being horrified as this ‘skornefull language’ was reported to him by his dinner table spy. In his letter to

68 Philippa Maddern discussed maintaining a ‘reputation and performative behaviour as a defining characteristic of the gentry. She showed that protecting a consistently good reputation was important since ‘gentry formation was an ongoing process’. Philippa Maddern, ‘Gentility,’ in Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England, ed. Raluca Radulescu and Alison Truelove (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 18-34 (28-30).

69 This proverb evidently found its way into Italian medieval literature: the fourteenth-century Florentine, Paulo da Certaldo wrote in his Il Libro di Buoni Costumi that ‘It is better for a man to have good fama in this world than to have good wealth; and if you can succeed in living in this world rightly, then you gain good fama’: ‘Meglio è l’uome avere buone fama in questo mondo che avere un gran tesoro: e però che chi con buona fama muore, in questo mondo sempre vive. Puoi acquistare in questo mondo biona dama usendo le virtù partendo e scacciando da te i vizi’. Paolo da Certaldo, Il Libro di Buoni Costumi, ed. Alfredo Schiaffini (Florence: Le Monnier, 1945), reprinted in Mercanti Scrittori, ed. Vittore Branca (Milan: Rusconi, 1986), 13. This reference to the preference of good fame over wealth was noted by Thomas Kuehn in ‘Fama as Legal Status in Renaissance Florence,’ in Fama: the Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe, ed. Thelma S. Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail (New York: Cornell University Press, 2003), 27-46 (32-33). Though it is unlikely that Fastolf and his circle ever encountered Il Libro di Buoni Costumi, this shows that this biblical wisdom had transferred into medieval literary depictions of good conduct.
Paston, Fastolf asked that Paston would give him, ‘knowelege be writing what jentylmen they [were] that had this report’ (ll. 8-10). There is evidence that Fastolf himself made a conscious effort to avoid making unfounded negative reports about other men. He ensured that if his associates made negative reports about a man’s character, they were reinforced with solid evidence, and that there was good cause for making the complaint. One example is the occasion that Fastolf had heard bad reports against his enemy John Heydon. He declared that these reports should not be kept private, but should be spread about: ‘[the language] aught not to be kept prevye, but oplyshed (published)’ (letter 998, 27th December 1450, ll. 3-5). However, he added a caution that this should not be done until the reports could be verified: ‘on the other part it is to greet necye to noyse any man with-ought cause &c’ (letter 998, 27th December 1450, l.5). Fastolf compromised by commanding, in another letter, that the man who accused Heydon should be questioned, to ensure that his words were truthful: ‘that the man wheche that appeched Heydon be sent vp heder, if he dar stande by his wordes that he hath seyde &c’ (letter 1003, ll. 20-22, 7th January 1451).

It is not surprising that Fastolf’s most proactive moments were connected with the protection of his reputation. There is evidence in the Fastolf Letters and Papers that good favour was hard to win, and easy to lose, when one had such influential enemies. If Fastolf lost the friendship of an influential person, who otherwise might have supported his cases in court, he would have been more likely to lose possession of the properties that he had worked hard to accumulate. The dinner table gossip he heard reported from Norwich thus would have been a worrying warning sign that bad feelings were brewing amongst Fastolf’s fellow gentry in Norfolk. Fastolf made an

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70 See Smith, ‘Heydon, John’.
71 See, for example, letter 525 of 1455, in which Fastolf wrote that his enemy Philip Wentworth had used his influence to turn several men against him: ‘there is grete labour ayenst our entent. Wentworth hath gheten Debenham, Radclyff wyth othys in my lordys house to be ayenst our entent’ (ll. 7-10). Gilbert Debenham was a retainer of the Duke of Norfolk (Fastolf’s ‘my lord’), and ‘Radclyff’ was another man of Norfolk’s household whose specific identity is unknown (see Beadle and Richmond’s index to Paston Letters and Papers, part 3).
explicit statement about how ‘shame’ could lead to losses at court, and thus financial losses, in letter 520 of May 1455. During the drawn-out dispute over the wardship of Thomas Fastolf of Cowhaugh, Fastolf wrote to Paston that he dreaded most ‘the shame and the rebuke that we shulde hafe and the materere concernyng the warde wente contrary ayenst your entent and myne’ (letter 520, ll. 20-22, 3rd May 1455). It was not just shame or embarrassment that Fastolf dreaded, but the potential ramifications for his reputation with the jury that would decide the outcome of his legal cases. He went on to explain that this was so fearsome to him because the law could be manipulated by malicious individuals: ‘for now adayes ye knowe wele that lawe goth as it is fauoured’ (letter 520, l. 20, 3rd May 1455). Fastolf wrote that after a major defeat, the men of the law courts would alter their behaviour towards him: ‘the atturneys be wyse and discret in their condyt, whiche I doubte me sore of’ (letter 520, ll. 21-22, 3rd May 1455). The implication was that just one defeat was capable of casting a shadow over the way he would be treated in court at future proceedings. This shows that Fastolf’s diligence in tackling his legal disputes stemmed from his determination to maintain his standing and reputation with those who had the potential to threaten his interests.

Each of these pieces of evidence of Fastolf behaving in a proactive manner to acquire properties upon his return to England from France and to protect them once he had bought them, contributes to an overall impression of the strength of Fastolf’s character. This ambitious man sought out opportunities for wise property investments, then pounced upon them with the vigour that can be seen in letter 956. Since he had put so much energy into nurturing a reputation and building up a

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portfolio of properties, he needed to invest equal effort into maintaining his power in East Anglia. Thus, the Fastolf Letters record his detection of any malicious slander, and his proactiveness in suppressing any gossip that might damage his reputation.
Fastolf’s relations with his men:

Fastolf’s portfolio of properties required clusters of servants to work for him to manage each property. Two contrasting points of view have been put forward about the way in which Fastolf related to his associates. The most convincing view is that although Fastolf was undoubtedly bad tempered at times, especially towards the end of his life, he was fiercely protective of his men, paid them well, and was obviously a good enough master to promote the loyalty that kept Worcester, Bokkyng, and Barker in a close working relationship with him for decades. This is a significant contradiction of the opinion that was put forward by both K. B. McFarlane and John Harvey (the editor of William Worcester’s *Itineraries*), but it is supported most strongly by the evidence in the Fastolf letters and papers.

There is evidence in the letters and papers that were associated with the Fastolf Circle, that Sir John Fastolf was grateful for the good work that his servants did for him. He exhibited good lordship by praising his servants promptly for tasks that they tackled according to his requests. In addition to this, the Fastolf Letters also give the impression that Fastolf was sensitive to the pressures that the management of his matters might place on his servants. At times, Fastolf displayed awareness that the demands that he made could be considered unreasonable. In one letter to John Paston, he added a postscript to say: ‘And y pray yow foryeve me that y noye yow somoch

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73 For example, one of Fastolf’s servants, Geoffrey Spirleng was paid 40 shillings a year, which Richard Beadle pointed out was a ‘handsome wage’. Unfortunately, surviving evidence about the wages of men like Geoffrey Spirleng is sparse. To give some comparative context, the annuity of Thomas Hoccleve, clerk of the office of the Privy Seal, was £10 a year, which was raised to £13. 6s. 8d in 1409. See J.A. Burrow, *Thomas Hoccleve* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994), 8. For Spirleng’s wage, see Oxford University, Magdalen College Archives, EP 176/9, 122, as cited in Richard Beadle, ‘Geoffrey Spirleng (c.1426-c.1494): a Scribe of the *Canterbury Tales* in his Time,’ in *Of the Making of Books: Medieval Manuscripts, Their Scribes and Reader: Essays Presented to M. B. Parkes*, ed. P. R. Robinson and Rivkah Zim (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), 116-146 (122).

74 For example, see letter 990 of November 1450 in which Fastolf thanked Nicholas Bokkyng: ‘Item, y thank Nicholas Bokkyng for hys gode labour about the enselyng of the certificat of the jure that were named in the office of Tychewell’ (ll. 32-33). In another letter, Fastolf showed that he took note of the effort that his chaplain had gone to in representing him at the *oyer and terminer*: ‘John Bokkyng ys com to me, and hath expressly enformed me by mouth as by wrytyngs the greete labour and diligence whych ye [Howes] have take vppon yow, seth Martismasse’ (letter 996, December 1450, ll. 10-12).
wyth my materys’ (letter 587, l. 17, 20th March 1455-1459). He still expected his requests to be attended to as speedily as possible, but he was aware that he was putting his servants under pressure, and was apologetic for this.

Several of the Fastolf Letters and Papers suggest that Fastolf was protective of his servants and officers. In 1451, Fastolf wrote to Howes and Berney. Amongst a number of tasks for the men to carry out, there was a note of thanks to the men for their ‘gode and diligent laboure’ at the oyer and terminer at Lynne (letter 1005, ll. 30-32). Fastolf went on to express great concern that Berney entering Rokelong Tofftes at his request, might ‘preiudice hys title’ and he stated that: ‘yff it might lye in my power I wold gladlye sett it in a gode wey as hys ry3t were saved, and both parties contented’ (letter 1005, ll. 6-7). Fastolf was always mindful of his own agenda, and always kept it his priority. Therefore, he clarified his instructions to Berney, reiterating that though he regretted that Berney might be harmed by his work for Fastolf, he wanted him to do the work regardless: ‘[n]euerthelesse, I kepe not ne wold not but that he doo hys auauantage laufullie to nygh hys ryght yff he have onye’ (letter 1005, ll. 71-72, 28th January 1451). However, he offered a compromise by giving his servant instructions to act according to the counsel (advice) of wise men in order to avoid damage to his independent interests: ‘doo by councell, that it preiudice hym not here after’ (letter 1005, ll. 71-73, 28th January 1451). In this way Fastolf simultaneously protected his own estates and the interests of his officer.

Though Fastolf expected his servants to display the maximum amount of competence in their tasks, there are signs that he strengthened the impact of their work by assuming personal responsibility for monitoring his legal and property interests. In 1452 Fastolf wrote a letter that demonstrated how watchful he was over the costs that he had incurred due to his legal cases at court in East Anglia between

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75 The oyer and terminer were local commissions empowered to ‘hear and determine’ incidents. See Mark Ormrod, *Political Life in Medieval England 1300-1450* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), 112.
the years of 1439 and 1451, especially as a result of his ongoing battles with Thomas Tuddenham and John Heydon:76 ‘I have searched to the utmost here of all manner costs in pleas and processes. And so I pray you to do there, and send it me be tyme, to th’entent I may cast the somnes payd out by you and myne officers there to the costes that y have payd heere’ (letter 1009, ll. 26-32). This demonstrates Fastolf’s understanding of the accounting processes involved in managing his affairs, and his determination to be kept aware of these processes. He was just as diligent in 1454, demanding highly detailed information to be sent to him by Thomas Howes: ‘I charge you sende me your warauntes and lettres, or acompt of hem, and of whoos hand wrytyng they ben, and whate credences, instruccions and informacions ye had, and by whom’ (letter 1015, ll. 10-13, 12th July 1454). This demonstrates that, until 1454 at least, Fastolf supported the work of his servants and associates with an equal measure of personal diligence.

K. B. McFarlane created an impression of Sir John Fastolf as an imperious man who made constant demands on his collection of hardworking servants: ‘From 1450 until [Fastolf’s] death after a long illness in December 1459 the material consequences of the English defeat in France and the steady collapse of public order at home combined with the evidence of his own declining physical powers to reduce him to a state of querulous and unmanageable senility...a close fisted, litigious and irascible old man’.77 McFarlane’s viewpoint was indeed supported by some of the

76 For references to the dispute between Fastolf and Tuddenham and Heydon in the Fastolf Papers, see letters 972 (1449), 990, 993, 994, 996, 877 (1450), 1001, 1004, 1009 (1451), 555 (1456). A good overview of the dispute with Tuddenham and Heydon is given by Helen Castor in Blood and Roses, 60-81.

77 McFarlane, ‘Profits of War,’ 93. McFarlane’s description of Fastolf as ‘litigious’ came from Fastolf’s apparent preoccupation with ensuring that he was paid the debts that he believed that he was owed by the Lancastrian dynasty: McFarlane pointed out various drafts of a bill of claims against the government compiled by his servants after 1450: see Fenn, ed., Original Letters, 3: 260-275: ‘These ben the unjuries, losses, and damages that the seyd Fastolf hath had, as well withynne this royaume of England as in othir parties in maner and fourrne as it ensewith...’; and Gairdner, ed., Paston Letters, 3: 55-65. McFarlane reiterated his vision of Fastolf as a tough and unrelenting task-master in ‘William Worcester and a Present of Lampreys’, by describing him as the servant who ‘crossed England and back at least once in his ungrateful master’s service’. He believed that when Worcester did get away
claims that were made by these servants themselves. There is no doubt that Sir John Fastolf had sharp words for his servants. Fastolf’s clerk John Bokkyng thought himself treated badly by Sir John Fastolf, the evidence being documents such as Oxford, Magdalen College, Fastolf Paper 98, a petition that Bokkyng presented to William Waynflete after Fastolf’s death, which alleged that his father made losses in the service of Fastolf, and asked for £72 in compensation. Bokkyng explained why he and his father did not make this complaint during Fastolf’s lifetime: ‘Quat was the cause that he mevid not these maters unto the said knyghte in his lyve? the said Bokkyng ansuerithe the sharpe and bittre ansuers by the said knyghte in his grete siknesse at London made unto diuverse persones’ (my emphasis). Another servant of Fastolf, Henry Windsor, indicated that Fastolf had a reputation for being cruel and difficult to deal with: ‘Hit is not vnknoon that cruell and vengible he hath byn euer, and for the most parte withoute pité and mercy’. Windsor suspected that this harsh nature was so ingrained in Fastolf that it was unlikely to change, even with the intervention of his close advisor John Paston: ‘I suppose it wolnot chaunge yette be likelenes, but I beseche you, sir, help not to amend hym onely, but euery other man yf ye kno any [mo] mysse disposed’.

However, the letters of Sir John Fastolf actually suggest that what might at first seem to have been impatience and sharpness was actually justifiable annoyance at the lack of diligence exhibited by certain of his servants. The letters reveal that repeated demands were necessitated by his servants being slow or negligent at times. Fastolf often had to repeat a request twice, or even three times, before the task was carried


Waynflete had taken over the administration of Fastolf’s will in 1470. There is no surviving evidence to indicate whether Bokkyng’s requests for compensation were ever fulfilled. See McFarlane, ‘Profits of War,’ 111, n. 3; and Richmond, The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century: Fastolf’s Will, 87-88.

Letter 550 (from Henry Windsor to John Paston).

Ibid.
out. For example, in one letter of August 1450, Fastolf asked his parson, Thomas Howes, to ensure that Thomas Greene ‘see and correct’ a roll of articles (letter 983, ll. 24-27). By 15th September he was frustrated that he had not received any ‘aansuer of the labour that [Howes] do and my councell abowte the correccion of the articles that [Fastolf] sent [to Howes] ij monthys passed’ (letter 988, ll. 5-7). Exactly a month later, between 15th and 18th October, Fastolf was forced to ask for a third time ‘I wolle that ye sende me my articles that I sent yow wyth your correccions’ (letter 989, l. 10). To give another example of the apparent negligence by Fastolf’s servants, in May 1450, Fastolf had ‘grete merveylle’ that neither Howes nor his servants at Caister had sent the declaration ‘of the grete dammages and hurtes don’ to Fastolf, which he had asked for ‘sondry tymes’ (letter 981, ll. 30-34). In the same letter, he worried that he had not had answer from Nicholas Bokkyng about the ‘c.li. payeng, to whom it was payed’ (letter 981, l.39). The delay had caused Fastolf harm, as the man concerned had died since Fastolf first made the request, making his claim less ‘autentik’ (letter 981, l. 43).

The events of 1450-1451 would have made it vital that Fastolf’s servants addressed their tasks quickly and thoroughly: the demise of the Duke of Suffolk in 1450 meant that it was crucial for Fastolf to quickly and efficiently demand recompense for the damages that were done to him during the duke’s life. This complicated and demanding legal challenge demanded rapid responses from his servants who were gathering evidence for the dispute. In addition, Cade's rebellion of May 1450 would undoubtedly have caused Fastolf great anxiety, as his estates in London came under threat. As a consequence, Fastolf became increasingly demanding of his information-gatherers. Fastolf expected one of his servants, John Payn, to put himself at risk in the pursuit of the articles of the Jack Cade rebels in
June 1450, which he wished to possess.\textsuperscript{82} Colin Richmond pointed out that these articles ‘(the collecting of which almost lost John Payn his head)’ were ‘testimony to Fastolf’s desire for hard news and first hand information even to the risk of his servants’ lives’.\textsuperscript{83} However, Cade’s Rebellion was an exceptional occasion, which must have been terrifying to Fastolf, who worried that it might cause his ruin - the rebels targeted Fastolf Place in Southwark, having mistakenly identified him with the men responsible for the loss of France.\textsuperscript{84} We can see that, on most occasions, Fastolf was protective of his servants.\textsuperscript{85} It would never have been in Fastolf’s best interests to jeopardise the safety of his servants, and it was only in an extreme circumstance such as this that he would have put his men in a potentially-dangerous situation.

There is further evidence that the pressure that Fastolf exerted on his men was necessitated by their tendency to neglect their duties. The letters of 1450 onwards show that sometimes the information that Fastolf’s associates sent to him was insufficient for his needs, so he had to remind his men of exactly what he needed to know: ‘Remembr ye have sent me y[the] costs of the plees, but I have not particular declared how oft I have ben distreyned wrongly by ye enforcing of y[the] s[ixth] Heydon’ (letter 979, ll. 4-6, 16\textsuperscript{th} April 1450), and ‘I sent...to yow...to pray the seid Herry Sturmer wyff for to serche vpp all manere evidens...but ye sent me but a bille or two’ (letter 1011, ll. 38-40, 23\textsuperscript{rd} July 1451). Fastolf also complained about the officers who received money on his behalf from his feoffees: ‘Item, I pray you seeyth

\textsuperscript{82} See the following comment by Payn in letter 692: ‘where as my maister Syr John Fastolf, knyght, þat is youre testatur, commaundyt your beseecher to take a man and ij of the beste orsse þat were in his stabyll with hym to ryde to the comens of Kent to gete the articles þat they come for’ (ll. 9-12). Payn wrote about the cost of this duty: ‘and so I gete th[ose] articles and brought hem to my master, and þat cost me more emonges þe comens þat day þan xxvij s’ (letter 314). For John Payn’s account of guarding Fastolf Place in Southwark, including some doubts about the veracity of Payn’s account, see Helen E. Maurer, \textit{Margaret of Anjou: Queenship and Power in Late Medieval England} (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), 72-74. For discussion of Payn’s task, and Fastolf’s involvement in Cade’s Rebellion in general, see Scase, \textit{Literature and Complaint in England}, 118.
\textsuperscript{83} Richmond, ‘Hand and Mouth,’ 239.
\textsuperscript{84} See Wakelin, \textit{Humanism, Reading and English Literature}, 81-91.
\textsuperscript{85} To give just one example of this protectiveness, see letter 1005, ll. 6-7, in which Fastolf showed concern about John Berney’s independent interests. See page 20 above.
well to the charges and allowances of myne officers accomptantes, and that they
make lyeereez of money vpon her charges better then I vele they doo’ (letter 993,
2nd December 1450, ll. 37-39). He believed that he was a rather tolerant master and
that others would not have been so understanding: ‘for and myne auditours had such
officers vndre hem they wold be ryght wroth’ (letter 993, ll. 37-40, 2nd December
1450). By a year later, Fastolf had given up his attempts to control his officers, and
instead instructed Thomas Howes to take over the majority of their work: ‘that ye do
your part to resseyve my dewtees of such commodites your sylf...and not to suffre
my officers resseyve it’ (letter 1009, ll. 58-77, 24th June 1451). He explained his
reasoning to Howes: ‘For ye knou well of expereience, that when it commyth in theyr
handz they woll make work and sett it out in jtemys nedlese’ (letter 1009, ll. 65-6).
Fastolf confid with Howes that once his officers had possession of his money, it
was not easy to ‘hafe [the money] owt of her handz’ (letter 1009, ll. 58-77, 24th June
1451). This suggests that Fastolf had to deal with not only negligence, but also
dishonesty, in his servants. Finally, it appears that, at times, the most basic
management of Fastolf’s properties was neglected by his servants. In one letter,
Fastolf instructed Thomas Howes, who was managing his property of Caister Castle,
to keep a more careful eye on the way that Fastolf’s men were caring for his horses:
‘Oft tymys my horses be foundr yn deffaut of kepyng’ (letter 990, ll. 45-46, 11th
November 1450). Considering this evidence that Fastolf’s servants were likely to
forget basic requirements like looking after his horses, there is little wonder that his
letters were filled with chastisement.

This thesis does not set out to contradict the impression that Fastolf was a sharp,
controlling, and at times, querulous master. Jonathan Hughes portrayed Fastolf as ‘a
father figure’ who was ‘loved’ by his servants, which is a portrayal that swings too
far away from McFarlane’s vision of an uncompromising tyrant. Rather, this thesis presents the evidence that Fastolf was justifiably controlling of his servants, and that whilst they resented his uncompromising nature, they also respected him and were sufficiently contented with life within the Fastolf circle to stay in his service for decades.

It does seem that, as Fastolf neared his death (from 1454 onwards) he descended into querulousness that, unlike earlier in his life, was not kept in balance by his diligence and sharp mindedness. Unlike before, when Fastolf’s servants could rely upon him to stay aware of the financial and legal matters that concerned him, in his later years he was less likely to listen to good advice, and to keep aware of the state of his own affairs. In a letter dated to ‘perhaps 1456’ by Norman Davis, William Worcester expressed his worries that Fastolf had lost the motivation to monitor his own matters. Worcester put this down to negligence by Fastolf’s associates but, regardless, it is clear that Fastolf’s lack of initiative in the following statement was the antithesis of the proactiveness that is witnessed by letters 1009 and 1015 described above: ‘And a grete lak ys yn hym, he taryeth so long to put all thynges of charge yn a sure wey; hyt ys for lak of sad councell to meove him’ (letter 558, ll. 6-8, perhaps 1456). It is difficult to say whether the contrast between the diligent younger Fastolf and the lax elderly Fastolf was truly down to a decline in the quality of counsel given to him, or whether Fastolf experienced a gradual decay in his ability to understand and act upon this counsel. It appears that even if Fastolf’s advisors had been attempting to guide him at this time, his unwillingness to listen would have discouraged them in their efforts, since the next letter in the Fastolf Letters collection

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86 ‘It is possible that this father figure who loomed large in the imaginations of stepson and secretary was no less introspective’. Hughes, ‘Stephen Scrope and the Circle,’ 143.
87 Letter 558. Davis pointed out that there is no firm evidence of date for the letter. He supposed that the letter was written in ‘perhaps 1456’ because it referred to the ‘chantry to be founded’, which suggested that the project to set up a chantry in Fastolf’s memory was ‘less advanced’ than it was when letters 569 and 570 were written (probably at the end of 1456). In addition, Davis noted that William Worcester’s anxiety about the state of Fastolf’s financial affairs seemed earlier than the circumstances of letter 571, which was datable to April 1457.
Section One, Chapter One: Introduction

describes how Fastolf would ‘not be aunsuered ne satisfyed...but after hys wylfullnesse’ (letter 559, ll. 14-22, About 1456). Either way, the change in Fastolf’s behaviour in the late 1450s caused great distress to his secretary William Worcester when he witnessed Fastolf’s properties suffering from lack of investment.

The element of Fastolf’s relations with his servants that remains to be considered concerns the conflicting claims about the financial rewards that he gave to them, and about the financial damage that he may have caused to them. The editor of Worcester's Itineraries, John H. Harvey, stated that by the time Worcester wrote the Itineraries he was ‘a retired scholar enjoying himself after a long and arduous career, which had been none too well paid by his stingy employer’. However, Harvey did not provide any evidence that Sir John Fastolf was actually stingy. Worcester did make the tongue-in-cheek comment that he was paid 5 shillings a year to ‘help pay for bonettys that I lose’ (letter 506, ll. 9-14). Worcester also recalled that Fastolf had expressed a wish that he had been a priest so that the church would have paid his wages. If 5 shillings a year was his entire allowance, then Worcester would have been paid very poorly indeed. Evidence about the wages of Fastolf’s other servants suggests that Fastolf paid other servants much more than this: Geoffrey Spirleng, who acted as an assistant to Fastolf’s chaplain, was paid 40 shillings a year (see Oxford, Magdalen College Archives, EP 176/9). Moreover, there is some indication that Worcester’s complaints were light-hearted observations about the quirks of Fastolf’s personality: Worcester wrote afterwards ‘foryefe me, I wryte to make yow laugh’ (l. 15).

William Worcester did indeed find himself in financial difficulty after Fastolf's death, but this was as a result of last-minute changes to Fastolf’s will, and his subsequent treatment at the hands of John Paston and the other executors of the will,

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88 Worcester, Itineraries, ix.
89 As cited by Richard Beadle in ‘Geoffrey Spirleng,’ 122.
in addition to the personal expenditure that he made in the endowment of the college of monks at St. Benet’s, Hulme, which Fastolf wished for in his will. There is evidence that Fastolf himself intended Worcester to be rewarded fairly for his long service, and that it was John Paston whose actions were threatening the reward that Fastolf intended: ‘Hyt was promysed me and graunted xxv mark lyfelode o Ser John Paston ys behalff of my Maister Fastolf londz, xx mark for evyr besyde v mark of fee terme of lyfe; and I hafe not clerely viij mark’ (letter 912, ll. 46-48, 17th May 1470). It was in fact the last-minute alterations that were made to Fastolf’s will as he lay dying, which were promoted by John Paston, and which excluded William Worcester from the administration of the will in favour of John Paston, that left William Worcester without the reward that he believed that he deserved for his ongoing service to Fastolf.

Fastolf was accused of being a driver of a hard bargain when he conducted the acquisition of his properties. However, it is difficult to accept this as a blot upon his character when one considers the competitive environment in which he was making his purchases. In letter 713 of the Paston Letters corpus, Robert Spany wrote to John Paston after Fastolf’s death to complain about his treatment during a land transaction: ‘Sire John Fastolf came in-to Norfolke, hering of the seid bargayn wold not suffre his feffés to make your seid suppleaunt astate accordyng to his bargayn withoute he wold gif x marc. more, and ell he shuld neither haf lond nor monye’ (letter 713, ll. 13-16, probably 1460). Spany revealed that the strength of Fastolf’s character led him to submit to his demands and pay an extra ten marks to Fastolf, to his own damage: ‘Youre seid suppleaunt not being of powere to resiste his gret might and powere in eschewyng of lesse, but paied x marc. more as he was constreyned contrarie to his

90 Worcester, Itineraries, ix.
91 The nuncupative will of Sir John Fastolf (see letter 54) was drawn up after Fastolf’s death and was dated the 3rd November 1459 (Fastolf died on the 5th). The revisions to the will appointed John Paston and Thomas Howes as sole administrators and so enabled them to apparently exclude Worcester from any financial reward for his service. See McFarlane, England in the Fifteenth Century, 202.
first bargayn, to his gret hurte at that tyme being a yong begynnere’ (letter 713, ll. 16-19).\textsuperscript{92} Spany asked for compensation out of the late Fastolf’s wealth, which was being administered by John Paston. However, Colin Richmond supposed that John Paston and William Yelverton would not have considered his case worth compensation: ‘he probably got no more change out of John Paston... [w]ould he have done out of William Yelverton?’\textsuperscript{93} This suggests that Fastolf was a tough man, but not unfair, or any harsher than he would have been expected to be. Without such an uncompromising attitude towards property acquisition, it is unlikely that he would have achieved the successes that he did in the Fifteenth-Century East Anglian land market, which, as Anthony Smith has pointed out, was rife with competition for land between rival factions.\textsuperscript{94}

Where the evidence might possibly contradict this overall impression of a firm but fair lord is in Fastolf’s alleged financial mistreatment of his own servants. FP 98, a petition that John Bokkyng presented to William Waynflete after Fastolf’s death, has already been discussed above in relation to its description of Fastolf’s ‘sharpe and bittre ansuers’ to his servants. This petition records an astounding number of financial misdemeanours which John and his father Nicholas claimed that Sir John Fastolf committed against them during his life. They include a complaint that Nicholas Bokkyng had given Fastolf 13s. 4d., and had never been given the money back.\textsuperscript{95} There is some evidence that Fastolf had not intended Nicholas Bokkyng to make personal losses from his work for Sir John Fastolf, as he swore upon his psalter that this would not happen: ‘the said knyght promised feithfully and up on his sawter at heylesdon...that the said bokkyng shuld haue no wrong but in all maner of maters of his accomptis that towched conscience he wulde be rewled by maistre John

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{93} See Richmond, \textit{The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century: Fastolf’s Will}, 106.
\textsuperscript{94} Smith, ‘Litigation and Politics,’ 63.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid, 88, note 120.
Wysenhalle & maistre Richard Purlond’.\textsuperscript{96} However, regardless of these apparently good intentions, Nicholas did find that his role as Fastolf's receiver-general was a financial burden. Bearing in mind William Worcester’s complaints of 1456 about Fastolf’s loss of grip on the finances of Caister Castle (see letter 558), it seems likely that the damages done to his servant Bokkyng were due to Fastolf's mismanagement of his finances as he reached the end of his life, rather than any malicious intent or stinginess. All other evidence in the Fastolf Letters and Papers suggests that though Fastolf was mindful of his expenditure, he was a fair master and looked after the interests of his servants. He could never be described as kind, or as a ‘father figure’, but he had the intention to reward his servants appropriately for the service they did for him. Though Fastolf’s good intentions were marred by his lack of diligence as he neared his deathbed, his own financial wellbeing suffered as well.

\textsuperscript{96} FP 98.
**Sir John Fastolf’s associates:**

This part of the chapter will present some biographical information about the associates of Sir John Fastolf who were:

i) scribes of Fastolf’s letters, documents or literary manuscripts;

ii) composers of literature that was associated with Fastolf;

iii) recipients, senders, or bearers, of letters that were connected with Fastolf;

iv) associates of Fastolf, whose work involved the production or consultation of written documents (such as lawyers, auditors, or ‘counsellors’).

By way of introduction a table is presented below, which lists the men who were associated with Fastolf in any way. It provides standardised spellings for each man’s name, based on those given in the index of Beadle and Richmond’s edition to the third volume of the Paston Letters. Finally, where there is enough evidence, the table states the chronological extent of each man’s connection with Fastolf. This chronology is based on: a) circumstantial evidence in the letters and documents printed in Davis, ed., *Paston Letters and Papers*, parts 1 and 2 and Beadle and Richmond, eds., *Paston Letters and Papers*, part 3 as well as from numerous unpublished letters and documents in the collections of the British Library and Magdalen College in Oxford; and b) palaeographical evidence from the letters and papers, that suggests the chronological range of each man’s scribal work.
Figure 3: A table of the associates of Sir John Fastolf.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>1420</th>
<th>1425</th>
<th>1430</th>
<th>1435</th>
<th>1440</th>
<th>1445</th>
<th>1450</th>
<th>1455</th>
<th>1460</th>
<th>Chronological Extent of Connection with Fastolf</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barker, William</td>
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<td>1445 to 1459</td>
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<td>Berney, John (I of Reedham)</td>
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<td>1431 to 1440 (d. 1440)</td>
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<td>Berney, John (II of Reedham)</td>
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<td>son of first John Berney</td>
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<td>Bokkyng, Nicholas</td>
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<td>1423 to as late as 1459</td>
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<td>Bokkyng, John</td>
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<td>1435 to 1459&lt;sup&gt;97&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Boteler, Robert</td>
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<td>1449 to 1459</td>
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<td>Brackley, Friar John</td>
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<td>1456 to 1459</td>
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<td>Brayne, Matthew&lt;sup&gt;98&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Broun, Robert</td>
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<td>1447 to 1450</td>
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<td>Cole, William</td>
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<td>1445 to 1454</td>
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<td>Crossone, Henry</td>
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<td>1445</td>
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<td>Dorset, William</td>
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<td>1444 to 1447</td>
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<sup>97</sup> The early date comes from a document that states that Bokkyng served Fastolf for more than 24 years. Since Bokkyng was still in Fastolf’s service upon Fastolf’s death, this places his start date at 1435 at the latest: ‘And furthermore the seid John Bokkyng demaundith to be satisfied + contented of a c. li. of reward granted by the sied John fastolf un to the seid John Bokkyng un recompence of his long contynued service doon un to the seid ser John fastolf by the space fully of xxiij yere & more’ (FP 98).

<sup>98</sup> Beadle and Richmond’s index has two separate entries for ‘Braun(e),--- clerk of sessions’ and ‘Braun, Matthew’, with only one reference for the latter. It seems likely that these were the same person, since there is no biographical evidence in the letters to separate them. Therefore, the two entries have been combined in this table.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fastolf, John (of Oulton)</td>
<td>1429 to 1449</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fitzravf, Robert</td>
<td>1448 to 1459</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frays, John</td>
<td>1456</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frowyke, Henry</td>
<td>1454</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grene, John</td>
<td>1433 to 1434</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grene, Thomas⁹⁹</td>
<td>1447 to 1450</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hansson, Christopher</td>
<td>1454 - 1456 to 1459</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hansson, Henry</td>
<td>1454 to 1456</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hert, Thomas</td>
<td>1455</td>
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<tr>
<td>Herward, William</td>
<td>1431</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hoddison, Thomas</td>
<td>1435</td>
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<tr>
<td>Howes, Thomas</td>
<td>1443 to 1459</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inglose, Sir Henry</td>
<td>1419/1420 to 1451(d. 1451)⁹⁹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inglose, Henry Jr.</td>
<td>1453 to 1459</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jenney, John</td>
<td>1450 to 1451</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jenney, William</td>
<td>1445 to 1459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrtelyng, John</td>
<td>1429 to 1435 (d. by 1441)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

⁹⁹ Thomas Grene, by the time of Fastolf’s death, was described as steward of Yarmouth and witnessed the making of the will of Sir John Fastolf: “Thome Grene senesalle ville Yernemouth erat prseens in hospicio dictas Northalys & videbat dictas causias factur et paratas” (FP 72).

⁹⁹⁹ According to John Harvey, William Worcester in his Itineraries recorded the date of Inglose’s death as 1450: ‘Memorandum. 145[0]. 21. die Junij obijt Henricus Inglese chivaler’. However, the ‘0’ was not in the original manuscript. Harvey probably provided the zero from what he found in the printed record of Inglose’s death in Calendar of the Fine Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office: Henry VI, 1445-1452 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1939), 18: 133, 178. Worcester, Itineraries, 360-361.
| Lynford, John | 1431 to 1456 |
| Molyneux, Nicholas | 1445 to 1458 |
| Mundeville, John | 1412 to 1413 |
| Nantron, Luket | 1450 to 1459 |
| Newman, Nicholas | Possibly as early as 1455 to 1459 |
| Paston, John | 1422/1423 to 1424/1425 |
| Paston, William | 1454 to 1455 |
| Pole, Lodowick of | 1431 to 1448 |
| Rafman, John | 1448 to 1456 |
| Raulyns, 101 | 1455 to 1459 |
| Russe, John | 1435 to 1459 |
| Shipdham, Walter | 1447 to 1459 |
| Spirignt, Geoffrey | 1421 to 1454 |
| Sturmer, Henry | 1435 to 1436 |
| Walle, Geoffrey | 1439/1441 to 1454 |
| Waller, Richard | 1435 to 1459 |
| Witchingham, Edmund | 1438 to 1459 |
| Worcester, William | |

101 This is probably the same 'Raulyns' who was listed by William Worcester as a defender of Caister Castle against Anthony Lord Scales, around 1469: '---Raulyns, a stranger'. Worcester, *Itineraries*, 191.
The palaeographical and circumstantial evidence in the letters, documents, and manuscript books associated with Sir John Fastolf enables the following list to be drawn up, of men who had *any* involvement in reading and writing in the circle of Sir John Fastolf:

- William Barker
- John Bokking
- Matthew Brayne
- William Ebesham
- Ricardus Franciscus
- Thomas Grene
- Thomas Howes
- John Kyrteling
- Luket Nantron
- John Rafman
- Walter Shipdham
- Geoffrey Spirleng
- William Worcester

Unidentified scribe A: wrote letter numbers 520, 542, 536 (probably), 538 (folio 35), 878, and 1016.¹

Unidentified scribe B: wrote letter numbers 536, 538 (folio 36), 577, and 585.²

Chapter Three discusses the work of the scribes who had *most* involvement in written correspondence in the circle of Sir John Fastolf: William Barker, John Bokkyng, Thomas Howes, Geoffrey Spirleng, and William Worcester. These scribes are now introduced in the brief biographical sections that follow:

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¹ Norman Davis first attributed these letters to this unidentified hand in the second part of his *Paston Letters and Papers* series, then Beadle and Richmond added letter number 1016 to the list in the third part of the series.

² As above, Norman Davis attributed these letters to this unidentified hand. As will be reinforced throughout this thesis, there were many additional un-named individuals involved in writing in Fastolf’s circle, and since many of them wrote single manuscript books, or single items in compilations such as College of Arms, MS. Arundel 48, it is difficult to establish whether they were members of the inner circle of Sir John Fastolf, or writers who contributed material from outside of the circle upon the request of Fastolf or William Worcester. It is important to acknowledge the contribution of these numerous unidentified scribes, and to conclude that the extended circle of readers and writers around Fastolf was large, and inclusive of his own servants, accomplished London-based scribes, and men whose identities remain uncertain.
William Barker: 3

Relatively little is known about William Barker. His dates of birth and death are unknown. Barker definitely outlived Fastolf’s secretary William Worcester, who had died by 1485, as he was still alive in that year. 4 It is not known where he came from or where he was schooled or trained. We know roughly when he came into Fastolf’s service as, after Fastolf’s death, he wrote that he was, ‘late howshold servaunte be the space of xxi yere wyth Syr John Fastolf, knyght, dyssesid’ (letter 925, ll. 6-16). If Barker stopped counting his years of service upon Fastolf’s death in 1459, this means he must have begun work with Fastolf in 1439. We also know that he married Agnes, sister both to Thomas Howes and to the mother of William Worcester’s wife, Margaret. 5 His hand first appears in a letter from Sir John Fastolf dated to 12th May 1448 (letter 962). From this date onwards, he wrote eight of the surviving letters for Sir John Fastolf, five of these written in London between 1448 and 1451 and three at Caister between 1456 and (possibly as late as) 1459. 6

When William Barker was not doing scribal work for Sir John Fastolf, it appears that he was important in protecting Fastolf’s feoffees and ensuring that his master’s properties remained safe from claims from his rivals. In November 1454 he wrote to Fastolf from Wroxham to inform him that he had to be at Norwich to prevent John Porter, a retainer of Fastolf, being outlawed. 7 He also gathered information for his

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4 See letter 925.

5 See the following declaration by William Barker and Margaret Worcester: ‘[Barker] had wedded Annes, late dyssesid, that was the hoole systere bothe on-to Syr Thomas Howes, clerk, dyssesid, also the hoole systere to Isabell, modyre to þe seid Margret Wyssetyr’ (ibid, letter 925, ll. 10-12, perhaps about 1485).

6 The latest date comes from Davis’ dating of letter 589 to 9th August 1455-1459. The date is imprecise because there is no internal evidence to give them a more specific date. They must have been written after Sir John Fastolf moved to Caister in 1454, since they state that they were ‘wretyn at Caister’. However, they could have been written as late as 1459, the date that Fastolf died.

7 ‘Please your maystership, the cause of myn terying is that I must ben at Norwyche on Monday at the shyre to stoppe the oughtlawyre of John Porter’ (letter 1020, ll. 1-2). Beadle and Richmond dated this letter to ‘probably’ 1454 based on the fact that John Porter of Blickling, who was a retainer of
master: in June 1455 he wrote to William Worcester about the events of the aftermath of the first battle of St. Albans. He gave Worcester information that was very interesting to Fastolf. For example, he reported that Sir Philip Wentworth, who was Fastolf’s enemy in a dispute over the wardship of Thomas Fastolf, bore the King’s standard but ‘kest hit down and fled’ (letter 1024, ll. 25-26).

There are just a few extant examples of Barker’s personal correspondence. When his own correspondence has survived, it usually relates to Fastolf’s interests. For example, he wrote to John Paston I in the later years of Fastolf’s life to pass on the message that Fastolf was ‘weel agreed’ to the purchase of a property (letter 578, l. 19).

After Fastolf’s death, William Barker sided with the Pastons in the dispute between them and William Worcester over Fastolf’s will, and he even worked for the Pastons. The evidence for this includes a letter from Friar Brackley to John Paston of around 1460, in which he expressed his awareness of William Barker’s intention to serve Paston: ‘W. B., lator presentis, intendit vobis, si placeat, humilime et verissime serviturum’ (letter 610, ll. 54-55). In addition there is a letter, probably written in 1479, from William Paston II to Richard Roos, which requests: ‘send me knowlach yf William Barkare be com do hym com to me to Norwich on Munday’, proving that Barker was working for the Pastons in the 1470s.

The acrimonious relationship between William Barker and William Worcester was confirmed in 1474 in one of

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Worcester’s last letters concerning Fastolf, in which he complained that he should have ‘a grete amendys of Robynson and his meyntenours, Barker and othyrs’ (letter 1050, ll. 37-38).\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{11} This acrimonious relationship between William Barker and William Worcester had origins in the period of time that they were both servants of Sir John Fastolf. For example, see letter 566, of around 1456, in which Worcester complained about Barker, and punned on his name by describing him as a ‘berker ayenst the mone’ (l. 41).
William Barker’s Scribal Hand:

Figure 4: A sample of William Barker’s hand from his early career. A letter in the hand of William Barker for Sir John Fastolf written in 1448. FP 26 (letter 1020).

Figure 5: A sample of William Barker’s hand from his later career. Autograph letter to Sir John Fastolf, written in 1454. BL, MS. Additional 27444, folio 28 (letter 1020).
**John Bokkyng:**

John Bokkyng, the son of another of Fastolf’s associates Nicholas Bokkyng, was described by K. B. McFarlane as ‘brought up to serve’ Sir John Fastolf. There is no certain date for Bokkyng’s entrance into Fastolf’s service. However, he was first mentioned in a letter of July 1450. In this letter, and others of the same year, he was recorded performing collecting, delivering, and ‘waiting upon’ roles. Bokkyng’s scribal hand first appears in a document dated September 1450 (letter 985). The earliest evidence for John being in the service of Sir John Fastolf originates from around the time that his father was making headway in Fastolf’s dispute over the manor of Titchwell (1448-1455). It appears that it was Nicholas Bokkyng who negotiated his son’s position as servant to Fastolf. This is suggested by a document that listed Nicholas’s grievances against Fastolf after Fastolf’s death, which stated that: ‘the said knyght graunted to allowe for John his sonys wages ij marc & euer after xl s as other servantes toke for ther wagis’. This also suggests that Nicholas had to negotiate with Fastolf to secure a fair wage for his son, implying that Fastolf would not have automatically granted John Bokkyng a wage that was comparable with that of his other servants without the intervention of his long-established servant Nicholas Bokkyng.

In a letter from Fastolf to John Paston, he wrote that he was sending his, ‘ryght trusty seruanunt John Bokkyng’ to wait upon his ‘lerned counsell’ regarding a case against Nicholas Appulyerd (letter 457, ll. 7-8, 14th September 1450). Two months later, William Yelverton addressed John Bokkyng in terms that implied that Bokkyng

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13 See letter 986 of July 1450 in which Bokkyng was recorded being send to visit Thomas Howes to collect information about what corrections were to be made to the some rolls for Sir John Fastolf. Letter 457 showed that in July 1450 he was also required to be at the oyer and terminer to help in case against Appleyerd. In November of the same year he was at Southwark in London, searching for evidence for use in Fastolf’s legal disputes (see letter 991).
14 For more information about the dispute over Titchwell, see Lewis, ‘Sir John Fastolf’s Lawsuit Over Titchwell’.
15 FP 98.
was thought to have some influence over Fastolf's actions, and some involvement in Fastolf's legal concerns: ‘and also for to meve hym for that we may have a good shereve and a good vndershewe that neythir for good fauore no fere wol returme for the Kyng ne betwix partie and partie non othir men but such as are good and trewe and in no wyse will be forsworne’ (letter 878, ll. 3-6, November 1450). Bokkyng was not a lawyer, but rather a legal administrator. However letter 878 above is indication that John Bokkyng had some legal knowledge and influence. John Bokkyng's expertise appears to have had some affect on the nature of his working relationship with Sir John Fastolf compared with Fastolf's other scribes.

After Fastolf's death, John Bokkyng allowed some long-stored animosity towards his master to rise to the surface. John petitioned William Waynflete for money that Fastolf allegedly owed to his father, Nicholas. In addition, he took an active part in opposing the executors of Fastolf's Will, and remained in communication with another bitter ex-servant of Fastolf, William Worcester, after his master's death. The two men appear to have been united in the belief that their clerkly services went

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16 See Davis, ‘Language in Letters,’ 337.
17 There is evidence that Bokkyng was acting as a legal administrator, rather than as a lawyer in his own right. In 1450, John Paston was directing Bokkyng in ‘help[ing] solicit[ing] and labour[ing] [Fastolf’s] chargeable materys’ at the oyer and terminer (letter 457). Also, in 1456, Bokkyng wrote to John Paston to request his presence at court (letter 552). Bokkyng gave Paston an update of all the matters at court that concerned him, but ultimately requested Paston’s presence to lend some weight to the proceedings: ‘at youre comyng we shal haue sum good ende with your helpe in þe same matier’ (ll. 22-23).
18 For example, once Bokkyng moved to London to assist John Paston with Fastolf’s matters at court, he became responsible for corresponding with Fastolf frequently to update him with accounts of his legal matters (see, for example, letters 1029 and 1036). This contrasts with the duties of Fastolf’s other scribes: William Worcester, for example, declared explicitly that he had no involvement with Fastolf’s matters that concerned the law (letter 566, probably October 1456), and William Barker never wrote letters of correspondence to Fastolf at all. Bokkyng generally appears to have taken on most of the administrative work connected with Fastolf’s legal matters: for example, in January 1451, Fastolf instructed him to inform Henry Inglose about the enditements of treason against Henry Heydon, which must have required some legal expertise (letter 1004, ll. 10-15). Also, in November 1454 Thomas Howes wrote to John Paston to inform him that he had sent to John Bokkyng a list of jury members (letter 510).
19 FP 98.
unfairly compensated by Fastolf’s revised will. In 1469, Bokkyng was worried that William Waynflete was reluctant to take responsibility for the administration of Fastolf’s Will, and urged him to do so. By persuading Waynflete to administer Fastolf’s will, Bokkyng promoted the interests of both William Worcester and himself. This evidence has led Richmond to wonder whether Worcester might have been the more ‘conciliatory’ figure out of the two men. Richmond suggested that it might have been the ‘steely man’ Bokkyng who encouraged Worcester to battle the executors of Fastolf's will over their deceased master’s possessions.

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21 John Bokkyng claimed he was owed 200 marks (see FP 98). For William Worcester’s belief that he went unfairly rewarded see letter 604 of February 1460. See Richmond, The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century: Fastolf’s Will, 87-88.
22 ‘Ther com tidynges from Worcestre þat my lord was discoragid þerjune, and þerfore myn vncele prayd me to write þus to you’ (letter 1045, ll. 9-10).
23 Richmond, The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century: Fastolf’s Will, 86.
24 Ibid. Richmond pointed out the following statement in letter 89 of May 1460, which supports this impression that Bokkyng was a ‘steely’ man: ‘I spak this day to Bokkyng. He had but few wurdys, but I felt be hym he was rythe evyll dispositd to the parson [Thomas Howes] and yow; but coverthe langgage he had’ (from William Paston to John Paston) (lines 9-11).
John Bokkyng’s scribal hand:

Figure 6: A sample of John Bokkyng’s hand from his early career (1458). An autograph letter from John Bokkyng to Sir John Fastolf. BL, MS Additional 43488, folio 41 (letter 1036, image reproduced from the appendices).
Figure 7: A sample of John Bokkying’s hand from his later career (probably 1469). Detail from autograph letter from Bokkyng to Robert Kyrton. FP 94 (letter 1045).
Thomas Howes:

Thomas Howes from 1445 onwards was rector of Castle Combe, Fastolf’s estate in Wiltshire. However, his responsibilities were dispersed around Fastolf’s estates in East Anglia: a document of 1445 refers to him as being ‘of the manor of Titchwell’, a property that Fastolf acquired in 1431. He held wardship of Thomas Fastolf of Cowhaugh, Suffolk, over whom Fastolf got in a dispute with Philip Wentworth. Howes had the important role of managing Fastolf’s Norfolk and Suffolk estates whilst Fastolf himself was in London. This involved directing Fastolf’s information gatherers, and managing the servants at Caister Castle. A large proportion of his duties involved reading and writing. Many more letters were addressed to him than any other associate of Fastolf. In addition, Howes read pedigrees as part of his complex genealogical studies. He was also key to the storage and administration of written material associated with Fastolf. In the 1440s he regularly sought out documents, and deployed them to the associates of Fastolf who needed them for their work. For example, letter 961 of October 1447 shows that he sent a will to Sir John Fastolf, and an explanatory note to Fastolf’s servant William Worcester. When Fastolf moved to Caister in 1454, Howes remained there for only a short period

25 For Fastolf’s acquisition of Titchwell see Lewis, ‘Sir John Fastolf’s Lawsuit over Titchwell,’ 216. For the reference to Howes ‘of the manor of Titchwell’, see Oxford, Magdalen College, Titchwell 81.
26 For more information about Fastolf’s dispute with Sir Philip Wentworth over the wardship of Thomas Fastolf of Cowhaugh see Castor, The King, the Crown, and the Duchy of Lancaster, 150; Richmond, The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century: The First Phase, 240-243. For more information on wardship see Menuge, ‘English Wardship in Romance and Law c. 1200- c. 1420’.
27 For example, in Fastolf’s dispute with Hickling priory, Howes investigated the Eccles family of Norfolk, and also sent other men to investigate. See Anthony Smith, ‘Sir John Fastolf’s Dispute with Hicking Priory.’ 62.
29 ‘And the seid Reginald was hefded in the Ryflyng tym, and is beryed in the chauncell of Byllokby, as it sheweth by a note of his testament and wyll whiche I send you, as Wyllyam Wureestre can enforme you by a lettre I haue sent hym &c’ (letter 961, ll. 6-9).
before relocating to London to assist John Paston with Fastolf’s matters there.\textsuperscript{30} These matters included Fastolf’s dispute with Wentworth, which involved Howes himself.\textsuperscript{31}

In the dispute over Fastolf’s nuncupative will Howes sided with William Worcester, and testified that John Paston caused the alterations to be made.\textsuperscript{32} Documents written after Fastolf’s death confirm the extent to which Howes was involved in the written administration of Fastolf’s properties and portable wealth: FP 91 contains a list of bonds and other documents relating to Sir John Fastolf that were in the custody of Thomas Howes in the 1460s. This reinforces the impression of Howes as an administrator and shows that his control over the written material associated with Sir John Fastolf continued beyond his master’s death. Thomas Howes died in February 1469, and William Worcester was an executor of his will.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{30} See the following letters, dating from 1455 and later, which give details about Thomas Howes’s work with John Paston in London: letters 558, 1034, 1035, and 577.

\textsuperscript{31} See letter 565, ll. 41-42. This echoes the involvement of the chaplain, James Gloys, in a dispute concerning the Paston family in 1448: Gloys was sent to attend on John Paston in London for a season. See also letter 129.

\textsuperscript{32} See Thomas Howes’s letter to Thomas Bourchier, Archbishop of Canterbury, of 1468, in which Howes stated that Paston’s claims to Fastolf’s lands were unjust: ‘the pretens bargayn that John Paston yn hys lyffe surmytted, bye colour of which he entended to hafe all my Mayster Fastolf londes...was not iuste ne trew’ (letter 901, ll. 9-10).

\textsuperscript{33} FP 90 and 84. See also letter 1049, ll. 2-3.
Luket Nantron:

The circumstantial evidence concerning Luket Nantron dates from the mid-1450s and later, and relates to his administrative and letter-writing scribal work. In a letter tentatively dated by Norman Davis to November 1456, Fastolf told John Paston I that he received a letter from William Barker, written in Nantron’s hand, regarding his servants at Cotton.34 Interestingly, this letter was carried to Sir John Fastolf by a man named Henré Hansson. If this Henry were related to Fastolf’s military associate Christopher Hansson, this would be evidence of a long working relationship between Luket Nantron and the Hansson family.35 Nantron also worked for men who were part of the wider circle of Sir John Fastolf. In around 1458, Henry Windsor, apparently a Chancery clerk, wrote to John Paston I, excusing himself for using ‘Luket’ as his secretary but he ‘had no leiser’ to write the letter himself.36

Luket Nantron was the scribal hand of Basset’s Chronicle in London, College of Arms MS. M.9.37 The new catalogue of the College of Arms describes it as a ‘scribal fair copy in a French hand of the period, possibly that of Luket Nantron whose name figures in the added rough title.’38 This title, which William Worcester added to the text, reads: ‘& Christoforum Hanson de patria almayn quondam cum Thoma Beaufort duce Excestrie ac luket Nantron natus de Parys vnus de clerics Johannis ffastolf’.

More circumstantial evidence about Luket Nantron, dating from after the death of Sir John Fastolf, confirms that he had a close working relationship with

34 ‘I receyvid by Henré Hannson on Thorsday last passid at iiiij after none certeyn lettres, amonges whiche I receyvid on from William Barker writen of Lukettes hand’ (letter 569, ll. 2-3).
35 Christopher Hansson (d. 1462) was a collector of Fastolf’s rents in London (see FP 51 and letter 155, in which Margaret Paston referred to accounts made by Hansson). Before then, he had been an archer in the garrison of St Valéry. See Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. Fr. 25767.52, as cited in Benedicta Rowe, ‘A Contemporary Account of the Hundred Years’ War from 1415 to 1429,’ English Historical Review 41 (1926): 507-508.
36 Letter 574, ll. 7-8. The significance of this letter in terms of Luket Nantron being allowed into the Chancery to copy documents is discussed in Chapter 4, page 253 below.
37 The most comprehensive overview of Basset’s Chronicle and the men involved in its composition, writing, and correction is McFarlane, England in the Fifteenth Century, 210-212.
Christopher Hansson, and shows that their relationship was based both on their involvement in the composition of literature, and on their work together in administrative duties such as the transportation of money around the country. Nantron and Hansson were among the associates of Fastolf who did administrative work for the Paston family in the years following Fastolf’s death. The evidence for this is Clement Paston’s letter of August 1461, in which he promised to send John Paston five marks and wrote: ‘þe remnawnte I trow I xall gett vp-on Cristofire Hanswn and Lwket’ (letter 116, ll. 38-39).\(^{39}\)

Luket Nantron’s work as a textwriter and the overlap with his administrative work are discussed in Chapter 5 below, page 292-300.

\(^{39}\) See Chapter Five, page 292-294 below for further discussion of the working relationship between Christopher Hansson and Luket Nantron.
John Russe:

There are relatively few letters in the hand of John Russe. The earliest surviving letter in his hand is letter 508 of the Paston Letters, written in late 1454. The letter was evidently intended for John Paston I and concerned Russe’s attendance at court at Cowhaugh, as a steward, in consequence of Paston, Thomas Howes, and William Barker being granted the wardship of Thomas Fastolf of Cowhaugh.40 This letter is also Russe’s earliest-recorded connection with Sir John Fastolf, since this wardship was made in the interest of Sir John Fastolf.41 Subsequently, Russe was involved in Fastolf’s estate business consistently; often working in co-operation with Fastolf's other servants, such as Thomas Howes and Geoffrey Spirleng.42

Little is known about the background and training of John Russe, except that he was described by Robert Cutler, vicar of Caister, who testified against Russe in the battle over Fastolf’s will, as illiterate and unable to understand Latin.43 Russe was mentioned frequently in the Fastolf Letters and Papers. In an inventory of 1454-1455, he was described as, ‘John Russe clericus coquine’.44 His name was written after the name ‘Thomas Upton’ had been crossed out, which indicates that William Worcester, the compiler of the inventory, was unsure about each man’s role. However, this does indicate that Worcester associated clerkly duties with John Russe, and so


41 For more information about the wardship of Thomas Fastolf of Cowhaugh, and Fastolf’s subsequent dispute with Sir Philip Wentworth over it, see Casior, The King, the Crown, and the Duchy of Lancaster, 150; and Richmond, The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century: The First Phase, 240-243.

42 See, for example letter 569 of probably 1456, in which Russe rode to Fastolf’s property at Cotton to fulfill tasks on Fastolf’s behalf. For the association between Russe, Paston, and Howes, see Davis, ‘Language in Letters,’ 333-336.


distinguishes him as one of the main writers of the Fastolf circle and suggests that he
certainly was not illiterate. The corpus of letters written by John Russe also testifies
to his writing abilities. Russe most frequently acted as a scribe to Fastolf’s chaplain,
Thomas Howes (see letters 510, 511, 516). The editors of the printed Paston Letters
and Papers have attributed only one extant letter from Sir John Fastolf to the hand of
John Russe, dated 7th February 1455 (letter 514). However, palaeographical evidence
shows that he also wrote letter 1035, a letter sent by Fastolf to Stephen Scrope on 30th
October 1457.\textsuperscript{45} This additional letter in the hand of John Russe suggests that he had
a more prolonged and significant involvement in writing for Fastolf than has been
suggested previously.\textsuperscript{46} As Russe was a merchant, this also testifies to the diversity
within the group of men who wrote for Sir John Fastolf.\textsuperscript{47}

Russe was another of Fastolf’s associates who entered the service of the Paston
family after Fastolf’s death. Alongside his mercantile duties, he received letters that
were co-addressed to servants of the Pastons,\textsuperscript{48} and was responsible for the delivery
of letters between members of the Paston circle (continuing to work with Fastolf’s
former chaplain Thomas Howes): ‘All whech Ser Thomas Howes, be the handes of
John Russe, hath deliuered to Richard Calle to deliuer to hise mastir John Paston’
(letter 64, ll. 196-198, 6\textsuperscript{th} June 1462, my emphasis). In letter 643 of August 1461 he
called himself Paston’s bedman and servant. Russe, apparently with John Paston’s
support, was later appointed to an official post in the port of Yarmouth: collector of
customs and subsidies in July 1463,\textsuperscript{49} continuing until 1485-1486.\textsuperscript{50} He was bailiff of

\textsuperscript{45} See Chapter 3, page 163 below.
\textsuperscript{46} Colin Richmond and Richard Beadle also pointed out that letter 1006, written by William Worcester
for Fastolf contains pen trials of the name ‘John Russe’ twice. If these trials were written by him, this
suggests that Russe had access to the written material associated with Fastolf.
\textsuperscript{47} See for example letter 650 of 20\textsuperscript{th} November, probably 1461, which records the mercantile activities
of John Russe: ‘Wherfore insomoche as John Russe and Robert Glouer sendethe a schip with corne
over we haue a-ventured with hem c’(centena) comb malt’ (ll. 27-29).
\textsuperscript{48} See letter 55, which mentions Russe receiving a letter that was co-addressed to Richard Calle, one of
Paston’s chief servants.
\textsuperscript{49} See letter 666 in which John Russe wrote to John Paston to ask for his support in nomination for the
post: ‘I beseke youre maistershyp...that it lyke you to desyre the nomynacion [of on] of the officez
Yarmouth several times from 1466 onwards, M. P. in the years 1467-1468, 1472-1475, 1478, and 1483; and was deputy butler of Yarmouth in 1479. He died in 1492.

eyther of the countroller ore serchorshyp of Jernemuth for a servaunt of yowrez, and I shuld so gyde me in the office as I trust shuld be most profit to my seyd lord’ (letter 666, ll. 5-9).

52 Russe was appointed as deputy butler of Yarmouth in 1479, then was pardoned from this duty on 5th March 1483. See Ibid, 730-731. All of the above information about Russe’s official posts following Fastolf’s death is also given in the headnote to letter 508.
53 See the writ of diem clausit extremum 9th October, Calendar of Fine Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office 1485-1509: Henry VII, 1485-1509, 182.
Geoffrey Spirleng:54

The majority of the existing biographical research concerning Geoffrey Spirleng was done by Richard Beadle in ‘Geoffrey Spirleng (c.1426-c.1494): a Scribe of the Canterbury Tales in his Time’. Though Beadle’s work was comprehensive, this section presents some additional biographical information about Spirleng, which has emerged through the original research of this thesis.

Richard Beadle stated that we have ‘no direct information concerning Spirleng’s early background or education’.55 However, he did note that Geoffrey Spirleng was ‘what K. B. McFarlane has styled the “gentleman bureaucrat,” or lesser gentry, expert in accounting and estate management’.56 Spirleng was employed by Sir John Fastolf initially as an assistant to his receivers Thomas Howes and Walter Shipdham, and Fastolf wrote to the three of them jointly.57 A letter from 1447 is the first extant letter in Spirleng’s hand, and was written on behalf of Thomas Howes, in Spirleng’s capacity of assistant to Howes (letter 961). When Fastolf received letters from the trio, the letter was usually in Spirleng’s hand. Richard Beadle supposed that Spirleng was either trained by Thomas Howes, or was schooled, ‘in business and estate management of the kind that was available, for example, in Oxford’.58 Alternatively, it is possible that Spirleng received his training in London.59

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54 See Chapter Five, page 306-308 for a case study of Spirleng’s written work as clerk and literary textwriter.
55 Ibid, 122.
56 Ibid.
57 See letter 965 of January 1449, from Howes, Shipdham and Spirleng. The letter referred to a letter that Fastolf had sent to them (now lost). For the working relationship between Howes, Shipdham, and Spirleng see ibid 122. Beadle referred to Oxford University, Magdalen College Archives, EP 176/9 as an example of Spirleng’s personal accounts, which he drew up for Howes.
58 Ibid 123.
59 There is a general lack of research into the training of clerks in London, but for a limited amount of information about the training of literate legal men in London, see Gwilym Dodd, ‘The Rise of English, the Decline of French: Supplications to the English Crown, c. 1420-1450,’ Speculum 86 (2011): 117-150 (121). E. W. Ives explained how these London-trained men might make the transition to the provinces: ‘Over half the lawyers trained in the Inns of Court, and an even greater proportion of those who attended the Inns of Chancery, failed to secure a position in the central courts and therefore went into provincial practice’. E. W. Ives, ‘The Common Lawyers in Pre-Reformation England,’ Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 18 (1968): 150-151. For the training of non-lawyers, see
From the accounts that Spirleng drew up for Thomas Howes between 29th September 1448 and 24th June 1451 we learn that Spirleng’s annual stipend was what Richard Beadle described as a ‘handsome’ 40 shillings, which did not take into account the free board and lodging he would have had at Caister Castle. Spirleng’s administrative work also concerned the properties and possessions of Sir John Fastolf, including compiling an inventory in 1448. This inventory has annotations in the hand of William Worcester, demonstrating that Worcester encountered and read Spirleng’s work in detail during Fastolf’s lifetime. This is just one piece of evidence for interaction between the writers in Fastolf’s circle, preserved within the corpus of written material associated with him. It is evidence like this that has prompted a closer examination of this interaction, which is presented in Chapter Four below.

Over the 1450s Geoffrey Spirleng progressed from his assistant role to the post of auditor. This was an important role: Fastolf’s auditors had oversight of the financial affairs of his minor manorial officials, and of the accounts of his receivers. The auditors gave Fastolf the means to monitor the performance of his other officials: so Spirleng was Fastolf’s eyes and ears when he could not be in residence at Caister. Christopher Dyer has shown that the work of auditors was not merely useful for the detection of negligence among servants, but also for the prevention of negligence:

Gwilym Dodd, Justice and Grace: Private Petitioning and the English Parliament in the Late Middle Ages (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), which described the ‘large, amorphous, and for the most part, anonymous group of writing clerks’ in London who ‘although not directly employed by the crown, many of these clerks like their counterparts in the localities, would have received their initial training in the Inns of Chancery and other departments of state’ (312).


63 Smith, ‘Aspects,’ 63-64.
knowledge that auditing would happen deterred servants from detectable theft or carelessness’. Spirleng also progressed to more important scribal duties over the course of his career. Beadle and Richmond have recently identified letter 547 from Fastolf to John Paston I, written in 1455, as being in Spirleng’s hand. This proves that, from the mid-1450s onwards, Spirleng did scribal work for Fastolf directly as well as for his associates.

In the aftermath of the death of Sir John Fastolf in 1459, Spirleng was one of the men who took the side of the Pastons in the dispute over Fastolf’s will. He was yet another former associate of Fastolf who went on to do administrative and accountancy work for the Paston family. He took up residence in Norwich and was appointed common clerk to the city of Norwich from May 1471 until 1490, not long before his death. As Manly and Rickert have pointed out, his clerkly role was very prestigious: ‘in 1469 [Spirleng] helped in the preparation of a gorgeous pageant presented before the Queen on her visit to Norwich’. During his residence in Norwich, Spirleng wrote The Canterbury Tales in Glasgow University Library, MS. Hunter 197 (U. 1.1), which Beadle believes was made for his own use, even if it was ‘a part-time undertaking, fitted in piecemeal amidst a variety of other activities’. The manuscript contains two colophons explaining that the text was the work of two

64 Christopher Dyer, Standards of Living in the Late Middle Ages Social Change in England c.1200-1520 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 94.
65 Beadle and Richmond, eds., Paston Letters and Papers, part 3, xxxi. See also letter 547, previously labeled by Davis as ‘unidentified’.
66 See letter numbers 164, 268, 339, 318, 341, and 352.
67 See Norwich, Norfolk Record Office, Norwich City Records 16/d/1, Folio Book of the Proceedings of the Municipal Assembly, 1434-91, folio 91v, where the minute recording Spirleng’s first election is in his own hand. The last record of his annual election is in May 1490 (folio 142v). In May 1491 the election of his successor, Andrew Pawe was minuted (folio 145r). As cited in Beadle, ‘Geoffrey Spirleng,’ 125. For a parallel, see the biography of John Carpenter, who was common clerk to the city of London from 1417 to 1438 and who, like Geoffrey Spirleng, moved in literary circles and compiled literary texts. See Carol M. Meale, ‘The Libelle of Englyshe Polyce and Mercantile Literary Culture in Late-Medieval London,’ in London and Europe in the Later Middle Ages, ed. Julia Boffey and Pamela King (London: University of London, 1995), 217-219. See also Thomas Brewer, Memoir of the Life and Times of John Carpenter (London: Arthur Taylor, 1856).
69 Beadle, ‘Geoffrey Spirleng,’ 123.
scribes: Geoffrey Spirleng and his son Thomas: ‘Orate pro salute animarum Galfridi Spirleng Ciuis Norwici Courtholder Clerici Maioratus et Comitatis dicte Ciuitatis ac Thome Spirleng filij sui qui scribendo hunc librum compleuerunt mense Januarij anno domini Millesimo CCCCmo lxxvj quo tempore predictus [folio 102v: dictus] Galfridus quasi quinquaginta et dictus Thomas quasi Sexdecim etatis extiterunt annorum’ (folios 102v and 115v). There is evidence that Geoffrey Spirleng used the decades of experience that he had gained by 1476 in order to supervise the work of his son. Manly and Rickert pointed out that Geoffrey appears to have corrected Thomas's work: ‘where apparently Thomas was copying, he omitted a passage which Geoffrey added in different ink in the margin’. This chronological account of Spirleng’s career shows how Spirleng progressed gradually from his early administrative work as a young man at Caister Castle to his prestigious position as town clerk and scribe of The Canterbury Tales.

70 As cited in Manly and Rickert, The Text of The Canterbury Tales, 1: 184, entry for Glasgow University, MS. Hunter 197 (U. 1.1).  
71 Ibid.
Geoffrey Spirleng’s Scribal Hand:

Figure 8: A sample of Geoffrey Spirleng’s hand from his early career (1447). Detail from a letter from Thomas Howes to Sir John Fastolf. Oxford, Magdalen College, Hickling 140 (letter 961).
Figure 9: A sample of Geoffrey Spirleng’s hand from his later career. University of
Glasgow University Library, MS. Hunter 197 (U.1.1), folio 102v.\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{72} Image reproduced from University of Glasgow, ‘The World of Chaucer: Chaucer and his Works,’ http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/exhibns/chaucer/works.html [accessed August, 2011].
William Worcester:73

The knowledge we have about William Worcester is partly an outcome of the fascination of modern historians and literary critics, and partly due to the interest that he had in his own identity. He wrote in his *Itineraries*, as well as in various other notes he made in letters and manuscript books, about himself and his relationships with his master and fellow servants.74 He was particularly enthusiastic about discussing his own name and status in his written work: for example, on the occasion that he wrote to John Paston to ask him to stop addressing him as ‘maister’ because that was the wrong title for him.75 Other members of the Fastolf circle were also fascinated by him, perhaps because of the confrontations that they had with him.

Friar Brackley, Sir John Fastolf’s confessor, even described Worcester’s physical appearance: ‘Propter Deum caveatis a confidencia in illo nigro Hibernico oculis obliquo et lusco, qui utinam corde, ore et opere non esset obliquior’ (‘For God’s sake put no trust in that black Irishman, half blind and with eyes set askew. I fear he is still more crooked in heart, speech and deeds,’ letter 612, ll. 1-4).76 It is quite possible that Worcester’s face did not in reality fit Brackley’s derisive description, and rather that Brackley wanted to cast a shadow over Worcester’s character by deriding his physical appearance in the way that had been traditional since late antiquity: for example, Brackley created a pun between what he believed was Worcester’s ‘crooked’ character, and his ‘crooked’ eyes.77 There are no other surviving descriptions of


75 Letter 506 of 2nd Sept perhaps 1454. See Chapter 2, pages 117-118 above for more discussion of this letter.


77 The writing of the fifth-century Sidonius appears to have influenced literary composition in the medieval period. His description of the ugliness of Gnatho was referred to by the 12th Century rhetorician Geoffrey of Vinsauf in his *Poetria nova*. Geoffrey of Vinsauf’s ideas about the description
Worcester’s appearance, which is surprising if he was as unusual-looking as Brackley supposed. Whether Brackley’s insults were truthful or not, they show that William Worcester provoked fascination and extreme reactions within the circle of Sir John Fastolf. These reactions ranged from cautious trust, to the utter distrust that was seen in the writings of Friar Brackley described above.

William Worcester was born in 1415. From his Imitations of John Paston, and his annotations in other manuscripts, we know that by Easter term 1432, he was an undergraduate of Hart Hall at Oxford University. Worcester was definitely in the service of Sir John Fastolf by 1438, as in that year he produced astronomical tables for his master. However, there is a possibility that Worcester was working for Fastolf as early as 1436, at 21 years old.

K. B. McFarlane pointed out that one of the first recorded

of physical appearance then influenced later-medieval writers. See Karl Young, ‘Chaucer and Geoffrey of Vinsauf,’ *Modern Philology* 41 (1944):172-182. Matthew of Vendôme stated that descriptions could be used to approve or disapprove of the subject: ‘Hic enim nihil aliud est argumentum, sive locus a nomine vel a natura, nisi per interpretationem nominis et per naturales proprietates de persona alienum probatum vel improbatum, personam propriem vel improperciam’. Geoffrey Chaucer was especially adept at making suggestions about a character’s moral condition through his or her physical appearance. His January of ‘the Merchant’s Tale’ has skin like a ‘houndfish’, and a salacious character to match his unpleasant physical appearance. Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 161, ll. 1824-1825. By the fifteenth-century, writers were playing with the conventions of descriptions of ugliness and beauty as an indicator of an individual’s moral condition, using unconventional descriptions to describe a loved one: Hoccleve’s *Of My Lady* lyric described his beloved lady as having a ‘narw and small’ forehead. Thomas Hoccleve, *Hoccleve’s Works: The Minor Poems*, edited by Israel Gollancz, EETS es 73 (1925), 2; reprinted with 61 (London: Oxford University Press, 1970): 37-38. The incongruence of the lady’s ugly appearance and the subject’s love for her would have been instantly recognisable to an audience that was used to a literary connection between ugliness and a bad character.

For example, in the aftermath of the death of Sir John Fastolf, Margaret Paston remained optimistic about how Worcester would conduct himself. In a letter she wrote in January 1462, she depicted Worcester as a conciliatory figure: ‘Will Worcet...told [me] þat he hopyd Pat ye wolde be hys good master, and seyd he hopyd ye shuld have non other cause but for to be hys god maist. I hope, and so do my moder and my cosyn Clere, Put he wolle do well j-nowe so þat he be fare wyth’ (letter 162, ll. 42-47).


These astronomical texts were the St Peter’s Church, Tiverton, Devon, copy of John Somer’s *Kalandrium*, and Bodleian Library, MS. Laud misc. 674. As cited in McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, 202, note 18.

K. B. McFarlane pointed out that BL, MS. Additional 28208, written on 27th October 1436, indicates that Worcester was possibly already Fastolf’s surveyor by this year. Beadle’s dating of Pembroke College, Cambridge, LC. II.230 as ‘perhaps between 1436 and 1440’ would support an earlier date for Worcester’s employment if it were written in 1436 or 1437. See McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, 202, and Beadle and Richmond’s headnote to letter 955 in *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century*, part 3.
employments of the young Worcester was a journey to Normandy, which cannot have been made much later than 1440. During this journey, Worcester collected evidence for a lawsuit concerning Fastolf’s nephew, Sir Robert Harling, who died at the siege of St. Denis in 1435. From that point onwards, one of Worcester’s important ongoing roles for Sir John Fastolf was to collect written and oral information for use in his property disputes and other legal cases.

William Worcester, amongst all of the literate men in Fastolf’s circle, had the most involvement in reading, editing, and translating literary texts. In the early 1450s, Worcester began his Boke of Noblesse. Christopher Allmand and Maurice Keen described the Boke as a kind of post-mortem of the wars with France, which analysed the defeat of 1450 and ‘encourag[ed] Englishmen to emerge from the trough of despondency’. Daniel Wakelin emphasised that the Boke was a work in progress, and so was testament to Worcester’s ongoing interest in reading, writing and

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82 FP 72, m. 9. See McFarlane, England in the Fifteenth Century, 203.
83 For Harling’s will (proved 12th December 1435) see Norwich District Probate Registry, Reg. Surflete, folio 187v, as cited in McFarlane, England in the Fifteenth Century, 203.
84 There are several letters that record William Worcester searching pedigrees and other documents for information. For example, letter 961 of 1447 recorded that Thomas Howes had sent William Worcester a will, and that Worcester would read it and convey the relevant information to Sir John Fastolf. The record-searching process often involved collaborating with Fastolf’s other literate associates to find the relevant facts: for example, in 1456, Worcester and Paston looked at an account of Sir Robert Whityngham’s goods together (letter 542, February 1456). K. B. McFarlane deemed William Worcester, ‘professional record-searcher and tracer of pedigrees’. Peter S. Lewis argued that this role led Worcester to develop a ‘mania’ for collecting archives and encouraged him to become a historian. McFarlane, England in the Fifteenth Century, 207; and Lewis, ‘Sir John Fastolf’s Lawsuit over Titchwell,’ 216.
85 The main sources of information and discussion about Worcester’s involvement in literary texts are Daniel Wakelin’s Humanism, Reading and English Literature, 93-125 and ‘William Worcester Writes a History of his Reading’ 53-71. Each provides comprehensive descriptions, and analysis, of his literary output and of his scholarly motivations.
86 Christopher Allmand and Maurice Keen, ‘History and the Literature of War: The Boke of Noblesse of William Worcester,’ in War, Government and Power in Late Medieval France, ed. Christopher Allmand (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 92-105 (94-97). Catherine Nall’s thesis gives numerous examples of how literature produced in the aftermath of the Hundred Years War analysed the defeat and suggested remedies for the causes of failures in France. For example, she pointed out that, in 1450, William Worcester glossed the passage in his copy of a French translation of John of Wales’s Breuiloquium (CUL, MS. Additional 7870) in a way that suggested that emulating Roman-style military discipline was the key to success on the battlefield. Nall pointed out the gloss by Worcester drawing attention to the discipline of the Romans, which appears on folio 12v of this manuscript. See Catherine Nall, ‘The Production and Reception of Military Texts, in the Aftermath of the Hundred Years War,’ (PhD diss., University of York, 2005), 37-38.
revising. In addition to the Boke, there was the lost and probably uncompleted Acta Domina Johannis Fastolf. Last, but certainly not least, there was the wealth of miscellaneous notes by William Worcester: his own notebooks, plus the annotations that he made in texts written by other men. Each annotation of ‘nota’ that was written by Worcester speaks a thousand words: each one signals a connection between the text and something that Worcester was thinking, or working on, at the time. William Worcester’s hand appears as the main scribal hand of seven manuscripts, and as a marginal annotation or ownership inscription in a further twenty manuscripts (see Appendix B).

Norman Davis, the editor of parts one and two of the Paston Letters and Papers series, focused on the epistolary language and palaeographical features of the written work of William Worcester in his articles, ‘The Epistolary Uses of William Worcester’ and ‘Language in Letters from Sir John Fastolf’s Household’. Davis got to know the scribal hands and linguistic features of Fastolf’s scribes through editing some of their work, and so laid the foundations for many subsequent studies of their work, including this thesis.

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87 The ongoing nature of the composition of the Boke of Noblesse is suggested by the revisions to the text in the mid-1470s and then again in 1475. See Wakelin, Humanism, Reading and English Literature, 95.
88 Another of Sir John Fastolf’s servants, John Bussard, was apparently involved in the Acta, and a letter to him from John Davy is further evidence that the now-lost manuscript was once in existence: ‘and thame he wrot...the jornés that my mayster dede whyl he was in Fraunce’ (letter 602, ll. 10-12). See McFarlane England in the Fifteenth Century, 211-212.
90 Wakelin noticed the exhortation ‘nota’, which William Worcester wrote throughout the margins of several manuscripts. Just one of many examples is in CUL, MS. Additional 7870: ‘nota bene pro Regno Anglie verificato tempore Regis nunc’ (folio 36v). Worcester also used his characteristic ‘Saturn’ symbol to mark significant passages. Wakelin, Humanism, Reading and English Literature, 100, 102 and 103. See Chapter 3, page 172-173 below for discussion of Worcester’s ‘Saturn’ symbol.
From 1450 onwards, the corpus of palaeographical and circumstantial evidence concerning William Worcester expands. In the year 1450 Worcester wrote fourteen letters on behalf of Sir John Fastolf, compared with none in 1448-1449, and one in 1447. This is probably because of the surge in Fastolf's legal activity in the early 1450s after the Duke of Suffolk was imprisoned in the tower and Fastolf sought to gain redress for the damage that the duke and his allies did to his interests in the late 1440s. There are eighteen autograph letters from William Worcester dating from 1454 to 1459, compared with none at all from before 1454. The increase in Worcester's writing activity in the later 1450s had a number of causes. Firstly, Fastolf moved to Caister in Norfolk, which meant that Worcester had to keep John Paston in London informed of the matters that affected his work. Secondly, Fastolf declined in health and proactiveness in his later years, which meant that Worcester had to take more personal responsibility for the management of his master’s interests. Finally, Worcester’s increasing workload from 1454 onwards gave him more cause to write to John Paston in order to complain about his master’s treatment of him.

Now to turn to the final days of William Worcester’s association with Sir John Fastolf. Worcester was not with his master when he died on 5th November 1459. However, he reported what he believed was a supernatural sign of Fastolf’s death, which was recorded by Friar Brackley in one of his letters: ‘near a church he encountered a white owl that persistently uttered strange cries and several times flew

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92 For Suffolk's imprisonment see Gairdner, ed., _The Paston Letters_, 2: number 101 (document of impeachment of the Duke of Suffolk, February 1450). Most of Fastolf’s letters of 1450-1451 sought financial recovery in the aftermath of his disputes over the manors of Hickling and Dedham. The duke of Suffolk was Fastolf’s enemy in both of these disputes (see pages 9-10 above). For example, in letter 979 of April 1450 Fastolf instructed his servants to inform him of how much financial damage John Heydon had done to him. John Heydon was in the service of the duke of Suffolk as his chief agent in Suffolk, along with Thomas Tuddenham. See Smith, ‘Heydon, John’. See Richmond, _The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century: The First Phase_, 227.
93 See letters 506 and 537.
94 For more information about the death of Sir John Fastolf on 5th November 1459, see letter 885, a declaration by one of Fastolf’s servants, Robert FitzRawff, about Fastolf’s will, which includes a description of the discussions that occurred amongst Fastolf and his associates on his deathbed. See also letter 900 (an Inquisition Post Mortem on John Paston), which gives the date of Fastolf’s death (line 171) and John Paston’s actions in the immediate aftermath of the death (lines 171-190).
back and forth between his horse’s legs’. Worcester bore a significant proportion of the costs relating to Fastolf’s death upon his own shoulders. He personally accepted the cost of Fastolf’s hearse cloth and paid at least £340 towards the funeral. There is evidence of him in 1459-1460 making inventories of Fastolf’s belongings, counting ‘sheep, 2,456 of them, rabbits, 6,000 of them’. However, by 1470, Worcester was considering living in Cambridge to save money, having been bitterly disappointed by revisions to Fastolf’s will that left him without what he believed had been promised to him: ‘Hyt was promysed me and graunted xxv mark lyfelode o Ser John [Paston ys behalf] of my Maister Fastolf londz, xx mark for evyr bysyde v mark of fee terme of lyfe; and I hafe not clerely viij mark’. This testifies to the argument that was made above: that Sir John Fastolf was not the mean master that K. B. McFarlane depicted him. Worcester’s decline into poverty was not promoted by lack of intention to reward him for his long service - but by the actions of other men who sought reward from Fastolf’s will. Shortly after Worcester wrote his letter of complaint, he abandoned the fight for this financial reward when the sole administration of the Fastolf estate was remitted to William Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester. By 1474 he acknowledged that he had been paid all that he was owed. After some turbulent times, which lasted until 1478 and arose from the help that he lent to Waynflete, he spent the remainder of his life engaged in journeys ‘for his own pleasure’. He

96 FP 72. Colin Richmond believed that this sum did not cover the entirety of the money laid out by Fastolf: ‘I doubt whether £340 represents all the expense of Sir John Fastolf’s burial; even so it is a considerable sum’. Richmond, The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century: Fastolf’s Will, 72-73.
97 FP 87 (4). See ibid 76.
99 See letter 1046 of March 1470, a memorandum from William Worcester to William Waynflete, which shows that Waynflete had just assumed the position of sole administrator and was gathering the documents that he would need for the role (ll. 4-9).
101 Worcester was arrested for debt, had his lands in Norfolk and Essex seized and upon his release from prison had to flee to London whilst his wife was still in prison. See ibid 206, and note 39.
102 Ibid 206. John Harvey stated that the journey that William Worcester made in 1478 was Worcester’s main journey ‘for his own pleasure’. This was a journey from Norwich to St. Michael’s
compiled his *Itineraries* and became ‘a retired scholar enjoying himself after a long and arduous career’. 103

The information that can be found in the numerous studies of William Worcester forms a toolkit for this new study of him as part of the *circle* of Sir John Fastolf, and for its investigation of his role as a member of the team of men who wrote and read within this circle.

Mount and back to London in summer of 1478, which he recorded in Cambridge University, Corpus Christi College, MS 210. See John H. Harvey, Introduction to William Worcester’s *Itineraries*, ix. 103 *Ibid.*
Source material:

The letters and papers that are referred to here as the Fastolf Letters and Papers are those that Richard Beadle and Colin Richmond described as ‘relating chiefly to Sir John Fastolf and his wide circle of associates’. However, there was a convergence of interests between Fastolf and his neighbour, business associate, and distant relative, John Paston I, so the thesis at times refers to letters and papers relating chiefly to the Paston Family.

Norman Davis selected a number of the Fastolf Letters and Papers for inclusion in the second part of Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century, first published in 1976. These papers are collected in BL, MS. Additional 39848, and Davis selected them because they were addressed to John Paston. Other Fastolf Letters and Papers are in BL, MSS. Additional 27443-4, 34888 and 43488-9, and were printed when Beadle and Richmond added a third part to Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century, in 2005. Documents relating to Fastolf’s relationship with his stepson, Stephen Scrope, are in BL, MSS. Additional 28205-13 and BL, Additional Charters 18207-556. The final body of Fastolf letters and papers is among the estate documents in the archives of Magdalen College, Oxford (the Hickling, Fastolf Papers, Titchwell, Lovel, and Guton Hall classes). These were moved to the tower of the college in around 1481 by William Worcester, and have remained there ever since. Norman Davis pointed out that these documents were moved to Magdalen because William Waynflete, who was the founder of the college in 1458, eventually

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104 Beadle and Richmond, introduction to Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century, part 3, XX.
assumed administration of Fastolf’s estate after Fastolf’s death. It is important to acknowledge how many documents exist in the archives of Magdalen College, and the Norfolk and Suffolk Record Offices, which have never been edited, and which do not appear in the *Paston Letters and Papers* series. I have counted 99 written ‘items’ in the ‘Fastolf Papers’ class at Magdalen College that have not been printed in any edition, and some of these comprise more than one document (for example, Fastolf Paper 1, which comprises nine deeds relating to the manor of Dedham). In addition, the majority of the Hickling, Titchwell, Lovel, and Guton Hall classes in the Magdalen College Archives have not been edited. Much of this material has been written about in previous scholarship on Fastolf, but equally, much of it has not. This amounts to a huge body of unedited material to be investigated. A few letters have become separated from these bodies of letters and are now in private ownership, or are stored at other institutions. Two Fastolf Letters are now in the United States: one in the library of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and one in the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington DC. The corpus of letters that has been edited and printed includes seventy-three letters from Sir John Fastolf, twenty-six to Sir John Fastolf and sixty-seven relating to him (as is indicated by their selection by Beadle and Richmond for their edition). As Beadle and Richmond pointed out, in their introduction to the third part, it is ‘perhaps not unlikely that other Paston and Fastolf letters unknown to previous editors or to us may yet come to light’.

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107 The University of Illinois document is dated 3 January 1451, and is addressed to Fastolf’s cousin, John Berney, and to Sir Thomas Howes, Walter Shipdham, and Geoffrey Spirleng. This letter deals with, among other things, Fastolf’s suit against the Duke of Norfolk and his relation to Lord Scales. The Folger Shakespeare Library letter is Washington Folger X. d.274. The locations and shelfmarks of the Paston Letters and Papers have been helpfully listed in the introduction to Beadle and Richmond, eds., *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century*, xx-xxi.
108 Beadle and Richmond, introduction to *Paston Letters and Papers*, xxii.
The earliest surviving correspondence that relates directly to Sir John Fastolf dates from around 1429.\textsuperscript{109} Letters dating from the mid-1450s until Fastolf’s death in 1459 are particularly numerous, including a final ‘spurt’ in letters which Colin Richmond has pointed out was ‘occasioned by the old man's impending death’.\textsuperscript{110} Fastolf many land and property purchases in the 1430s, followed by the eventful years of the 1440s and 1450s as he fought with his enemies over the rights to these lands and properties, provoked him and his associates to write so many letters and documents.\textsuperscript{111} However, this instability may also have contributed to the patchy nature of the corpus of letters, as some letters may have been destroyed during the tumultuous 1450s, perhaps due to a need to protect the sensitive information that they contained.

The men of Fastolf’s circle continued to write and be mentioned by letters (mainly those between the Paston family) for years after the death of Sir John Fastolf. William Worcester’s final letter dates from 1478, and concerned his long-deceased master. One of Fastolf’s other scribes, William Barker, wrote a letter in 1485, which also mentioned matters pertaining to Sir John Fastolf, nearly thirty years after his death.

It is important to combine letters and documents as source material for a study like this, as though documents such as rolls of expenses and inventories furnish the study with facts, figures, and names, they are insufficient as records of the day-to-day lives

\textsuperscript{109} Letter 954 from Fastolf to John Fastolf of Oulton and John Kirteling which Beadle and Richmond dated to ‘probably 1429’ (based on the subject matter of Stephen Scrope’s plans to marry Katherine Cobham).
\textsuperscript{110} Richmond, The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century: The First Phase, 229.
\textsuperscript{111} See Colin Richmond, ‘Sir John Fastolf and the Land Market. An Enquiry of the Early 1430s Regarding Purchasable Property,’ in East Anglia's History: Studies in Honour of Norman Scarfe, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill, Carole Rawcliffe, Richard George Wilson (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002), 107-132 (110-112), for some information about the documents associated with Fastolf’s land acquisition in the 1430s. A similar spurt in letter writing in the 1450s was noticeable in the Paston Letters: Charles Kingsford pointed out that the most valuable Paston Letters date from the 1450s. See Kingsford, English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century, 3. The Pastons, like Fastolf, were experiencing difficult times in the 1450s. To give an example of just one year, in 1450 they were pre-occupied with the aftermath of the entry of their property of Gresham by Lord Moleyns in 1449. See Caster, Blood and Roses, 60-81, concerning the Pastons’ disputes with John Heydon and Lord Moleyns; and letter 36, a petition to King Henry VI of 1449: ‘the xvij day of Februarij the yere of your nobill regne xxvj, that Robert Hungerford, knight, the Lord Molyns, entred in-to the seyd maner’.
of the medieval gentry and their associates. Christine Carpenter, in the introduction to her edition of another corpus of fifteenth-century letters, *The Stonor Letters*, pointed out that documentary and epistolary sources complement each other, since ‘the great virtue of the letters is the way they enable us to see behind the formal documentation which is all we normally have, into the processes that produced the documents, and even into the minds of the producers’. In *Locality and Polity* she gave examples of letters from the Paston Letters corpus that provide information about how relationships formed between landowners, when otherwise we have only ‘the bald form of lists of names on deeds or legal records’. She compiled a list of letters that are especially useful for providing information about the complex connections between landowners. To give just one example, in letter 141 John Paston wrote to his wife Margaret to let her know that Sir Henry Inglose had died, and that he would speak with Robert Inglose and Edmund Wychyngham to be his executors. Without this evidence, we would only know that these men were the executors from the appearance of a list of their names in Inglose’s will - and we would have no information about how they were enlisted as executors. Carpenter elaborated that: ‘it is in dealing with political and social relations that [the surviving letters of correspondence] really come into their own as evidence, for they allow us to look behind the mostly very formal sources to the processes that produced them’. So, Carpenter advised that letters should be examined, ‘in conjunction with the drier, less obviously informative but no less rewarding material’. Norman Davis celebrated the contribution that letters are able to make to our knowledge of dialectology since, among medieval written sources, they were relatively natural: ‘The Paston Letters

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114 For example, see letter 141, ll. 35-39. For the list of additional letters that support Carpenter’s point see *Ibid*, note 12.
provide unique evidence (on the move towards conformity and the persistence of
distinctively regional usages) at a level of writing that is neither literary (and so self
conscious) nor legal (and so largely conventional and formulaic).\footnote{117}

Charles Kingsford was one of the first historians to give real attention to legal
records as historical literature.\footnote{118} Christine Carpenter pointed out that his notes to the
Stonor Letters were evidence of the breadth of his historical research showing ‘that
he had done a remarkable quantity of work in the plea rolls of King’s Bench and
Common Pleas’.\footnote{119} Kingsford’s work, and then subsequent surveys of historical
writing, such as Antonia Gransden’s comprehensive overview of different types of
historical writing, draws attention to the need to look at a variety of written material
for information about reading and writing in the fifteenth century.\footnote{120}

There is a small number of petitions associated with the Fastolf circle, and they are
considered below as an important source for research into reading and writing by
Fastolf’s associates.\footnote{121} There are many similarities between the style of petitions and
letters. According to the \textit{ars dictaminis}, a letter would adhere to the following ideal
structure: Salution, Exordium, Narratio, Petitio, and Conclusio.\footnote{122} A petition followed
the same basic structure.\footnote{123} Looking at writs (the responses to petitions, which
conveyed authority) shows that they, too, followed the same conventions of
writing.\footnote{124} Gwilym Dodd concluded, after examining letters, petitions, and writs,
alongside each other that ‘anyone familiar with the form of a writ would also have

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item[\footnote{117}{}] Norman Davis, ‘Scribal Variation in Late Fifteenth-Century English,’ in \textit{Mélanges de Linguistique et de Philologie: Fernand Mossé in Memoriam} (Paris: Didier, 1960) 95-103 (95).
\item[\footnote{119}{}] Carpenter, ed., \textit{Stonor Letters}, 12.
\item[\footnote{121}{}] FP 32, FP 48, FP 60, FP 84, and FP 98.
\item[\footnote{123}{}] See TNA, SC 8/21/46 as cited and translated by Gwilym Dodd, who demonstrated how it fit into the five part structure of the \textit{ars dictaminis}. Dodd, ‘Writing Wrongs’.
\item[\footnote{124}{}] \textit{Ibid.}\end{itemize}}
been familiar with the form of a petition, and vice versa’. Fastolf’s writers were certainly adaptable writers, and it was partially the conventionality of these different types of writing that made this adaptability achievable.\footnote{For an example of the diversity of the writing activity of Fastolf’s scribes: Geoffrey Spirleng’s hand can be found in letters, accounting documents, and literary manuscripts. See Chapter 5, page 306-308 below for a case study of his work as a scribe.}

The source material that is extant and available for study is probably only the tip of the iceberg of what was actually written. There are numerous references in the Fastolf Letters to other letters and documents, and many of these seem not to have survived until the present day.\footnote{To give just one example, John Bokkyng in letter 584 referred to another letter that he was sending to William Worcester about the parliament of 1459 (ll. 24-25). This letter has not survived until the present day, and thus the only record of it having existed is in this secondary reference.}

There is a gap in the surviving correspondence, between 1452 and 1453.\footnote{This was pointed out by McFarlane in \textit{England in the Fifteenth Century}, 203, note 26, and was then discussed in greater detail by Colin Richmond in his article ‘Sir John Fastolf, the Duke of Suffolk, and the Pastons,’ in \textit{The Fifteenth Century VIII}, ed. Linda Clark (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), 73-104 (73).}

There has been much discussion about the reason for this hiatus. Possibly, Fastolf was too ill to write letters in 1452 and 1453.\footnote{FP 47, written in 1453, is proof of Fastolf’s illness: this letter stated that Fastolf was not able to answer to his adversaries in because of his feebleness. For further discussion of Fastolf’s illness of 1452-1453, see Richmond, ‘Sir John Fastolf, the Duke of Suffolk, and the Pastons,’ 73-74.} There was a previous bout of illness in 1450 which appears to have interfered with Fastolf’s ability to see his servants: ‘I haue ben right soore seeke, and am weel amendid; and triste to Our Lorde to see you hastily’ (letter 987, ll. 58-9, September 1450). However, it seems unlikely that all written communication concerning Fastolf would cease merely because he was ill during this period. Indeed, in 1456, Fastolf experienced another bout of illness, and not only did he maintain communication, but he ensured diligently that his servants compensated for his inability to receive the Duchess of York personally during her visit to Caister (letter 553, June probably 1456). Even though Colin Richmond suggested illness as a potential reason for the gap in correspondence, he expressed some doubt about the explanation, noting that ‘close on three years is an extraordinarily long interval in the life of a sometimes obsessive
letter writer’. Richmond noticed a corresponding gap in the correspondence of John Paston and suggested an alternative explanation - that it was too dangerous to write, or that letters were destroyed after reading. However, there is little evidence to suggest that Fastolf and his associates would have been more inclined to destroy letters of 1452-1453 purposefully than those of any other period - the Fastolf Letters corpus shows that letters survived even when they contained the most sensitive information and even when they included requests to destroy them after reading. Pushing towards an alternative explanation for the gap in correspondence, Richmond asked ‘was [Fastolf] in Southwark or in Norfolk?’ The evidence suggests that Fastolf was in Southwark, and that John Paston was in London (see, for example, letter 487, to Paston ‘in the Iner In of the Temple’). If both men were around London, this would mean that less written communication needed to pass between them (compared with 1451 when Paston was in Norfolk, and 1454 onwards when

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129 Ibid, 74, note 6.
130 Anthony Smith, in his response to Richmond’s article, also cautiously suggested that ‘if one were inclined to explain the gap, one might suggest discretion caused it at a time of acute anxiety over treason charges: letters were not written, or were not kept’. However, he then retracted this suggestion slightly by stating ‘[b]ut I would not be inclined to lay too much emphasis on this interpretation myself’. Anthony Smith’s ‘Additional Note’ to Richmond, ‘Sir John Fastolf, The Duke of Suffolk, and the Pastons,’ 100-101.
131 Despite the fact that 1452-1453 were, as Richmond has put it, Fastolf’s ‘worst years’, as the Duke of Somerset came back into power in 1453 (Fastolf had been part of the attempt to make Somerset accountable for losses in Normandy, after Somerset’s arrest in December 1450 - see Stevenson, ed., Letters and Papers, 2.2: 718-722). Fastolf subsequently received attacks at the parliament at Reading in 1453. See Richmond, ‘Sir John Fastolf, the Duke of Suffolk, and the Pastons,’ 73. A comparable period of turbulence was 1438-1450, during which Fastolf came under constant attack from John Heydon and Thomas Tuddenham, who were agents of the Duke of Suffolk (see letter 979 of April 1450, l.3 ‘damages don to me by John Heydon thys xij yers’). There are few references to these attacks to them until after the demise of the Duke of Suffolk in April 1450 (for Suffolk’s death, see Davis, ed., Paston Letters and Papers, part 2, 35). However, unlike 1452-1453, for which no letters survive, there are surviving letters from 1438-1450 concerning other matters.
132 An example of a letter that survived despite an instruction to destroy it was letter 1026 of July 1455, which commanded the recipient: ‘And aftur [Dis] is rede and vnderstoned I pray you brene or breke it, for I am loth to write of any thing of any lord; but I most nedes’ (ll.40-42).
133 Regarding the evidence that Paston was in Southwark in 1452-1453: there is a letter from Agnes Paston to John Paston, which Davis dated to November 1452, in which Agnes asked Paston ‘beynge at London’ to speak to Fastolf, because she hoped that he would sell some property to the Paston Family: ‘I suppose fat Sir John Fastolf...were spoke to, wolde be gladere to lete his kensemen han parte than straunge men. Asay him in my name’ (letter 25, ll. 41-47). In addition, Fastolf did not retire permanently to Caister until 1454 so he, too, was probably in London at the time. See letter 83 of July 1454 from William Paston II to John Paston I: ‘Syr Jon Fastolf...wyll ryde jn-to Norfolke ward as on Trusday, and he wyll dwelle at Caster, and Skrop wyth hym’ (ll. 4-6).
Fastolf moved to Norfolk and Paston remained in London). This does not fully explain the complete lull in Fastolf's written communication - he would still have had to write to his servants in Caister. However, the easy access that Fastolf had to his legal advisor in person might partially explain the comparative quiet - he had less need to send reams of written communication about his legal matters when he could speak with John Paston directly. Looking at the ‘Fastolf Papers’ corpus of documents reveals that there was not a corresponding gap in document production over this period. Despite the fact that the last letter from Fastolf before the gap was written in September 1451, there is a document concerning one of his property transactions dating from August 1452.\footnote{FP 47.} There is also a document recording a loan to the duke of York that was written in December 1452.\footnote{See Richmond, ‘Sir John Fastolf, the Duke of Suffolk, and the Pastons,’ 72, note 5, citing BL, Additional Charter 17242.} FP 50 is a declaration regarding a case of trespass and removal of crops in 1453. Finally in the Calendar of Fine Rolls there is a commitment of the manor of Titchwell to the keeping of Sir John Fastolf dating from 1453.\footnote{Interestingly this commitment was made partially by William Barker ‘of Suthwark’, which indicates that Barker was with his master in Southwark rather than at Caister. If Fastolf was indeed ill, it is logical that he would require the attendance of his clerks at Southwark, to attend to the duties that he could not. Calendar of Fine Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office: Henry VI, 1452-1461, 64.} Though these documents are not as numerous as those dating from other periods in Fastolf's lifetime, their existence shows that there is not a complete absence of written material relating to this period.

It does not seem that there is a single satisfactory explanation for the gap in correspondence between 1452 and 1453. It may have been the case that fewer letters were written, because Fastolf was able to speak directly with John Paston, and because his illness prevented him from attending to certain matters personally. Indeed, there is some indication in the first letter after the hiatus that Fastolf was unsure what letters had passed under his seal beforehand. Fastolf’s chaplain, Thomas Howes, apparently exploited Fastolf’s lack of awareness about his written material in
order to claim that Fastolf had sent letters that he had not. Fastolf complained: ‘hafe...[seyd] that ye have suffisaunt warauntes vndre my lettre and sele...there passed no such warauntes vndre my sele’ (letter 1015, ll. 1-9, 12th July 1454). This may be some indication that Fastolf had less involvement with written correspondence over the period of his illness. However, since this does not explain the complete lack in written correspondence concerning his matters over 1452-1453, it may also have been the case that some letters in this sensitive period were indeed destroyed rather than stored. Whatever the reason, the result was that there is a period of time about which we have minimal information about the lives of Fastolf and his associates.

Finally, some letters may have survived until as recently as the eighteenth century, before being destroyed by antiquarians who judged them to be unimportant. This was indicated in the following description of the Paston Letters by the Reverend Francis Blomefield in 1735:

There are innumerable letters...still lying among the loose papers, all of which I laid up in a corner of the room on a heap...I shall separate and preserve them, or whether you will have them burnt, though I must own ’tis a pity they should; except it be those (of which there are many) that relate to nothing but family affairs only.\(^{137}\)

So it is also possible that the 1452-1453 gap in correspondence happened because Blomefield threw some letters away. Fortunately, the Fastolf Letters survive in large numbers in the Magdalen College archives, where they have been since they were moved there in the fifteenth century. However, it is impossible to know how much written material relating to Fastolf and his circle passed into the possession of his associates and so might have been lost, destroyed, or dispersed over the centuries.\(^{138}\)

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138 Chapter 3, page 188 below describes the extent to which the documents relating to Fastolf’s interests travelled between his various estates, and passed between his associates, during his lifetime. Chapter 3, Pages 207-213 below show how complex the storage of these written pieces was, and how
The study of writing within the Fastolf circle is made difficult by the relative lack of attention that has been given to documents in comparison with letters of correspondence. Colin Richmond and Richard Beadle’s third volume of the *Paston Letters and Papers*, which contains the letters and documents associated with Sir John Fastolf, includes only a small number of documents. There are many so-far unprinted documents in the ‘Fastolf Papers’ collection at Magdalen College in Oxford, which are predominantly in Latin. They are miscellaneous in their nature, and numerous, and include such documents as: deeds relating to various manors (for example, FP 1), account rolls (FP 2), and acknowledgements of the payment of sums of money (FP 11). The introduction to Beadle and Richmond’s edition does not explain their omission. However, it is possible that Beadle and Richmond believed that the Latinity of these documents and their disjointed nature made them unsuitable for inclusion in their edition. This thesis attempts to compensate for this relatively sparse research into the administrative documents associated with the Fastolf circle by going back to the primary material in the Magdalen College archives, and examining each document for any information that it contains about reading and writing within the circle.

The final type of source material for the thesis are the literary manuscript books that were associated with Sir John Fastolf and his associates. These books, and the individuals who wrote and read them, are described in detail in Chapter Five, in order

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139 This is similar to the treatment that the Cely Letters and Papers received when they were edited for print. The editor, Alison Hanham, wrote that documents often seem, ‘disjointed and unwieldy’, and that the sheer number of these documents (some two hundred in the case of the Stonor documents) made them an impractical addition to a printed corpus. Therefore, Hanham ignored these ‘accounts and memoranda’ (even though she acknowledged that they were ‘full of individual items of interest’) and limited the edition to the letters alone. Alison Hanham, ed., *The Cely Letters*, EETS os 273 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), viii.

140 Alexandra Gillespie has discussed what was meant by the term ‘book’ in the Middle Ages, and has applied it to her own description of written material. She stated that ‘book’ should have very wide implications: ‘In this discussion I will use the word “books” to refer to a wide range of legible surfaces for texts, from scraps of parchment to substantial codices. That was how the word was used in the Middle Ages’. Alexandra Gillespie, ‘Books,’ in *Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature: Middle English*, ed. Paul Strohm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 86-103 (87-88).
Section One, Chapter One: Introduction

75

Section One, Chapter One: Introduction

There is already a body of literature about how readers related their reading of literary texts, classical especially, to their own lives, and how evidence for this reading was manifested in their notes, letters of correspondence, and in original compositions such as William Worcester’s Boke of Noblesse. Research has also examined the literary choices of nobility and royalty above Fastolf, and the composition of literature for these men, which may shed some light on the reading of this ambitious man, who would have sought to emulate those above him.

It remains to introduce the other gentry circles that can be compared with Sir John Fastolf and his associates.

The first and most obvious corpus of letters is the Paston Letters and Papers. Not only were these letters written to, from, and about, the Paston Family of Norfolk around the same time that the Fastolf Letters were written, but as William Paston I and John Paston I were both legal advisors of Sir John Fastolf (and thus were in

141 See Nall, ‘The Production and Reception of Military Texts,’ esp. 122, and 147. For the Boke of Noblesse, See McFarlane, England in the Fifteenth Century, 217: ‘[William Worcester] read the classics as he studied modern authors, to use what he taught them. He was less interested in their manner than in their content’. The Boke of Noblesse showed how it was possible to learn from the examples of excellent leaders that were depicted in classical texts: ‘Worcester’s secretarial help, offered to the king some unsolicited advice about a military campaign; and, amid the technicalities, he recommended finding leaders prudent enough to lead the troops with foresight and flexibility, “for in the Trojan War the prudence of one Antenor is said to have been of greater assistance than the strength or fortitude of ten Hectors”’ (‘nam plus profuisse dicitur in bello Trojano providentia unius Antenoris quam strenuitas aut fortitudo decem Hекторum’). Stevenson, ed., Letters and Papers, 2.2: 725, cited in Wakelin, Humanism, Reading and English Literature, 111.

142 For more information about the literary interests of King Henry V: Craig Taylor pointed out that Thomas Hoccleve dedicated The Regiment of Princes, a mirror for princes, to the future Henry V. Henry also received a translation of Gaston Phébus’ famous hunting manual, the Livre de la chasse from Edward Langley, second duke of York. See Edward duke of York, The Master of Game by Edward, Second Duke of York: the Oldest English Book on Hunting, eds. A. William and Florence Baillie-Grohman (London, 1904). Finally, Taylor showed that Henry was also the dedicatee of De officio militari, another traditional mirror for princes written by Richard Ullerston. See Craig Taylor, ‘English Writings on Chivalry and Warfare during the Hundred Years War,’ in Soldiers, Nobles and Gentlemen, essays in honour of Maurice Keen, ed. Peter Coss and Christopher Tyerman (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), 74. Henry V was also a patron of John Lydgate (1370 - c. 1451), and it was for him that Lydgate wrote his Life of Our Lady. See J. A. Lauritis, R. A. Klinefelter and V. F. Gallagher, introduction to A Critical Edition of John Lydgate’s ‘Life of Our Lady’, Duquesne studies: Philological Series, 2 (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University, 1961), 4-10. See Wakelin, Humanism, Reading and English Literature, 63, citing John Lydgate, ‘A Mumming at Eltham,’ in Lydgate, Minor Poems, ed. Henry Noble MacCracken, EETS es 107, os 192 (London: Oxford University Press, 1911-1934), 2: 627-634, II. 1-4, 36-49, and 81-84.
regular correspondence with him), many of the letters associated with Sir John Fastolf are also part of the Paston Letters corpus.

Moving on to the Stonor Letters, the Stonor lands lay in the Thames Valley in Oxfordshire, and John Stonor was, like John Paston, a legal man whose career as a judge enabled him to build up the family’s estates and rebuild its primary residence. In a complete contrast with the fluctuating fortunes of Sir John Fastolf and John Paston, John Stonor’s life was marked by its lack of turmoil - he, as Christine Carpenter has pointed out, ‘seems to have done little of note’. Carpenter noted that it was with John’s son, Edmund (d. 1382) that the family’s profile began to rise. By the lifetime of Thomas Stonor (b. 1394 - d. 1431), who came into his lands in 1415, the family had a real local presence, Thomas being friendly with Thomas Chaucer ‘one of the main local power brokers’. Interestingly, Thomas Stonor had an association with William de la Pole, the first duke of Suffolk and his son married a woman whom he asserted was de la Pole’s natural daughter. Sir John Fastolf also had a connection with this man - though as an adversary rather than a friend. The Stonor Letters are the fullest from the 1460s to the 1480s, two decades after the greatest writing activity in the circle of Sir John Fastolf. The Stonor letters, which have such varied topics as the marital issues of William Stonor, the business interactions that related to the wool trade, and other day-to-day issues of the middling gentry, have a broad contribution to make to our understanding of this class of people.

144 Carpenter, ed., Stonor Letters, 4.
146 See pages 9-10 above, which details the disputes that Fastolf had with the Duke of Suffolk. In the 1440s, the duke repeatedly attempted to recover the manor of Dedham in Suffolk from Fastolf, since until 1399 it had belonged to the de la Pole family.
in the fifteenth century.\footnote{Christine Carpenter emphasised the value of this corpus to late medievalists by arguing that ‘[w]hat the Stonor letters now have to offer is...an almost unrivalled insight into the social mores of the fifteenth century gentry’. Carpenter, ed., Stonor Letters, 17.} It is useful to make a comparison between writing practices in the Stonor circle and the practices of the Fastolf circle if it is true that the Stonors were more typical of fifteenth-century gentry society than what Carpenter deemed ‘the pushy society of East Anglian lawyers’.\footnote{Carpenter, ed., Stonor Letters, 17.} It was these East Anglian lawyers who wrote many of the items in the Fastolf Letters corpus. If Fastolf’s associates were atypical, it is essential to look at other circles for information about gentry society. Comparing the Fastolf Letters corpus with the Stonor corpus helps to create a more balanced impression about the writing of correspondence, which covers all subgroups of gentry society in the fifteenth century.

The \textit{Cely Letters} corpus is a collection that was written a generation later than the Fastolf and Stonor Letters, beginning in 1474 with the most frequent having been written in the 1480s. This corpus is much less continuous than the other two corpora and thus is less useful for studying letter writing practice over time. However, the collection is useful for a comparison between the Fastolf Letters and letters that were written by members of a different section of fifteenth-century society. The Cely family differed from the both the military man Sir John Fastolf, and the judges John Paston and John Stonor, as they were merchants of the Staple who bought wool in England and conducted business in Calais.\footnote{Alison Hanham, introduction to \textit{Cely Letters}, xi. For the involvement of the Cely Family in the staple at Calais see Alison Hanham, \textit{The Celys and their World: An English Merchant Family of the Fifteenth Century} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), especially part 2, ‘The Wool Trade’. For more information about the wool staple in Calais and the export of wool from London see Anne F. Sutton, \textit{The Mercery of London: Trade, Goods and People 1130-1578} (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2005), 139-146.} However, the family had a similar kind of figurehead to the man we understand Sir John Fastolf to have been. Alison Hanham, the editor of the Cely Letters, wrote the following about ‘Old Richard’ Cely:\footnote{Some biographical information about the elder Richard Cely (d. 1482) can be found in G. A.} ‘Old Richard dominates the correspondence up to his death, worrying
perpetually about prospects of war, about the price of wool and the difficulties of making a profit on it, and about his sons' remissness in writing... he was capable of showing real affection... but was inclined to be tyrannical'.

This impression sounds familiar: reminiscent of Sir John Fastolf as he entered his elderly years. Hanham’s remark that old Richard’s sons, Richard II and George, ‘speak of him to one another with a mixture of kindliness and calculation,’ promotes a comparison with the way that Fastolf’s secretary William Worcester wrote about Sir John Fastolf. Worcester combined gratefulness towards his master, frustration at his querulous nature, appreciation for his military principles, and concern for his wellbeing and the maintenance of his ‘worship’. The Cely Letters also preserve circumstantial evidence of the written work of scribes, especially the work of Thomas Ketson. This means that the Cely Letters, like those of the Fastolf circle, have contributions to make to our knowledge of the composition, writing, and reception of non-autograph letters within a gentry circle.


Worcester wrote about the respect that Fastolf apparently had for him, compared to the lack of respect that he felt John Paston showed him: ‘Wold Jesu, maistras, that my gode mast coude hafe founded yn hys hert to hafe trusted and lovyd me as my maister Fastolf dyd’ (letter 727, ll. 18-19).

K. B. McFarlane wrote that in the 1450s Fastolf declined into ‘querulous and unmanageable senility’. McFarlane, ‘Profits of War,’ 93. Worcester himself wrote that Fastolf was sharp with ‘simple’ servants like himself: ‘he questioneth and disputeth with hys servantes’ (letter 559).

Jeremy Catto argued that Worcester supported Fastolf’s views concerning the wars in France: ‘[William Worcester’s historical knowledge] was also capable of being used to a purpose: to make a case, in his Boke of Noblesse, for Fastolf’s political views, which it is clear he genuinely shared’. Amongst the evidence for this are Worcester’s annotations to the Boke of Noblesse, which argued that part of the reason why the French lands had been lost was because Charles VII had broken the truce with England: ‘Treugae pluries infractae’ (Several truces broken) and ‘Nota fallacias Francorum in rupcione treugarum, vide et attende bene’ (Note the deceits of the French in breaking the truces: see and take good note). BL, MS. Royal 18 B.XXII, 16v; 17r. This point about Worcester’s annotations comes from Nall, ‘The Production and Reception of Military Texts,’ 153. See Jeremy Catto, ‘Masters, Patrons and the Careers of Graduates in Fifteenth Century England,’ in The Fifteenth Century, Volume 1: Concepts and Patterns of Service, ed. Anne Curry and Elizabeth Matthew (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000), 52-63 (55). My emphasis.

In letter 572, Worcester expressed his wish that his fellow servants would act in a way that promoted Fastolf’s interests: ‘as of your mocion for my maister worship and profityt, exorting hym, the stuard, Shypdam, and Spyrylyng to take a labour and a peyn that thys be reformed’ (letter 572, ll. 35-37).
Comparisons can also be made with the written material associated with Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick (b. 1382- d. 1439). Like Sir John Fastolf, the earl had a long-serving secretary, John Shirley. Finally, there is a corpus of written material associated with a very different man from Sir John Fastolf and the earl of Warwick, in terms of occupation and position in fifteenth-century society: the draper and, later, Mayor of London, Sir Thomas Cook junior (d. 1478). Though Cook differed from Fastolf by earning his wealth through successful business transactions rather than prudent military activity, in many ways the two men were similar. M. A. Hicks pointed out that as well as his London residence Sir Thomas Cook had a country residence at Gidea Park in Essex, which he ‘embellished and improved’ whilst simultaneously operating ‘extensively’ in the land market in Essex, ‘his name being one of the most frequent to occur among the Essex feet of fines’. This division of time and investment between a country residence and a London townhouse is similar to Fastolf’s movement between Caister Castle in Norfolk and Fastolf Place in Southwark. Both Cook and Fastolf were concerned with conspicuous displays of wealth, though Fastolf was wealthier than Cook: Cook had £397.50 worth of plate, compared with Fastolf’s £2,456. Anne Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs have pointed out that Sir Thomas Cook had a secretary who had a similar role to John Shirley. This

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159 For Cook’s wealth: see TNA, E 405/48 m. I. As cited in Hicks, ‘The Case of Sir Thomas Cook,’ 83. The total of Fastolf’s plate is a total in the hands of his executors at the time of his death. See McFarlane England in the Fifteenth Century 189-190, citing Gairdner, ed. *The Paston Letters*, ii 166-174.
secretary and ‘man of affairs’ was named John Vale. As there may have also been similarities between Vale and William Worcester, this thesis makes comparisons between their secretarial works in their respective corpora of written material.

Situating these corpora of written material alongside the Fastolf Letters and Papers expands the focus of the thesis, in order to situate this case study of writing and reading within the wider context of the society to which Sir John Fastolf belonged.

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Chapter Two: A Case Study of the Fastolf Circle.

a) Introduction:

This is a case study of Sir John Fastolf and the men who were connected with him. Before these connections can be analysed, there is a dilemma of how to describe these men as a group. As the title of the thesis indicates, the term ‘circle’ has been selected. There will now be a brief explanation of why this has been chosen over others such as ‘household’, ‘retinue’, and ‘affinity’.

The word ‘circle’ has especial breadth as a way of describing a group. It has been used in a literary context to describe those who had a shared interest in producing, reading, or hearing literature: Carole Meale wrote about London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS. 491, a copy of the *Awnters of Arthure* that contained the names of people, ‘who seem to have formed a kind of informal literary circle amongst the Essex gentry in the early sixteenth century’.¹ The word has also been used for a literary critical purpose in scholarship relating to Sir John Fastolf: Jonathan Hughes, when looking at the intellectual and cultural output of Fastolf and his associates, described Geoffrey Spirleng as: ‘another who can be considered as part of Fastolf’s literary circle’.² Importantly, the connotations of the word ‘circle’ can be kept wide through an awareness that, though these men were bonded by their shared involvement in the composition and transmission of literature, this literary bond was created between men who were already linked by kinship, shared allegiances, or

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² Though there is no circumstantial or palaeographical evidence for Hughes’ claim that Spirleng was part of a ‘literary’ circle whilst in the service of Sir John Fastolf: his writing responsibilities were primarily administrative. See Chapter 5, page 306-308 below. Jonathan Hughes made this claim in ‘Stephen Scrope and the Circle of Sir John Fastolf: Moral and Intellectual Outlooks,’ in *Medieval Knighthood IV. Papers from the Fifth Strawberry Holl Conference, 1990*, ed. C. Harper-Bill and R. Harvey (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992), 109-146 (133).
geographical proximity. P. W. Fleming emphasised this breadth when he argued that: ‘the dissemination of culture was facilitated by existing communities’.

These communities within the wider society, which can also be deemed ‘circles’, would encompass a variety of connections between individuals, and would foster a range of different ways in which these individuals might interact. In comparison, the word ‘household’ is not sufficiently broad to apply to this study of Sir John Fastolf, due to its relatively narrow implications. It has close associations with the house itself, and it mainly concerns individuals in close physical proximity with the lord. The ‘Middle English Dictionary’ defines the household as, ‘the members of a family collectively, including servants, a family; the familia of a bishop, abbot, etc.; also, a hive full of bees’, or ‘the persons living with a king, queen, or noble; attendants, retainers, retinue; court’.

The East-Anglian fifteenth-century theologian, John Capgrave, is one example of a writer who saw a similarity between a household and a swarm of bees living and working in a single hive: ‘Alle these ben bees, whiche to þe houshold brynge/ Alle her stuf and al her gaderynge’ (c.1450). This appropriation of the word ‘household’ for the description of a hive and its bees reinforces the association between the word and the physical entity of the house. There are many examples, in medieval literature, of how the word ‘household’ was used to describe the people who were connected with a house.

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6 For example: ‘I beseke ye at þis tyme to behalde my myster, and at þou wolde vuchesafe to spare me and my hows & my howsold þat is þer-in’ (c. 1450). Mary Macleod Banks, ed., An Alphabet of Tales, EETS os 126 and 127 (London: Oxford University Press, 1904 and 1905; reprint as one volume 1987),
in his *Boke of Noblesse* is especially noteworthy since he is a central figure in this thesis. Worcester aligned the ‘household’ with a ‘mesuage’, and so associated it with a physical location: ‘The terme of Res publica...ought aswelle be referred to the provision and wise gouernaunce of a mesuage or a householde as to the conduit and wise gouernaunce of a village, towne, citee, countree, or region’ (c. 1451). Modern historians have also associated the household with single property by referring to the ‘household’ in opposition to those who were not reliant on the property for their board. For example, see Chris Given-Wilson’s observation about the associates of Thomas Arundel, Bishop of Ely: ‘The knights and esquires, or at least some of them, should probably not be thought of as full time members of the household - they would almost certainly have resided principally on their own estates’. Jeremy Goldberg has warned against focusing on the ‘household’ when studying social ties in late medieval England. He wrote that, ‘the focus on the co-resident group ignores such affective ties or ties of kinship that may have extended beyond the physical entity of the household’. Thus, ‘circle’ is more appropriate for this thesis, since the connections that were most pertinent in relation to writing and reading in Fastolf’s group extended beyond the house, and incorporated certain men who lived miles away from his primary residences of Caister Castle in Norfolk and Fastolf Place in Southwark. Using the term ‘circle’ avoids overlooking other important social relationships that bound people together even if they did not share the same living space.

The term ‘circle’ is also particularly useful for this study since it transcends social

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7 A mesuage was ‘a residence, dwelling house; farmstead; also, a household’. McSparran, ed., ‘Middle English Dictionary.’: ‘mesuāge’ (n.).
9 Given-Wilson found the names of the knights and esquires associated with Thomas Arundel in a list of fees of the household for the Christmas term, which included ten knights, and seven esquires. See *The English Nobility in the Late Middle Ages*, 88.
hierarchies and incorporates individuals from every social level: menial servants, literate clerks, fellow gentrymen, clergymen, and Fastolf’s social superiors such as dukes and earls. In the case of Sir John Fastolf, his circle incorporated any individual who contributed to his profit and honour in any way. In contrast, the term ‘affinity’ is more exclusive. The term did apply to a variety of different types of relationships - as G. A. Holmes wrote, it was a ‘sea of varying relationships’: for example, the lord’s relationship with some men of his affinity was defined by a precise contract, whereas with others it was not. The definition offered by the ‘Middle English Dictionary’ is also broad: ‘affinity’ could refer to ‘association’, ‘fellowship’, or ‘companionship’. However, when other modern historians have used the word ‘affinity’, they have focussed on the gentry associates of a lord, rather than his lower-level servants. For example, Christine Carpenter wrote that, ‘Beauchamp’s affinity, in common with those of other noblemen, consisted primarily of the gentry resident in the areas where his estates lay’. G. L. Harris also applied the term to fellow gentry men, whose relationship with the lord was based on military connections, social links (for example, through marriage), or professional connections.

In the following statement by Christine Carpenter, the word was used to refer exclusively to those who were involved in the transaction of the lord’s ‘business’: ‘there are...deeds that show beyond all reasonable doubt the affinity meeting to transact its members’ business’. Furthermore, despite the wide-ranging definition presented by the M.E.D, most of medieval uses of the word have a military register: ‘Alle þe folke of his affinite at

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14 ‘The pattern of service to a noble family - military, social and professional - gave a well established affinity a corporate identity manifested in the intermarriage of its families, their mutual assistance as feoffees and executors, and their general social intercourse’. G. L. Harris, introduction to *England in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. McFarlane.
fresch ware vnwondid...to þe fli3t foundid (c.1400)’, and ‘Þe Duke of Awmarle...& þe Duk of Surrey...& oþir moo of her afinite, were accorded...to sle þe King (c. 1425)’.16 The term ‘retinue’ has similarly military connotations, which distinguish it from the group that centred upon the domestic sphere of the house. Simon Walker observed this distinction in his statement that, ‘there was a considerable overlap between the personnel of the household and the retinue’.17 Walker explained that the retainers of John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster (d. 1399), were different from those of his household because they were: ‘required to campaign abroad in the duke’s company’ and ‘in times of peace they were to be ready at his summons’.18 Fastolf’s circle incorporated some military connections that were transferred into a peacetime context upon his return from the wars in France. However, the majority of his post-wartime connections concerned legal battles rather than wartime battles, and so ‘circle’ is a more appropriate descriptor.

The implications of the word ‘circle’ are also most appropriate to capture the nature of the relationships between individuals in the group around Sir John Fastolf. The word is able to encapsulate the shifting loyalties between individuals, and the way in which relationships could be manipulated in order to achieve certain aims: such as purchasing property, securing a marriage, or winning a legal battle. Christine Carpenter showed that the purchase of property could be facilitated by friendly relationships within circles, with a ‘vendor who moved within the same circles’ being ‘more likely both to be persuaded to sell and to have relatives in the same network who could be discouraged from pursuing their own claims to the lands’.19 Carpenter’s

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18 Ibid, 14.

19 Carpenter gave evidence that land sales were conducted amongst those who moved in the same circles, which might result in a favourable relationship of protection between seller and buyer: ‘I have
use of the phrase ‘moving in circles’ conveys the flexibility of these communities, which might disintegrate and re-form according to the political situation, or according to the personal circumstances of individuals within the circle. There were certain men whose connection with Fastolf was based on providing only occasional assistance with his business matters. Indeed, the looser nature of the relationship with these men, which contrasted with the more consistent attendance of Fastolf’s other men, gave Fastolf and his servants some concern about how to reward them. In October 1456, John Bokkyng wrote to John Paston that Hugh atte Fenne deserved some thanks for his help with obtaining 40 shillings from a man named Worsop. However, Bokkyng wrote frustratedly that he was unsure of how to express this gratitude, explaining: ‘I can nought vnderstande hym what he wolde be doon to or how rewarded, for whanne I speke of it he is desplesid and seithe he desirith no rewarde’ (letter 565, ll. 13-15). John Bokkyng did not trust Fenne, and added: ‘he fairith as a man wole sey he wole noo siluere, lokith awaywardes and takith a noble’ (ll. 14-15). This suspicion indicates that there was some anxiety about how good relations could be maintained within a circle. Bokkyng’s comment gives some idea of the changing boundaries of the circle, with men acting friendly or unfriendly according to their shifting loyalties.

Christine Carpenter’s article about the Stonor Letters emphasised the power that being part of a well-connected group could provide to any of its members: ‘[gentry society] was built on a network of associations stretching across the Thames Valley counties, which could act as a reservoir of trusted associates for all the arrangements

lond... clepyd Strangys...qwheche lond I desire to selle 3ow be-forne any other man’. In return for this ‘first refusal’ on the land, the seller demanded that the buyer did not show favour to another man with whom he had a disagreement. See Letter 521 of the Paston Letters and Papers. Carpenter, Locality and Polity, 285 and note 14. Virginia Davis found that there was a similarly close relationship between vendor and purchaser in the course of bishop William Waynflete’s acquisition of property: ‘He bought virtually no land which did not come from people with whom he or his close connections were demonstrably familiar... His particular emphasis on familiarity with both vendor and location was the best way of ensuring that titles were secure’. Virginia Davis, William Waynfleet, Bishop and Educationalist, Studies in the History of Medieval Religion 6 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1993), 126.
intrinsic to the management of family and property’. This contrasts with the implications of the word ‘retinue’: of a powerful lord being assisted by, and looking after, a group of servants and supporters. Mark Ormrod has shown that the ‘retinue’ was a flexible group, incorporating household men, lawyers, and other ‘well wishers’. However, the emphasis was on the power of the lord: his ‘social and political primacy’. In contrast, Carpenter’s description of ‘circles’ and ‘networks’ emphasised the value of connections for every member involved in the connection. Fastolf was a wealthy and powerful landowner and a firm master to his servants. However, his relationship with his associates was complex and was not merely that of dominant and domineered. The nature of Fastolf’s connection with his associates varied from man to man and was liable to be re-negotiated according to the situation. Thus, the term ‘circle’, and the flexibility that it implies, is most appropriate for this thesis. The men within this group, when referred to individually, are called his ‘associates’.

The case study now proceeds to examine the Fastolf circle from the inside outwards, aiming to establish the relative proximity of Fastolf’s associates. The findings of this research will be presented in an original way, capturing the Fastolf circle as a diagram. Sociolinguistic studies, such as the one conducted by Alexander Bergs, have presented gentry circles in a visual way. Bergs devised a diagram of the social network of the Paston family, which represented the group within which linguistic interaction occurred. However, the diagrams that will be presented in this thesis have wider implications for medieval studies. They will act as a basis for research into the way in which Fastolf’s associates interacted, both with each other and with him. Knowing where Fastolf’s associates were located at any given time is

fundamental to the thesis’s study of how these individuals read, wrote, and performed administrative duties within their circle.

This case study will consider methods of subdividing the circle of Sir John Fastolf. It is possible to make these divisions according to who each man was - his social position and responsibilities - as was indicated by circumstantial evidence in the Fastolf Letters and Papers. Alternatively, these groupings can be made according to linguistics: how each man was described by his lord and fellow associates. The case study will also consider whether medieval people themselves recognised these groupings.23

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23 Rosemary Horrox has suggested that the terms that indicate sub-groups within the wider circle might not have represented divisions in reality. Instead, she proposed that they reflected a medieval 'passion for arranging things in order and for resolving all the possible ambiguities and contradictions which might arise'. Rosemary Horrox, ‘Service,’ in Fifteenth Century Attitudes: Perceptions of Society in Late Medieval England, ed. Rosemary Horrox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 91-78 (61).
b) Relative proximity and how to establish it:

The ‘network analysis’ approach to gentry studies describes the different types of connections, and degrees of proximity, between members of a network.24 Regarding the geographical extent of cultural networks amongst the gentry, Deborah Youngs showed how the gentry were certainly not restricted to their localities and gave several examples of connections that were made in London by families from other parts of England and Wales.25 Christine Carpenter emphasised that a man of the greater gentry would form social and economical connections both within his own county and outside it by pointing to the marriage statistics that show that the greater gentry would more often marry outside the county than more parochial families.26

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24 The most recent studies of gentry networks are Malcolm Mercer, *The Medieval Gentry: Power, Leadership and Choice During the Wars of the Roses* (London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011); Deborah Youngs, ‘Cultural Networks,’ in *Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England*, ed. Raluca Radulescu and Alison Truelove (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 119-133; Jonathan S. Mackman ‘The Lincolnshire Gentry and the Wars of the Roses,’ PhD diss. (University of York, 2000); Castor, *Blood and Roses*; and Peter R. Coss, *The Origins of the English Gentry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Network analysis was paid particular attention by Christine Carpenter in her article ‘Gentry and Community in Medieval England’, which described the different degrees of proximity between members of a network. Christine Carpenter, ‘Gentry and Community in Medieval England,’ *Journal of British Studies* 33 (1994): 340-380. Peter Coss’s article, ‘Hilton, Lordship and the Culture of the Gentry’ provides a good survey of the various theories of aristocratic and gentry networks: ‘Hilton, Lordship and the Culture of the Gentry,’ *Past and Present* 195 (2007): 34-52. From the 1970s onwards ideas emerged about the ‘county community’, of clusters of geographically-defined communities. Subsequent work superseded this in order to show that communities were not restricted to a single county, or in fact to any geographical location, but created by ‘people in interaction’. See Anthony P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (London and New York: Tavistock Publications, 1985), 12-13. Then there is Carpenter’s *Locality and Polity*, which emphasises the role of interaction between aristocratic and gentry networks: ‘the mutually reinforcing interplay of gentry networks with lords’ affinities’. The most recent theories have begun to take into account every social interaction into which the gentry entered. As Peter Coss wrote, ‘relationships entered into as a result of the running of households and estates, as well as through the legal protection of those estates. These are as important as the vertical relationships with the higher nobility and the horizontal relationships between themselves as equals or near equals which have often been a mainstay of gentry studies’. So, according to this theory, the relationship between Sir John Fastolf and the men of his stable at Caister would be as important for an analysis of his ‘social network’ as that between him and the other knights who fought in the battles of the Hundred Years War. Thus, recent theories of gentry networks create bigger, more interconnected, and more complex ‘networks’.

25 Youngs pointed out the emphasis on parochialism in previous scholarship, and countered this by showing how connections were formed by gentry families outside of their home counties. Youngs concentrated on connections made for the purpose of cultural exchanges, such as the exchange of literary texts. Youngs, ‘Cultural Networks,’ esp. 125.

26 Carpenter concluded that, ‘the more substantial the gentry family, the wider its connections would be, not just within the county but outside it as well’. Carpenter, ‘Gentry and Community,’ 346.
She pointed out that certain lords held land in several regions, such as the Shirleys, who had a stake in Derbyshire, Leicestershire and, Warwickshire.\(^{27}\)

In order to create a comprehensive overview of all the connections between members of the gentry - both proximate and distant - we need to search for evidence for any link between individual gentrymen. Christine Carpenter called for a ‘careful examination of the links at all levels of gentry society, the identification and social analysis of groupings, and an assessment of the strength of connection between the levels of the gentry hierarchy’.\(^{28}\) Carpenter believed we should seek connections with ‘real meaning’, signified by ‘marriage, wills, dealings with the crown, and appearances as parties to cases in the legal records’.\(^{29}\) The methodology of this search involves examining records of feoffees and witness lists ‘as evidence of trust and interconnectedness’ between late-medieval gentry.\(^{30}\)

Unfortunately, there are few extant records of feoffments relating to Sir John Fastolf. Even if many of these types of documents had survived, they may not be very useful for ascertaining who was truly proximate to Fastolf: Carpenter’s study showed that the appearance of an individual’s name on a witness list did not necessarily indicate his proximity to the lord since, ‘witnesses were not always present when deeds were drawn up’.\(^{31}\) In addition, these lists did not necessarily indicate friendship, as ‘potential opponents of a settlement, rather than trusted friends, might be included among the people involved in it because this would oblige

\(^{27}\) Carpenter argued that men have been inaccurately associated with a single county, when the evidence suggests that their interests were spread over multiple counties: ‘[the gentry] have by and large been treated as belonging exclusively to one or other of these counties, without regard for the effect that their involvement elsewhere might have had on their actions’. \textit{Ibid}, 350.

\(^{28}\) \textit{Ibid}, 368.

\(^{29}\) \textit{Ibid}.

\(^{30}\) \textit{Ibid}.

\(^{31}\) Carpenter made reference to C. R. Cheney’s observation that the fact that a charter of Henry VI was dated at a certain place on a certain date did not mean that the king or any of the named witnesses were present at that place on that date. See C. R. Cheney, ed., \textit{Handbook of Dates for Students of English History} (London: Royal Historical Society, 1970), ix. As cited in Carpenter, \textit{Locality and Polity}, 295.
them later to uphold the deed’. Finally, as many of the individuals under discussion in this thesis (such as clerks and other non-gentry ‘servants’) may never have been asked to act as witnesses and feoffees, it is necessary to consider alternative sources of information about relative proximity within the Fastolf circle.

Medieval documents that record the living arrangements of Fastolf and his circle give some indication of the physical proximity of each of his associates. There are no surviving records of these arrangements during Fastolf’s time in Normandy (pre-1439), or regarding his house in Southwark where he lived from 1438 until 1454. However, there is an inventory for Caister Castle, Fastolf’s residence in Norfolk. This inventory, which was made in 1448 and was amended with further notes in 1455, recorded who lived in each chamber at Caister. For example, figure 10 below shows the entry for the chamber of Sir Henry Inglose:

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32 Ibid. See also Dorothy J. Clayton, *The Administration of the County Palatine of Chester, 1442-1485* (Manchester: Chetham Society Publications, 1990), 140-141.
33 FP 43.
Figure 10: FP 43, page 15, describing ‘Inglose Chamber’ (the chamber of Henry Inglose) and its contents.

The existence of this inventory enabled C. M. Woolgar to produce a floorplan of Caister Castle for his book *The Great Household*, which gives an useful visualisation of where Fastolf’s associates would have lived in relation to each other. This floorplan creates a vital impression of the physical space of Caister Castle, and gives some idea of how its inhabitants lived in relation to each other:

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Figure 11: C. M. Woolgar’s floorplan of Caister Castle. See Woolgar, *The Great Household*, 66-67.
However, as Fastolf was only in residence at Caister from 1454, evidence of an associate living there can only be taken as evidence of his physical proximity to Fastolf if it appears in the 1455 revision. So though John Rafman was listed in 1448 as having his own chamber at Caister, this is evidence of his remoteness from Fastolf rather than his proximity, since Fastolf was living in London at the time.\textsuperscript{35} By the time that Fastolf moved to Caister in 1454, Rafman had long ceased to be in his service.\textsuperscript{36} The 1455 revision contains a list of clothing that was kept at Caister, which belonged to Robert Boteler, John Majur, Edward ‘valetās stabīlis’, John Russe, John Paston, Matthew Brayne, John Bokkyng, William Worcester, Colin ‘de la chambre’ and Thomas Upton.\textsuperscript{37} Although this does not prove that any of these men were living at Caister permanently, the storage of their clothing at Caister suggests that they spent a considerable amount of time there at a time when Fastolf was also there in residence.

More information about the physical proximity of Fastolf’s men can be drawn from the scribal hands of his letters.\textsuperscript{38} The men whom Fastolf usually asked to write his letters were William Worcester, John Bokkyng and William Barker. Worcester wrote thirty-five of the extant Fastolf Letters, compared with Barker’s eleven and Bokkyng’s ten. Evidence that these men wrote letters for Sir John Fastolf is also evidence that they spent time in close proximity with him. Other services connected with the composition and receipt of letters also suggest proximity. For example, in October 1447 Thomas Howes sent a will to Fastolf, which he did not expect him to interpret, but instructed Worcester to ‘enforme’ him about with the help of

\textsuperscript{35} FP 43 lists Rafman’s chamber, containing several bedding items: ‘I Fedirbed I bolster ij blankettis i peire shetys’ (folio 14).
\textsuperscript{36} Rafman had been disgraced in 1448. See letter 962: Fastolf’s account of the ‘harme’ done when Rafman ‘kest an obligacion of iii mark...wheche was owyng [him] by the Duchesse of Bedford’ (ll. 31-33).
\textsuperscript{37} FP 43, folio 15.
\textsuperscript{38} The discussion which follows is original interpretation of the Fastolf Letters and Papers. However, the identification of scribal hands, unless otherwise indicated, was the work of Davis, Beadle and Richmond, the editors of the Paston Letters and Papers series.
explanatory notes that he provided in a separate letter (letter 961, ll. 5-9). Worcester must have been at Fastolf’s side at this time in order to do this.

In contrast, if an individual exchanged letters with Sir John Fastolf he must have been separated from Fastolf. Fastolf constantly exchanged letters with Thomas Howes in the period 1447 to 1454, which was necessitated by Howes being at Caister whilst Fastolf was in London. Other associates of Fastolf were addressed in conjunction with Howes, such as Thomas Grene, Walter Shipdam and William Cole, which suggests that they too worked at a distance from Fastolf. By implication, any individual who worked as an assistant to these men must also have been distant from Sir John Fastolf for a period of time.

For example, Geoffrey Spirileng was Howes’s most frequent scribe and so, like Howes, usually worked at a distance from Fastolf.

When Fastolf moved to Caister, and his house became ‘holye to-ghedre at one place’, he still called upon Worcester, Barker and Bokkyng to be at his side to write his letters. He was not reluctant to send these men away temporarily, though, and the duration of these absences varied from man to man.

John Bokkyng was away in London especially frequently: he subscribed his letters from ‘your place’, which was Fastolf Place in Southwark, and from ‘London’.

John Paston became the most frequent recipient of letters from Fastolf after 1454, suggesting that he was not in

39 ‘as it sheweth by a note of his testament and will whiche I send you, as Wylliam Wurcestre can enforce you by a lettre I haue sent hym &c’ (letter 961, ll. 5-9).

40 However, evidence that a man wrote letters for a distant Fastolf associate was not evidence of his permanent separation from Fastolf. He might have been chosen as scribe because he was due to return to Fastolf, and so could bear the letter to him. Alternatively, the letter might have been a reply to a letter that the associate had carried from Fastolf.

41 Beadle and Richmond identified Spirileng as scribe of letters 961, 964, 965 (in the headnotes to the letters in their edition), and 547 (in their introduction to the edition, page xxx). There is no evidence, palaeographical or circumstantial, to suggest that Spirileng spent much time in Fastolf’s presence.

42 See letter number 571 for William Worcester’s description of Fastolf’s ‘housold’ as ‘holye to-ghedre at one place’ at Caister (ll. 13-14). However, Worcester was evidently still physically proximate to Fastolf at Caister, as he described Paston’s latest visit to Caister, at which Worcester was also present (‘ye meved a gode mater e to the parson and to me at your last beyng at Castr’ [ll. 12-13]). Worcester, Bokkyng, and Barker all wrote letters as scribes for Fastolf in the period 1454-1459, which is evidence that they spent at least some time in physical proximity to Fastolf.


44 See letters 1029 and 1036.
Fastolf’s presence as much as he had been before Fastolf moved to Caister.\footnote{Twenty-seven out of the thirty-four letters written by Fastolf after 1454 were addressed to John Paston.} However, Fastolf’s associates were never away from him for long before they were called back into his presence. Palaeographical evidence shows that John Bokkyng was the scribe of six of Fastolf’s letters in the period 1454-1459, despite spending a lot of time away in London.\footnote{Letters 513, 1021, 560, 568, 569, and 570.} Despite accepting that Paston had to be in London and Norwich for extended periods of time, Fastolf often summoned him to Caister: in 1455, William Worcester informed Paston that, ‘Assone as ye goodly may to see my maister it shall be to hym a singular pleaser’ (letter 529, ll. 12-13). As Fastolf entered old age, he became frustrated if Paston was not nearby. Worcester’s annoyance at being at the receiving end of his master’s demands for Paston’s attendance was clear when he wrote: ‘My maister demaundyth me sondry tymes when ye shall be here’ (letter 537, l. 6, 6th January probably 1456). This demonstrates that the proximity of Fastolf to his associates was liable to change on a day-to-day basis.

Many of Fastolf’s letters dating from the time that he spent in London contain evidence of the location of his men. For example, one letter records John Bokkyng providing help to Thomas Howes, and telling him and Fastolf’s ‘councell’ what Fastolf’s intentions were.\footnote{‘John Bokkyng...can [to] you and to my councell all myne entent concernyng that mater’ (letter 988, ll. 34-38).} Another letter records Thomas Howes sending for William Cole to come and oversee the accounts of Fastolf’s officers.\footnote{‘I pray you to do sende for Willia m Cole, and that he wold see and hyre the examynyng and makyng of the accomptes, yovyng hys gode avice theretoo’ (letter 990, ll. 49-53).William Cole was Fastolf’s auditor. See letter 995, l. 21: ‘William Cole and Shypdam myne auditours’.} Another describes Walter (‘Watkin’) Shipdam advising Thomas Howes about money owed to Fastolf.\footnote{‘prayng you [Thomas Howes] to do serche of the new the said officer bokys by avice of Watkin Shypdam, and William Cole’ (letter 1009, ll. 99-100, 24th June 1451).} As Thomas Howes lived permanently at Caister, and Cole, Bokkyng, and
Shipdam had chambers in the castle, the work that was described in the letters above was probably carried out at Caister.\textsuperscript{50}

Some of Fastolf’s associates made frequent journeys between London and Caister. For example, in 1450, Fastolf sent Bokkyng to Caister to investigate the damages done by ‘dyuers men and officers in Norffolk’ (letter 986, ll. 1-7). However, Bokkyng was evidently soon back with Fastolf in London, as he was the scribe of one of his letters within the same month (letter 987). And though in October 1450 Fastolf sent William Barker to Caister to deliver some articles, he subsequently wrote a letter that commanded him to return to his side rather than risk being absent and idle: ‘that the said William may spede hym hedre, for there [at Caister] he may not be occupied but yff the oyer and termynner had be contynued and satyn stille’ (letter 989, ll. 44-47).

Once Fastolf moved to Caister in 1454, he also relocated his servants. William Worcester noted a dramatic change in the living arrangements of Fastolf’s ‘houshold’, which justified a reassessment of its yearly costs: ‘my maister shuld be lerned whate hys housold standyth vppon [yerlye] seth he kept it holye to-ghedre at one place’ (letter 571, ll. 13-14). However, circumstantial evidence recorded in Fastolf’s letters indicates that the relative proximity of his servants remained relatively unchanged. Worcester and Barker were still most frequently at their master’s side - it was only their location which changed to correspond with Fastolf’s move to Norfolk. Though a letter written in December 1455 reveals that Fastolf sent William Worcester to John Paston in London, Worcester was evidently with Fastolf prior to this in order for Fastolf to hand him some letters: ‘I sende my seruaunt Worcestre wyth lettres...praying yow hertlie to take the leysar hat myn entent were

\textsuperscript{50} See the 1448 inventory of Caister Castle for the chambers of each of these men: ‘Cole is chamber and watkyn is’; ‘Shipdam is bedde’, ‘Camera Bokkyng in le basecourte’ (FP 43). However, some of Fastolf’s associates appear to have used their chambers more frequently than others. For example, William Cole was evidently at Caister only occasionally: ‘by avice of...William Cole, \textbf{yff be be at Castre}’ (letter 1009, ll. 100-1, my emphasis). This supposition is supported by the fact that whilst Walter Shipdam had a separate room labelled as his ‘bedde’ on the inventory, independent of the ‘chamber’ that he shared with William Cole, Cole did not have a ‘bedde’ (FP 43, page 16).
sped, as the berer hereof shal more pleynlie enforce yow’ (letter 536, ll. 9-12). Then Worcester was back at Fastolf’s side by January, taking part in the New Year’s Day celebrations at Caister. 51

The evidence suggests that of all of Fastolf’s associates, it was only John Bokkyng whose relationship with Sir John Fastolf altered drastically upon Fastolf’s retirement to Norfolk. Formerly one of Fastolf’s most proximate associates, from 1455 onwards he was spending more time away from his master. For example, in 1456 Bokkyng sent tidings from London to Fastolf at Caister (letter 1029). A letter written to John Paston in Norwich on 15th May 1456 is further evidence about Bokkyng’s travels in the post-1454 period. He had written to Paston just seven days earlier from Southwark (see letter 548) and by the 15th May declared that he had come ‘home’ to Caister:

To My Maister Paston...his day I come home, and as to our materes I shall be with yow on Monday and Teusday next, be myn maister is aduys, and enforce yow of all and of suche I wil nought write...Writen at Caistre vigilia Pentecostem.  
(letter 549, ll. 1-3 and l. 21)

The reason for John Bokkyng’s distance from Sir John Fastolf in the later years of Fastolf’s life was that Fastolf was involved in serious legal disputes in London, which he could not attend to in person because he had retired to Norfolk. 52 Documents that record the expenses that Fastolf incurred as a result of his legal cases indicate how consistently Bokkyng was involved with administrating Fastolf’s legal matters throughout the 1450s. For example an account of the expenses that John Fastolf incurred during a 1453 assize at Gloucester reveals that John Bokkyng spent some time there helping with the case: ‘Item in expense Johannis Bokkyng apud Teukesbury per I nocte et die’ (‘Item in expense of John Bokkyng at Tewksbury for

51 ‘I had sent yow [Paston] word of the gode chere that the persons ye wote off had here vppon New Yeere Day’ (letter 537, ll. 1-2).
52 For example, Fastolf’s battle with Sir Phillip Wentworth over the wardship of Thomas Fastolf of Cowhaugh (see letter 1018 of 1454, which is the earliest letter that refers to this dispute), and his dispute with John Andrew over Andrew’s indictment against Fastolf’s chaplain, Thomas Howes (see letter 1034 of October 1457).
one night and one day’). Letter 548 shows that Bokkyng was accustomed to handling legal processes (‘I shal take a venire facias ayenst Wentworthe’ letter 548, l. 31), though he occasionally found that he had limited power in the courts, since he was not a lawyer: ‘As for attachement...I wolde haue doon it; I cowde nought be amytted’ (letter 548, l. 31, ll. 28-9). There is palaeographical evidence of John Bokkyng’s value to Fastolf’s associates as a legal administrator, including letter 1019, which was a memorandum that Beadle and Richmond believed was, ‘hastily jotted by John Bokkyng, probably as a result of a meeting with John Paston I, and perhaps also with other legal counsellors’. All of this circumstantial and palaeographical evidence shows that John Bokkyng, in the later years of Fastolf’s life, spent an increasing amount of time away from his master.

Physical proximity is a misleading gauge of Fastolf’s dependence on, or frequency of contact with, his associates. The number of letters exchanged between Sir John Fastolf and the men who lived away from him demonstrates that he could communicate his requirements adequately despite rarely speaking with them. This was true even before Fastolf moved from Normandy to London: though Fastolf did visit London in person, he exercised much of his authority through written correspondence from France. For example, he wrote a letter to his Norfolk-based associate John Fastolf of Oulton, which gave him commands such as: ‘Item, 3e sende me by Raufm<an> answare of þe lett[er]s þat I sende yow, þat I may haue verray

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53 BL, MS. Additional 28206, folio 124r.
54 Bokkyng’s attention to Fastolf’s matters in London when Fastolf could not be there himself has a parallel in the work of Thomas Ketson, who was an associate of the Cely Family. The Cely family, like Sir John Fastolf, employed a representative for occasions when they could not be present in a certain place. Thomas Ketson assisted the family by handling wool on behalf of Maryon and John Cely who were in London. See Hanham, ed., Cely Letters, xi. Ketson, like Bokkyng, also appears to have assisted the Cely family with written work. This is indicated in a letter which asked Ketson to re-write a letter that Richard Cely had drafted: ‘Also my godfather onderstond that 3e haue sent to Thomas Ketson for the letter that he wrat. And 3e haue that letter then he prayes you that 3e wolld take the letter that ys closyd in thys letter, ewe 3e thynke yt be best so for to do, and ryed to Bregys to Thomas Kesten and desyer hym to make another letter better than thys ys after your intent, accordyng to the letter that ys in my letter at I wrat to my father’. Hanham, ed., Cely Letters, letter 8, ll. 7-13, my emphasis.
knolage how þat hit standys with me þer in al maner of thynges’ (letter 953, ll. 49-51, 31st October, probably 1429).

To give some indication of the level of contact that Fastolf was able to maintain with his remote servants, there are twelve extant letters from Fastolf to Thomas Howes dating from the period of September to December 1450 alone. Fastolf was able to use his frequent correspondence with Howes to send instructions to his other servants at Caister, and there are many examples in the twelve letters mentioned above. They range from administrative orders to men living at Caister (‘Item, to Sperlyng to deliuer þe stiward my book’, letter 985, l. 38), to messages of praise (‘Item, y thank Nicholas Bokkyng for hys gode labour’ letter 990, l. 32, 11th November 1450), to remonstrations (‘I sende home ij of my roode horses...that they be well kept as it is belongyth to hem. Oft tymys my horses be foundred yn deffaut of kepyng’, letter 990, ll. 41-46). This shows that though many of Fastolf’s men at Caister rarely received an oral command from their master, his requests and commands were passed on to them by the ever-present Thomas Howes. So in considering ‘relative proximity’ within Fastolf’s circle, it is necessary to consider not only physical proximity, but the potential for Fastolf to keep in contact with his associates using written correspondence.

55 There was a similar working relationship between the Humphrey Staffords and their servants, who were left at the property to work without direct supervision: ‘[Both the Humphreys were] becoming increasingly part-time landowners and full time politicians. Things might have been much worse without the work of John More, receiver general... It might not be too fanciful to suppose that More introduced some order to the family economy’. Carpenter, Locality and Polity, 170-171.
c) Permanence and exclusivity of service within the circle of Sir John Fastolf:

In creating a visual representation of the relative proximity of Fastolf’s associates it is important to acknowledge that each man contributed a different degree of permanence and exclusivity of service. Several of Fastolf’s associates, particularly those who gave him legal advice and assistance, or performed occasional administrative duties, were not in attendance permanently.\(^{56}\) When these men were required, they were sent for: ‘I pray you to do sende for William Cole’ (letter 990, ll. 49-50, November 1450). These occasional attendees were not part of the daily group dynamic, so Fastolf had to instruct his men at Caister on how to conduct themselves around them. For example, he described how he wanted Geoffrey Spirleng to behave towards William Cole: ‘that Geffrey Spyrlyng forebere hym and gefe none occasiion to displese hym’ (letter 990, ll. 52-53).

Many of Fastolf’s associates had their own estates to manage. For instance, around May and June 1451, the time that John Paston was assisting in Fastolf’s disputes with Thomas Tuddenham and John Heydon, he was sent a letter by his wife Margaret informing him about a ‘fayre plase to sell in Seynt Laveransis parysch’ (letter 140, l. 3).\(^ {57}\) This demonstrates that Paston was juggling his responsibilities for Fastolf with managing and improving his own portfolio of properties. These men also had independent social standing. Fastolf made this evident when he worried that a task that he had assigned to John Berney might have compromised Berney’s own

\(^{56}\) Anne Curry acknowledged that ‘service’ was used both ‘in the sense of a particular piece of work or the performance of a particular instruction’ and ‘in the sense of an appointment or position of employment’, and so could relate to either occasional or permanent attendance. Curry, Concepts and Patterns of Service, xv. G. L. Harriss argued that infrequent attendance was especially likely from legally trained men: ‘[m]ore fluid in membership and far less exclusive in their loyalty were the numerous groups of those who received a fee from the lord. An habitual element among those were his legal counsel’. Harriss, introduction to England in the Fifteenth Century, xii.

\(^ {57}\) See letter 1008 for evidence of Paston’s involvement in the dispute with Tuddenham and Heydon. He was described working hard to further Fastolf’s interests in court against the partiality of the judges: ‘my maister Inglose, Pastons, and many other plentyfs had put in and declared bothe by wriytyn and by woord by fore the jugez the laufull excepcions in many wise, the juges by ther willulnesse myght nat fynde in ther hert to gef not so moche as a bek ner a twynclyng of ther eye toward, but toke it to derisioin’ (letter 1008, ll. 6-11, 9\(^{9}\) May 1451).
property rights: ‘he writith to me that he [doth] respyt and sufferaunce of hys entree in the maner of Rokelond Tofftes at my request doon ys lyke to preiudice hys title’ (letter 1005, ll. 66-68, 28th January 1451).

Fastolf’s letters demonstrate that he could turn the independent interests of his associates to his advantage. Even when these men were not attending to Fastolf’s matters, they moved in the same circles as he did. As a result, they could act as Fastolf’s eyes and ears, whilst simultaneously attending to their own business. For example, whilst Fastolf was in the throes of a dispute with Nicholas Appleyard, his associates William and John Jenney were also engaged in a ‘matier atwix hem and Appli3erd’ (letter 987, ll. 35-36, between 7th and 14th September). Fastolf called upon William Jenney to support his accusation that Appleyard was behaving badly: ‘and [you] conne sey how Apply3erd was demened that day’ (ibid).

Members of Fastolf’s circle had other vertical and horizontal connections in addition to their association with Fastolf.58 These connections were an asset to Fastolf, as they maximised the local knowledge and influence of his associates.59 Fastolf’s watchfulness ensured that the connections of his associates complemented his own interests. In any instance that they did not, he was quick to protest. On one occasion, he wrote: ‘I hafe herd late that the said Bernay hath doon greete frendshyp and fauo

58 ‘Fastolf’s councillers, colleagues and servants nearly all assisted other men in such capacities as witnesses, feoffee and executor’. Smith, ‘Aspects,’ 109. For further discussion of those men who had relationships with Fastolf which Smith observed were ‘interwoven’, see Smith ‘The Acquisition,’ 148.
59 ‘[the connections of Fastolf’s councillors, colleagues and servants] extend[ed] their knowledge of, and involvement with, the conveyances and legal business of the inhabitants of their locality.’ Smith, ‘Aspects,’ 109. See also Smith, ‘The Acquisition,’ 148. Rosemary Horrox wrote that ‘the best sort of servant was the one who was well connected and who could get things done, not the one who had no existence outside the orbit of his master’. Horrox, ‘Service,’ 71. The case study of William Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester from 1447 to 1487, reveals that the clergy, too, benefitted from the multiple connections of their associates: ‘Waynflete used members of [William Lord Hastings’] indentured retinue as agents in the area’. Davis argued that the fact that Hastings took Thomas Danvers, ‘Waynflete’s right hand man’, into his affinity suggests that ‘he wanted the advantages of having Danvers’ connections in his affinity’. Davis, ‘William Waynfleet,’ 142.
vnto my aduersarie... and y merveylle that he woold doo soo, for there [ben] othyre men that woold hafe doon for hym and hys allye as well as he’ (letter 988, ll. 29-31). 60

Fastolf’s behaviour showed that though these men had other matters to attend to, he expected them to be available to attend to his business at any time. This was difficult when they were being drawn around the country by their own matters. For example, in November 1450, Fastolf’s legal advisor John Paston rushed from Norfolk to London to attend judicial hearings there concerning his own dispute over the manor of Gresham. 61 However, whilst he was rushing there another associate of Fastolf, William Yelverton, wrote to Fastolf to say that he needed Paston to come back to assist with one of Fastolf’s matters. 62

Fastolf had to accept that there were times when his associates could not attend to his requests in person. However, if this was the case he urged them to find an alternative way to assist him. For example, in 1455 he asked John Paston to write to his servants in London if he could not be there himself. 63 Though these were busy men, they were eager to meet Fastolf’s requirements. Less than a month after Fastolf wrote letter 520, he wrote again to thank Paston for the ‘grete labours’ he took in the ‘spedyng of [his] causys at London thys terme passed’ (letter 523, ll. 1-3, 28th May 1455). Paston had evidently attended to Fastolf’s request promptly and thoroughly, despite being busy with his own matters.

60 Though Fastolf was disappointed with his associate, there is nothing in this statement that indicates that Berney was wrong in assisting another lord. Rather, Fastolf was surprised that Berney would align himself with Fastolf’s enemy for the sake of an unprofitable alliance. Even John of Gaunt (1340-1399), who was focused upon military service, and thus insisted upon a ‘monopoly of service’ from some of his men, did not expect this from all of his associates: ‘Every retainer and annuitant was employed by the duke for a specific purpose and, if that purpose could be fulfilled while serving other lords as well, then there was no objection to a retainer doing so and taking his fee at the same time’. Walker, The Lancastrian Affinity, 103, see also 8 and 46.
61 Letter 467. For a description of the Pastons’ dispute over the manor of Gresham, see Castor, Blood and Roses, 65.
62 Letter 878.
63 ‘But and ye might be at London your-sylf this terme...And in cas be that ye may in no wyse, than I pray you, as my feithfull trust is in you, to make aunsuer of such materys vppon the said lettres’ (letter 520, ll. 6-12).
Certain of Fastolf’s associates did offer him exclusive service. Thomas Howes provided unflinching administrative support to his fellow associates, especially in the years prior to Fastolf’s retirement to Caister. In fact, Sir John Fastolf never wrote to Thomas Green, William Cole, or Walter Shipdam, without involving Thomas Howes. William Worcester was another of Fastolf’s more exclusive servants, and he rarely found time to be away from Sir John Fastolf. On the one occasion that he performed scribal work for a man other than Fastolf, the letter was addressed to Fastolf, and was connected with Fastolf’s matters. Worcester’s presence was demanded so constantly that even when he sought leave to visit his family in Bristol, Fastolf ‘dyd not graunt it’ (letter 537, l. 9, 6th January probably 1456).

This shows that Sir John Fastolf expected different levels of commitment from those who were part of his circle. Equally, these men were prepared to offer different levels of commitment, depending on their role, their other connections, and their independent interests.

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64 See letter 966 for just one example of Fastolf’s practice of co-addressing letters to Howes: ‘To my ryght trusty and weel loved frendes Thomas Howys, clerk, William Cole and Water Shipdam’.
65 Worcester was the scribe of a letter for William Yelverton in 1450. This letter was addressed to Fastolf and contained news about Yelverton and Fastolf’s mutual enemies, Thomas Tuddenham and John Heydon (letter 877).
d) **The Fastolf circle captured as a diagram:**

This section now presents a visual representation of the circle of Sir John Fastolf, in the form of two Venn diagrams. The overlapping sections within the diagram show which associates were frequently in transit between Fastolf’s properties. The aim is to capture the relative proximity of Fastolf and his associates. When the thesis progresses to explore writing within Fastolf’s circle, the diagrams help to understand the need that some of Fastolf’s associates had to use written correspondence instead of oral communication. The diagram is also useful for the study of Fastolf’s scribes, as it suggests likely candidates when the scribal hand of a letter has remained hitherto unidentified. Finally, an understanding of the relative location of Fastolf’s associates informs the analysis of readership communities in chapter five of this thesis.
Section One, Chapter Two: A Case Study of the Fastolf Circle

Figure 12: a Venn diagram of the location of Fastolf’s associates in the period before 1454. Sir John Fastolf was living at ‘Fastolf Place’ in Southwark, London.

Figure 13: a Venn diagram of the location of Fastolf’s associates in the period after 1454. Sir John Fastolf by this time was living at Caister Castle in Norfolk.

Now that the circle of Sir John Fastolf has been described, his associates have been named and their relative proximity with Fastolf has been explained, the thesis will examine the circle more closely by looking for sub-groups within it.
e) Subgrouping the circle of Sir John Fastolf:

Grouping the circle according to who they were: their role and social position.

The letters that Sir John Fastolf sent to his associates usually contain information about their responsibilities. As a consequence, these letters suggest groupings between men who shared similar roles. Existing scholarship has proposed various theories about subdivisions within a circle. Between:

- ‘retainers’ and those receiving wages;66
- ‘household’, ‘retainers’, and ‘estate officials’;67
  or
- ‘honourable servants’ and ‘menial servants’.68

Rosemary Horrox described a medieval ‘obsession’ with order and hierarchy.69

Modern historical scholarship, too, is preoccupied with categories. It is rarely sufficient to present a name without a description, so the name of a lord’s associate usually appears with either a biographical detail, or a description of his responsibilities.70 It has sometimes been difficult for scholars to fit Fastolf’s associates into definite categories. For example, Jonathan Hughes described Geoffrey Spirleng as Fastolf’s ‘accountant’ in the following statement: ‘Bentley in Yorkshire, described by Worcester “as a goodly manor but notoriously difficult to manage”... needed to be frequently visited by Worcester and Geoffrey Spirleng, Fastolf’s accountant’.71 Yet in another part of Hughes’ article he described Spirleng as a

66 Harriss, introduction to England in the Fifteenth Century, xi-xiii.
67 Walker, The Lancastrian Affinity, 8.
68 Horrox, ‘Service,’ 63.
69 Horrox, ‘Service,’ 61.
70 For example: ‘Worcester also contributed to an account of the French war which was dedicated to Fastolf. The other three contributors...were Luke Nantron, a French dependent who followed Fastolf to England...and Christopher Hanson, who collected Fastolf’s rent in 1453-4... and Peter Basset, who served Fastolf in Maine and Anjou’ (my emphasis). Smith, ‘Aspects,’ 56, and McFarlane England in the Fifteenth Century, 132.
71 See FP 72, m. 7, which suggests that William Worcester made a journey to Yorkshire to oversee Bentley and Wighton on the Wolds. See letter 86 of the Paston Letters corpus for Worcester’s assertion about the difficulty of managing Bentley in Yorkshire, cited in Hughes, ‘Stephen Scrope and the Circle,’ 127. A letter from John Paston I to Sir John Fastolf reveals exactly how troublesome the manor of Bentley was to those who were in charge of its management. Amongst his complaints were that the officers at Bentley were putting Fastolf’s tenants out of their land and renting it to others, which was likely to cause harm to Fastolf (‘your land leten by your officers to your hurt and othyr men ys grete
receiver and auditor: ‘the Norwich scrivener, Geoffrey Spirlenge, Fastolf’s deputy receiver 1448-1452 and auditor in the 1450s’. This discrepancy may be due partially to Spirlenge’s progression up the career ladder during his time as part of Fastolf’s circle. However, it may also be that the diversity of his duties made it difficult to restrict him to a single job title. Consequently, this section explores whether it is indeed appropriate to differentiate Fastolf’s associates according to their background, training, and responsibilities.

The role of scribe was assumed by several individuals within Fastolf’s circle, most frequently William Worcester, William Barker, and John Bokkyng. William Worcester was the scribe of many more of Fastolf’s letters than the other men. He also appears to have had a more prominent role in the administration of Fastolf’s legal matters. For example, when Fastolf wished to draw up his will, it was Worcester whom he asked to assist him (letter 537). Worcester, probably encouraged by the dominance of his scribal and administrative work over his other duties, described himself as ‘secretary’ (‘per diligenciam Willelmi Wircestre secretarij predicti Iohannis Fastolf’), which has led modern historians to echo this. However,

avayll (letter 53, ll. 4-8, 24th May 1458). Paston’s greatest worry was the amount of money owed to Fastolf by his tenants: ‘The worst mater for yow [Fastolf] that we hafe to doo ys that there ys so grete debt lyeng vppon your tennantes at ones to rere’ (letter 53, ll. 11-12).

Hughes, ‘Stephen Scrope and the Circle,’ 133.

It should be acknowledged that legal and estate administration were not the only administrative contexts in which William Worcester worked. He was also involved in military administration during Fastolf’s military service in France. K. B. McFarlane pointed out that, ‘one of his first recorded employments took him to Normandy to collect evidence for a lawsuit arising out of the death of Fastolf’s nephew, Sir Robert Harling at the Siege of St. Denis in 1435’. McFarlane, England in the Fifteenth Century, 203 (see FP 72, m. 8, 20 Henry VI). William Worcester’s own Itineraries suggest that he did not perceive a great distinction between his estate, and military, administrative work: on page 209 of the manuscript we find a military text: De militibus apud bellum de Vernoyle creatis, immediately followed by a document associated with his administrative duties at Castlecombe: ‘de ecclesiis de Castelcombe et Radclyffe’. For more information about the military context of administrative work, see C. T. Allmand, ed., Lancastrian Normandy 1415-1450: the History of a Medieval Occupation (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983); and especially Anne Curry, The Hundred Years War (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1993) and ‘English Armies in the Fifteenth Century,’ in Arms, Armies, and Fortifications in the Hundred Years War, ed. Anne Curry and Michael Hughes (New York: Boydell Press, 1999), 39-68.

when Worcester was away, Fastolf did not hesitate to turn to Barker, Bokkyng, or any of the several hitherto-unidentified scribes, to write for him. Additionally, Worcester’s non-scribal duties were diverse, and he handled similar tasks to Bokkyng and Barker: receiving and interpreting documents, carrying and fetching, and providing legal assistance to Fastolf’s advisers.\textsuperscript{75} His duties even extended to Fastolf’s personal care on his deathbed: Worcester spent ten years tending to the ailing Fastolf, and noted the details of his master’s illness in BL, MS. Sloane 4, folio 38v.\textsuperscript{76} William Worcester was required to be so flexible that at times he appears to have been unsure about his own role. For example, BL, MS. Additional 28208 is a survey of Castle Combe that William Worcester produced for Sir John Fastolf. On folio 2v, William Worcester wrote: ‘Informacio W. Wyrcestre quod superuiser de Castelcombe et Oxendon’. However, before ‘superuiser’, he wrote and then crossed out, ‘Rec’. It is possible that Worcester had first intended to give himself a different title, perhaps ‘Rector’, before changing his mind. At times it seems that Fastolf’s associates were not even sure of where they and their fellow associates were based at a given time. One item in MS. Additional 28208 refers to, ‘Willelmo Blakman xxs de bonis Rectori de [Bentley] Castlecom’ (folios 21r-22r). Despite the fact that the two manors were geographically distant - Bentley is in South Yorkshire, whereas Castlecombe is in Wiltshire - there was apparently some confusion about which one William Blackman was associated with.

Though certain of Fastolf’s associates, such as Worcester, Bokkyng, and Barker,
had similar responsibilities, he maintained individual relationships with each of them. He appears to have known the strengths and weaknesses of each man: for example, in 1457, knowing that William Worcester had no specialist legal expertise, Fastolf specified that he sent him to London for various tasks except legal duties: ‘for dyuers of hys oune particuler maters **whych concern not the law**’ (letter 571, ll. 1-4, my emphasis). However, Fastolf’s servants had wide-ranging roles, and could expect to be designated any task **within their capabilities**. This is similar to the adaptability that Malcolm Richardson found in Chancery clerks, according to the evidence preserved in the *Ordinaciones cancellarie*. He noted that for the top level ‘first form’ of clerks (such as the keeper of the rolls, the preceptors, and the examiners), work was ‘unspecialized...as individual clerks’ names appear on a variety of documents’. Further down the hierarchy, roles were more predetermined; Richardson noted that at this level, ‘certain types of documents were normally handled by specific officers’. However, this was not reflected in the way that Chancery clerks were described. Clerks of the first form were described according to their specific role, despite the fact that their actual duties were unspecialized. In contrast, the lower level clerks were listed simply as, ‘writing clerks in the king’s Chancery’, when their profession was named at all, even though their responsibilities were much more specialised. This demonstrates that preciseness in the description of an individual’s role did not

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77 Fastolf knew exactly how to maximise the abilities of each of his individual associates. Not only did the Oxford education he gave Worcester help him to develop secretarial skills, but it also nurtured his ability to research history and compose and translate literature, which Fastolf put to practical use: Worcester’s historical work was...capable of being used to a purpose: to make a case, in his *Boke of Noblesse*, for Fastolf’s political views*. Catto, ‘Masters, Patrons and the Careers of Graduates in Fifteenth Century England,’ 55.

78 Rosemary Horrox explained that each ‘honourable’ servant (those with ‘independent standing aside from the performance of his task’) ‘would also be called upon to perform a plethora of ad hoc tasks, which tend to leave fewer traces in the extant records but probably represented a more substantial burden’. Though Horrox’s definition of ‘honourable servants disqualified men like Worcester and Barker, her observation still applies to these men, whose diverse tasks appear to have been assigned by Fastolf on an ad hoc basis. Horrox, ‘Service,’ 64.


necessarily correspond with a lack of it in his actual responsibilities.

The advantage of flexibility amongst Fastolf’s men was that, as long as Fastolf ensured that one of the men was with him, there was always a capable servant who could attend to his matters. The following comment by John Bokkyng shows that Fastolf was indeed careful to ensure that one of his men was available at all times:

‘All men ar owte at þis tyme, as þe parson, Worcest<er>, and Barker, and þerfore til þei come I may nought owte’ (letter 590, ll. 4-6, 2nd April 1455-59).

Roles appear to have been least flexible in the outer circle of Sir John Fastolf. There were certain men whose connection with Fastolf was based on a specific duty alone. One such man was Nicholas Bokkyng, who was father to Fastolf’s scribe and servant John Bokkyng. Nicholas was Fastolf’s ‘receivour general’ and was specifically responsible for collecting his revenues in London and redistributing this wealth as wages and occasionally advising Fastolf on matters relating to his income (see page 121 below).  

Bokkyng’s role in Fastolf’s circle made him responsible for ensuring that Fastolf received and kept what belonged to him. This afforded Fastolf some protection from dishonesty amongst his servants, which was vital when he was away from his properties. On an occasion when one of Fastolf’s servants took items from Fastolf’s coffers, Nicholas was held personally responsible: ‘Item where as the seid Bokkyng hadde at castre & at London ij cofres for the said knyghtis money and other evidencis therynne to be kept the fornseid knyght dede oon lowys yoman of his chambr at ij divers tymes breke up the said cofres and the harmys that the said Bokkyng suffred by that enchensoun he can not verryly putte in certeyn but he had lever than xli it hadde be vndone be cause of obligacion & ij silver girdyll whiche were there jnne among other of whiche he never was answered of &c. Summa x li.’  

However, though Nicholas had a great amount of responsibility, his responsibilities

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81 See FP 98.
82 FP 98.
had quite a narrow range. Unlike John Bokkyng, William Worcester, and William Barker, there is no evidence that Nicholas Bokkyng had any additional roles on top of his role as receiver: he never wrote a letter, carried out general fetching and carrying duties, or represented Fastolf at court.

There is another potential way to subdivide the Fastolf circle. Unlike the method suggested above, which splits the circle into several clusters of men with similar responsibilities, this method divides the circle into just two groups. This way of dividing the Fastolf circle was suggested by one of the men from within the circle itself. William Worcester perceived a difference between ‘seruantes’ like himself, and those who were ‘auctorised yn the law’ and had ‘haboundaunce of godes’. He believed that the difference was manifested in the way that the two groups were treated by Fastolf:

He questioneth and desputyth wyt hys seruauntes here...hyt suffysyth not our simple wyttes to appease hys soule. But when he spekyth wyth Maister 3elvorten, yow, or wyth William Geney, and such othyrs as be auctorised yn the law and wyth haboundaunce of godes, he ys content and haldeth hym pleased wyth your aunsuers and mocions, as reson ys that he be (letter 559, ll. 15-21, c.1456)

The distinction between ‘seruantes’ and ‘such othyrs’ was based on two criteria. One was social status and wealth, and the other was authority and knowledge of the law. Several studies have focused on explaining how the first criterion, social status, divided medieval households. However, Fastolf relied heavily on legal advice and so the second criterion, level of authority and knowledge of the law, was an important way of distinguishing between Fastolf’s associates. Legal expertise was a

83 For example, Horrox’s compared ‘honourable’ servants who had ‘independent standing aside from the permanence of his task’, with ‘menial’ servants without this social standing. Horrox, ‘Service,’ 63. See also this statement about John Paston’s standing in Norfolk: ‘[John Paston was not, like Thomas Howes or William Worcester], on Fastolf’s staff; he was a “squire of worship” with political experience and political contacts of his own’. Castor, Blood & Roses, 109-110.
84 Anthony Smith’s observation that Fastolf’s spending on advisers ‘might have amounted to 3 per cent of the purchase price of a property on average’ reveals how much he valued sound legal advice. Smith, ‘The Acquisition,’ 142-143. For information about some of the legal disputes that required such
prestigious quality for Fastolf’s men. John Bokkyng expressed his frustration about his lack of legal training, which prevented him from assisting with matters before the barons of the Exchequer court. He perceived a contrast between himself and John Paston who, unlike him, was permitted to make an oath ‘in propre persone before the barons’. Bokkyng’s impotence in this situation reveals the practical basis of the distinction between legal and non-legal men in Fastolf’s circle: Fastolf reserved the most respect for associates who could make a real impact in the legal disputes that were troubling him at this time.

Several members of the group with ‘haboundance of wealth’ first made contact with Fastolf through military service. As Colin Richmond put it, they were the ‘Baugé generation’, which consisted of men with whom Fastolf had made particularly strong connections in Normandy, and who had fought together at Baugé in 1421. For example, Sir John Fastolf and Sir Henry Inglose served in Normandy with extensive assistance from Fastolf’s legal advisers, see Smith, ‘Aspects,’ 11.

85 Case studies of other late-medieval circles have shown the value of associates who had legal knowledge, or were involved in local politics: ‘[The well-connected “administrators” who were part of the affinity of John of Gaunt] had every chance to look after the interests of their lord in the execution of their administrative duties, whilst their professional qualification as lawyers gave them an indispensable position in county society as attorneys, trustees and testamentary executors’. Walker, The Lancastrian Affinity, 192; “[When more than one lord was associated with a man] the interesting thing is that all the lesser connecting figures were lawyers or noble servants or both and were evidently in demand as business associates because of their professional expertise and connections”. Carpenter, Locality and Polity, 306, and see also 294. Carpenter made reference to a number of deeds that are evidence of the activities of these legal men as ‘brokers’ such those in J. H. Bloom, ed., The Register of the Gild of the Holy Cross... of Stratford-upon-Avon (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1919), 40 which showed that a lawyer such as John Campieon of Gaydon in southern Warwickshire might be used as a feoffee because he had the advantage of ‘knowing his way around the law courts’.

86 As for attachement ye may non haue withowte ye [or on of yow] make youre othe in propre persone before the barons. I wolde haue doon it; I cowde nought be amytted (letter 548, ll. 26-29). Helen Castor proposed an additional subdivision within the group of ‘legal men’, which isolated John Paston as ‘unique’. Paston had legal training but was not, like William and John Jenney or William Yelverton, a professional lawyer with other clients to attend to or a judicial career. See Castor, Blood and Roses, 110.

87 Richmond, The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century: The First Phase, 206-207. For more information on Baugé, see Basset’s Chronicle in London, College of Arms, MS. M.9, folio xliii v (Richmond acknowledged that this reference was given to him by Anne Curry). For more recent scholarship on Baugé, see J. D. Milner, ‘The Battle of Baugé, March 1421: Impact and Memory,’ History 91 (2006): 483-507.
together, and Fastolf ransomed John Mautby, whose granddaughter later married his associate John Paston.88

Most of Fastolf’s men with ‘haboundaunce of godes’ were well-connected landowners. Fastolf exploited these connections to make acquisitions such as his manor at Guton, which he purchased from a relative by marriage of Sir Henry Inglose.89 On several occasions these men with independent connections in East Anglia engineered opportunities for Fastolf to buy property. For example, John Kyrtelyng’s close connection with Tittleshall helped Fastolf to acquire the property, and Geoffrey Walle mediated the purchase of Holmhale.90 Fastolf’s associates encouraged him to extend these connections beyond military or professional ties by suggesting prudent marriages. For example, Anthony Smith noted that the plan for Fastolf’s ward to marry John Paston’s daughter, ‘was recommended by those of his servants, notably Thomas Howes, who were now deliberately cultivating Paston’s friendship’.91 This demonstrates how keenly Fastolf and his associates made firm links with those who could reinforce his power and influence in East Anglia.

88 See letter 955 from Sir John Fastolf to Henry Inglose and John Berney, dating from between 1436 and 1440, and also Oxford, Pembroke College LC. 2.230 item 3, as cited in Richmond, The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century: The First Phase, 206-207
89 Oxford University, Magdalen College, Guton Hall 196. As cited in Smith, ‘Aspects,’ 27 and 34.
90 For John Kirteling’s involvement in the acquisition of Tittleshall see BL, Stowe Charter 212, as cited in Smith, ‘Aspects,’ 27. There is further evidence for John Kirtelyng’s part in Sir John Fastolf’s acquisition of property in Calendar of Fine Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office: Henry VI, 1452-1461, 270-271: for example, ‘John Kirtelyng and William [Ilketishale] granted [the manor of Bentley] and advowson to the said John Fastolf and Millicent’ (270). For Fastolf’s acquisition of Holmhale, see FP 12.
91 See letter 509 from Sir John Fastolf to John Paston in November 1454: ‘certeyn well-willers...have meoved me that yn case the seyd warde myght be had, that ye desyre an alliaunce shulde take atwyx a doughter of yourys and the seyd waard’ (lines 20-23). Smith, ‘Aspects,’ 215-216.
Grouping the circle of Sir John Fastolf according to how they described themselves and each other:

This section examines how far the language that was used by members of Fastolf’s circle suggest groupings within the circle, and how these divisions compare with those that were proposed in the previous section.

‘Household’ was a linguistic term that was used frequently in the written material associated with Fastolf.92 For example, William Barker described himself, Thomas Howes, and William Worcester, as ‘howshold seruantes’ in a document that he wrote after Fastolf’s death.93 This connected several individuals based on their service as part of a ‘household’.94 But what exactly was the ‘household’ in relation to Sir John Fastolf and his associates? In a letter that William Worcester wrote to John Paston in 1457, he advised that Fastolf needed to be updated about ‘what hys housold standyth vppon [yerlye] seth he kept it holye to-ghedre at one place’ (letter 571, ll. 12-14). Worcester’s use of the word ‘housold’ implied that prior to Fastolf’s move, it encompassed two groups: one based at his primary East Anglian residence at Caister, and another at the property where he actually lived, Fastolf Place in Southwark. When Fastolf retired to Norfolk, ‘housold’ began to refer to a single group. Fastolf still had properties in Southwark, and servants to maintain them. However, unlike Caister, which had symbolic importance relating to Fastolf’s social position in East Anglia, Fastolf Place was only ever a townhouse: a convenient base from which to handle his legal affairs in London. Therefore, when Fastolf left Southwark, the term ‘housold’ left with him. This linguistic analysis suggests that ‘household’ had two

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92 See also pages 81-83 above, where the term ‘household’ is discussed for the purpose of deciding the appropriate term to describe all of the associates of Sir John Fastolf.
93 ‘I, the seid William Barkere, was late howshold seruante be the space of xxj yere wyth Syr John Fastolf, knyght, dyssesid’; ‘Syr Thomas Howes, clerk, dyssesid...Thomas Howys and William Worcester were bothe howshold seruantes many yerys to Pe seid Syr John Fastolf’ (letter 925, ll. 8-9 and 11-14).
94 Helen Castor envisioned Howes and Worcester as ‘the heart of the large household’. In contrast, she grouped Fastolf’s other associates as ‘others, servants, friends and associates on whom Fastolf relied heavily’ - ‘among them his auditor Watkin Shipdam; his servant John Bokkyng, his legal advisers William and John Jenney and Judge William Yelverton and his confessor Friar John Brackley’. Castor, Blood and Roses, 107.
focal points: the house at which the lord actually resided; and the property that symbolised his lordship, Caister Castle.\footnote{This contrasts with Helen Castor’s statement that, in 1454, Fastolf was ‘preparing to move his household [to Caister] permanently from his London house at Southwark’, which implies that prior to the move the ‘household’ was based entirely at Southwark. Castor, Blood and Roses, 100.}

Friar Brackley, after Fastolf’s death, used the Latin word ‘familia’ to describe a group that was bonded in an ideological way rather than according to its geographical location. The ideological basis that bound this group seems to have been its united opposition to Friar Brackley. Thus Brackley wrote vehemently about the ‘false’ familia of Sir John Fastolf (‘fallacibus familia’, letter 582, l. 40).

‘Servant’ was another linguistic category that was used frequently by Fastolf’s associates for self description, and by Fastolf himself to describe some of them.\footnote{Letter 782, l. 1. 4-9.}

When the term ‘servant’ was not used, it was substituted with a word that referred to the individual’s practical role in relation to Fastolf, rather than his individual identity:

John Bokkyng the whych was one of Ser John Fastolf hys clerkes\footnote{Letter 782, ll. 48-49.}

and:

Thome Howys, rectoris de Pulham...Thomas Howys, clericus.\footnote{Letter 906, l. 3, and ll. 14-15.}

The exact title that was given to these men depended on the circumstance, and on the purpose of the document.\footnote{For example, though William Worcester was usually described as Sir John Fastolf’s ‘secretary’, when he was handling matters relating to Castle Combe he was ‘Senescallum’ of Castle Combe (Poulett Scrope, History of the Manor and Ancient Barony of Castle Combe, 197), and ‘superuisoris’ of Castle Combe (Worcester, Itineraries, Appendix 2).}

For example, there is just one record of Fastolf referring to Thomas Howes as his ‘pore’ chaplain, which was in a petition that asked for the support of the Duke of Norfolk (letter 1021, ll. 8-9). This suggests that Fastolf, on
that occasion, altered his linguistic description of Thomas Howes to suit the supplicatory tone of the petition to the duke.

In contrast with his humbling use of the word ‘servant’, Fastolf addressed certain of his associates according to the nature of their kinship with him, or in relation to a notion of ‘friendship’.  

Fastolf’s associates echoed the linguistic division that was made by Fastolf. Those whom Fastolf described as ‘servants’ (Worcester, Bokkyng, Barker, and Howes) referred to and addressed each other as friends or kin, or according to their responsibilities. However, they referred to the men whom Fastolf called his kin or friends by either their name alone, or the respectful title ‘master’. This linguistic distinction was so clear that when John Paston ventured to address William Worcester by the title of ‘master’, Worcester pointed out its unsuitability:

And where as ye of your pleas wryte me or calle me Maister Worcestr, I pray and requyre yow foryete that name of maist shyp, for I am not amended by my maist of a ferythyng yn certeynté, but of wagys of housold in comune entaunt comme nows plaira. By Worcestr or Botoner I hafe v s. yerely, all costy s born (letter 506, II. 6-10)

Worcester’s argument was that the title ‘maister’ was reserved for those with an annuity, not those who were paid a yearly wage. Instead he preferred to be addressed by his surname ‘Worcester’ or his pseudonym ‘Botoner’.

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100 For example: ‘My cosyn’ letter 987, I. 10; ‘kynnesman of myn’ letter 536, I. 5 (Paston); ‘my cosyn Inglose’ letter 1005, I. 40 (Inglose); ‘my cosyn’ letter 990, I. 47 (Berney); ‘myn frendes William Jenney’ letter 1002, II. 26-27 (Jenney - and others); ‘Thomas Grene and othyr off my trusty frendz’ letter 983, I. 6 (Grene); ‘my cosyn Wychyngham’ letter 996, I. 98 (Witchingham); ‘cosin’ letter 953, address (Fastolf of Oulton); ‘brothyr’ letter 1027, I. 1 (Molyneux).

101 ‘I have desyred my trusty frend Wylliam Wurcestr’ (letter 516, ll. 3-4); ‘my bro þre Spyrlyng’ (letter 571, I. 10).

102 ‘your clerk, W. Barker’ (from Howes, letter 1008, II. 3-4); ‘Nicholas Newman...chief of his chambre’ (from Howes, letter 901, II. 140-141); ‘Magister Thomas Howys vobis amantissimus’ (from Friar Brackley, letter 557, I. 27).

103 Thomas Howes addressed John Paston (letter 507, address) and Henry Inglose as ‘mayster’ (letter 961, II. 56-59, and letter 1008, I. 8) and William Worcester called John Berney ‘Maister Berney’ (letter 496, address).

104 ‘[He was making the] point that he had neither independent means nor a decent salary’. Castor, Blood and Roses, 106-107. ‘Botoner’ was the maiden name of Worcester’s mother. Worcester was so attached to his double identity that he stated both names wherever possible. Even in a straightforward list of accounts that exists as part of a survey of Castle Combe, he gave both of his names: ‘ffine
This distinction between ‘friends’ and ‘servants’ corresponded with another linguisic division, between those who were described as ‘esquire’ and those who were not. The following men were given the title ‘esquire’ or its Latin equivalent ‘armiger’, indicating that they had independent wealth and property:

John Paston (letter 547)
John Berney (letter 955)
Henry Inglose (letter 955)
John Fastolf of Oulton (FPs 10, 11, 12, 13, 20 and Titchwell 81)
Edmund Wichyngham (FP 16)
Nicholas Bokkyng (Titchwell 83)

In the case of Paston, Berney, Inglose, Fastolf of Oulton, and Witchingham, the use of ‘esquire’ in documents corresponded with the use of the respectful title ‘master’ in letters from Fastolf’s servants. This is yet more evidence that the most respect was given to those who had independent wealth.

In several cases, the social position of those who were ‘esquires’ was made especially noticeable by a juxtaposition between their titles and the titles of those who were referred to by their professional occupation. This is exemplified in the following list: ‘John Fastolf of Oueltone...armiger Edmund Wichyngham armiger and John Kyrtelyng clerico’.105 It should be pointed out that the distinction between those who were described as esquires and those who were not was not always reflected in their wages. This is suggested by a document in the Magdalen College archives, which records that a man who was described as an ‘esquire’ and a man who was not were paid the same wages: ‘Item where as in the first yere of the said Bokkyng \office/ in paieng of the wagis of the said knyghtis ridyng seruauntis amongis odre paied vn to Thomas Vassan esquier & seruaunt to the seid knyght & to oon [James] Jamys Billery clerk of ffrauns & secretarie with the said knyght als wele for englond

\textit{Willelmi Botonner dicti Worcestr\ pro tenementis in tenura Thome Pykeryng’} (BL, MS. Additional 28208, folio 15r).

105 FP 16.
as for ffrauunce aftre there covenantis to eueryche of them 4 v marc by yere.\(^{106}\) James Billery, a ‘clerk’, received the same wage as a man who had the status of ‘esquier’. This suggests that there was some flexibility within Fastolf’s circle, and that a man’s wages were decided on an individual basis.

The final potential linguistic subgroup was the men whom Fastolf called his ‘councell’.\(^{107}\) When Fastolf used the word ‘councell’ in his correspondence, he referred to the men who were qualified to give specialist advice, as opposed to ‘seruantes’ like Thomas Howes and William Worcester. In one letter, Fastolf used ‘councell’ to describe those who might help Thomas Howes to choose the best way to retaliate against his enemies.\(^{108}\) In another, the ‘councell’ referred to religious and legal men who discussed Fastolf’s matters with John Paston.\(^{109}\) This was a group that overlapped with the group of ‘kin’, ‘friends’, and ‘esquires’ that has been discussed in the previous paragraphs. However, the word ‘councell’ appears to have referred to these men in the specific context of giving advice. The association of the word with the provision of advice is supported by Fastolf’s frequent use of the word ‘councell’ as a synonym for ‘advice’: ‘I had lever ye were at London a weke the rather and tymelyer than a weke to late. I pray ye doth somwhate aftyr my councell as I wolle do by youres’ (letter 531, ll. 5-8).\(^{110}\)

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\(^{106}\) FP 98. My emphasis.

\(^{107}\) ‘Councell’ was the way that Fastolf’s scribes described the group of people who gave him advice. In modern scholarship, this word is most commonly spelled ‘council’. The word for the advice that was given itself was also called ‘councell’, but in modern scholarship it is most commonly spelled ‘counsel’ to distinguish it from the other meaning.

\(^{108}\) ‘Item, forasmoch as John Dynne, Fouler, Brampton and such othyr [that] have put me to greete costes and dammages...I woold desyre that ye and my councell woold fynde a dew meene that they were corrected’ (letter 989, ll. 39-42).

\(^{109}\) ‘And seth the seyd mater ys of so grete wyght and charge, and he takyth it so gretely to hert, puttyng hys grettist trust yn yow [Paston] to remembre thys seyd mater by avyse of hys councell lerned both spirituell as temporell’ (letter 535, ll. 7-10).

\(^{110}\) See also: ‘I sende to yow [Paston] myn welbeloved frende and seruaunte Ser Thomas Howys, to have youre good councell and advyse how and in what wyse he may best be demened there’ (letter 518, ll. 2-5, my emphasis).
John Watts discussed the ‘council’ in the context of the provision of advice to King Henry VI. He pointed out that alongside formal meetings with the purpose of discussing certain issues, there was, ‘informal dialogue between the king and his greater subjects’. Though this dialogue was not very well documented, Watts believed that it ‘may have been the most significant avenue of counsel in political and constitutional terms’. Britnell agreed that advice-giving by councils was done on a fairly informal and ad-hoc basis: ‘[e]very major landlord had the assistance of a council, with his estate officers as an inner circle, whose importance lay not so much in its collective wisdom, since councils did not often meet, as in the advice individual members could give if asked’. Watt’s research describes advice-giving to kings, but there is evidence that in the circle of Sir John Fastolf, too, the majority of advice was given informally.

The evidence that suggests that a considerable amount of advice was indeed given to Fastolf informally comes from letters in the Fastolf Letters corpus that described situations when Fastolf needed guidance. Letter 559, in which William Worcester complained that Fastolf only listened to the advice of certain men, implies that counsel was frequently proffered to him by his men outside the context of a formal council meeting. Additionally, there was an implication in the following statement that advice might be sought in more than one place: ‘ye shuld have called to you sadde councell [in London] on myn behalf...lerned men of my councell here [at Caister] tellen me’ (letter 1016, ll. 19-23). All of this circumstantial evidence implies that Fastolf perceived his council to be a fluid circle of advisers rather than a single, officially appointed, group.

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111 Watts, Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship, 85.
112 Ibid.
Nicholas Bokkyng was one such man who was qualified to give advice to Fastolf relating to Sir John Fastolf’s finances, and was called into Fastolf’s presence to do so periodically: ‘Item where as in the yers president aftre all accompte of the said Bokkyng dyuers tymes the said knyght sent for the seid Bokkyng to come to hym to Castre for maters in whiche he liked to have the said Bokkyng pouer advis’.\(^{114}\) When Bokkyng was called to give counsel, he would have been aware that the effectiveness of his advice depended on his master’s decision whether to take it. This is perhaps what William Worcester implied when he prayed, ‘Gode gefe hym grace of holsom councell and of a gode disposicion’ (letter 537, ll. 10-11). Wholesome counsel was only beneficial if the lord had the inclination to accept the good advice. The evidence suggests that councillors were not hesitant to offer criticism as part of their counsel, but though the master might listen, he was not obliged to take heed. John Watts described this prerogative in relation to the king’s counsel given to a king: ‘criticism could be a form of counsel, but it was the king’s prerogative to make of counsel what he would’.\(^{115}\)

Fastolf’s councillors were highly influential over his decisions regarding property management and his matters at court, especially if they possessed knowledge and expertise that he lacked. However, Fastolf did not deal with his servants \textit{en masse}, but as individuals. This meant that even amongst the sub-group of his councillors, there were men whose advice held more weight than others. One such man was John Paston. Anthony Smith described Paston’s growing influence from 1454 onwards, pointing out that Paston encouraged Fastolf to challenge Sir Phillip Wentworth over the wardship of Thomas Fastolf because he wanted the ward to marry his daughter.\(^{116}\)

\(^{114}\) FP 98.
\(^{116}\) Smith, ‘Aspects,’ 215-216. See letter 509 from Sir John Fastolf to John Paston in November 1454: ‘certeyn well-willers...have meoved me that yn case the seyd warde myght be had, that ye desyre an alliaunce shulde take atwyx a doughter of yourys and the seyd waard’ (ll. 20-23).
Fastolf’s other servants obviously noticed this special influence, because they helped Paston to recommend the action against Wentworth, and so ‘deliberately cultivat[ed] Paston’s friendship’. It was probably the fact that Fastolf attached special importance to Paston’s advice that enabled Paston to invent a scenario in which he ‘bargeyned’ for all of Fastolf’s manors, lands, and tenements in Norfolk after Fastolf’s death. It was the great influence that Paston had over Fastolf that made this situation believable, and which made it necessary for William Worcester, and the other men who protested against the revised will of Sir John Fastolf, to argue so vehemently against it being true:

And as for ony bargeyn of sellyng or yevyng the maner of Castre or hys londes in Norfolk to John Paston the eldyst, squyer, I herd neyvr the seyd Ser John Fastolf sey yt (letter 895, 12-14).

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Section conclusion:

It has become clear that Fastolf fostered various degrees of physical proximity between himself and his associates. However, Fastolf achieved ‘proximity’ with several of these men despite rarely having met them face-to-face. He sent letters to some, often on a daily basis. Others received his messages via one of their fellow associates. The key to the success of Fastolf’s circle was his awareness of the individuality of his associates. When Fastolf’s living arrangements changed, the organisation of his circle altered to complement these arrangements. However, Fastolf was ready to compromise in response to the circumstances of his individual associates. For example, when John Paston’s busy life prevented him from attending to Fastolf’s matters in person, Fastolf allowed him to send instructions by written letter. Fastolf also accepted that he could expect different levels of permanence and exclusivity of service from his associates. He received constant attendance from some men, but others had to be given special notice if he wanted them to attend to him.

The individuality that was allowed within the Fastolf circle meant that there were no pre-determined subgroups of men with the same ‘job title’ or officially-appointed responsibilities. Fastolf’s associates could expect to receive a range of very different requests, which varied according to their abilities and in response to Fastolf’s tumultuous life. However, an analysis of the circumstantial evidence about the tasks they undertook has revealed that two distinct groups did exist. One consisted of those who were qualified to handle legal matters and give legal advice, and had independent wealth (such as John Paston, John Berney and Thomas Grene). The other was made up of those who had no specialist authority and relied on Fastolf for their living (such as William Worcester, William Barker and Thomas Howes). The linguistic study of this section has suggested alternative subgroups within the Fastolf circle. The words ‘household’, ‘household servant’, and ‘servant’, and job titles such as ‘clerk’ and ‘parson’ were used in relation to certain associates (such as Worcester,
Barker and Howes). In contrast, other men were addressed using titles relating to their social position (‘maister’, ‘esquyer’), or their social relationship with Fastolf (‘cosyn’, ‘kynnesman’, ‘brothyr’, and ‘frende’), such as John Paston, Henry Inglose, and John and William Jenney.

However, there is an overlap between the empirical and linguistic methods of subdividing the Fastolf circle. Both methods suggest that there was a dividing line that separated those whom Fastolf called his ‘frendes’ who had legal authority, wealth, and independent social status, from those he referred to as his ‘seruantes’ who relied on Fastolf for their ‘v s. yerely’ (letter 506, ll. 6-10).

Section One, which is an introduction of Fastolf and the management and organisation of his circle, feeds directly into Section Two’s study of writing and reading in the circle of Sir John Fastolf. It is crucial to have an idea of what the circle itself was, how it was organised, who was part of it, and where the men were located in relation to each other and Sir John Fastolf, in order to understand how a community of writers and readers existed within it.
Writing and Reading in the Circle of Sir John Fastolf (d. 1459)

In 2 Volumes: Volume 2

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

University of York
Medieval Studies

December 2011
List of Contents of Volume 2

SECTION TWO: Writing in the Circle of Sir John Fastolf

Chapter Three: The writing and transmission of letters and documents for Sir John Fastolf. 125

Chapter Four: Interactions between writers in the Fastolf circle 219

Chapter Five: Fastolf's circle as the readers and writers of texts in manuscript books. 260

CONCLUSION 338

APPENDICES

Appendix A: A table of the property acquisitions of Sir John Fastolf. 343

Appendix B: William Worcester's scribal hand in Manuscript books 345

Appendix C: A diagram of the Paston network, and a diagram of their external links. 346

Appendix D: Evidence of a hired messenger being employed to carry letters by Mercers 347

Appendix E: The hand of Luket Nantron in Basset’s Chronicle. London, College Arms, Ms. M.9, folio 35 recto. 348

Appendix F: A draft petition by Sir John Fastolf, in hand of Luket Nantron. 349

Appendix G: A draft petition by Sir John Fastolf in hands of Luket Nantron and William Barker. 350

Appendix H: The hand of William Barker in a letter from Sir John Fastolf. 351

Appendix I: Excerpt from the inventory of Caister Castle, FP 43. 352

Definitions 353

Bibliography 354
List of Illustrations and Tables in Volume 2

Figure 14. The Signature of Sir John Fastolf (Oxford, Magdalen College, Hickling 130).

Figure 15. Four examples of Fastolf’s signature in Oxford, Magdalen College, Fastolf Paper 19. Items 4, 5, 6, and 8.

Figure 16. A scribal signature on the behalf of Sir John Fastolf.

Figure 17. An example of a strip of previously-used paper being used to seal another letter.

Figure 18. Watermark of a bull in profile, with added annotation to define the shape, FP 26.

Figure 19. Watermark of a bull’s head with star protruding from forehead, with added annotation to define the shape, FP 77.
Section Two: Writing in the Circle of Sir John Fastolf:

Chapter Three: The writing and transmission of letters and documents for Sir John Fastolf.

This section explores how letters and documents were composed, written, and transported by members of the Fastolf circle. As a prelude to this study of the written form, it is necessary to point out that written correspondence was not the sole form of dialogue within the circle.

Snatches of spoken conversation were recorded in the Fastolf Letters. For example, Fastolf’s chaplain Thomas Howes was quoted in a letter to John Paston: ‘He answered a-geyn in þese wordes: “Nere is my kyrtyl, but nerre is my smok”’ (letter 624, ll. 10-11, 13th January 1461). Howes was adapting a proverb, from the Latin ‘tunica propior pallio est’ (the tunic is closer than the cloak). The proverb was evidently not well known, for Paston’s correspondent needed to explain how it applied to Thomas Howes: ‘þis was his meanyng, þat ye shulde þan he’ (letter 624, ll. 11-12). This letter demonstrates the inseparability of the written and oral forms for researchers of the medieval period. It is the earliest documented use of this proverb in Middle English, the next record being from a list of proverbs printed in 1546: ‘And ny is my Kyrtyll, but nere is my smok’. Without the survival of the Fastolf Letters, there would be no record that this proverb was used in the Middle Ages - and certainly no evidence that it was used in spoken conversation. This section shows that writing had a specific role in the transmission of information, which existed alongside that of oral conversation. It also demonstrates that letters and documents not only contain evidence about the role of writing, but also present information about oral communication.

Certain of Fastolf’s associates displayed trust that their associates were willing to keep written information secret. This was illustrated when William Worcester wrote to John Paston with sensitive information concerning the poor state of Fastolf’s accounts. He marked the message as confidential with the following instruction: ‘I pray yow and require yow kepe thys mater to your-sylf’ (letter 572, l. 39, 1st May 1457). However, even if the intentions of Fastolf’s associates could be trusted, the written form itself was not a secure method of transmitting information. A letter written by Thomas Denys reveals his distrust in the security of the written letter: ‘The said Asshcote can counterfete my hand, and therefore I drede he wole stele by sum fals letters suych as he myght gete. I haf wretyn to my seruauntz ther-aftir’ (letter 492, ll. 21-23, 8th April 1454). Seven years later he echoed this concern in the postscript to a letter he wrote to Margaret Paston: ‘Men sey send a wiseman on thy erand and sey litell to hym; wherfor I write brefly and litell’ (letter 716, ll. 25-26, 21st or 28th June). This indicated that Denys did not entirely trust either the spoken or the written form and thus divided his message between a ‘litell’ spoken to a wise man, and a ‘litell’ sealed in a written letter.

A letter that William Worcester wrote in 1478 indicated that a letter should not be sent at all if the sender could not guarantee its safe transmission: ‘Item, yff ye wryte to me hyt hath nede to be by a sure commer, for I had levyr a letter be brent then lost, ne forte videant Romani’ (letter 780, ll. 47-48, 1st March probably 1478). This anxiety was also expressed in the Stonor Letters. A letter to Thomas Stonor contained an apology for the delay in sending him a deed he had requested. This delay had occurred because Thomas could not guarantee its safe carriage: ‘Anolper

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2 Thomas Denys was in the service of the Earl of Oxford in Winchester (see the headnote given to letter 452 by Norman Davis).
3 ‘ne forte videant Romani’, translated literally, means ‘lest the Romans may by chance see it’. The reason for Worcester’s use of this phrase in particular is uncertain; perhaps it appeared in one of the classical texts that were associated with him and the Fastolf circle (see Chapter Five below).
poynte, þat ys we kepte not sende þe Dede aboute into þe tyme hit were enrowlyd, for drede of losyng &c. ⁵ Not only could a letter be intercepted and read by an unfriendly person, but an unreliable letter-bearer might lose the letter or document which, until enrolled, was the only evidence of a legal contract or agreement.

The Cely Letters also hint at the likelihood of letters going astray. This was suggested by the diligence that the Celys showed in checking whether letters had arrived. In addition, these correspondents entrusted as little as possible of value with bearers who might not be trusted. On one occasion in 1484, George Cely’s wife sent some gold to her husband but, as she did not know who ‘shold care the letter’, sent ‘not another thing with this letter’. ⁶ Then six days later, William Maryon wrote to George to check whether the letter had been received.⁷

Several of the surviving letters associated with Sir John Fastolf show that there was just as much doubt about the safety of letters after the point of delivery. Several writers appended to their letters a command to the recipient to destroy the letter after it had been received. This demonstrates that certain information was so sensitive that the sender could not risk it being intercepted, or passing into unfriendly hands. Hugh atte Fenne wrote a letter to William Worcester in 1460, addressing him as the enigmatic ‘H. B. of Lincoln’.⁸ At the end of this secretive letter, Fenne suggested combustion as one way of limiting the readership of his letter that was, as he put it, ‘not discreet’. The alternative was storing the letter securely: ‘Brenne þis scrowe or kepe it pryvy &c, as you like’ (letter 1037, ll. 56-57, my emphasis, ⁹th April 1460).

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⁵ Carpenter, ed., Stonor Letters, letter 65, 1462.
⁸ Beadle and Richmond commented that this was ‘mysterious’ and was, ‘perhaps Fenne’s attempt to render Worcester’s “Saturn” symbol...which looks like a monogram’. See the headnote to letter 1037.
No other surviving letters between members of the Fastolf circle offered the recipient the option of keeping it if it had such sensitive content. For example, Henry Windsor was insistent that a letter he sent to John Bokkyng and William Worcester, relating to the Battle of St Albans, was destroyed. He was worried that his words would displease the powerful men about whom he wrote: ‘And aftur [pis] is rede and vnderstonden I pray you bren or breke it, for I am loth to write of any thing of any lord; but I moost nedes’ (letter 1026, ll. 40-42, 19th July 1455, my emphasis). Friar John Brackley, Fastolf’s confessor, issued John Paston the same command in a letter that he wrote probably in 1456: ‘Visa frangatur et in ignem post jaciatur’ (letter 557, l. 33, 29th June probably 1456). Brackley’s concern was sensible, since the letter was crammed with instructions concerning Fastolf’s legal disputes, apparently entrusted to him by a ‘secrete frende’ of Fastolf’s enemies. To give a final example, William Worcester closed a letter to John Paston with the request: ‘I pray yow breke my b[i]lle’ (letter 576, l. 22, probably 1458).

The survival of letters containing a request that they be destroyed proves that these commands were likely to be ignored. It is unsurprising that this was the case, as documents were often needed as evidence, long after they were written. The temptation to keep and store letters, even if they were meant to be destroyed, must have been irresistible.

Concern about the security of the written form was one reason for the system of oral ‘credence’ in the fifteenth century and earlier. Pierre Chaplais pointed out that

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9 For more information on the Battle of St Albans (22nd May 1455) see Myers, ed., English Historical Documents, 275-277, in which are printed three primary documents relating to the battle. See also Armstrong, ‘Politics and the Battle of St. Albans’; and Hicks, ‘Propaganda and the First Battle of St Albans,’ 167-183.

10 Musson described a ‘growing demand for legal proofs, exemplifications of title deeds and records of legal processes’, which had been developing since the early fourteenth century. Anthony Musson, Medieval Law in Context: the Growth of Legal Consciousness from Magna Carta to the Peasants’ Revolt (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 66. See also page 207 below on the storage of documents.

11 Pierre Chaplais described the function of the oral message or ‘credence’ and its accompanying written letter of authentication, the ‘letter of credence’: ‘By the fifteenth century, a letter of any type
the writers of diplomatic letters did not always make it clear why they were choosing to send part of their message orally. Instead, they kept the confidential message so carefully confined to oral conversation that even references to it were vague in the written letter.\textsuperscript{12} It is likely that the system of oral message delivery was intended to restrict confidential information to a medium which did not leave a written record. In letters in other corpora, this intention was stated explicitly: ‘Item, syr, as ffor syche [newwellys] as ys here, plesse hytt yow to comen wyth the brynger herof and he wyll tell yow, for I darre nott wryght, etc’.\textsuperscript{13} Sir John Fastolf required his servants to use their initiative, and to think beyond what he instructed them in writing. He gave them authority to deal with what was not desirable or practical for Fastolf to give written instructions about: ‘And that it please yow thynk vppon all othyr maters that I can not wryte esylye now’ (letter 579, ll. 56-57, 3\textsuperscript{rd} July 1459).

For Fastolf, saving time was the most important advantage of the system of the oral message. On at least one occasion, Fastolf could not even spare the time to remain with his scribe until he had finished writing a letter on his behalf: ‘And be cause I myght [not] abyde till the wrytyng e of the matteres that I commaunded Worcestre to wryte, I signed the lettre so neere the begynnyng’ (letter 993, ll. 44-46, 2\textsuperscript{nd} December 1450). If Fastolf could not wait until his scribe had put his matters into writing, he instead spoke with him and expected him to pass on the message orally.

which contained an incidental clause of credence announcing a supplementary oral message was sometimes described as a ‘littera...cum commissione credencie’. Chaplais defined a ‘letter of credence’ as ‘a notification that the king is sending A, or A and B...the bearers, who will convey an oral message on his behalf to the addressee; sometimes, the king explains that he has committed a credence (or some words) to the envoys, that he has opened his mind (or will) to them, that he has placed his words in their mouth or simply that they are fully informed of his will (or intention); the second clause...is a request to the addressee to give full credence to the envoy...in what they will say on the king’s behalf’. Pierre Chaplais, English Diplomatic Practice in the Middle Ages (London: Hambledon, 2003), 163 and 177.

\textsuperscript{12} Some letters of credence give a brief outline of the subject of communication...the envoys being left to fill in the details by word of mouth...Even the motives which induced the king to choose the word of mouth...are simply hinted at: he has opened his mind to his envoys, who are to give the addressee oral explanations in a more secret fashion (secritus), more clearly (claritus, delectius or luculencius) or in fuller detail (lacius, plenius or seriosius). Chaplais, English Diplomatic Practice, 178-179.

\textsuperscript{13} Hanham, ed., Cely Letters, letter 216, ll. 16-19.
The following statements are evidence that more information was conveyed through correspondence than was written in the letters themselves: ‘I haue commaunded the said Worcestr to comyn with you of the said mater, as of othire materes, more along of myne entent than I can do writte, to whom ye lyke geve credence of such materes as ye can thynke be for my proffit’ (letter 542, ll. 13-17, 12th February 1456, my emphasis), and ‘I sende my servaunt Worcestre wyth lettres to hem directed at thys tyme of myn entente, prayng yow hertlie to take the leysar þat myn entent were sped, as the berer herof shal more pleynlie enforme yow’ (letter 536, ll. 9-12, 11th December 1455, my emphasis).¹⁴

Though there were a large number of men who delivered Fastolf’s letters, it seems that only a few of them were entrusted with oral messages. There is only evidence that Fastolf authorised John Bokkyng (letter 1003), William Worcester (letter 536), William Barker (letter 538), Nicholas Newman (letters 554/555), and Geoffrey Spirleyn (letter 589), to deliver oral messages. This was a small group considering that the Fastolf Letters mention eighteen letter bearers by name, as well as numerous anonymous ‘goers between’. Acting as Fastolf’s mouthpiece in the delivery of his letters was evidently a role that carried great responsibility, which was entrusted to few men. The fact that John Bokkyng worked so closely with Thomas Howes at Caister Castle qualified him to convey oral messages between Howes and Sir John

¹⁴ This divide between the written and oral components of correspondence was also a feature of a fifteenth-century letter from a different corpus of letters. Sir John Cheyne (d. 1468) wrote to Sir John Pelham (d. 1429): ‘and as touching to the good speed of my Lord of Huntington now lost at sea, the bearer hereof shall declare it then by mouthe more plainly than I can write it at this time’. See John Taylor, ‘Letters and Letter Collections in England 1300-1420,’ Nottingham Medieval Studies 24 (1980): 57-70 (69). For the full text of this letter see Laetitia Lyell, A Medieval Post Bag (London: 1934), 271. For more information about the writer of this letter, see Linda Clark, ‘Cheyne, Sir John (c.1390-1468),’ ODNB, online edn. 2008, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/50265 [accessed June, 2011]. Christine Carpenter pointed out the use of verbal messages in the surviving Stonor Letters, and made the observation that, in that corpus, oral communication was mostly associated with noble correspondence, commenting that ‘employing a greater number of trusted emissaries, they tended to send information by word of mouth rather than by letter’. Carpenter, ed., Stonor Letters, 9, citing letters 22 and 23. For example, Gilbert Talbot (d. 1387) wrote to Edmund de Stonor that Thomas More would deliver a message by mouth: ‘et sur ceco envoiouns deverz vous nostre bien ame Thomas atte More pur vous certefier plus a plain, a quil vous plese doner foy et credence de ce quil vous certefiera tochaunt noz dites tenauntes’ (letter 22).
Fastolf. By assisting Howes, he became well-acquainted with the matters that concerned Fastolf, and so could be trusted to give him accurate reports of these matters: ‘Item, the day of thys lettre wrytyng, John Bokkyng ys com to me, and hath expressly enformyd me by mouth as by wrytynges the greete labour and diligence whych ye have take vppon yow, seth Martinmasse’ (letter 996, ll. 10-12, 20th December 1450).

The Cely Family correspondence, too, shows that only trusted bearers were entrusted with oral messages: ‘Sir, oder tydyngys hawe we none here, but that Joysse can enforme youre masterschyp be mouth well inowth’. It is clear that Joysse Parmenter had an established reputation as a faithful servant, since on other occasions he had been a trusted supply of information for the Cely family: ‘Joysse told me that your mastership had granted him the stable and the house at his coming again to Calais for to occupy it’.

Certain disputes that concerned the Paston family in the 1440s and 1450s made oral communication crucial, as rapid dialogue was needed to solve problems swiftly. However, the tumultuous political situation in Norfolk at that time meant that servants might refuse to deliver messages. For instance, when the men of Thomas Tuddenham occupied the Pastons’ residence at Gresham, Margaret Paston dispatched a servant of hers to speak to one of these men. What was remarkable was that this

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16 Roura, ‘Keeping Track of the Post,’ 23.
17 Christine Carpenter described the period of insecurity that began in 1449 when Richard Neville became earl of Warwick, when, ‘at no time...could landowners assume that the rule of England, and therefore of its shires, would remain in the same hands for any length of time’. Carpenter showed that in this period of uncertainty, ‘a landowner was prepared to make use of a political connection to which he belonged in dealing with his lands’. Carpenter, Locality and Polity, 439. This was paralleled in East Anglia, and in the Fastolf circle. As John Watts has pointed out, Thomas Daniel made the ‘decision to involve himself in the politics of East Anglia from the later 1440s’. Watts suggested that the duke of Suffolk became the ‘unwilling frontman’ for Daniel’s ambitions (Watts, Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship, 219). Sir John Fastolf, as a gentry landowner, became a victim of wrangling within the nobility above him and so was plagued with attacks to his properties by the Duke of Suffolk and his allies from 1447 onwards (see letters 986 and 994 and pages 9-10 above)
18 See Oxford University, Magdalen College, MS. Hickling 104. For an account of the expulsion of John Paston from the manor of Gresham by Lord Moleyns on 17th February 1448, see letter 36, which
servant was female, because no man was willing to take the message. In the end, Margaret found it advantageous to give the message to her female servant Katherine: Helen Castor pointed out that ‘there were at least some benefits of being a woman in this situation...communication from Margaret by a female servant encouraged Barrow to be gracious. He received Katherine with “great cheer’’.\(^9\) Regardless, this demonstrates that there were complex forces at work in the selection of the bearers of oral messages, and that it was not always possible to send a letter with the preferred bearer. A comment in one of the Stonor Letters, of 1482, also reveals that it had not been possible to use a trusted letter bearer: ‘As for news y have told this berrer to enforme yow. I fere me he cannot well shew them to your mastership’.\(^20\) In this case, the sender evidently had to entrust a certain man with the delivery of his letter even though he did not trust him.

Chaplais showed that, in the case of diplomatic letters, it was rare for a letter to be sent without the benefit of a supplementary oral message.\(^21\) Several letters between members of the Fastolf circle were accompanied by oral reports about the health of the sender, which could be provided easily since the bearer had recent contact with that individual: ‘And trwly, brother, I thank almyghty God of your welfare, of the which the berer of this my pour lettre certified me of &c’ (letter 1026, ll. 5-6, 19\(^{th}\) July 1455). Evidently both the written and the spoken elements of correspondence were essential.

The letters of Sir John Fastolf refer to the delivery of the message in both a spoken and a written form, even where it was not immediately obvious how an oral report would enhance the written exchange: ‘Item, the day of thys lettre wrytyng, John Bokkyng ys com to me, and hath expressely enformyd me by mouth as by
wrytynges the greete labour and diligence whych ye have take vpon yow’ (letter 996, ll. 10-12, 20\textsuperscript{th} December 1450), and ‘so ye mow bothe wright and seye’ (letter 577, l. 26, 13\textsuperscript{th} April 1459).

The balance between the oral and written form of correspondence can be evaluated in two contrasting ways. Pierre Chaplais argued that in the case of diplomatic messages delivered by foreign envoys, the oral component was significantly more important than the written for the communication of information: ‘[o]ral delivery, an essential ingredient of the way of credence, had to precede written delivery, which in any case was nothing more than a supplementary and optional step’.\textsuperscript{22} In contrast, Sarah Williams questioned whether the orality referred to in letters was a ‘discourse (produced by respect for tradition or perhaps nostalgia) rather than a reflection of actual practice?’\textsuperscript{23} Her questions were prompted by the Paston Letters, which contain references to the aural reception of a letter, but also descriptions of ‘the act of “seeing” a letter, which seems to indicate a process of visual assimilation’\textsuperscript{24}. Williams’s observation highlighted the prestige that was attached to oral communication, indicating that even those who read their own letters wished to create the impression that they were read to.

Regardless of whether the oral delivery of correspondence was actually practiced, there is a significant amount of evidence illustrating the prestige that was attached to oral communication. In the following passage from the Boke of Noblesse, William Worcester claimed to report words spoken by Sir John Fastolf. These apparently oral anecdotal digressions were incorporated into passages that were otherwise straightforward narrative accounts. For example, Worcester’s account of the siege of Harfleur included a brief recollection of what Fastolf had apparently said about what

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid, 209.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid, 73.
he had witnessed: ‘yn the wynter nyghtys I herd the seyd ser Johan Fastolfe sey that every man kepyng the scout wache had a masty hound at a lyes, to berke and warne yff any adverse party were commyng’.\(^{25}\) Then later in the text, Worcester wrote:

\[\text{I hafe herd myne autor Fastolfe sey, when he haf yong knyghtys and nobles at his solasse (‘solasse’ meaning ‘entertainment’),}\(^{26}\) \text{how there be twey maner condicions of manlye men, and one ys a manly man called, another ys a hardye man; but he sayd the manlye man ys more to be comended, more than the hardye man.}\(^{27}\)

This ‘soundbite’ was written in the margin of the manuscript, which added to the impression that it was a separate oral dimension to an otherwise written text. However, though it is possible that this was indeed a transcript of Fastolf’s words, it is equally likely that it was a literary device, wherein Fastolf was depicted as being able to communicate in an appropriate manner for a ‘worshipful’ knight. As J. D. Burnley pointed out ‘a knowledge of the language proper to the concerns of a gentleman was equated with the possession of gentility itself’\(^{28}\). The perceived value of education in a leader had an important role in the training of the young Henry VI, who was encouraged to take time to learn the literary and linguistic arts.\(^{29}\) The young king was not only instructed to read, but his reading material was carefully controlled: Henry VI was to concentrate especially on history: ‘mirrors and


\(^{28}\) Burnley reached this conclusion from the observation that manuscripts of the fifteenth century contain notes such as lists of the names of various animals and birds, and hints on choosing a horse. He concluded that ‘it is apparent that the motive for compiling lists of such terms was one of social aspiration: a knowledge of the language proper to the concerns of a gentleman was equated with the possession of gentility itself’. J. D. Burnley, *The Language of Chaucer* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1983), 178.

\(^{29}\) A commission of the Privy Council in 1428 appointed Richard, earl of Warwick as tutor to Henry VI and explained the link between education and royal leadership. Being educated in, ‘good manners, literature, language, nurture and courtesy and other virtues and teachings appropriate to a royal person’ would make the king ‘better able to hold and govern in preserving our honour and estate’. Nicholas Harris Nicolas, ed., *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (London: Commissioners on the Public Records, 1834-1837), 3: 296-297, as cited in Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading and English Literature*, 24.
examples of tymes passed’, which were not theoretical mirrors for princes, but were narrative histories that showed how great leadership had been enacted. So for Henry VI, reading and practical leadership were joined, as his education aimed at making him aware of examples of great leadership from the past. By depicting Sir John Fastolf leading debates about the conduct of men at war, Worcester was creating an image of another educated military leader. The quote from the Boke of Noblesse about ‘hardy’ and ‘manly’ men may have come from Cicero, and by putting this quote into the mouth of Sir John Fastolf, Worcester depicted Fastolf as a leader who was able to apply the wisest points from Roman literature to the contemporary situation. Fastolf, as depicted in this soundbite, was not only aware of the desirable qualities of a leader, but was dedicated to facilitating the learning of other knights by passing on his knowledge to younger knights during their leisure time. According to

31 For a parallel impression that the author created an image of the patron, see Daniel Wakelin’s research into the composition of The Fall of Princes by John Lydgate for Duke Humphrey of Gloucester. Wakelin discussed the depiction of Duke Humphrey in the prologue to the text and, on pages 31 to 34, presented evidence from the prologue that suggested that Lydgate was “a sort of propagandist, trying to develop for the duke a “persona as a learned statesman” in “cultural politics”.” Daniel Wakelin, Humanism, Reading and English Literature, 31-34. See also Jennifer Summit, “Stable in Study”: Lydgate’s Fall of Princes and Duke Humphrey’s Library,’ in John Lydgate: Poetry, Culture, and Lancastrian England, ed. Larry Scanlon and James Simpson (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 207-231 (212); and Alessandra Petrina, Cultural Politics in Fifteenth-Century England: The Case of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 261.
32 Daniel Wakelin pointed out that the phrase ‘manlye man’ might have come from the vir virtutis. Daniel Wakelin, Humanism, Reading and English Literature, 112. See Quentin Skinner, The Foundations of Modern Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 1: 87-91. Craig Taylor pointed out that the adaptation of Roman texts to current concerns (as opposed to turning to Vegetius and summaries of Vegetius in texts like the regimine principum of Giles of Rome) was a feature of French writers of the Hundred Years War until the latest years of the Wars, when men such as John Talbot, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, William de la Pole and Sir John Fastolf, turned to such texts in the face of defeat and ‘increasing domestic dislocation’. The Boke of Noblesse was one such mid fifteenth-century English text which married classical wisdom with practical writing on the laws of war. Taylor, ‘English Writings on Chivalry and Warfare,’ 80-81, and 83-84.
33 The oral provision of advice about chivalry by the experienced captain, Sir John Fastolf, is reminiscent of the kind of education described by the thirteenth-century writer Geoffroi de Charny. His Book of Chivalry called for the establishment of schools to teach the ethics and science of chivalry to young knights. The text also pointed out that training and advice in military matters was most likely to come orally from qualified and experienced veterans, as opposed to from classical texts. Geoffroi de Charny, The Book of Chivalry, 92 and 100-106. See Taylor, ‘English Writings on Chivalry and Warfare,’ 82. For an alternative image of what was being taught to young gentry by elder men in the fifteenth century outside of a directly military context, see Jonathan Hughes’s article, ‘Educating the Aristocracy in Late Medieval England’. Hughes pointed out that by the fifteenth century, the nobility ‘had to cease being warriors fighting for their families and became educated servants of the state’. As
this depiction, he was a man who was talented enough to fit in reading and learning alongside his other responsibilities as a military leader and land-owner. However, it is quite likely that this image of Sir John Fastolf was carefully crafted by William Worcester, in order to create a portrait of a well-read leader who was prepared to benefit from the wisdom contained in written texts.

The following quotation shows how the depiction of an educated leader was employed in Christine de Pizan’s *Le Livre des Fais et Bonnes Meurs du Sage Roy Charles V*:

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Evidence, Hughes cited John Tiptoft’s *Declamacion of Noblesse*, in which he sought to define a new concept of the ruling class: ‘those who drink from the well of Greek and Roman learning’. Jonathan Hughes, ‘Educating the Aristocracy in Late Medieval England,’ *History Today*, February 1999, 26-33 (29). Finally, there is the evidence contained in Lydgate’s *Fall of Princes*. Despite the fact that the text was written with Humfrey, duke of Gloucester as its patron, it seems that the text was written with the aim of educating others apart from him: ‘It is almesse to correct and a-mende! The vicious folk off euer comoute’. John Lydgate, *Fall of Princes*, ed. Henry Bergen, EETS os 121-124 (London: Oxford University Press, 1924-1927), 1: 206-210. See Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading and English Literature*, 36.

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34 This portrayal of an efficient division of time was noted by Daniel Wakelin in Pietro del Monte’s exultation of his princely reader in *De Vitiorum inter se Differencia et Comparatione*. Wakelin showed that this text celebrated ‘the prince who reads alongside his competing duties’. See Alfonso Sammut ed, *Unfredo duca di Gloucester e gli umanisti italiani, Medioevo e Umanesio* (Padua: Antenore, 1980), letter 3, ll. 10-28 Wakelin showed that this Italian humanist feature transferred into fifteenth-century writings in English, as John Lydgate in *The Fall of Princes*, depicted the reading of its patron, Duke Humfrey, fitting tightly into an active public life: ‘Lydgate too interweaves these lines [about reading, eg. 1: 365-399] with others about governing with the vigilance of Argus and about pursuing the lollards’. Lydgate, *The Fall of Princes*, 1: 372-383 and 400-413. Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading and English Literature*, 30-31, and see also 33.

35 Taylor has written about exactly how this image of educated military leadership was constructed in relation to Henry V and Humfrey duke of Gloucester. Both men were depicted as educated military leaders in literary texts. To give just one example: ‘The anonymous author of the *Gesta Henrici Quinti* reported that Henry V drew military advice from Giles of Rome during the siege of Harfleur’. Elmhams, *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, 42. For Giles of Rome see Charles F. Briggs, *Giles of Rome’s De regimine principum: Reading and Writing Politics at Court and University*, c. 1275-c.1525 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 62-64. For other examples see Taylor, ‘English Writings on Chivalry and Warfare’, 81. Taylor’s suggestion that this was an ‘image’ of ‘a counseled and wise king’, rather than the bare truth, comes from evidence such as Hoccleve’s assertion that Humfrey duke of Gloucester already knew so much about warfare that it was unnecessary to prepare an English translation of Vegetius’ *Epitoma rei Militaris* for him. Taylor pointed out that if this were the case ‘it is hard to imagine that it would have been more useful for Henry V’. See Thomas Hoccleve, *Hoccleve’s Complaint and Dialogue*, ed. J. A. Burrow, EETS os 313 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 101, lines 561-565. Bishop Thomas Bekyngton, tutor to Henry VI, was also connected with the wisdom of classical literature. Thomas Chaundler, a graduate of New College, Oxford, dedicated his works to the bishop and in the process, referred to the sayings and circumstances of classical authorities such as Cicero, Epicurus, and Aristippus of Cyrene. Andrew Cole commented that by making this connection, Chaundler cast Bekyngton as an educated bishop, and linked him with the wisdom of the great classical authorities: ‘Essentially Chaundler makes Bekyngton out to be a patron worthy of counsel in the new classical forms’. Andrew Cole, ‘Heresy and Humanism,’ in *Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature: Middle English*, ed. Paul Strohm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 421-438 (429).
In winter, especially, he often occupied himself in hearing read various fair histories, holy scripture, or the *Fais des Romains*, or the *Morialites de philosophes* and other [works of] knowledge until the hour of supper ... afterwards he amused himself for a while with his barons and knights ... and thus, by constant order, the wise and well-educated king conducted his life (my emphasis). 36

Christine de Pizan’s work was either an accurate account of Charles V’s lifestyle, or a literary device that depicted him indulging in the appropriate leisure pursuits of an educated king. Either way, both Charles V in *Le Livre des Fais et Bonnes Meurs du Sage Roy Charles V* and Fastolf in *The Book of Noblesse* were shown participating in conversation and tuition, and being read to. With this emphasis on aural intellectual edification in mind, it is unsurprising that medieval letters had such a fundamental oral dimension.

John Russe, the merchant of Yarmouth 37 who was involved in the management of Fastolf’s properties, and whose clothing was listed in the 1448 inventory of Caister Castle, was still communicating with Fastolf’s lawyer John Paston long after Fastolf’s death. 38 It is from the period after Fastolf’s death that most letters written by and from Russe survive. These letters stand out, because Russe was inclined to make proverb-like statements. In one letter he advised John Paston to ‘remeembr the onstabylnesse of thys wold, hou it is not a menut space in comparyson to euery’ (letter 688, ll. 58-59, 6th May 1456). In the same letter he wrote, ‘many smale growe to a gret summe’ (l. 63) and also, ‘[a] day lost in idyll can neuer be recoueryd &c’ (l. 83).

This density of proverbs within a single letter was quite unusual. Russe was also especially forthcoming with moralising advice to Margaret Paston in the aftermath of


37 For the mercantile activities of John Russe, see letter 650 of 20th November, probably 1461: ‘Wherfore insomoche as John Russe and Robert Glouer sendethe a schip with corne ouer we haue aventured with hem c{\textdollar}(centena) comb malt’ (ll. 27-29).

38 See FP 43, folio 15, for Russe’s inclusion in the inventory of Caister Castle: ‘Johannem Russe clerico coquine per vno walet I virge’.
Fastolf’s death, ‘It is a meritory dede to helpe them that mene trewly, whiche for Godys sake, maistresse, consedre’ (letter 725, ll. 11-13, 1466 or soon after). It is possible that John Russe picked up these proverbs from his own reading of literary texts: evidence of manuscript ownership by merchants, and of the involvement of merchants in the patronage and composition of literary texts, shows that merchants had a distinctive literary culture of their own.\(^{39}\) Research has also found that merchants were involved in the writing of texts and the making of manuscript books.\(^{40}\) However, John Russe never stated that he had picked up these ‘soundbites’ from books he had possessed, read, or had read to him. This contrasts with William Worcester, who cited his literary sources diligently.

It is possible that Russe did not encounter these sayings in the books that he read, but rather during the frequent conversations that he must have had with other men during his travels as a merchant. Similarly, the letters of Sir John Fastolf contain oaths that stand out amongst his usual business-like prose. For example, in a letter that William Barker wrote for him in 1451 he instructed John Berney and Thomas Howes that ‘these materes must be amended, with the hepe or the croke &c’ (letter 1003, ll. 30-31, 7\(^{th}\) January 1451). A search of the ‘Middle English Dictionary’ shows that the first and only recorded use of this phrase from the Medieval period was written by John Gower in his *Confessio Amantis*: ‘So what with hepe and what with crok,/ Thei make here maister ofte winne/ And wol noght knowe what is sinne’.\(^{41}\) It is difficult to establish whether Fastolf picked up this phrase by reading Gower or

\(^{39}\) See Meale, ‘The *Libelle of Englyshe Polyece*.’ 181-227, which describes merchantile book collectors (for example, John Brinchel), explains the interest of merchants in particular types of texts (for example, chronicles and annals of the city of London, 200-201), and finally analyses the mercantile bias of the *Libelle of Englysche Polycye*, which suggests that it was encouraged by mercantile patronage.

\(^{40}\) C. Paul Christianson identified two drapers and two haberdashers who also identified themselves as stationers; one stationer who was also a textwriter; one haberdasher who was also described as a parchment, plus many other merchants who had a hand in book production. C. Paul Christianson, *A Directory of London Stationers and Book Artisans* (New York: Bibliographical Society of America, 1990), 27, 41, 95, 96, 102, 117, 127, 164 and 172.

\(^{41}\) See McSparran, ed., ‘The Middle English Dictionary,’ ‘crōk (n.) Also crouk & (N) cruk, croik’.
other literary texts in which it might have appeared or whether it had become a commonly-used phrase in oral conversation by Fastolf’s lifetime. What this does demonstrate, once again, is that there was a thin line between orality and literacy within Fastolf’s circle. Even if the source of one of John Russe’s proverbs could be traced to the work of Ovid or Aristotle, it is quite possible, and quite likely, that he heard it spoken by someone like Fastolf or William Worcester. The same applies for Fastolf’s use of ‘by hook or by crook’: though it was recorded in written culture, it might also have been widely used in spoken language.

Aside from the theoretical, literary, and political prestige of oral communication, it played a great practical part in the daily lives of Fastolf’s associates. Sir John Fastolf and his associates, whose lives were dominated by legal cases, were engrossed in the animated oral debates that occurred at court. One letter recorded a particular exchange in a way that captured its liveliness and that indicated that the confident and rapid delivery of speech was a prerequisite for success within such an environment: ‘And by side this the seid Prisot wolde suffre no man that was lerned to speke for the pleyntyfs, but took it as a venom, and took them by the nose at every thred word’ (letter 1008, ll. 33-35, 9th May 1451).

Oral promises had influence over the day-to-day interaction between Fastolf and his associates. In an exchange that occurred between Fastolf and his stepson Stephen Scrope, Scrope was apparently made an oral promise. When this promise went unfulfilled, he protested vehemently in his letters. Similarly, Henry Windsor wrote to John Paston, confident of his entitlement to property from Fastolf since Fastolf had given his (spoken) word: ‘as touchyng my preferryng to the Boreshed in Suthwerk...of my maisters awun mocion he said that I shuld set vpon the Boreshed’ (letter 574, ll. 35-37, 27th August probably 1478, my emphasis). Whether this

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promise was in reality spoken, or written, is uncertain. However, Windsor described it in the register of spoken conversation.

The letters of Sir John Fastolf and his associates reveal that business manoeuvres were often founded on information that was conveyed to them orally, often in what appears to have been an informal setting.\[^{43}\] This kind of oral information was evidently given credit, for when these men recorded what they had heard, they did not even have to specify who had spoken the words: ‘it [ys] lyke that grete labour and speciall pursute shall be made to the Lord Scalys...and thus I have herd sey’ (letter 996, ll. 23-26, 20\(^{th}\) December 1450, my emphasis). Fastolf exploited the movement that his men made between London and Norfolk to keep track of his concerns around the country. His men gave him oral reports whenever they returned to him after a journey: ‘Item, I have vndrestand well by rapport of my servauntes and othyrywse of your gode and diligent laboure made and doon’ (letter 1005, ll. 30-31, 28\(^{th}\) January 1451, my emphasis). This evidence suggests that Fastolf’s information-gathering process was founded on oral reports and informal conversation.

A letter from one of the correspondents of William Stonor demonstrates that he was well aware of how much damage could be done by a negative oral report. Edmond Hampden wrote to William Stonor that he had heard a negative report that had been made about one of his servants.\[^{44}\] Hampden, fearful of the implications of these oral reports, strongly recommended that their originator, Harry Gorton, should keep quiet: ‘I wold avisse Hary Gorton to kepe hys tong ther’. Hampton proposed that a contrary report should be released in Gorton’s home town in order to discredit

\[^{43}\] The confidence in orally-conveyed information for business manoeuvres had a parallel in a legal context. An example is the prominence of oral testimony and reports in proof of age cases. Joel T. Rosenthal gave an example from Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem: Henry V (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1987), 18: 529, where an individual testified that he ‘remembered because his house burned and those that came to help told him that Giles Henthill had a son by Katherine his wife on that day’. The oral report was trusted because the individual who was testifying could link it with a definite historical event: the burning-down of a house in the village. Joel T. Rosenthal, Telling Tales: Sources and Narration in Late Medieval England (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 13. See also page 147 below.

\[^{44}\] Carpenter, ed., Stonor Letters, letter 219, 18\(^{th}\) June 1478.
his negative words: ‘I trust to do 3ow better servyce in on owyr than yt scall ley in hys powyr to do in all the dayys off hys lyve: and that scall I be reportyd in the same towne that he dewlyt in’.

There is also evidence of nervousness about malicious oral reports in literature that was written for royalty. Stephen Scrope, Sir John Fastolf’s stepson, translated the *Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*, which warned a king not to keep ‘suspecious peple’ in the household, in particular ‘accusers’, ‘contrevours’, and ‘reporters of wordis behind a mannnes bakke’.\(^4^5\) The text warned that if a king tolerated these kinds of men, he would have no ‘sufficient servants’ or good counsellors. This encapsulates the contempt that was reserved for individuals who made damaging oral reports. A letter from King Henry VI to the duke of York demonstrates the power of oral communication, and its potential to damage relationships and compromise reputations. In 1450, Henry wrote a letter to the duke specifying that it was some ‘straunge langage’ that people had said about the duke that was most troublesome to the king: people had warned the king that the duke ‘schulde take upon you that ye nothir aught nor as we doutenat ye wole not attempte’.\(^4^6\) Despite the fact that the king did not fear that the duke would actually attempt something, he still worried about the rumour.\(^4^7\)

Fastolf’s servants made use of a variety of modes of communication in the genealogical enquiries that they made in order to reinforce his claims to his properties. Seeking out written pedigrees was one of the ways in which they conducted these enquiries, but equally important were the oral testimonies that were provided by all manner of individuals. In one letter, three of Fastolf’s servants gave


\(^4^7\) See Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading and English Literature*, 77.
him information connected with a genealogical enquiry that he was conducting. They pointed out that the best insight could be gained by speaking to local people with long memories: ‘And for to wete what tyme he wedded hir...it [is] nat vnknowe to dyuers olde men and gentlemen of this, that the seid Margery dede make a-syne er thanne Roys solde it to you’ (letter 965, ll. 19-22, 12th January 1449). In another example, John Crop told William Worcester that ‘[Edmond Wexchaundler] said me if that y wold go to Brianston that I shulde speke with old John Rogger, and he wolde tell me moch more of that awnsatry’ (letter 969, ll. 13-15, mid-May 1449). The next letter that John Crop wrote to Worcester reveals just how diverse his oral sources were: Crop had asked a man to do some genealogical research, and the man had ‘spake to Dan Hew Forster, and to the Abbot is kervere’ (letter 970, ll. 9-10, 2nd June 1449). Then when Crop himself made some enquiries, he ‘met with a bakere that dwellid som tyme in Glastynbury’ who told him ‘there was a lorde that was callid Lorde Louel the Rich’ (letter 970, ll. 23-24, 2nd June 1449). Crop reported what he had learned from the long memory of Edmund Waxchandler, Dan Hew Forster and others, and Worcester was able to synthesise this oral testimony with the evidence he found in written documents connected with the dispute. This suggests that written pedigrees were useful to a certain extent, but for a complete picture, Fastolf’s information gatherers had to interrogate a knowledgeable, old, local person who could provide more detailed information.

The trust that information gatherers placed in oral sources of information was also displayed in the way that information was gathered for evidence in the dispute over Fastolf’s will. To give one example, Bodleian Library, MS. Norfolk Top. C.4 comprises evidence taken aurally from several witnesses in a variety of locations in 1464 and 1465.48 Not only was there trust in these oral testaments but he, in fact,

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appears to have prioritised these sources for the provision of certain types of information. Among those individuals who were listed as witnesses of the scenes around Fastolf’s deathbed were two illiterate husbandmen called Henry Clerke of Blofield and John Tovy of Caister, another husbandman called Thomas Hert of Caister, and William Shave, an illiterate roper. Each of these men were recorded as giving oral accounts of exactly what happened around Caister at the time of Fastolf’s death. These kinds of people were those who were likely to have been around to see events happening, and perhaps they were perceived as uncomplicated, relatively apolitical, and therefore likely to be trustworthy sources of information.

A combination of oral and written information kept Fastolf well-informed at all times, and he appears to have juggled the two lines of communication successfully. However, the evidence suggests that the spoken word could cause confusion, especially when there were conflicting sources of information. Without the benefit of written accounts to reflect upon in tranquility, Fastolf’s information-gatherers at times became confounded by contradictory accounts. John Crop, who was making enquiries for Fastolf, expressed his frustration about discordant spoken information: ‘And in euery place where that y laboured for this seid mater y myght not fynde iij men ne ij men yn one tale, but euery man haue dyuers talis. And so y wote neuer after whom to wryte the redy trouth’ (letter 970, ll. 27-29, 2nd June 1449). In a separate incident, Fastolf himself expressed his anger that his associates had become prey to the potential unreliability of the spoken word: ‘Item the parson off Cotton that late was duelling there fast by Cotton, whych falsly enformed William Cole and Shypdam myne auditours that... my tenauntes... wer notable and sufficient men to pay the debt... the said auditours gevyng credence to the said parson toke the said vnsufficient man to be plegghe’ (letter 995, ll. 20-26, 5th December 1450, my emphasis). It cannot be proven that the parson of Cotton gave this information to
Fastolf’s auditors orally. However, this does suggest that Fastolf had to keep a careful watch over his circle when so many lines of communication were passing through it.

Fastolf was a prolific letter writer and sometimes composed numerous letters to the same recipient in quick succession. For example, in the period September to December 1450 alone he wrote twelve letters to Thomas Howes. There is a danger that the volume of this correspondence might lead to too great an emphasis on written correspondence as a means of interaction between Fastolf and his circle. In fact, these written letters reveal a lot about the importance of oral discourse within the circle.

A letter that John Bokkyng wrote to John Paston demonstrates that he had a preference for oral communication over written. Bokkyng, at times, struggled to address Fastolf’s diverse and numerous concerns within a single letter. He expressed his dissatisfaction with the written form in a letter that he wrote in 1456. He stated that he could not answer Paston’s many questions until he visited him the next week (letter 548, ll. 2–6, 8th May 1456). He did set down many written items concerning goings-on in London, but followed them with the promise of further information by mouth: ‘I write noo more til myn comyng’ (ll. 50). Then seven days later, Bokkyng reminded Paston that he was due to visit, and that he would give him more spoken information: ‘[I shall] enforme yow of all and of suche as I wil nought write’ (letter 549, ll. 3–4).

This preference for oral communication was echoed in the Cely Letters, written a generation after the Fastolf Letters. Richard Cely the younger wrote that he would rather wait for an opportunity to speak with George, than attempt to convey his message in a letter: ‘I wolde wryte to yow of many thyngys, byt I tryste to telle yow them meryly by movthe.’ Another Cely Letter, number 124 in the printed corpus,

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49 ‘I receyved a lettre from you...jn whiche bothe moche þinge is conteynd whiche all at þis tyme I may nought answere vn-to myn comyng þe neste weke’ (letter 548, ll. 3–6).

50 Hanham, ed., Cely Letters, letter 81, ll. 16–17. For more information about Richard Cely the younger see Holmes, ‘Cely Family’.
promised not just one oral message, but two. The first component of the message was from the bearer of the letter, and the second was from the sender himself: ‘I am porpossyd to com houyr to yow that same tyme myselfe; and than shall I show vnto yow be mow the many thyngys etc. and so con the brenger hereof’.  

Despite the prestige attached to orality, it was crucial for correspondents to maintain a balance between written and oral information, with oral communication being reinforced by the appropriate written authority. Accordingly, in the following letter, the final sentence acted as the equivalent of the diplomatic ‘letter of credence’ described by Pierre Chaplais: ‘And amonges others ye may say to my nepheu Henré Filongley I trust right gretly in my Lord Tresorer is gode lordship...and this my lettre shall be yowr warant in this behalf’ (letter 577, ll. 23-27, 13th April 1459).  

The concord between written and oral forms in correspondence is especially apparent in one particular item in the Fastolf Letters corpus. In about 1450 or 1451, Stephen Scrope wrote a schedule of grievances against his step-father Sir John Fastolf (letter 1012). Fastolf must have replied to this, because between August 1451 and July 1452, Scrope wrote a list of rejoinders to Fastolf’s replies (letter 1013). These rejoinders alternated between written pieces of information and promises of further information ‘by mouth’. Alison Truelove pointed out that medieval correspondence had a ‘rhetorical nature’ and that this accounted for the formulaic phrases that were used by letter writers. Scrope’s reply to Fastolf was indeed punctuated by formulaic sentences, which made promises of future oral conversation:

As to the iiij answere, my seyde fader seith that he promissed me neuer

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52 Ibid.
53 Beadle and Richmond pointed out, in the headnote to the letter, that this date of August 1451- July 1452 comes from its reference to the death of Stephen Scrope’s mother, Millicent Fastolf, just over five years earlier (‘it is now more than v yere sen my s<eyd> lady my moder discessed’). Millicent died in 1446 (see headnote to letter 1013).
54 ‘In accordance to the tradition of the form, letters were often written to persuade and cajole others into obeying the will of the writer, and this accounts in part for the formulaic phrases that occur throughout’, Alison Truelove, ‘Linguistic Diversity in the Stonor Letters,’ Reading Medieval Studies 31 (2005): 77-95 (89).
to make yeerly worth iij tymes the lordshyp of Wyghton. Savi<ng> the
displeisir of his good faderhode, I can wel telle the place where it was seyde,
that is to sey, in a gardin in the parke of Alaunsom. As to <the> remanent
of that answere, I can, be my said faderes leue, replie thereto better
be mouth than be writing.

As to the iij answere: I sey nat in my iij article that my seyde fader wrote
to me to com to hym, ne desyred me to leue my lorde of Gloucestr
es
seruyse, whoos soule God assoyle: but I haue tolde the causes of all in my iij article
and in my iij replicacion. As to the remanent of that answere, I can,
be the seyde licence, replie thereto better be mouth than be writing.

As to the v answere: I sey that I rehersed noo thing in my v article but as
truth was, and is, saue my seyde fader may seye as jt pleseth hym. The
remanent of that answere I shal replye thereto by mouth, be my
seide faderes leve.

(letter 1013, ll. 20-34, Aug 1451-July 1452, my emphasis)

Stephen Scrope weaved references to spoken discourse into his writing, giving oral
dialogue such prominence that he not only described a spoken promise made by
Fastolf, but recorded the exact location that it was made.55 There was a congruity
between orality and literacy in the legal literature of the time, which was similar to
the way in which Scrope mixed oral and written forms in letter 1013 above.56

Petitions to parliament of the fourteenth- and fifteenth- centuries shared a repertoire
of legal terms with oral pleas at court. These written petitions, like Scrope’s account

55 A legal context for this balance between oral and written testament can be found in medieval
court proceedings, especially during the examination of the witnesses. After the oral examination of the
witnesses, the judge ‘published’ their testimony by furnishing each party with a written copy of the
record of the witnesses’ depositions. It was conventional practice for the parties to mark up the
margins of their copies of the depositions to demonstrate how the testimony of each witness supported
their position. So, the written and oral modes of transmitting information were entwined in the process
of fighting a case. See James A. Brundage, The Medieval Origins of the Legal Profession: Canonists,
Civilians, and Courts (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 159. Jean Phillipe Levy explained
that presenting certain information orally was preferable because a written text could not be
interrogated in the same way that a speaker could be: ‘a true witness can be examined face-to-face, one
can question him, notice whether he hesitates or vacillates, if he flushes, if he grows pale: one can ask
him the source of his knowledge of the facts...while a written document remains impassive’. Jean-
153.

56 See Gwilym Dodd’s forthcoming article in Medium Aevum, entitled ‘Writing Wrongs: the Drafting
of Supplications to the Crown in Later Fourteenth-Century England’. I would like to thank Gwilym
Dodd for providing me with access to this piece in advance of its publication.
mentioned above, displayed a preoccupation with stating names, and times, which made them resemble spoken pleas at court.\(^{57}\)

Scrope’s formulaic testimony, with its circumstantial detail about where Fastolf’s promise was made, resembles another legal medium: the ‘proof of age’ statements of the period. In these documents, individuals stated exactly what they were doing, and where, when a ward was born, in order to prove that a ward was old enough to be handed the lands that were in the care of his lord.\(^{58}\) John Bedell pointed out that jurors in these cases took both orally-recounted memories and written records into consideration. They used the same Latin word *recolere* to describe knowing the time of birth by memory, and for finding it in a dated document.\(^{59}\) Bedell concluded that ‘it seems clear from reading these documents that the judges did not regard documentary evidence as the best testimony’.\(^{60}\) Stephen Scrope’s testament above highlights the balance between writing and orality, demonstrating that each had a specific role in the recording and transmission of information.

Scrope used formulaic phrases because they would have made the oral delivery of the letter as powerful as possible. Walter Ong pointed out that written material that has been composed for oral delivery, and aural reception, is characterised by the repetition of language that the composer wanted to emphasise to the listener(s) and to

\(^{57}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{58}\) John Bedell described what this ‘proof of age’ statement entailed: ‘This usually involved a juror insisting upon his closeness to the birth or baptism by recalling that he had happened to be in town that day on business or in the church where the baptism was performed to speak with the vicar. Finally, a juror might recall the year of the birth because of some event in his own life that made the year memorable to him’. John Bedell, ‘Memory and Proof of Age in England 1272-1327,’ *Past and Present* 162 (1999): 3-27 (9). For more information about proof of age statements see Crawford Hodgson, ‘Proof of Age of Heirs of Estates in Northumberland,’ *Archaeologia Aeliana* 3 (1907): 297-305, and the more recent study by Rosenthal: *Telling Tales*, especially Chapter One. See also page 140 above.

\(^{59}\) Bedell, ‘Memory and Proof of Age,’ 24. Bedell based this observation on what he found in two documents: one used the word to convey knowing the time of a birth from memory, and the other for finding it in a dated document. Bedell referred to *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1913), 4: 171, number 239, and *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1912), 3: 497-498, number 622.

\(^{60}\) This is supported by the procedure that was followed in processing private petitions in parliament: if a petitioner was called to provide evidence, ‘their testimony supplemented what was written in the petition and was given orally’. This suggests that, in the case of petitions, the spoken word held more weight than the written. Gwilym Dodd, ‘The Rise of English, the Decline of French: Supplications to the English Crown, c. 1420-50,’ *Speculum* 86 (2011): 117-150 (124).
ensure that they remembered. Scrope’s promise to give more information ‘by
mouth’ indicates that he wanted to emphasise that there was more information to
come, in a separate oral form. Repetition was also used in the *Fastolf Letters* on other
occasions: ‘we kan nought see that the xx li. kan be made sekyr to 3ow, be cause
that the condicyon of the same xx li. strechyth [but to the] heirs of Ser Hugh
Clyfford, and noght to the assignez... But as for the xx li., it kan noght be made
sekyr to 3ow because above rehearsed’ (letter 958, ll. 4-7 and ll. 23-4, 6th February
1445 or 1446, my emphasis). Repetition controlled what stuck in the mind of the
listening recipient once the letter had been read out.

The evidence suggests that Fastolf’s correspondents were in tune with which
situations required *ad-hoc* spoken intervention with the content of the written letter.
When addressing Fastolf himself, achieving the correct balance between the two
modes of communication was crucial if Fastolf’s associates were to achieve the
response that they desired. When Fastolf’s servant John Rafman was disgraced, he
sent his fellow servant William Barker a letter pleading with him to speak to Fastolf
on his behalf. This was recorded in letter 962, from Fastolf to Howes, Cole and
Shipdam, in which he recalled that Rafman had sent him a letter, ‘by William
Barkere’. The letter reveals that Rafman did not intend Barker to pass on the message
in its written form. Instead, there were instructions to Barker to pass on the plea
orally: ‘the tenure is thys: “William Barkere, I praye you hertyly to speke vn-to my
mayster Fastolf for John Rafman hese prisoneres”’ (letter 962, ll. 1-15, 12th May
1448). However, even if Barker did present Fastolf with a speech as requested, he
also sent the original written message. This, once again, demonstrates how important

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62 Rafman was disgraced because he had, ‘kest an obligacion of iii’ mark...wheche was owyng [him] by the Duchesse of Bedford’ (letter 962, ll. 29-34).
a combination of oral and written communication was in the circle of Sir John Fastolf.

As Fastolf entered his old age, it appears that oral communication became more troublesome for the closest members of his circle (ie. William Worcester, William Barker, Thomas Howes and John Paston). Speaking with Fastolf was not easy during his later years and this was something that his servants complained about in their letters. William Worcester moaned to John Paston that, ‘[Fastolf] questioneth and desputyth wyth hys seruauntes’ (letter 559, ll. 15-16, about 1456) and years later John Bokkyng wrote that he had waited until after Fastolf’s death to make certain claims for remuneration due to ‘the sharp and bittre answers by the said knyght in his grete siknesses at London and also the drede that the said Bokkyng at alle tymes hadde of the said knight’ (FP 98). 63

However, though constructive conversation with Fastolf could be difficult, it was achievable and could be rewarding. A letter of 1459 suggested that John Paston relied on men who were familiar with Fastolf’s personality to soften messages that were likely to provoke his displeasure: ‘Myn mayster is as freshe as ever he was this ij yere, thanked be God. And youre mater that ye have meved [of] to Ser Thomas for the purchase, &c., myn mayster is weel agreed þerto, but fyrst hit was taken strangely, &c’ (letter 578, ll. 17-20, 24th June). This letter shows that though Fastolf could be a difficult man, he was suggestible. Oral conversation could be an important method of persuasion for the associates of Sir John Fastolf.

There was also an element of orality in the written literature that was composed by William Worcester for Sir John Fastolf. Worcester gave the impression that oral testimony was the foundation of his written text of the Acta Domini Johannis Fastolf. Whether Worcester actually found his information in the way he described is

debatable. However, he took pains to state that he derived part of his account of Fastolf’s life from the oral accounts of certain individuals: ‘Marcii anno 38° regis Henrici secundum relacionem vxoris Thome Swayne’. Worcester would have seen this technique of constructing written texts from diverse oral sources in the literature that he read. BL, MS. Cotton Julius E. IV contains Thomas Elmham’s *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, and has several marginal notes by William Worcester, which indicates that he read or owned it. In this text, Elmham made reference to rumour (‘ubi dictum est Gallorum multitudinem se parare as preliandum nobiscum...’) and gossip that was spread throughout the army by prisoners (‘Et interim pululavit verbum in exercitu per quosdam captivos quod...’). This shows that Worcester read a written text that made reference to oral sources of information as contributary material for an account of the life and deeds of King Henry V.

Worcester’s conversion of oral information into written material continued after Fastolf’s death. The editor of William Worcester’s *Itineraries*, John H. Harvey, noted that when Worcester wished to learn more about monastic book collections, he did not have the luxury of consulting a catalogue, but instead had to speak to their custodians: ‘Worcestre was avidly curious about the contents of libraries held by monastic houses and private individuals... he depended on personal reports of interesting items and upon his own interrogation of custodians’. The *Itineraries* themselves reveal that Worcester was keen to record information about the days and nights that he spent simply eating, drinking, and talking, with individuals whom he

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64 Daniel Wakelin had doubts about William Worcester’s honesty concerning his source material for the composition of literature. For instance, Wakelin showed that Worcester’s use of Cicero’s *De Senectute* for his composition of the *Boke of Noblesse* ‘suited the spirit’ of the original, but did not represent the original text faithfully. For more detailed information see Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading and English Literature*, 116-117.
65 BL, MS. Additional MS. 28206, folio 19v.
66 For this text see Elmham, *Gesta Henrici Quinti*. The references to Worcester’s marginal notes were made by Taylor and Roskell, the editors of the text, on page xv. They refer to folios 113v, 117r, 117v, 112r, 112v, 123v, 124r, and 125r of MS. Julius E. IV.
met during his travels, for example: ‘Martis .22. post meridiem equitaui de Tavystoke meridiem per villam Seynt Mary Otery loquendo cum magistro Cornwayle presbitero’ (‘Tuesday 22\textsuperscript{nd} in the afternoon I rode from Tavistock through [Exeter to] the town of St. Mary Ottery, where I talked and drank with Master [---] Cornewayle, priest’).\footnote{Worcester, Itineraries, 38-39.} It is likely that much of the knowledge that Worcester gathered in the course of his journey came from these oral conversations. The gathering of oral information by William Worcester had a parallel in the collection of information by Jean Froissart (c.1337 - c.1405), who demonstrated his ability to weigh up oral sources and judge their value as reliable sources of information. As Antonia Gransden pointed out, regarding Froissart’s account of the rape of the countess of Salisbury, he weighed up the oral evidence, stating: ‘I have stayed long and had many conversations in England, principally in the king’s court and in the courts of the great lords of that country, but never have I heard speak of such as wicked deed; and when I have asked many people who would have known, they were completely ignorant of it’.\footnote{Chroniques de Froissart, ed. Siméon Luce, Gaston Raynaud, and Léon and Albert Mirot (Paris: Société de l’Histoire de France, 1869-1975), 2: 135. Translated by Gransden in Historical Writing in England, 91.} Once again, Froissart’s statements about the oral sources of his information may be a literary device rather than reality. However, even if they were, the important point is that both Froissart and William Worcester wished to create the impression that they used oral sources. So both William Worcester and Jean Froissart not only trusted oral accounts, but they drew attention to the supposed oral origins of the information, which indicates they believed that oral sources made their work \textit{more} authentic and \textit{more} credible.
Chapter Three: The writing and transmission of letters and documents for Sir John Fastolf.

The composition of a Fastolf Letter

Dictation:

Having acknowledged the importance of orality in the delivery of letters in the Fastolf circle, this section will move on to a discussion of the role of orality in the composition of the written form. The letters of Fastolf and his associates present an opportunity to add to the work that has been done on the role of dictation in the composition of the Paston Letters. Norman Davis stated that non-autograph Paston letters ‘were probably dictated’. Davis’s conviction that the Paston letters were dictated led him to argue that a non-autograph letter would preserve the words, and even the syntax, of the sender.\(^\text{71}\) However, though Davis emphasised the role of dictation, in the introduction to the Paston Letters and Papers series he did describe some scribal errors that were symptomatic of mis-copying rather than mis-hearing. For example, though he attributed one significant error, ‘sere and here’ written instead of ‘Sere Andrew’, to mishearing (letter 141, ll. 25, see note 11, 1\(^\text{st}\) July 1451), another mistake, ‘Rapere w’ (letter 220, l. 29, 18\(^\text{th}\) January 1473, see note 8) was ‘more likely to be a mistake in copying from a draft’. Davis also pointed out evidence contained in a letter from Margaret Paston to John Paston, which indicated that the scribe was using notes to compose a letter, rather than being dictated to.\(^\text{72}\) However, Davis would never accept that scribes were entirely responsible for the composition of letters: he argued that the errors in letters 141 and 220 could not have been made by a scribe who was ‘composing as he wrote’.\(^\text{73}\)

\(^{72}\) Davis was discussing letter 192, which contains notes in the margin that indicate that John Pampyng was using it as a guide for a reply. See headnote to letter 192.
\(^{73}\) Davis, introduction to Paston Letters and Papers, part 1, xxxviii.
All of the extant letters from Sir John Fastolf were written for him by other men. Even if Fastolf was capable of writing, he chose to ask his associates to write letters on his behalf. The same is true for some of Fastolf’s senior servants: Norman Davis pointed out that though one letter exists in the hand of Thomas Howes (Fastolf’s chaplain and head of his household at Caister until 1454), two of his letters are in William Worcester’s hand, two are apparently in John Russe’s and one in William Barker’s. Beadle and Richmond have subsequently identified others as being in the hand of Geoffrey Spirleng. Richard Beadle, in ‘Private Letters’, published the year before he co-edited the third part of the Paston Letters and Papers series, suggested that scribes had some influence over the contents of the letters that they wrote. He argued that ‘there appears to be no external evidence, and very few signs from the texts of the letters themselves, to support the widespread assumption that dictation was commonly practised’, and that ‘it is equally likely that the drafting of much correspondence was undertaken by scribes who had been given only general directions or notes as to the intended content’. This is supported by research into the drafting of petitions, which shows that petitions have a general uniformity in style, which suggests that the greatest responsibility for composition was assumed by the clerk. This section of the thesis aims to reach a conclusion about the role of oral

74 This point was made by Richard Beadle: ‘none of the 70 or so extant letters of Sir John Fastolf is in his own hand, though he signed most of them personally prior to a serious illness in mid-1451’. Richard Beadle, ‘Private Letters,’ in A Companion to Middle English Prose, ed. A. S. G. Edwards (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 289-306.
75 Davis, ‘Language in Letters from Sir John Fastolf’s Household,’ 332. The letters in the hand of Worcester are letters 53 and 507, those in the hand of Russe are 510 and 511, and the one in William Barker’s hand is letter 662.
76 Richard Beadle and Colin Richmond attributed letters 961, 964, and 965, all letters written between Howes and Fastolf, to the hand of Geoffrey Spirleng.
77 Richard Beadle wrote that if scribes did compose from notes, they ‘would have been likely to use wax tablets to take down notes from which a letter was to be written up’. Beadle, ‘Private Letters,’ 290-291 and note 6. See Michelle Brown, ‘The Role of Wax Tablets in Medieval Literacy: A Reconsideration in the Light of a Recent Find at York,’ The British Library Journal 20 (1994): 1-16.
78 See Gwilym Dodd’s research into the language of petitions in the early fifteenth century, which put forward the suggestion that ‘having furnished a clerk with the basic “facts”, a petitioner may then have left him to write up the substance of the supplication as he saw fit, placing trust in the clerk’s abilities to make the best possible case on the petitioner’s behalf’. Dodd did not diminish the input that the supplicant would have (‘we cannot discount the possibility that supplicants may still have heavily
dictation in the composition of non-autograph Fastolf Letters, and about the amount of influence that his scribes had over their form and content.\(^79\)

This work about the role of the scribes in the composition of the Fastolf Letters has the potential to alter our understanding of the biography of Sir John Fastolf. Colin Richmond used the assumption that Fastolf dictated his letters to contribute biographical details to his *The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century* series. He argued that the continuing coherence and comprehensiveness of Fastolf’s letters, even in his later years, was evidence that ‘there was no loss of grip’.\(^80\) He referred to ‘the two letters he dictated to William on 24 June 1456’ and ‘the three he dictated to John Bocking the following November’ as evidence for his statement.\(^81\) Richmond pointed out that if Fastolf declined into ill health in the 1450s, this was not indicated by the letters of this period which were ‘not in the least feverish’.\(^82\) He referred to a particular letter that was written to William Yelverton at this time as ‘eloquent’.\(^83\) If Fastolf did indeed dictate his letters, then this indicates that Fastolf maintained his soundness of mind and eloquence into his elderly years.

However, if Fastolf’s scribes were not dictated to, then the clarity of these letters might be evidence of their capacity as scribes rather than Fastolf’s continuing soundness of mind. The idea that the skillful composition of a letter could be down to

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\(^79\) There is a parallel debate about the letters of Joan of Arc. There are eleven surviving letters attributed to Joan. There is evidence that these letters were written on her behalf. See documents 35, 38, and 91 in Craig Taylor, ed. and transl., *Joan of Arc, La Pucelle: selected sources* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). However, it is not clear how much control she had over the content of the letters: whether she dictated them verbatim or not. Joan of Arc, in document 91, stated that she had ‘said to master Jean Erault: write what I say to you’, which implied that she was dictating. However, it appears that even if she were dictating, the letters did not transmit her intentions faithfully: ‘she replied that she had made this reply in part but not all of it’ (see document 38).


\(^81\) *Ibid.* My emphasis. The letters that Richmond referred to were letter numbers 554, 555, 568, 569 and 570.

\(^82\) *Ibid.*, 255.

the excellent training of the scribe rather than the eloquence of his master was put forward by Sutton and Visser-Fuchs in their study of Sir Thomas Cook’s secretary John Vale: ‘the letter from Cook to Sir Thomas Montgomery has already been cited as a possible example of Cook’s compositional powers, but it may in fact show Vale’s capabilities’.\(^8^4\) Returning to Sir John Fastolf and his scribes, Colin Richmond considered, but ultimately dismissed, the ‘possibility that the continuing vigour of these last letters is the secretary’s, not Fastolf’s’. His reasoning was that Fastolf’s letters are consistent throughout their chronological range, and that there was no evidence to suggest that a particular scribe intervened with their tone or content: ‘Fastolf’s last letters are like almost all his earlier ones, whoever is the scribe’.\(^8^5\)

Beadle never, in fact, suggested that Fastolf’s scribes worked entirely independently of their master when they composed letters: he acknowledged that they probably worked from notes that they had taken during a meeting with Fastolf. If this were the case, the consistent quality of the Fastolf Letters was probably due to the successful way in which Fastolf and his scribes collaborated to compose letters. The syntax and spelling of the letters may have been determined by the scribe. The subject matter, and order of the contents, was likely to have been determined by Fastolf’s oral directions.

Fastolf’s scribes, making the effort to write letters that had consistent syntax and tone, may have kept draft letters from which to extract appropriate pre-approved phrases. Certain formulaic phrases that appear more than once in the Fastolf letters suggest that this was the case. To give an example, a particular phrase was repeated in two separate letters in the hand of William Worcester: ‘I had leuere ye were at London ij dayes to rathe then ij dayes to late,’ and ‘I had lever ye were at London a

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weke the rather and tymelyer then a weke to late.\textsuperscript{86} Initially, the phrase was probably an echo of Fastolf’s spoken words, when he was expressing his impatience for the attendance of his legal advisor. Worcester probably repeated it subsequently because it was a tried and tested formula. Frank Barlow’s research on the clerks of Richard Blund, a thirteenth-century bishop, has found that bishops’ clerks composed using exemplars. Barlow examined the drafting of the bishop’s acta, and concluded that: ‘no doubt the bishop’s clerks...had some sort of formulary for reference, if only a box of drafts and spoiled exemplars’.\textsuperscript{87} In a lay context, the fourteenth-century administrator Richard Bury, who held a range of positions including king’s clerk, keeper and treasurer of the wardrobe, keeper of the privy seal and chancellor, compiled a formulary of official documents.\textsuperscript{88} There is also evidence that at least one fifteenth-century secretary may have kept collections of exemplars for use in composition. The compilation of documents and letters that was made by John Vale in the late 1470s and early 1480s show that he was interested in the process of writing. Margaret Kekewich suggested that the written pieces in BL, Additional MS. 48031A were not compiled by Vale due to his interest in their contents, but due to his desire to have a set of models for composition: ‘they...represent a useful and varied selection of epistolary and legal styles and, as such, would have been appropriate models in a formulary’.\textsuperscript{89} There is evidence that administrators of the fifteenth century gathered together written material that covered the range of content that an administrator would need to present in his written work, as well as the styles that they would need to adhere to. The written material associated with Thomas Bekynton

\textsuperscript{86} Letter 525, ll. 10-11 (June, 1455), and letter 531, ll. 5-6 (‘perhaps 1455-6’).
\textsuperscript{87} The acta were the bishop’s registers, which C. R. Cheney described as covering a wide variety of business including ‘land-grants and mandates to manorial officials’, the bishop’s activities in the diocese, and ‘administrative correspondence of all kinds’. C. R. Cheney, \textit{English Bishops’ Chanceries 1100-1250} (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1950), 1-2. Frank Barlow, vol. 11 of \textit{English Episcopal Acta XI, Exeter 1046-1184} (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
\textsuperscript{88} See Gwilym Dodd, ‘Writing Wrongs: The Drafting of Supplications to the Crown in Later Fourteenth-Century England,’ forthcoming in \textit{Medium Aevum}.
\textsuperscript{89} Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, ‘The Provenance of the Manuscript,’ 112.
Chapter Three: The writing and transmission of letters and documents for Sir John Fastolf.

(1390?-1465), Bishop of Bath and Wells and Keeper of the Privy Seal shows that he compiled dossiers of a wide range of materials: everything that a diplomat or administrator would need for English claims during the war (mainly memoranda relating to Edward III’s claim to the French throne). Finally, there is intriguing evidence to show that Royal clerks who issued writs upon the request of petitions did so with the help of exemplars provided by the petitioner: there is an example in a writ accompanying a petition presented by Agnes de Valence in 1305, in which the writer of the writ evidently drew upon the vocabulary of the petition, using the same emotive phrases such as ‘maliciously’, ‘with force and arms’, and ‘against the king’s peace’. Some responses to petitions even stated explicitly that a writ should be written ‘according to the form of the petition’. In the case of these replies that drew upon the petition for phrasing and form, the exemplar was a time-saving device for the Royal clerks. However, it is clear that exemplars could also act as a means of quality control. Returning to the Fastolf circle, there is evidence that Sir John Fastolf was exacting about the way that information was presented in a document: ‘And I desyre to have my bokes valued in the ende of the rolle, as the old maner ys, and also the greynyng and aunsueryng of my officers in the margyn vppon euery title to be set out’ (letter 1005, ll. 58-60, 28th January 1451). So, it would have been sensible for Fastolf’s associates to keep exemplars in order to meet his strict requirements.

In order to ascertain whether the letters of Sir John Fastolf were indeed composed from exemplars, it is necessary to perform a close examination of their language,

91 Bekynton’s dossiers are BL, MS. Cotton Tiberius B. XII; MS. Harley 861, and MS. Harley 4763; and Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodley 855. As cited in Allmand, War, Government and Power in Late Medieval France, 85.
93 Ibid. See, for example, TNA SC 8/8/2/4082 (?1320).
94 There is some evidence that there was a deficiency in didactic material about household management and accounts, in comparison with works on estate management and manorial accounting. This might explain why Fastolf was so concerned with instructing his administrators in exactly how he wanted his documents to be written. See Woolgar, Household Accounts from Medieval England, 1: 48.
which may preserve the syntactic remains of letters that preceded them. The following two passages, the first from a postscript to letter 994, and the second from the body of letter 995, contain remarkably similar content, presented in similar phrases:

Item, Ser John Buk, parson of Stratford, physshed my stankys at Dedham and holf brake my damme, destroyed my new mille, and was ayenst me allwey at Dedham, to the damage of xx li., whych may be endyted allso.

Item the seid John Cole hath by force ayenst my wille thyse yeere and other yeeres [take] out of my waters at Dedham, as I am credybly enformed, and Ser John Bukk, to the nombre of xxiiij swannys and signettes...

(letter 994, ll. 48-53, December 1450)

Item, I have thyse weke comyned wyth my tenauntes of Dedham, who were the chieff counsell of brekyng my mylledam, whereby I hafe lost xx li. by yeere...also Ser John Buk, parson of Stratton, was off counsell and doer also, whych physshyd my stankes and waters at Dedham and destroyed the grete quantité of physsh to the dammage of xx li....And one John Cole of Stoke in the same counté hath taken by dyuers tymes in yeeres passed moo then xx of my swannes and signettes being yn my ryuers at Dedham, as I am ryght credyblye enformed.

(letter 995, ll. 8-16, December 1450)

These similarities indicate that William Worcester used a draft or copy of letter 994 to compose letter 995, rather than being dictated to verbatim. If these letters had been dictated verbatim it is likely that they would have been more naturalistic, and less peppered with formulaic phrases.95

Geoffrey Spirleng appears to have written at least one letter to Sir John Fastolf with a letter from Fastolf in front of him. Spirleng’s letter was addressed from Thomas Howes, Walter Shipdham, and Geoffrey Spirleng, and so it is possible that it was dictated by Howes or Shipdham. However, linguistic evidence in the letter suggests that it was not dictated, and was instead composed using a letter from Fastolf as a guide. Fastolf had evidently written to his men at Caister to ask for

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95 This argument about the implications of repetitive phrases was inspired by a conversation I had with Dr. Philippa Hoskin, archivist at the Borthwick Institute at the University of York. I would like to thank her for the suggestion that repetition might indicate that scribes were using drafts of older letters to help them to compose new ones.
information about the new bailiff of Halysdon (modern day Hellesdon in Norfolk). In
the reply to this request, Spirleng wrote: ‘that ye send me wo...’, which he then
cancelled and replaced with ‘as to the xiiiij article of youre seid lettre, touchyng these
wordes that we shuld send you worde’ (letter 965, l. 80, 12\textsuperscript{th} January 1449, my
emphasis). Spirleng’s mistake was in Fastolf’s first-person singular voice, indicating
that he mistakenly copied it from the letter that Fastolf had sent to them. Realising his
error, Spirleng crossed it out and replaced it with a response to Fastolf’s command in
the appropriate second person plural. This suggests that, in some situations at least,
scribes were indeed composing as they wrote, rather than being dictated to.

Variation in syntax and lexis in letters written for Fastolf by each of his scribes
would be the strongest indicator that the scribes were responsible for the composition
of these letters. Conversely, linguistic differences between letters composed by a
scribe for Fastolf, and the scribe’s own holograph letters, would indicate that he was
being dictated to by Fastolf (or, at least, that the scribe had a very limited influence
over the form of his master’s letters).

A comparison of the work of different scribes can be achieved through a ‘micro
study’ of linguistic features within the opening formulae of the Fastolf Letters.\textsuperscript{96}
Norman Davis pointed out that ‘fifteenth-century letters in English of a formal,
respectful kind very often open with a long series of conventional phrases and
sentences constructed with minor variations upon a regular pattern’.\textsuperscript{97} The opening
formula was one part of the letter that most certainly did not reflect spoken
conversation - it was constrained according to the status of the sender and recipient.\textsuperscript{98}
The standardisation of the opening formula is confirmed by the reaction of King

\textsuperscript{96} This section on the opening formulas of Fastolf’s letters evolved from an essay I wrote in 2008
towards my Master’s degree, entitled \textit{The Language of Letters in the Hand of William Worcester}.

\textsuperscript{97} Norman Davis, ‘The \textit{Littera Troli} and English Letters,’ \textit{The Review of English Studies} 16 (1965):
233-244 (236).

\textsuperscript{98} This contrasts with the letter as a whole, which Alison Truelove argued generally reflected spoken
language: ‘[L]etters could be highly formulaic but at the same time reflect the spoken language of the
period relatively well’. Truelove, ‘Linguistic Diversity,’ 78.
Henry VI when the duke of Burgundy altered the way that he addressed letters to him in the aftermath of the 1436 division between the former allies, Burgundy and England: ‘Henry shed tears of boyish vexation when he read the address of the letters that had been arrested at Dover; it was pointed out to him that whereas the duke had formerly styled him “his sovereign lord,” he now spoke of him as “his dear lord and cousin”’. 99

In the Fastolf Letters, the most striking example of the opening lines being used to set the tone of the letter was the following letter to the Duke of Norfolk:

Right high and myghty prynce, my right noble and good lord, in my right humble wyse I recomaunde me to your good grace. And for the noble lordship and supportacion shewid vn-to me at all tymes, I beseche our lord God guerdon yow, where as I may nought, but only as your daily and contynuell bedeman, now in myn age, pray for the good prosperité of youre right highe and noble estate, as I am gretly bound to doo; prayng tendirly youre highnesse to contynue youre good lordship and supportacion in the materes touchyng...
(letter 1021, ll. 1-8, 2\textsuperscript{nd} April 1455)

This letter to the Duke opened with a series of reverential formulaic phrases, which delayed the subject matter until the appropriate level of deference had been established. The exact form that the opening formula took was remarkably similar in each of Fastolf’s letters, varying only according to the recipient’s status. The following opening sentences, which appeared in 1451 in three different letters from Fastolf to the same recipient, demonstrate this conventionality:

Ryght trusty and weel be-lovyd frendys, I grete yow hertly weel, and late yow wete...
(hand of William Barker, letter 1003, ll. 1-2, 7\textsuperscript{th} January 1451)

Ryght trusty and welbeloued frende, I grete yow wele, and lete yow wyte...
(hand of John Bokkyng, 1007, l. 1, 13\textsuperscript{th} April 1451)

Ryght trusty frendys, I grete you well, and lete you have in

Chapter Three: The writing and transmission
of letters and documents for Sir John Fastolf.

knoulege...
(hand of William Worcester, 1011, l. 1, 23rd September 1451)
Apart from the ‘have in knoulege’ variation in the final quotation, differences between these lines are mostly limited to spelling. The formulaic nature of these openings makes them especially useful samples for a study of scribal language, as any minute linguistic differences are particularly easy to identify. There are differences in these opening lines which indicate that the scribes, rather than Fastolf, composed them. William Barker, for example, used the word ‘hertly’, which was not written in any other opening to a letter from Fastolf until 1455. To give just two more examples, Barker omitted the word ‘friend’ in ‘Ryght trusty and weel be-lovyd, I grete you weel’ (letter 997, l. 1, 27th December 1450), which the other scribes did not. And Bokkyng in one letter wrote ‘and certifie yow I haue receivid your lettre’ (letter 1002, ll. 1-2 3rd January 1451), which was a phrase that William Worcester never used. 100

The closing formulae are even more suggestive that scribes were heavily involved in the composition of Fastolf’s letters. These closing lines are also formulaic, though they are less rigidly formalised than the opening lines, because they did not have the same function of establishing the letter’s degree of formality. The letters in the hand of William Worcester were the only ones in which the ‘Trinité’ was invoked rather than ‘Lord’ or ‘God’, for example: ‘And I beseche the blessed Trinité to have yow yn hys gouuernance’ (letter 1017, l. 15, 30th October 1454). John Bokkyng was the only scribe to ever use the variant ‘Holy Goste’, as in: ‘I beseche the Holy Goste be with yow’ (letter 1021, ll. 26-27, 2nd April 1455). Bokkyng was also unusual for

100 There was an evolution in the style of the opening formulae over time, which was represented in the work of all of Fastolf’s scribes. The corpus of extant Fastolf letters has a gap of three years, between August 1451 and July 1454 (see page 70 above). The first letters following this hiatus opened with some form of the phrase ‘and wolle ye wete’, which contrasts with ‘and lete you wete’, which was used before 1451 (see letters 1015 and 1016, in comparison with letters 1006 and 1007). Then in 1455, this evolved into ‘please yow to wete that’ (for example, ‘Worshypfull and my ryght welbelovyd brothyr, I comaund me to yow. Please yow to wete that’, letter 1027, l. 1). This demonstrates that even if Fastolf’s scribes had control over the precise form of the opening lines of the letters that they wrote, they were affected by general trends in the composition of letters for their master, which were probably promoted by Fastolf’s own preferences.
omitting certain pronouns: ‘And Our Lord haue yow in kepyng’ (omitting ‘his’, letter 1002, l. 41, 3rd January 1451). It may be that each of Fastolf’s scribes chose opening and closing lines from his own compilation of appropriate formulae. This would explain this linguistic variation between the scribes, within the otherwise conventional lines of the opening and closing formulae.

If the letters of Sir John Fastolf were composed by his scribes, then it should follow that non-autograph letters from senior members of his circle were also composed by the scribes who wrote them. Thomas Howes was a chaplain who, up until 1455, held a position of great responsibility at Sir John Fastolf’s residence of Caister Castle. Richard Beadle has pointed out that despite his frequent engagement in correspondence, ‘only one letter in his own rather crude hand (complaining in personal terms about his employer) survives’.101 A comparison of linguistic features in Howes’ autograph letter with the features of letters written for him by his clerks may reveal whether Fastolf’s senior associates dictated their letters.

There are spelling differences between the only extant letter in Thomas Howes’s own hand (letter 564), and letters that were written for him by John Russe (for example, letter 516), which represent phonetic differences.102 Howes had a preference for e over i (in words such as ‘preson’, ‘wele’ [for ‘will’], ‘other’ and ‘wretyn’). Russe at times used the i/y form where Howes would use e (such as in ‘euyr’, as opposed to ‘euer’). In addition, Howes’ autograph letter contains idiosyncratic spellings, such as his omission of the final h in ‘hat’ (for ‘hath’), ‘causet’ (for ‘causeth’), and ‘maket’ (for ‘maketh’). If Russe were being dictated to,

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102 The hand of John Russe has some distinctive palaeographical features that help to identify it as his: such as his tall s with an ascender that reaches out to the right, and his y with a descender that flicks out to the right. Folio 188 of BL, MS. Additional 39848, which is an autograph letter by Russe, contains his characteristic symbol, which he drew after his signature. This symbol also appears on the dorse of letter 510, which confirms that this letter was written in his hand. Though the palaeographical identification of letter 510 as Russe’s hand was made by Norman Davis in his edition of the Paston Letters, he did not note the presence of this symbol, which provides important confirmation of the scribe’s identity.
his writing should share the phonetic characteristics of Howes’s work. However, this is not a certainty - he may have rendered Howes’ words into a spelling system that reflected his own accent.\footnote{See the research on scribes copying exemplars in dialects other than their own. In such situations, scribes might a) leave language unchanged, b) translate into his own dialect, c) something in between, the scribe copying a mixture of his own forms and the exemplar’s. McIntosh’s work relates to copying from written exemplars, but it could be expected that the same principles would apply to copying from dictation. Angus McIntosh, M. L. Samuels, and Michael Benskin, \textit{Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English (LALME)} (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986), 1: 15.} Perhaps the best method to determine whether Russe was dictated to by Howes is by conducting a comparison of his scribal work for different senders, including his own autograph work. If Russe were being dictated to, then his scribal work would differ according to who was dictating to him.

It is difficult to conduct a rigorous comparison between letters that John Russe wrote for one sender and another, simply because of the small number of extant letters in his hand.\footnote{The letters that have been hitherto identified as the hand of John Russe are letter 510 (BL, MS. Additional 34888, folio 110, 13\textsuperscript{th} November 1454); letter 511 (BL, MS. Additional 27444, folio 29, 18\textsuperscript{th} November 1454); letter 516 (BL, MS. Additional 27444, folio 31, probably March 1455); and BL, MS. Additional 39848, folio 188.} This thesis is able to add one more letter to the small collection that is known to be in the hand of John Russe. This letter is number 1035 in Beadle and Richmond’s edition, and is a copy of a letter that was sent from Fastolf to Stephen Scrope on 30\textsuperscript{th} October 1457. This copy was sent to Fastolf’s legal representatives John Bokkyng and John Paston for their information. The features of the script of letter 1035 correspond with the hand of the letters that have already been identified as the hand of John Russe, and indicate that Russe was the copyist of this letter, which has hitherto been described as the work of an ‘unidentified’ scribe.\footnote{See footnote 102 above for a list of the distinctive palaeographical features of the hand of John Russe.} As Beadle and Richmond supposed that this copy was made at the same time that the original was sent to the primary addressee, it seems likely that the original was also written by John Russe. If it had survived, it would have been a further example of his hand - but as the original does not survive, we cannot be sure.
Despite the relative paucity of examples of Russe’s scribal hand, it is possible to make some observations about his work in comparison with the work of other scribes. There are certain linguistic features of letters in the hand of John Russe that are not shared by letters written by other scribes on behalf of the same senders, suggesting that they were part of his scribal idiolect. For example, his word ending for plurals was consistently -ez (for example, ‘personez’, ‘Goddez’ and ‘hertez’). This word ending was much rarer in letters written by other scribes for Fastolf or Howes. However, even if this word ending was phonetically significant, and not merely a graphetic feature, it is difficult to establish whether this was Russe’s scribal input, or the influence of the men he was writing for. This difficulty is, again, due to the small size of the corpus of Russe’s work. Many of the unusually-spelled words used by John Russe appear only once in letters written by him. So, for example, it is impossible to know the origins of Russe’s use of the spelling ‘consetheryng’ (for ‘considering’) in letter 510, for Thomas Howes (l. 9). Since Russe did not use the word in any of the letters he wrote for himself or Sir John Fastolf, it is difficult to establish whether the spelling represented Howes’ spoken language if Howes were dictating, or Russe’s own internal voice if Russe were composing the letter.

Since letters in the hand of John Russe were written for a wide range of senders, they were written in different registers, and thus contained a variety of types of words. For example, it could be argued that the spelling of worshipful as ‘worshipfull’ in Russe’s letters for Thomas Howes reflected Howes’ spoken language, and that if he were writing a letter for Fastolf he might have spelled it ‘worshipful’ as William Worcester and William Barker did (see the opening lines of letters 513 and 518 for examples). However, since the letters that Russe wrote for Fastolf were addressed to lower-status recipients, they never contained this word, which was usually directed at higher-status addressees. Similarly, Fastolf was more likely than Howes or Russe to use the word ‘fooes’ (foes), due the frequency with
which he wrote about his legal battles. Differences in register such as these make a straightforward comparison of the spelling and lexis of autograph and non-autograph letters more complicated.

When one compares the spelling of the more frequently-used word ‘witen’ (to know) by each scribe of Sir John Fastolf, it does appear that the spoken dialect of the scribes had an influence on the written language of Fastolf’s letters. The variation in the way of spelling ‘witen’ is likely to have been phonetically significant, and it divided the scribes. The spelling of the word probably reflected whether the scribe used the short vowel sound and thus wrote ‘wite’ or ‘wyte’, or used the long vowel sound and wrote ‘wete’. In letters that Russe wrote for Howes, Fastolf, and himself, he spelled the word ‘wete’. William Worcester and William Barker also preferred ‘wete’. In contrast, John Bokkyng usually spelled the word ‘wyte’ (see for example, letter 1019, l. 27, November 1454). This demonstrates that scribes had an influence over phonetically-significant spellings, and indicates that Russe’s spellings in letters he wrote for Howes and Fastolf were probably influenced by his own spoken language, rather than by dictation.

The general tone of the single letter that John Russe wrote for Sir John Fastolf suggests that, though Russe probably had a significant impact on the spelling and possibly even the syntax and some of the lexis of the letter he wrote for Fastolf, it was Fastolf as the sender who determined the content, tone, and overall register of the letter. This letter, number 514, from Fastolf to John Paston, includes a direct quotation of what Fastolf had heard said about him at a dinner in Norwich: ‘War the govynne, war, and goo we to dyned, goo we. Where? To Ser John Fastolfiez, and there we shall well pay there-fore’ (ll. 5-6). The comment that follows the report of this

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106 Norman Davis pointed out that John Bokkyng wrote ‘wete’ in two instances against seven of ‘wyte/wite’. Davis counted from the collection of letters that he published for parts one and two of the Paston Letters and Papers (Davis, ‘Language in Letters,’ 341). My own research has found three additional instances of ‘wyte/wite’ in the letters that are printed in the third part of the Paston Letters series.
‘skornefull language’ conveys Fastolf’s despair at such a damaging report: ‘what there menyng was I know well to no good entent to me ward’. The letter ended with a closing assertion that suggests that Fastolf had become a wary man after years of disputes with his enemies: ‘At suche a tyme a man may know hese frendez and hese foos asondre, &c’ (letter 514, ll. 13-14). Jeremy Goldberg focussed on the exchange of letters between prospective couples in the fifteenth century and argued that the formalised nature of such an exchange meant that letters like the Valentine’s letter between Margery Breus and John Paston III ‘tell us little of the actual thoughts and emotions of the parties concerned’. This may be an accurate assessment of letters between potential spouses, which were one stage in the formal courtship process. What we read in the Valentine’s letter may represent an ideal, rather than the true motivations of the sender of the letter. However, it does seem that the angry letter of Sir John Fastolf that is discussed above was infused with the personality of the man that we understand Fastolf to have been: watchful, proactive, and at some times uncompromising. This suggests that though Fastolf probably did not dictate his letters, his scribes made careful notes and took great care to convey his

107 Jeremy Goldberg emphasised the importance of providing ostentatious entertainment for one’s dinner guests, and household: ‘Communal eating served a number of functions beyond the purely pragmatic…A lord’s claims to political influence and the exercise of governance in his locality could likewise be demonstrated through his observed good management of the household gathered in the hall’. Thus the accusation that these men apparently made - that a visit to Fastolf’s residence for dinner could be damaging to them - was an extremely serious one in terms of Fastolf’s local reputation as a good lord. Goldberg, Medieval England, 121.

108 Goldberg, Medieval England, 123.

109 This is reinforced by the following comment by Sarah Williams in which she discussed the difficulty in separating ‘reality’ and social convention surrounding the use of the word ‘read’: ‘real practice may be obscured by discourse - by the desire of writers to conform with social convention and ideological strictures surrounding the relationship between speech and writing’. Williams, ‘English Vernacular Letters c.1400-c.1600,’ 75.

110 It should be noted that John Watts argued that it is not the true intentions of the writer that is important when judging the impact of a written piece on its reader. Watts, discussing specifically the rhetoric of politics, wrote that this rhetoric was designed to ‘intersect with other rhetoric and with those schemes of publically-recognised values which dominate the organisation’. John Watts, ‘Polemic and Politics in the 1450s,’ 6. Thus it was not important that writing represented the truth, but that it conformed with the expectations and experiences of the society into which it was released. This is a good explanation for the consistent use of certain formulae in the Valentine’s letter discussed above - the writer may have put onto the page what was expected of her, rather than what she actually thought.
personality, his mood, and the intended content of his letters, very accurately. Thus, non-autograph letters appear to have been a truly collaborative effort between the sender and the scribe, and the resulting letter conveyed its message through a combination of the sender’s vocabulary, tone, and thoughts, and the scribe’s spellings and syntax.
The composition of the postscript of a letter

Though Sir John Fastolf wrote no autograph letters, he took care to sign most of them.\textsuperscript{111} Fastolf subscribed all but three letters written between 1429 and 1450 with his distinctive signature:

![Signature of Sir John Fastolf](image)

Figure 14: The signature of Sir John Fastolf, Oxford University, Magdalen College, MS. Hickling 130

He also signed certain legal documents during this period. FP 19 includes a collection of six quittances from Sir John Fastolf for payments from Louis de Luxemburg, archbishop of Rouen and administrator of Ely. These were written by six different scribes, and four of them were subscribed with Fastolf’s signature:

![Examples of Fastolf’s signature](image)

Figure 15: Four examples of Fastolf’s signature in FP 19. Items 4, 5, 6, and 8.

\textsuperscript{111} This point was made by Richard Beadle: ‘[n]one of the 70 or so extant letters of Sir John Fastolf is in his own hand, though he signed most of them personally prior to a serious illness in mid-1451’. Beadle, ‘Private Letters,’ 292.
Fastolf’s distinctive autograph signature is a clear contrast with the following example of a scribal imitation of his signature:

Figure 16: A scribal imitation signature on the behalf of Sir John Fastolf.

One letter in the hand of William Worcester, which was composed over two days (the recto on 15\textsuperscript{th} October, and the verso on 18\textsuperscript{th} October), was signed by Fastolf twice: once on each side of the letter (letter 989). He signed the letter once after the closing formula of the letter, then the letter re-opened with a new item, which Worcester squeezed in around Fastolf’s signature. The letter then continued onto the dorse of the page and was re-signed by Fastolf after the letter closed for a second time. The signatures share distinctive palaeographical features and were written in a heavier hand and darker ink than Worcester’s work in the letter. Fastolf’s diligence in authorising both parts of this letter shows that he was keen to supervise any written work that was sent under his name if possible.\textsuperscript{112}

Though Fastolf usually signed his letters himself, there are a number of exceptions. The earliest is letter number 954, which was written in France in 1429-33 and has an imitation of Fastolf’s signature by an unidentified clerk. The second and third exceptions were letters 987 and 457. Letter 987, dated to between 7\textsuperscript{th} and 14\textsuperscript{th} September 1450, was begun by William Worcester, and finished by John Bokkyng

\textsuperscript{112} Fastolf was especially ‘hands-on’ in ensuring that letters that were written for him conveyed exactly the information that he intended them to. There is evidence that other fifteenth-century lords were less hands on. Connolly showed that the earl of Warwick (b. 1382 - d. 1439) allowed his secretary John Shirley a significant amount of control over the authorisation of his written letters and documents: Shirley probably had Warwick’s signet and ‘it seems likely that he would also have signed routine letters for Warwick’. See Connolly, John Shirley, 22. This contrasts with Sir John Fastolf, who did allow his servants to write under his signet, but expressed his discomfort in doing so. For example, in letter 577 he sent his signet to his representatives at Caister, but specifically instructed them to be careful about what passed under it. He wanted copies of all the letters, and the signet itself, to be sent back to him. So, Fastolf was uneasy about allowing his men to use his signet - and his diligence in checking and signing his own letters is testament to his concern about the accuracy of letters sent in his name.
who also signed Fastolf’s name. This suggests that Worcester and Fastolf departed before the letter was finished, leaving Bokkyng to finish the letter and sign it. Letter 457, which was written within a week of 987, was also not signed by Fastolf. This time the signature was imitated by William Worcester, whose impression of his master’s signature was ‘somewhat stylised’.¹¹³ This is the only surviving imitation of Fastolf’s signature by William Worcester in the period before Fastolf moved to Caister Castle in 1454. This imitation signature is significant, as it suggests a degree of autonomy in the work of Fastolf’s scribes. The co-existence of autograph signatures and imitated signatures in the Fastolf Letters corpus is interesting, as it demonstrates that although Fastolf preferred to authorise his letters, he was prepared to allow his most trusted clerks to do so in his place if absolutely necessary.

A letter in the Stonor Letters corpus was also given an imitation signature.¹¹⁴ This suggests that the clerk did not expect the sender of the letter, a man named Harleston, to check the letter and sign it himself. It also suggests that the clerk was responsible for the letter’s composition, or that he composed from notes that he had made following a meeting with Harleston. However, in this case Harleston did eventually sign the letter himself in addition to the clerk’s imitation signature. This indicates that, though an imitation signature would have been sufficient, Harleston eventually decided to check the letter and give it greater authenticity by signing it with his own hand. So Harleston, like Fastolf, was keen to authenticate his own letters if possible.

As was pointed out by Beadle and Richmond in the headnote to letter 1035, most letters of the post-1454 period survive only as copies forwarded to John Paston and John Bokkyng, ‘presumably at the same time as the original was sent to the primary addressee’.¹¹⁵ This makes it impossible to ascertain whether the original had an autograph signature, or a scribal imitation. Of the letters that were not copies,

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¹¹³ See Davis’ headnote to letter 457.
¹¹⁴ Carpenter, ed., Stonor Letters, letter 135, dated 1474 or earlier.
¹¹⁵ See Beadle and Richmond’s headnote to letter 1035.
Norman Davis observed, ‘there are thirty-eight letters from July 1451 onwards, and none of them has an autograph signature’.\textsuperscript{116} Davis believed that this indicated that, ‘it seems likely that by then Fastolf was unable or disinclined to sign his name’.\textsuperscript{117} One of the later letters with an imitated signature was letter 1016, which was written by an unidentified scribe in June 1454, the month in which the letters began to make references to a dispute between Thomas Howes and John Andrew. It may be that, on this occasion, Fastolf was too busy to sign his own letter. Or perhaps his scribe was involved in work that took him away from Sir John Fastolf, and so the absent scribe had to imitate his master’s signature. Either way, the lack of an autograph signature is evidence that the scribes were left alone to complete the composition of the letter, and is convincing evidence that Fastolf’s servants composed the letters, rather than wrote them from dictation.

Letter 538, though it is printed as one ‘item’ in Norman Davis’s edition, actually exists as two closely-related variants (dated 25\textsuperscript{th} January 1456). One of these was written by the scribe of letter 1016 mentioned above, whilst the other was written by another unidentified scribe. The version written by the second unidentified scribe contains an imitation of Fastolf’s signature, as well as additions and corrections in William Worcester’s hand. The existence of two letters that are so similar in content, and which contain evidence of scribal collaboration, suggests some sort of drafting or training activity. If these letters were not intended to be actually sent, it is understandable that the scribes imitated Fastolf’s signature. The existence of letters with imitated signatures like these supports the argument that Fastolf did not dictate his letters. If Fastolf had been dictating these letters, there would have been no need for his scribes to imitate his signature.

\textsuperscript{116} Davis, ‘Language in Letters,’ 331.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.
Chapter Three: The writing and transmission of letters and documents for Sir John Fastolf.

Letters that were signed by Fastolf before their end also suggest that Fastolf did not dictate his letters.\textsuperscript{118} If Fastolf had been accustomed to dictating his letters from beginning to end, there would have been no reason to sign some of his letters prematurely as he did in letter 993, which he signed after the first ‘item’ (dated 2\textsuperscript{nd} December 1450). Additionally, if Fastolf had dictated part of the letter, and left the scribe to write the rest alone, then the two sections of the letter should differ noticeably in lexis, syntax, and tone, which is not the case in letter 993. The only linguistic difference between these two sections was that there was a greater frequency of formulaic combinations of words in the postscript: ‘costes and dammages’, ‘losse and dammagys’, ‘worshyp and proffyt’. This linguistic consistency implies that \textbf{one} man was responsible for both the pre- and post-signature part of the letter. Since Fastolf was not present to sign this letter at its end, this one man was probably the scribe. Letter 1011 of September 1451, which contains an imitation of Fastolf’s signature by William Worcester, supports the suggestion that Fastolf’s scribes had considerable input into the content of the letters. Not only did Worcester imitate Fastolf’s signature, which indicates that Fastolf was not present to sign the letter himself, but he reopened the letter with a postscript that he undersigned with his own name (‘Worcestre’), plus his ‘Saturn’ symbol.\textsuperscript{119} Worcester, on this

\textsuperscript{118} Richard Beadle pointed out that ‘Fastolf’s signature sometimes appears midway down the sheet, obviously inserted long before Worcester had completed the writing of the letter’. Beadle, ‘Private Letters,’ 291.

\textsuperscript{119} Norman Davis noticed the symbol, which he found was used as part of Worcester’s signature in BL, MS. Sloane 4, folio 57, and Davis commented that it might ‘refer to Worcester’s antiquarian studies, of which Saturn was considered patron’. See Davis’ headnote to letter 501. Worcester reiterated his interest in Saturn in his Itineraries of the year 1480, as he drew two maps of the heavens concerning the elongation of Saturn. The editor of the Itineraries pointed out what he believed to be a personal connection between Worcester and Saturn: ‘As this pair of horoscopes seems to be an exercise in “electional astrology”, a personal reference is probable’. Worcester, Itineraries, 300-301. The Saturn symbol was also discussed by Richmond and Beadle in their edition of the Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century, part 3, 170, and they referred to letter 506 for an example of the symbol. On certain occasions, Worcester may have used the symbol in an attempt to blur his identity in sensitive written material. For example, he used it as a signature in letter 576, which also contained an instruction to destroy it after reading (‘I pray yow breke my b[i]lle,’ l. 22, probably 1458). Alison Hanham, in 2008, has since argued that this symbol was not the symbol for Saturn, but instead the symbol for Jupiter. Hanham, ‘The Curious Letters of Friar Brackley,’ 50-51.
occasion, was evidently keen to signal his own involvement in the composition of the letter.

The evidence suggests that if Fastolf had to leave before the composition process had been completed, his procedure was to interrupt his scribe in order to sign his name, then leave the scribe to continue his work alone. This is confirmed by the following statement in letter 993, which was the only reference that Fastolf made to the letter-composition process: ‘Wryt hastly at London ij\textsuperscript{d} day of December A\textdegree{} xxix r.r. H. vj. And be cause I myght [not] abyde till the wrytynges of the materes that I commaundd Worcestre to wryte, I signed the lettre so neere the begynnyng’ (letter 993, ll. 43-46, 2\textsuperscript{nd} December 1450). This statement was written as a postscript, to the left of and below Fastolf’s autograph signature. The positioning of the postscript by Worcester marked it out as the part of the letter that Fastolf said he could ‘not abyde till the wrytynges of’. Though this postscript was composed by Worcester, it was written in Fastolf’s voice. This shows that Worcester could write convincingly in the voice of his master, and so is further evidence that he would have been capable of composing Fastolf’s letters from a set of notes.

There were occasions when Fastolf signed the letter at the conventional point, after the closing formula of the letter, but reopened the letter with a postscript. It is likely that Fastolf’s scribe took the completed copy of the letter to Fastolf for him to check and sign, at which point Fastolf remembered something that he wished to include in the letter. Fastolf may have dictated these additions \textit{verbatim}. The following quotation supports this suggestion, as it has the tone of spoken language:

\begin{quote}
J. FASTOLFLE
And I pray you send me word who darre be so hardy to berk ayen you in my right...yll they wolles not dredd ne obbe that, then they shall be quyty by Blacberd or Whyteberd, that is to sey by God or the Devyll
(letter 982, ll. 32-36, 27\textsuperscript{th} May 1450)
\end{quote}
This menacing postscript, which spoke directly to the recipient in informal language, contrasts with the business-like tone of the rest of the letter, which indicates that it might be the closest relic of Fastolf’s spoken language.

The editor of the Cely Letters noticed similarly colloquial language in them, arguing that ‘certain expressions’ used by the writers of the Letters ‘have the ring of spoken rather than literary English’. In the case of the Stonor Letters, the least formal parts of the letters were their postscripts, which echoes what has been observed in Fastolf’s letters. Most personal information was reserved for these autograph appendices to the letters. Some of these postscripts reveal a surprising amount of information about the psychological and physical condition of the sender, such as the frequent assertion made by Elizabeth Stonor that she was ‘crazed’ when she wrote the letter, meaning, according to the ‘Middle English Dictionary’, that she was diseased or deformed: e.g. ‘Cossen, I was crasyd þat the makyng off thys letter, but I thanke God I am ryght well amendyd, blesyd by Jhesu’.

If Fastolf’s scribes were responsible for the composition of his letters, then the formality of these letters is unsurprising since, as Richard Beadle has pointed out, ‘the writers of official correspondence, and many of those whose private letters survive, were trained to adopt a conventional framework of expression, or if they were not so trained, were able to imitate some basic elements of received epistolary style from letters they had seen or heard read’. In contrast, the postscript, being hastily added to the body of the letter, may have been a more spontaneous representation of Fastolf’s spoken language.

Though the postscripts of letters contained some afterthoughts, there seems to have been an element of planning involved. There is a sign in a letter from the Stonor Letters corpus, written by Thomas Betson to Elizabeth Stonor in 1478 that the

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120 Hanham, ed., Cely Letters, xxvi.
121 Carpenter, ed., Stonor Letters, letter 204.
122 Beadle, ‘Private Letters,’ 299.
postscript was not a hastily-added continuation of the main body of the letter, but that Betson had always planned to include post-signature information. This indication comes from the fact that Betson did not write the full closing formula before the signature, but after the postscript:

Writen at Cales the xvij day of Maii, An°. ut supra.
Be your ffeythffull servaunt, Thomas Betson.

(POSTSCRIPT)... And our blissid lord be your comfforther and help in all your good workes, Amen.

If Betson had ever intended the letter to close at the point of the signature, the customs of letter composition would have made him include a closing formula before he signed it. This is further indication that the postscript had an important function in conveying information that for some reason the sender had not included in the main body of the letter. Indeed, in letter 211 discussed above, Betson reserved the potentially sensitive advice that the Stonors ‘remembre large expensez and be ware of them’ for the postscript. This suggests that the postscript may have had a special function, in conveying the most personal, and occasionally sensitive, information.

In a letter that John Bokkyng wrote to Sir John Fastolf, he indicated that he was pressured for time as the letter-bearer was ready to depart immediately: ‘The messenger was on horsbak whanne I wrote yow þis bill, and þerfore it was doon in haste’ (letter 1036, ll. 12-13, 15th March 1458). However, the Fastolf letters suggest that there was usually a time delay between a letter’s composition and its dispatch: ‘And as for the speed of makyng of oure lettrez, they arn at all tymes redy

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123 Carpenter, ed., Stonor Letters, letter 211.
124 See the next letter in the corpus, letter 212, which displayed this conventionality of including the closing formula before the signature: ‘by the mercy off our lord, who ever preserve your right worshipful person in longe helth and vertu, Amen. ffrom Cales the xvij day off May. Be your servaunt Thomas Betson’.
125 This urgency is similar to that which was demonstrated in the following letter from the Cely Letters corpus, which demonstrates that once an opportune moment for delivery had been secured, the writer could be pressured into rushing the execution of his letter: ‘Syr, I wold a wrytt yowre masterschyppys of moo matters, but my space was but schort and the passage tarryd [not] but 3ede at the same tyde that hytt came ffrom Dower’. Hanham, ed., Cely Letters, letter 214, ll. 21-24.
to send forth *yf we myght gete any massangeres...* (letter 964, ll. 36-38, late December 1448) and: ‘Please you nat to be displeased ner to take it to gref, we sent you answere by Cornelius as fer as we coude at that tyme; and *yf ther koude a be get any massangeres to London ward* a-yenst Christenmasse, youre lettrec were redy at all tymes &c’ (letter 965, ll. 1-5, 12\textsuperscript{th} January 1449). This suggests that on most occasions Fastolf would have had time to think of additional matters between the time of his letter’s composition and its dispatch, which he would append to the letter as a postscript.

Letter number 474, from the corpus of letters sent to the Paston family, records an occasion when the postscript was used to apologise for a deficiency in the letter preceding it. This is further evidence that there was a gap in time between a letter’s composition and its dispatch. It seems that the writer, James Gresham, wrote the original letter as a rough draft. He then evidently put it to one side until the arrival of the letter bearer, at which point he ‘had thought to have wretyn the letter a-bove wretyn newe’, judging it to be unacceptable due to the ‘foule wrytyng and interlynyeng’ (letter 747, ll. 33-34).\textsuperscript{126} Ultimately, he was unable to re-write the letter due to his lack of free time (‘I lakke leyser’, l. 34). By way of compensation, Gresham used the postscript to excuse himself for the poor execution of the letter.

A final explanation for the post-signature continuation was to protect potentially secret information. This purpose is not referred to frequently in the corpus of letters associated with Fastolf or the Paston Family. However, one letter does contain evidence that the postscript was used to convey information that could be cut away, and thus eliminated from written record. Thomas Denys wrote: ‘I write to you thus that ye may kyt awey this lower part of this lettre’ (letter 475, ll. 31-32, 4\textsuperscript{th} March 1451). This practice can also be seen in the Stonor Letters corpus: ‘Moreover, Syr, I

\textsuperscript{126} James Gresham was a clerk of William Paston. He was mentioned in numerous letters that are printed in the first volume of the Paston Letters and Papers series: for a full list, see the index to Beadle and Richmond, eds., *Paston Letters and Papers*, part 3.
wryte aparte þat it may be kette away, þyff ye lust to schew þis above unto þe parson of Sylverton’.¹²⁷ This is probably the reason why letter number 580 in the Paston Letters corpus has the remnants of words that were written below the subscription, which were cut away. As Norman Davis noted, ‘something was evidently written below the subscription, for tops of letters survive over about 4in., but the rest is cut off’. However, the fact that letter 475 still exists in its entirety shows that not even this method of protecting sensitive information was completely safe. If one did not want to leave a written record of sensitive information, it was safest not to commit it on to paper at all and instead to convey it as a supplementary oral message in the way that was described earlier in this chapter.

Chapter Three: The writing and transmission of letters and documents for Sir John Fastolf.

The stages of a ‘Fastolf Letter’: drafts and copies

Drafts:

This section has already touched upon the subject of drafts in suggesting that Fastolf’s scribes used the drafts of letters that had already been sent to compose new letters (see page 155-157 above).

Letter 956, one of the earliest extant letters from Sir John Fastolf, dated to May or June 1444, was labelled as a ‘draft’ by Beadle and Richmond. The letter, probably to Sir William ap Thomas, was peppered with minor re-phrasings. For example, ‘whereof I sende you the double wretyn at’ was altered to, ‘whereof I sende you the double’ (l. 3). This alteration suggests that either the scribe or Fastolf changed his mind about providing information about where the letter was composed. Some amendments to this letter did not alter the meaning of the language, they only improved its elegance. For example, ‘for to by it’ was changed to ‘for to purchasse it’ (l.7). However, at other points in the letter, Worcester made more serious amendments: in one case, he originally wrote ‘whethyre my lorde Cardynall wyll by the <seyd> place’, then changed it to ‘whethyre my lorde Cardynall wyll syll the <seyd> place’ (ll. 7-8). This altered the meaning of the message completely. The most substantial correction that Worcester marked on this draft contains examples of both minor experimentations with syntax and of more drastic amendments to the letter’s content. Worcester originally wrote the following:

And whethyre my lorde Cardynall wyll [syl] the <seyd> place or no I can not veele, for a was jsett to yeff it to the Erle of Dorset. But to be acerteynyd of thys matyre, or for to ease h<...>e, I pray you comynyth wyth my brothyre Wallere, recomandynge me vn-to hym, and saith I prayed hym on my behalf to say you therevp<pon as h>e knoueth, for I wote weel he can best sey you of any man that I know (Letter 956, ll. 7-13)

However, he then added this alternative wording underneath the original passage:

128 Beadle and Richmond gave letter 956 the following headnote: ‘It is sufficiently clear from the tone and substance of this draft that it was drawn up by Worcester on behalf of Fastolf...rather than on his own account’. Beadle and Richmond, eds., *Paston Letters and Papers*, part 3.
But I suppose he ys misenformyd, for as I have herd seid, he hath ordeyn it for one of [my lordys] hys nefewys. Neuerthelese, I pray you enqueryth thys matiere on my behalf of my ryght (well canc) trusty brothyr Wallere, recomaundyng me vn-to hym, and that I prayd hym hertly to say you in secre wys hou thys matier standith (And þere cancelled) And vppon such knoulage as we have, ye and I shal wyke perveppon, and aftyre c<...>s spedefull, and the case requirith, we sholl send my lord word. The bold and underlined text indicates the parts of the correction which merely changed the style of the letter. The rest, marked in italics, involved drastic changes to the content of the letter. Worcester eventually decided against the alternative wording and crossed it out. Worcester’s experimentation with the wording of this letter demonstrates that drafting could ensure that the phrasing of the letter met Fastolf’s exacting standards, and that the letter conveyed precisely the right message to its recipient.\footnote{The following statement demonstrates how exacting Fastolf was with his servants about the phrasing of his documents. In this instance he was highlighting the importance of conciseness: ‘Item, as to the rolle of articles whych that I send you by the forsaid Bedford, I pray you that ye wille desyre Thomas Greene to see and correct hem, and make every mater shortyr, and that it can be to the vnderstand of the mater not lessed’ (letter 983, ll. 23-25, 8th August 1450).} Beadle and Richmond pointed out the ‘number of deletions and interlineations’ that indicate that letter 1021, dating from 2nd April 1455 from Sir John Fastolf to the Duke of Norfolk, was a draft. The usefulness of the draft in this instance was sustained beyond the initial composition process. James Gairdner suggested that the letter was sent to John Paston I for his approval.\footnote{See headnote to letter 1021, by Beadle and Richmond. See note to the letter in Gairdner, ed., The Paston Letters, 3: letter 278.} The postscript of letter 518 contains a reference to this letter: ‘Item, cosyn, I sende yow a lettre to deluyere to myn seyd lord, wyth a copye of the same wheche I praye yow to se, and if ye thenk hit be [to] don deluyeret youre-self’ (letter 518, ll. 25-27, 29th March 1455). The ‘copye’ to which Fastolf referred was actually the aforementioned draft. As this letter had an unusually noble recipient, it is unsurprising that Fastolf sought approval from his legal advisor, John Paston. However, Paston would not have been able to open the
sealed fair copy. Therefore, the draft, which was originally produced in order for John Bokkyng to perfect the wording of the letter, made a re-appearance when Fastolf needed his advisor to check the letter before it was sent. Because the fair copy was presumably forwarded to the Duke of Norfolk, it has not survived with the extant Paston letters. However, the draft was kept by John Paston, diligent record-keeper that he was. The draft contains no evidence of amendments made by Paston (all interlineations were made by the original scribe, John Bokkyng). This indicates either that Paston deemed the contents of the draft to be acceptable and so redirected the sealed copy as instructed by Fastolf, or that he made a new copy with any corrections included.

There are surviving drafts that were written quickly and roughly, which were intended to be copied neatly once the letter had been finished and checked. These drafts were never meant to leave the house and so some of them were jotted hastily on the back of other documents. For example, letter 1033 was written on the back of a sheet that had already been used to write an account. It is understandable that these roughly-composed letters were not signed by Fastolf, since only the fair copy would have needed to be signed. Not all drafts would have been re-copied neatly: in the case of accounts, it appears that the document was a work-in-progress, and was never intended to be re-copied. For example, when writing BL, MS. Additional 28208, a survey of Castle Combe, the compiler William Worcester apparently forgot the surname of one of the men who were paying rent. He left a blank space in order to

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131 Richard Beadle pointed out the diligence of the Paston family in their record keeping. He wrote that ‘[a]notations and endorsements added to some of the letters by John Paston I and his two sons...suggest that they had developed a basic filing system’ and pointed out the ‘family’s retention of large quantities of their personal correspondence long into the post-medieval period’, which was ‘unusual’. He believed that the collection had a greater ‘scope, variety and interest’ than other fifteenth-century letter collections (Beadle, ‘Private Letters,’ 294). For an example of these annotations, see letter 551, on which John Paston wrote the date of the letter’s composition or receipt, next to its closing sentence: ‘primo die Junii A“xxiiiij’; the first day of June 1456 (l. 58).

132 Carpenter used the combination of a lack of signature, and the frequency of corrections and alterations, to conclude that letter 37 in the Stonor Letters corpus was a draft. Carpenter, ed., Stonor Letters, 27.
Chapter Three: The writing and transmission of letters and documents for Sir John Fastolf.

return to the account later once he had discovered the name - but he never did: ‘Phelippus [blank space] de catcombe mille’ (folio 32r). This indicates that, at times, Fastolf’s servants were required to work from their memory, or from defective information. On the occasion that their supply of information failed them, they had to resign themselves to leaving the document with omissions, which they hoped to fill in later.

An autograph letter, from Richard Byngham to Sir John Fastolf, was described as a ‘draft’ by Beadle and Richmond, as it was written on the back of a sheet that had already been used for accounts (letter number 1033, 9th February 1456). It also had a high frequency of corrected mistakes. However, the nature of these mistakes suggests that it was not a draft, but a copy. Line nine of the letter as it appears in the edition contains several mistakes: ‘Wherfore I besech to your [gode gracio] maisterschip als mekely [humbly] as I can’. This mistake is likely to have been due to eye-skip, where Bingham had begun to prematurely copy ‘Wherfore I besech your gode grace that ye will vouchsafe remember’, which appears in its correct place on line thirteen. Other minor mistakes may also have been the result of misreadings that Byngham made whilst he was copying: ‘perfourm’ for ‘ferme’ (farm) for instance. Since these two words have very different meanings, it is more likely that this was a straightforward copying error, rather than one that was made at the stage of composition. Stephen Scrope wrote at the foot of the letter ‘Copie of my fader Byghames lettre to my fader F’. Since the content of this letter largely concerned Scrope, it is likely that he asked his father-in-law Byngham to produce a copy of the original that he had sent to Fastolf.

The disposable nature of drafts that were intended to be replaced eventually by ‘fair copies’ means that, unfortunately, not many examples survive. Drafts are especially rare, compared to fair copies, in the extant corpus of letters from Sir John Fastolf. This is due to the fact that the majority of the extant letters relating to Fastolf
are from the collection of the Paston family, and so are mainly those that were sent to them. Christine Carpenter pointed out that certain letters in the Stonor Letter corpus probably survive because they were drafts that were kept by the Stonors for future information: ‘[letter number 46, from Thomas Stonor to Sir John Fortescue] seems to be a draft kept by Stonor for reference; this explains the absence of any endorsement.’ However, in the case of the Fastolf Letters it seems that most drafts of letters were destroyed or used for other purposes. For example, there is evidence that Fastolf’s scribes used unwanted written material to seal other letters:

133 See headnote to letter 46 in Carpenter, ed., Stonor Letters.
Figure 17: An example of a strip of previously-used paper being used to seal another letter (Oxford University, Magdalen College, Titchwell 72). The correction on this document indicates that it may have been an unwanted draft.

There is a similar lack of drafts of letters which were written to Fastolf. The drafts of letters that were sent to Fastolf would have been kept by their senders and so did not make their way into the ‘Fastolf Papers’ collection.

Even in letters that were not drafts, Fastolf’s scribes made corrections in order to refine the wording. For example, William Worcester cancelled ‘residew’ and inserted the synonym ‘remenant’ in the following sentence: ‘Item, y desyre to know who ben the remenant of the coexecutours of the Lord Wyllughbye’ (letter 541, ll. 7-8, 5th February 1456). A similar desire to make improvements seems to have been the motivation behind the corrections that Fastolf’s scribes made to each other’s work. The text of letter 538, of January 1456, survives as two separate copies. The second, which was corrected by William Worcester, differs in minor ways from the first, and these corrections consisted predominantly of altered spellings, and syntax that was changed according to what Worcester regarded to be correct. Some examples of Worcester’s numerous alterations were: he changed the spelling of ‘leuyth’ to
‘lyueth’ (letter 538, l. 4), ‘lyue’ to ‘lyf’ (l. 11), ‘geve’ to ‘yeve’, and he altered the syntax of ‘is right lykely’ to ‘right liklye [ys]’ (l. 15). This illustrates the perfectionism that was expected from Fastolf’s scribes in the composition of letters on his behalf. Alison Truelove also identified perfectionism in the Stonor Letters. Despite the variety of spellings that were employed in the letters, there was ‘evidence that some writers attempted to conform to what they regarded as correct or standard orthography’.  

134 She noted that ‘words are crossed through and replaced with others, and sometimes it can be observed that one spelling has been rejected in favour of another’.  

134 Truelove, ‘Linguistic Diversity,’ 86.
135 For example, ‘In one of [Goddard] Oxbridge’s letters, he began to write “customers” with an initial “co”, but crossed this out and changed the vowel to a “u”, and elsewhere he wrote the pronoun “hem” before replacing it with the more standard “theme”. See Truelove, ‘Linguistic Diversity,’ 86, citing letters 164 and 165 of Carpenter, ed., Stonor Letters and Papers.
Chapter Three: The writing and transmission of letters and documents for Sir John Fastolf.

Copies:

A large proportion of the surviving Fastolf Letters are copies of original letters that were dispatched to their recipients. As a result, there is a rich array of source material for a study of the copying work done by Fastolf’s scribes. The majority of these copies were made for John Paston and John Bokkyng, who were working on Fastolf’s legal cases in London whilst Fastolf was in retirement in Norfolk.\(^{136}\) The following letter to Howes and Bokkyng confirms that Fastolf sent copies of documents to his associates to reinforce their legal work on his behalf: ‘Item I sende you a copé of Sybeton ple and quytaunce forged to grounde your bille by it’ (letter 994, ll. 44-45, 4\(^{th}\) December 1450). The originals of the copies that Fastolf sent to Paston and Bokkyng do not survive. As Norman Davis has pointed out: ‘not everyone receiving a letter would keep it and fewer would return it for the family records’\(^ {137}\). It was only the Paston family’s unusual interest in record-keeping that ensured the survival of this written material. If these copies had not been sent to Paston, there would be no evidence that the originals were ever written.

When Fastolf was absent from Caister, prior to his 1454 move to East Anglia, he wrote to his servants frequently to demand copies of documents relating to his legal matters. This was recorded by Thomas Howes and Geoffrey Spirleeng in a letter that they wrote to Fastolf: ‘ye write vn-to vs to laboure effectuaily to get you a copy of the office whiche [was] take ayens you at Lycheham’ (letter 964, ll. 3-4, late December 1448). In later years, when the situation was reversed and Fastolf was in East Anglia whilst his servants were managing his legal disputes in London, he was equally proactive about obtaining copies of documents that concerned him: in 1456 he told Paston that getting copies of a bill relating to the deceased Duke of Bedford,

\(^{136}\) Letter numbers 1017, 1018, 1022, 1027, 1034, and 1035 were all copies directed to John Paston and John Bokkyng.

\(^{137}\) Davis, introduction to *Paston Letters and Papers*, part 1, xxxviii.
would be a ‘singerler confort’ to him (letter 539, l. 21, 26th January 1456).\footnote{138} Fastolf informed Paston that he wanted these copies of the relevant documents ready at hand, should he need to go to London himself.\footnote{139}

On one occasion, Fastolf asked Thomas Howes for copies of his own letters, because he was not sure of what exactly he had written in the past: ‘And where as ye afferme...that hit w<as> my pleyn wille, commaundement and entent, that...the seyd Andrewe...shuld be noted, knowen and corrected at oyer and determiner... As to that, I can weel agree me thereto, with that ye wole sende me the dowble of myn writinges sent to you in that behalf’ (letter 1016, ll. 3-10, 20th July 1454, my emphasis). Copies were such a valuable source of information for Fastolf that he was willing to offer a ‘gret reward’ for a copy of a particular letter concerning his dispute over Titchwell (see letter 964, l. 9, late December 1448). By having copies made, Fastolf could also ensure that his absent associates were kept aware of what he had written to their fellow associates: ‘like as I has wretyn to hym in a lett<er>, of þe whe<ch> I send 3ow a copé closed here-jn’ (letter 953, ll. 62-63, 31st October probably 1429).

Copying was not only an information-gathering exercise for Fastolf, it was also a way of keeping a record of written evidence when the original document was being used elsewhere: ‘Item, sendyth me a copé of the said offices I sende you home by William Barker’ (letter 989, ll. 127-128, 15th-18th October 1450). His servants were equally diligent about having copies made of written information that they did not want to lose track of. Thomas Howes in 1449 received a letter from William Willy (letter 973), which he promptly responded to. We are only aware of the content of Howes’ reply because it survives in the form of a copy made by an unidentified

\footnote{138} ‘And if this said bille, after it is devised and made, and sent me a copie of hit, hit shold be to me a singerler confort’ (letter 539, ll. 1-22).
\footnote{139} ‘for or evere I came to London I wold that alle thing shuld be made redy to my hande’ (letter 539, ll. 21-22, 26th January 1456).
scribe (letter 974, also probably 1449). The letter was marked as a copy by the following contemporary headnote: ‘Responsio littere Willelmo Willy, Thome Howys clericus missus &c’ (letter 974, l. 1). It is likely that it was Thomas Howes who asked for this copy to be made, intending to store it in the archives at Caister Castle.\(^{140}\)

Having copies made of documents that were being transported between Fastolf and his associates mitigated the loss, damage, or interception of the original by unfriendly parties. In one letter, Fastolf requested: ‘And also sendyth me the originall evidenses and copé of the plees... by a sure comer betwene; and kepe ye the vidimus and copé of hem there, for doubt of lesyng or takyng by the wey’ (letter 989, ll. 14-15, 15\(^{th}\)-18\(^{th}\) October 1450). It was even possible to prevent the loss of valuable documents by ensuring that copies were sent around the country instead of Fastolf’s originals.\(^{141}\) So through the copying process, Fastolf avoided the excessive movement of his original documents away from his archives at Caister Castle. In the following letter to Howes and Bokkyng, Fastolf wrote: ‘Item I sende you a copé of Sybeton ple and quytaunce forged to grounde your bille by it’ (letter 994, ll. 44-45, 4\(^{th}\) December 1450). In another letter, he declared: ‘I have do sergeed among myn evidence and I have wel founde a releas of Nycolas Bockyng...wherof I sende 3ow the copye’ (letter 586, ll. 2-7, 19\(^{th}\) September 1454-1459).

A document bound into the manuscript containing William Worcester’s *Itineraries* demonstrates that the protocol for copying documents could prove to be a barrier for those who wished to consult original documents (perhaps believing them to be most likely to be authentic): ‘Item yn tweytymes rydyng to Langley for to see the acquitance...I was denyed pleynly that I shuld not see the seyd aquitance but a copie

\(^{140}\) Beadle and Richmond described the letter as a ‘file copy of Howes’s immediate reply to no. 973’ in their headnote to the letter in *Paston Letters and Papers*, part 3.

\(^{141}\) For example, see this demand to see a copy of a document that had been in the hands of his servant, William Barker: ‘William Barker...hath deluyered yow Raf Woodrove is obligacion. Ye like to sende me the certente, for I wolde knowe it’. The ‘certente’ was a copy, so Fastolf was requesting a copy rather than the original (letter 569, ll. 51-53).
of yt, all be yt that I had a token from Maister Spylman to hafe a syght of the quitance.’

Other corpora of medieval letters also contain evidence about the purpose of making copies. The Cely Letters, like the Fastolf Letters, record that copies of documents were made for the family’s records. A letter from William Cely shows that he consulted with the wife of a man named William Stryke about a quittance that was apparently given to him. This woman confirmed that: ‘her husbond hathe a quytance of Sybson’. Cely surmised that he would be allowed to see the original document, but would only be able to acquire a copy: ‘I schall see [it] whan I come theder - wheroff I schall send yowr mastyrschypp the copy schorttly.’ This shows that the wife guarded the original as closely as Sir John Fastolf guarded his original documents, and demonstrates why copying was such an important procedure for individuals who needed to compile complete and up-to-date records.

Malcolm Richardson noted that in the case of Chancery documents, ‘[m]ost replications were made from drafts after the fair copies had already left the chancery, an inefficient system causing all kinds of errors and omissions’. This may also have been the case with some of the replications in the Fastolf Letters corpus - some may have been copied from drafts rather than from the letter that was actually sent. However, most do appear to have been copied from the letter that was sent. Most of Fastolf’s letters were sent to members of his inner circle of associates, and so gaining access to the sent letter in order to copy it would not have been difficult. The most likely situation in which a copy might have been made from a draft, in the way that Richardson described, was if the letter had already been dispatched, and so only the

142 Worcester, Itineraries, 389 (folio 309 of Cambridge University, Corpus Christi College, MS. 210).
145 Richardson, The Medieval Chancery, 21.
draft remained. This would not have applied, of course, if the copy had been made before the letter had been sent.

The *Cely Letters* contain evidence that certain letters were indeed intercepted before their dispatch in order for a copy to be made. Alison Hanham, the editor of the letters identified this in letter 105, which was a memorandum from George Cely for Thomas Granger, written in September 1480. The majority of the memorandum is in the hand of William Cely, indicating that it is a copy of the original, which William made before George Cely dispatched it to Thomas Granger.¹⁴⁶

Research on the clerks of the thirteenth century bishop, Richard Blund, has suggested that they had an organised system for writing a document. Frank Barlow’s study focussed on an incident in 1257 when Blund lay dying and his clerks busied themselves drafting, engrossing, and sealing documents in order to dispose of his effects before he died. Barlow pointed out that, ‘the production of a document entailed...three relatively simple operations: drafting, writing and sealing’.¹⁴⁷ He distinguished between the drafter who could be ‘any suitably qualified clerk’; the scribe whose work required ‘even less expertise’; and the sealer for whom there ‘is no evidence at all’, suggesting that these three tasks were undertaken by different men, with different statuses and qualifications.¹⁴⁸

Two hundred years later, in the gentry context of Fastolf’s circle, it appears that there was a limited amount of regularity in the division of responsibility for written tasks. Though drafts do survive in several different hands, there are most examples of documents that were drafted by William Worcester. For example, Magdalen College, Fastolf Paper 64 is a draft of Fastolf’s will in Worcester’s hand.¹⁴⁹ It appears that Fastolf was determined to give the responsibility of drafting important written

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*.
¹⁴⁹ The fair copy of this will is FP 65, which was written in a formal hand by an unidentified scribe.
documents to Worcester, whether other clerks were present or not: ‘I asked licence to ryde yn-to my contree, and my maistré dyd not graunt it; he said hys wille was for to make, &c’ (letter 537, ll. 8-10, 6th January 1456). In contrast, letters that were intended to be dispatched were apparently written by whichever clerk was available at the time - perhaps because of the urgency of the task, or because they were copied from drafts which required less compositional skill. Most copies of letters were made by William Worcester: letter 1017 in 1454, letters 1022 and 1027 in 1455, and letter 1034 in 1457 are all copies in his hand. A possible explanation for why Worcester wrote some of these copies was that Fastolf’s other scribes were unavailable. These other scribes were, in fact, the co-recipients of the copied letters (‘A John Paston et John Bokkyng, ou William Barker’ letter 1017, ‘A John Paston et John Bokkyng’ letters 1027 and 1034).

There were two occasions when a copyist other than William Worcester made copies to forward to Paston and Bokkyng. In 1454 an as-yet unidentified hand copied a letter from Sir John Fastolf to Henry Frowyk (letter 1018). This is interesting because William Worcester had written a letter from Fastolf to Richard Waller on the same date (letter 1017). This begs the question: since Worcester was present in order to write letter 1017, why did Fastolf not also ask him to copy letter 1018? In 1457 another unidentified hand produced a copy of a letter from Fastolf to Stephen Scrope (letter 1035). This is also interesting, since William Worcester wrote a copy of a letter from Fastolf to William Yelverton the day before, which was also sent to Paston and Bokkyng (letter 1034). Again, it is hard to say why William Worcester

150 Henry Frowyk was a London mercer, alderman and sometime mayor and Justice of the Peace for Middlesex. See headnote to letter 1018, and J. C. Wedgewood, History of Parliament, Biographies of the Members of the Commons House 1439-1509 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1936), 357; and Calendar of Fine Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office: Henry VI, 1452-1461, 44 for his commission to distribute an allowance of tax in Middlesex, and page 52 for his position of knight of Parliament and distributor of an allowance of tax in Middlesex.


would copy some letters, and leave others for his fellow scribes. Since these are the only extant letters between Fastolf and Frowyk and Scrope, it is possible that both unidentified copyists were men who were sent by Frowyk and Scrope to deliver letters to Fastolf. They may have subsequently acted as scribes for Fastolf’s reply and simultaneously produced copies for Paston and Bokkyng. This is especially likely since these hands have not been identified in any other letter associated with Sir John Fastolf.

On certain occasions, it seems that Fastolf’s letters acted as a preview for information that would be provided in a separate letter. These letters made reference to matters that Fastolf had explained more fully elsewhere. This enabled Fastolf to write letters that avoided unnecessary elaboration. For example, in one letter he referred his correspondent to a letter that he had sent previously: ‘Item I have wrote before thys to you that the juré in Suffolk, whych John Andreu falsly toke and caused my maner of Bradwell to be cast yn to the Kynges hand myght be examyned yff they presented onye such office’ (letter 995, ll. 42-43, 5th December 1450, my emphasis). If the recipient needed more information about this matter, he had to seek it out in the other letter. This was another reason why keeping good records of correspondence was crucial. Fastolf, at times, also promised further information that he planned to provide in a letter that he had yet to write: ‘Item, I hafe deluyered vpp the shyppmen and left the shyppes heere, for such causes as y shall and wryte vnto you’ (letter 1006, ll. 35-36, 13th March 1451).

This practice can also be seen in the Cely Letters. In 1483 William Cely (d. 1489) wrote to George Cely: ‘Syr, as [ffor] the wull fflete, came heder all yn saffte, thanckyd be Godd, and soo I wrote vnto yowre masterschyppe yn annoder letter be Benett Trotter’. In this case, the more detailed letter was so independent from

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153 Hanham, ed., Cely Letters, letter 201, ll. 21-23, my emphasis.
the one that referred to it, that it was carried by another letter bearer. The letter in which William Cely gave this extra information did not survive. Perhaps this was another reason for the separation of information between two letters: the more detailed (and, thus, potentially sensitive) letter could be destroyed, whilst the letter that mentioned the matter only briefly could be kept as a reminder.
**Letter collection, delivery, and the role of the letter bearer:**

This section has so far examined the stages of production involved in the composition of a letter for Sir John Fastolf. It will now turn to what remained in the transmission of a letter following its composition: the process of collection and delivery. This part of the thesis will look at the practicalities of sending a letter: who was responsible for taking Fastolf’s letters to his correspondents, and who brought back the reply.

The earliest extant reference to a letter bearer in Fastolf’s letters is in letter 953, which was written in 1429, when Fastolf was still in military service in France. This letter records that Fastolf’s stepson, Stephen Scrope, was a carrier in two capacities. Firstly, Scrope bore letter 953, which largely concerned his plans to marry Katherine Cobham. Secondly, since Scrope was making a journey from Rouen to Norfolk, Fastolf used him to transport useful documents to the men who were acting as his representatives in England. Fastolf sent copies of two separate documents with Scrope, both of which contained information that he believed they needed. One was a letter from Lord Hungerford to Fastolf: ‘my said lord Hungerford sais jn his letter þat hit (the land which Robert Monpynson held from Fastolf) is worth bot xl s. a 3ere aboufe þe rentis, as 3e may se [in] þe letter þat he sent me, þe qu<ich> I send 3ow by my son Scrope’ (letter 953, ll. 66-68, 31st October Probably 1429). The other document was a copy of Fastolf’s reply to Lord Hungerford: ‘I am agreed þat he schal hit, like as I has wretyn to hym in a letter, of þe whe<ch> I send 3ow a copé closed here-jn’ (letter 953, ll. 62-64). So the delivery of Fastolf’s letters and the transportation of documents relating to his legal matters were physically combined by Stephen Scrope in the process of bearing letter 953.

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154 Beadle and Richmond pointed this out in the headnote of the letter in their edition of the Paston Letters and Papers, part 3: ‘Scrope himself, specified in the letter as its intended carrier, was serving in France in 1428’. 

Chapter Three: The writing and transmission of letters and documents for Sir John Fastolf.

There is one remarkably detailed warrant for the delivery of a letter to, and reply from, Sir John Fastolf during the period of his life that he spent in Normandy. This warrant is valuable, as it displays the effort that the knight Sir William Oldhall went to in order to dispatch a letter to Fastolf, and the expenses that he incurred in the letter-delivery process. Oldhall wrote (in French) that ‘we have written many letters to the noble man, messire Jehan Fastolf, knight, captain of Caen, making mention of the gathering which had been made by the enemies and adversaries of the king’.\footnote{This document was edited and translated by Stevenson in \textit{Letters and Papers}, 2: Appendix to the Preface, number III. The original document is a ‘Warrant for the Payment of a Messenger employed in carrying Letters respecting the state of Normandy’, from BL, Additional Charter 3779.} The letters had to be transported from Essai to Caen, and then Fastolf’s replies had to make the return journey. The warrant gave the name of the letter bearer ‘Nicholas Clare, Englishman’ and pointed out that Clare made two journeys to deliver letters ‘travelling by night and day’.\footnote{Ibid.} He was given two horses for the journey, one belonging to Nicholas Hok and the other to Michael Cusalley. Hok and Cusalley were each rewarded with twenty shillings for the use of their horses, ‘and for the injury which they have consequently sustained’.\footnote{Ibid.} This case study suggests that the expenses involved in employing a letter bearer might have varied according to the speed of dispatch that was required. Oldhall wrote that he excused the cost of delivering his letter, which was more than usual, ‘taking into consideration the necessity that there was for a speedy despatch of the said letters’.\footnote{Ibid.}

In contrast to the specially-commissioned letter bearer in the military context described above, many letters in the Fastolf Letters corpus present evidence of letters and documents being carried by men who were travelling for other purposes. This was stated explicitly in a letter that instructed the recipient to reward the man who was bearing a letter: ‘lete the brynger her of have some what for his costes, for thow
he come not theder for the cause onely hit is reson he have some what’ (letter 1024, ll. 40-42, early June 1455). It was also proven in numerous letters that recorded men combining letter delivery with other duties. For example, in the 1440s, a ‘Cornelius’ gave Fastolf’s servants advice regarding his ships: ‘The rather that Cornelius seid and he shuld kepe the plaigthe (barge) he would neuer to haue do wyth hir in wynter seson’ (letter 965, ll. 33-35, 12th January 1449). The same letter recorded him carrying a letter from Howes and Spirleng in Norfolk to Fastolf in London: ‘we haue take in one John Brig to assaye hym yf he can do better than the other Ducheman that hath made youre malt here byfore, in lyke forme as we write vn-to you lateward by Cornelius’ (letter 965, ll. 72-74). However, letter bearers like Cornelius were only useful if they were travelling to the same place that the letters needed to go. Thomas Howes encountered difficulty in sending letter 965 because Cornelius could only carry the letter part way. As a result, the completion of the letter’s journey depended upon Howes finding a carrier for the remainder of the journey: ‘Please you nat to be displesed ner to take it to gref, we sent you answere by Cornelius as fer as we coud at that tyme; and yf ther koude a be get any massangeres to London ward a-yenst Christemasse, youre lettrez were redy at all tymes &c’ (letter 965, ll. 1-5).

In September 1450, Fastolf wrote a letter to Berney, Howes, and Shipdham that addressed several of the matters that concerned him at the time, such as his dispute against Nicholas Appleyard, and with Cornelys Florysson who had stolen some of his wheat. The letter ended with an instruction to the recipients to endeavour to get Robert of Burton ‘bringer of this lettre’ established at Saint Benet’s, Hulme, in

159 A parallel can be seen in the delivery of a letter in the Stonor Letters corpus. The editor of the letters, Christine Carpenter, noted that ‘Thomas Stonor borrows a horse...from Thomas Rokes to ride home and Rokes returns Stonor’s horse, presumably now rested, along with a servant, who brings a letter from Rokes’. This shows that the delivery of Rokes’ letter was combined with the transportation of the horse that he had borrowed, making the journey as efficient as possible. Carpenter, ed., Stonor Letters, 30-31.
Norfolk (letter 987, ll. 51-52). It appears that Burton had visited Fastolf to make this request, and was travelling onwards to consult with Berney, Howes, and Shipdam. His journey proved to be a convenient opportunity to transport the letter that contained his request. Fastolf saw this as a chance to inform his Norfolk-based associates about certain matters, and he even seized the chance to enclose several documents that related to his case against Appleyard, which he believed might prove to be useful in the case: ‘I sende yow th’endenture of lees vnder wax... with whiche whan ne ye haue don sende hem me agayn’ (letter 987, ll. 44-50).

A letter from Sir John Fastolf to John Paston, written in 1459, records another instance of a man acting as the bearer of a letter that concerned him. Fastolf wrote that, four years earlier, Laurence Donne had wrongfully entered one of his properties in London. Christopher Barker, one of Fastolf’s associates in London, had sent Fastolf word of this, and Donne carried the letter to Fastolf himself: ‘as Christofre sent me word...wyth the seyd Laurenc’ (letter 579, ll. 46-47, 3rd July 1459). Laurence evidently met with Christopher Barker to commit the reasons for his entrance of Fastolf’s property into writing, and then delivered the letter to Fastolf in person (letter 579, ll. 46-47).

In 1459, Fastolf reminded John Paston that he had sent some documents to him with a man named John Daunson: ‘I sent a copy of the seyd feffement by John Daunson the last weke’ (letter 579, ll. 1-5’). In the same letter, he told Paston that he had also written a letter to Stephen Scrope and William Yelverton ‘late by the seyd Daunson’ (l. 52). Daunson’s name was not mentioned in the corpus of Paston or Fastolf letters again until 1467, when he was listed as a witness in the dispute between William Worcester and Paston over Fastolf’s will: ‘wheche witnesse were Stephen Scrope...John Daunson...and others’ (letter 901, ll. 12-18). It is likely that Daunson had specific business with Paston and Fastolf, which made it necessary for him to travel between members of the Fastolf circle. Journeys like these were
convenient opportunities for Fastolf to transport his letters and documents around the country.

The delivery of Fastolf’s letters was facilitated by his temporary residence in London, which meant that his associates frequently made journeys between London and Norfolk. This became a convenient channel for the delivery of Fastolf’s letters. Thomas Howes and Geoffrey Spirleng, in 1448, recalled that Fastolf had instructed them to break a lock to a chest in his chamber and send him ‘certeyn closyps knyt to gedre in a clout’ (letter 965, ll. 25-28, 12th January 1449). Robert Cutler was given the task of bringing eleven of these clasps to Fastolf, and delivering the letter which referred to them: ‘we send you xj of them by Robert Cotelre, brynger of this lettre’ (letter 965, ll. 27-29).

In a letter written in July 1450 Fastolf stated that he planned to send either John Bokkyng or William Barker to provide practical assistance to John Paston in Norfolk: ‘I am avysed to sende John Bokkyng or William Barker to yow’ (letter 987, ll. 17-18, 7th-14th July 1450). Eventually, Fastolf decided upon Bokkyng, which he indicated by the following statement in a letter he sent soon afterwards: ‘wherefor I seende vnto yow my ryght trusty seruaut John Bokkyng, to wayt vppon my lerned councell and othyr trusty frendys of myne’ (letter 457, ll. 6-8, 14th July 1450). Beadle and Richmond, in the headnote to letter 987, suggested that it was probable that Bokkyng was the carrier of letter number 457. So it seems that John Bokkyng acted as the carrier of the letter that described the assistance he was about to give in Fastolf’s legal matters. This shows that Bokkyng’s letter-bearing task was a secondary task -

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160 The circumstantial evidence about the frequent journeys that men such as Robert Cutler, John Bokkyng and William Barker made for Sir John Fastolf, described fully below, contradicts a statement that Norman Davis made: ‘[other members of the household] were less mobile than Worcester’. Davis, ‘Language in Letters,’ 330.
161 Beadle and Richmond described Cutler as ‘parson of Mautby’ and later ‘vicar of Caister’ (1453-66) in the index of Beadle and Richmond, eds., Paston Letters and Papers, part 3.
162 This was indicated by the comment, ‘gevyng credence to the seid Bokkyng in that it may concern thys mater or onye othyr to my worshyp and profytt’, which suggests that Bokkyng was assigned the role of letter bearer (letter 457, ll. 15-16).
he was making the journey for the primary purpose of assisting John Paston with Fastolf’s legal matters.163

The Fastolf Letters reveal how fleeting the visits made by his associates could be, proving to be perfect opportunities not just to deliver letters to him, but to collect letters from him. In a letter dated by Norman Davis to ‘probably 15th November 1456’, Fastolf wrote that he had received a letter from William Barker carried by Henry Hansson: ‘I receyvid by Henré Hansson on Thorsday last passid at iiiij after none certeyn lettres’ (letter 569, ll. 1-5). Then in another letter written three days later, Fastolf reported that Hansson had taken a letter from him to John Paston: ‘And where as I late wrote vn-to yow in a lettre by Henré Hansson for the fundacion of my college’ (letter 570, ll. 1-2).164 Hansson had evidently remained with Fastolf for up to three days before making an onward journey to John Paston, taking a letter from Fastolf with him.

Fastolf used so many different men to deliver his letters, depending on who was available and willing to travel, that it was difficult to keep track of the delivery process. In one letter, Fastolf informed Thomas Howes and John Bokkyng that he had sent letters with several bearers: ‘Item I have wryt to you lettres by Maister Hue Acton, and seth by othyrs goers betwene’ (letter 995, ll. 47-48, 5th December 1450). He expressed concern about whether these letters had reached their destination: ‘but I hyre no word of how manye peyr lettres the parson and ye hafe resseyved seth ye rode; also be Wyndam seruaunt &c’ (letter 995, ll. 47-49). It appears that these bearers could not be relied upon to make delivering letters a priority once they

163 The observation that letter-bearing was just one of the duties undertaken by Fastolf’s servants is reinforced by evidence relating to royal households. Malcolm Richardson pointed out that the Chaufewax or Chaufcire’s primary responsibility was tempering the wax and sealing writs, but that he was also paid to transport Chancery rolls, wax, and parchment by horse. Richardson, The Medieval Chancery, 17-18.
164 For more information about the foundation of a college by Sir John Fastolf, see FP 63, an early draft of his will, which detailed his intended establishment of a foundation of six religious men at Hulme upon his death. Fastolf later altered the location of his ‘college’ to Caister Castle (see FPs 64, 65, and 66). For an explanation of the establishment of the college see Hanham, ‘The Curious Letters,’ 32.
reached their destination, for Fastolf urged Howes and Bokkyng to seek one of them, Richard Baxter, and ‘resseyve hys lettres’ (letter 995, l. 51).

This concern with keeping track of letters was echoed years after Fastolf’s death, in a letter from John Paston II to his father John Paston I: ‘And that letter which I sente yow [as] I vnderstod syns, [Nicholas Colman] the berere there-of cam not owte of Norwych iiiij or v dayes aftere the bylle was delyueryd hym, wherfor I am jn dowte whythere it is come to yowre handes or not, whychc cawsyth me to wryght to yow ageyn jn thys wyse’ (letter 235, ll. 10-14, 27th September 1465, my emphasis). Nicholas Colman was a former servant of Sir John Fastolf, who moved into the service of the Pastons after Fastolf’s death. It seems that the Paston family inherited Fastolf’s anxiety about the process of letter delivery along with the services of his letter bearers!

Teresa Sanchez Roura showed that these anxieties were also apparent in the letters that were transmitted between the Cely family and their associates.\(^1\) The letters frequently made reference to the name of the letter bearer (‘Syr, I sente yow a lettyr by Robard Flemyingys man’),\(^2\) and recipients often confirmed whom they got the letter from (‘thys day I ressauyd a letter frowme yow be Randowlfe, the Stapell clarke’).\(^3\) Roura concluded that ‘[t]his constant checking on who the bearers were helped ensure that no change in hands could affect the messages, as seals could be easily violated, and continuous recapitulation of previous letters helped correspondents keep track of the post’\(^4\) Regarding the letters of the Stonor family, the correspondents were keen to show each other that they had ensured, or intended to ensure, that onward messages were passed on safely. For example, Walter Elmes described diligently exactly when he intended to pass on a letter to one of William

\(^1\) Sanchez Roura, ‘Keeping Track of the Post,’ 22.
\(^2\) Ibid., letter 134, ll. 8-9, 14th November 1481.
\(^3\) Ibid., letter 137, ll. 1-5, 28th November 1481.
\(^4\) Sanchez Roura, ‘Keeping Track of the Post,’ 22.
Stonor’s other correspondents, in his letter of 1481: ‘John Cheynye is owt a haukyng, as sone as he comyth home I shall delyver yowr letter’.¹⁶⁹ This extraneous information was confirmation that Elmes knew of the recipient’s whereabouts, and had plans to track him down and deliver the letter directly.

There is evidence that the need for urgent communication prompted Fastolf to send his servants on special journeys. This was the case on one occasion when Fastolf sent a message to the Duke of Norwich:

where as ye write that we shuld speke wyth my lord Norwich Chaunceler to wete what he hath don to the mater of Hykelyng. Ser, please you to wete, we sent G. Spirlyng to Lenn to do the massage vp-on youre commandement, and he answered that he had recceyued the day afore he come vn-to hym a lettre from you... ...he wole send you answere by his owen writyng in all hast goodly. (letter 965, ll. 90-97, my emphasis, 12th January 1449).

Fastolf not only sent Geoffrey Spirleng to give a spoken message to the Duke of Norfolk, but he had sent a letter to the Duke the day before, and the Duke had returned a reply with equal urgency. When Fastolf sent his men specifically to collect or deliver letters, in the way that that he sent Spirleng in letter 965 above, he ensured that their journeys were as effective as possible. For example, letter 966 recorded that Robert Boteler was sent especially to collect information from Howes, Cole, and Shipdam. However, Boteler’s journey was also an opportunity to transport a document to them that was crucial in a dispute: ‘And also, wher they have made ther pe de gree, and make Thomas last of the stok, wheche shuld have isseu Margery and Anneys whec<he> ben wedded on of them to Ser Edward Hull and an other to on Wake, wheche make ther cleyme in the seyd maner be thys tale, as 3e may seen be the bille [at we sent 3ow by Robert Boteler’ (letter 966, ll. 14-18, probably January/February 1449).

Fastolf was insistent that letter-delivery missions were conducted quickly: in one letter he expressed his hope that William Barker would not take longer than was strictly necessary to deliver a letter: ‘Item, that myne articles I sent home by William Barker in a long rolle may be sent vpp ayen in all goodly haste corrected as ys beforeisaid; and that the said William may spede hym hedre, for there he may not be occupied but yff the oyer and termyner had be contynued and satyn stille’ (letter 989, ll. 44-47, 15th-18th October 1450, my emphasis). This demonstrates that men like William Barker were used by Fastolf to deliver his letters and to move his documents around the country, but that they were also needed for other purposes. This was echoed in letter 554 of June 1455, which recorded that Fastolf sent a letter to John Paston with his ‘trusty seruant Colyn’ (ll. 1-14). Fastolf wanted his man to return quickly with Paston’s response to the original letter, so he made the closing request: ‘I pray yow spede Colyn home ayen be-tyme wyth such materes as ye thynk behofefull’ (ll. 32-33). And finally, another look at the letter from John Paston II to John Paston I, written after Fastolf’s death, reinforces this impression that the senders of letters disliked unnecessary delays: ‘þat then it lyke yow þat I may haue answere by the berere herof, whych schal tary at London a day or ij and not passyng’ (letter 235, ll. 16-17, 27th September 1465, my emphasis).

On some non-urgent occasions, it appears that Fastolf and his correspondents used letter bearers from outside of their immediate circle, who were employed especially to deliver letters. This probably occurred when there was no servant travelling in the right direction. P. C. Pearson, examining the Paston Letters, made a distinction between three different modes of letter delivery used by the Paston family: servants or neighbours who acted as bearers; carriers ‘who appear to be persons who carried
messages and other goods for reward’, and loderers and carteres ‘who were probably porters of heavier goods’.  

This diversity can also be found in the Fastolf Letters. Sir John Fastolf gave the names of numerous men who acted as carriers of letters and documents, many of whom were not mentioned in the corpus of Fastolf letters in any other capacity. It is not always clear whether these men were specially-hired letter bearers, or servants of Fastolf who were not mentioned elsewhere in his letters. Teresa Sanchez Roura, in her article ‘Keeping Track of the Post in Fifteenth Century England’, suggested a way of identifying bearers who were unknown to the sender. There was a linguistic marker, in the use of the indefinite ‘one’. She gave an example from the Cely Letters corpus: ‘I sent unto you at the last passage by one Roger Kinton, a letter’. With this in mind, letter 986, *does* indicate that Fastolf was using a paid carrier, as opposed to one of his servants. Though Fastolf in this letter recalled that he had previously sent a roll to Caister by his associate John Berney, in the same letter he stated that he was transporting the most recent commission of letters and documents with ‘oone Berd, caryour’ (II. 4-5 and I. 13). The distinction he made between John Berney ‘servuant’ and Berd ‘caryour’ suggests that he had employed Berd specifically for the purpose of delivering his roll, ‘wyth othyr lettres thys day to be send’.  

A letter in the Cely Letter corpus records the anxiety of its sender when she did not know exactly who was going to bear her letter, which indicates that she, too, was using one of these paid, ‘carriers’. The sender, Margaret Cely, stated that this made her cautious about what she enclosed in the letter: ‘ye [schall receyue] in thys lett[a]

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\(^{170}\) See Appendix D for evidence of a hired messenger being employed by Mercers to carry letters.  
\(^{172}\) For example: ‘I hafe sent home certeyn *lettres by John Bedford*, praying yow to tendyr the said *lettres as ye shall considre it moste to my proffyt and avayle*’ (letter 983, ll. 1-3, my emphasis), and ‘[m]ore ouere, I sende you home by the *berer here-off, Thomas Medew*, viij wryttes of grene wex of dyuers processes that I have in Norfolk especiall, wyth a distres for Ser John Shypton’ (letter 983, ll. 4-6).  
\(^{173}\) Sanchez Roura, ‘Keeping Track of the Post,’ 22.
feterloke of gold wylth a rebre þerin, and I pray you ser to [t]ake [it] in worthre at thys tyme, for I knew not wo schold care the letter and þerfo[r] I scent no noder thyn g wyth thys letter. 174 Margaret’s anxieties were expressed again, this time indirectly, in a letter from William Maryon to George Cely: ‘my masterys youre wyffe...sent a lettere vnto you the last [we]ke be on Rechard Cartar of Darbey, in the whyche letter sche sen[t] vnto you a lytell locke of goulde y-closed in the sayd lettere, the wyche sche trust to God ye have ressayved’. 175 This letter reveals who carried Margaret’s letter: a man who was not well-known to the family judging by the introductory phrase ‘on’ (one), and by the locating phrase ‘of Darbey’, which emphasised that he was not local to the Celys in London. Margaret’s indirect voice sought confirmation that the letter arrived safely: ‘the wyche sche trust to God ye have ressayved’. Margaret Cely’s initial worries about sending the letter with this unknown man, and her subsequent wish to check with George that it had arrived, indicate that she was half-expecting the loss of her letter.

This section has shown that letter transmission could never be entirely reliable. However, correspondents were at least *partially* reassured when their letters were in the hands of men whose trusted position within the circle made them more likely to ensure that the letter and its contents reached their destination.

The Fastolf Letters indicate that paid letter carriers made prescribed journeys, at pre-determined times. Therefore, using a paid carrier rather than the correspondent’s own servants was a disadvantage for the timely delivery of the letter, as well as for its safety. This was because the dispatch of the letters had to wait for the scheduled journey: ‘And þerfore I pray <3o>w þat 3e make apointment w<it>h þe said Pesemerche in þe best wise þat 3e may, athir of þe ton place or þe toþer; and or 3e let take hit after xx 3ere, hauyn<ge> rewarde to þe verray val<ue> þerof; and as 3e don,

174 Hanham, ed., *Cely Letters*, letter 222, ll. 16-20, my emphasis, c. 14th September 1484.
send me worde by þe nexst messager’ (letter 953, ll. 58-61, 31st October probably 1429). A carrier going in the right direction at the right time could not be guaranteed: ‘Item, please youre tendernesse to accept this for our excuse, that yt hath be long er we myght send you any answere of youre lettrez, for a-bout this tyme of Cristemasse come no man out of these partyez to London. And as for the speed of makyng of [oure] lettrez, they arn at all tymes redy to send forth yf we myght gete any massangeres’ (letter 964, ll. 36-38, late December 1448). Weeks after letter 964 was written, Fastolf’s servants were still encountering problems with finding a messenger to carry their letters, as their apologies to their master reveal: ‘Please you nat to be displesed ner to take it to gref, we sent you answere by Cornelius as fer as we coud at that tyme; and yf ther koude a be get any massangeres to London ward a-yenst Cristemasse, youre lettrez were redy at all tymes &c’ (letter 965, ll. 1-5, my emphasis, 12th January 1449).176

Letters in the Cely Letters corpus echo the observation that was made about the Fastolf letters above, that dispatch was not always immediate (see page 175-176 above). Letter 38, written in 1478 reveals that two letters written by the same sender, but four days apart, travelled with the same carrier, so the recipient received them simultaneously. This recipient recognised in his reply that he knew that the letters were not written at the same time: ‘I have resayuyd from the ij letters be wyll Maryon, j lett[er wryt] the xxiiij day of Octobor, the weche I wyll understand, the todor letter wryt frysth day of Novembor, the weche I understand wyll’.177 In letter 194 of September 1482, William Cely expressed his frustration at the delays in letter-delivery that were caused by problems in crossing the channel. He tried to dispatch

176 P. C. Pearson pointed out that the Pastons had problems with the availability of messengers: ‘the usual problem was the unavailability of messengers...’, and gave this example: ‘my mastres (Margaret Paston) excused that she write yow no letter, for myche of the materre that she shuld haue wret to you I had wret in my letter or she knew ther-owf and also she knew not of so redy a massengere as I had’. Pearson, ‘Carriage of Mail,’ 232.
177 Hanham, ed., Cely Letters, letter 38, ll. 1-4, my emphasis.
his brother George’s letter, but failed to do so quickly: ‘Syr, I hawe sent ower youre letter ynto Ynglond that 3e lefte [here], but hit was v days affter 3e departyd ffyrst, for here was noon passage no sonner, the wynd was so contrary and the see so trublys’.\(^\text{178}\)

Sir John Fastolf had the capability to facilitate the transmission of letters between other men, and exercised this when these letters were connected with his own matters. For example, in a letter to Thomas Howes, Fastolf mentioned that John Jenney was working on his case against Tuddenham and Heydon but had encountered problems because he had no written authority from the Duke of Norfolk to pursue the case. Fastolf commanded Howes to ensure that a bill in the duke’s name was written up, and to make sure that the duke (or his men) had this document delivered to John Jenney, ‘by such as goth dayly in to that contree to Tateshale’ (letter 996, ll. 87-88, 20\(^\text{th}\) December 1450). Fastolf may have been referring to servants or associates of the duke, or he may have meant hired messengers. However, it is most likely that Fastolf was unconcerned with exactly who would make this journey, as long as someone did.

Finally for this chapter’s discussion of the transmission of letters, the Fastolf Letters contain some evidence about the protocol in the event that the recipient of a letter was not available to receive it. Writers provided directions in case the recipient was not at home, which included an alternative addressee. The carriers of the Fastolf Letters appear to have gone to great effort to track down either the intended recipient of the letter, or the specially-named alternative: ‘To my gode maister John Paston, esquire, in Norwich; and yn hys absence to John Berney at Castre, squyere’ (letter 498, 5\(^\text{th}\) July 1454, address). This was also suggested by the address to letter 988, in which four possible residences were named for the recipient of the letter ‘[to Thomas Howes] beyng at Castre, or at Norwych, at Pokethorp, or at Haylysdon manere’. Presumably, the bearer had to seek out Howes in whichever of these places he

\(^{178}\) *Ibid*, letter 194, ll. 8-12.
happened to be. In contrast, letter 268 of the Stonor Letters corpus shows a certain correspondent who was satisfied with simply finding a suitable alternative recipient who happened to be in the vicinity. This letter, from Richard Germyn to Sir William Stonor in 1480, was almost entirely concerned with the manner in which previous letters had been dispatched, which is exemplified in the quotation below:

...Moreover, y late wrote you a letter and send him by oon John Symon, which gave you the orenge and marmelate at Exeter: which letter was delivered unto Lannos, skynner, in asmoche as ye be not at London. Y tryst ye have him. Also ye wrothe unto me to have youre plate, which is with Maister John at Wille: at your letteris deliverans he was not at home, but before Midsomer y schal bringe hit to London pakked in the carior’s pakke of Exeter, so bi the grace of God y schal deliver you me seilf. ¹⁷⁹

The alternative recipient must have been a well-trusted associate of both Richard Germyn and William Stonor because he received another letter on Stonor’s behalf a year later, letter 284: ‘And also y wrote a letter unto youre Maistership, which was delivered unto Lannoys, Skinner’. However, the fact that Germyn’s letter was given to a man other than its intended recipient meant that on two occasions he had to write again to Stonor, specifying exactly who bore his last letter, and exactly whom it was delivered to. Germyn’s slight distrust of this way of dealing with the absence of a letter’s recipient was clear in the interrogative statements that he made in both letter 268 and letter 284: ‘y trust ye have him’. The very inclusion of this statement in these letters revealed some apprehension about the safety of the letter and perhaps expected a negative response.

The storage of documents and letters in the Fastolf circle.  

According to an inventory of 1448, Sir John Fastolf’s books were kept in the ‘stewe hous’ (or bath room) next to his chamber - a point that is re-visited in the following chapter on Fastolf’s books. Less is known about the storage of his letters and documents.

It has been shown above that Fastolf was diligent about keeping important documents and having copies made when they left his possession, for use in legal cases, or for consultation by his representatives around the country. It was crucial to have access to written records not only as evidence to support rightful claims to property, but also to ensure that these claims were justified in the first place: ‘As to the trauers of Herlyng londz... the bokes be not here off it... Ye most inquire there... that y make none demaund [to] my party aduerse... but as the trouth ys; and that I may fynde record and wrytyng off it and need bee’ (letter 1009, ll. 102-108, 24th June 1451, my emphasis). The importance of written information was perhaps most glaring when it was missing, or when it was difficult for Fastolf to access. For example, Anthony Smith has described how ‘Fastolf’s enemies exerted themselves at times to prevent him from access to archives and documents of relevance to his dispute with Hickling Priory’.  

So what was Fastolf’s procedure for the safe storage, and easy retrieval, of written information? The introduction to this thesis pointed out that, in 1481, William Worcester moved an entire collection of documents to Magdalen College in Oxford, where they remained until the present day. Before this, these documents must have

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180 For a study of a particularly efficient document storage system see A. J. Piper, ‘Thomas Swalwell, Monk of Durham, Archivist and Bibliophile (d. 1539),’ in Books and Collectors: Essays Presented to Andrew Watson, ed. J. P. Carley and C. G. C. Tite (London: British Library, 1997), 71-100. Piper pointed out the reasoning behind the efficient system, which was to ensure that the monks had access to any documents that they would need to back up their claims to their property: ‘the Durham Monks had long been assiduous in ensuring that they preserved and had ready access to the documents which gave them title to their privileges and possessions’ (75).

181 Smith, ‘Sir John Fastolf’s Dispute with Hickling Priory,’ 69.

182 Davis, ed., Paston Letters and Papers, part 1, xxxi.
been kept together somewhere, presumably at Caister Castle. Anthony Smith wrote that ‘by 1446 the tower at Caister Castle certainly housed a central archive, from which records might be dispatched to London when needed for lawsuits or other purposes, and there were also subsidiary archive stores in Southwark and at Norwich’. This is supported by circumstantial evidence in Fastolf’s letters. On occasions, Fastolf wrote to his servants at Caister asking for documents to be sent from there to an associate somewhere else in the country, or he asked them to consult or copy a document at Caister. Fastolf’s servants worked hard to ensure that his legal associates were always in possession of the documents they needed, and if these documents did not exist, they used Caister as a base to have them written: ‘I sende you at þis time the rolle of þe copies of all patentes, and the appoyntment wit
 Wentworth laste, and also a abstracte drawen as it come simply to my remembrance’ (letter 590, ll. 1-3, 2nd April 1455-1459).

Malcolm Richardson argued that document storage was inefficient in the medieval period, and pointed out the problems that medieval people had in engineering a solution to the difficulty of storing documents in a sufficiently organised manner: ‘Retrieving information was one of the perpetual headaches of medieval administration. Whatever the ingenuity of the medieval mind, it was unable to develop a workable and widely accepted method for finding documents once they had been stored’. Richardson wrote specifically about the storage of documents within the royal Chancery, but it appears that local administration was equally flawed. There is evidence in the Fastolf Letters to suggest that the way that wills were stored made finding and consulting them very difficult, especially if the deceased man had properties in more than one county: ‘Item, as for the testamentes of Bertylmew Antyngham and of Thomas Seynt Omer, we can nat fynde them as yet.

184 Richardson, The Medieval Chancery, 23.
But we suppose it is nat lyke we shull fynde them here, for yf a man haue lyvelod in ij dyoces or in more than one, than his testament and wyll shall be proued and registred at Canterbury’ (letter 961, ll. 50-54, 26th October 1447). The impact of this disorganisation was especially severe because the fifteenth century gentry constantly needed to consult documents and make copies of them. At times even the men of Fastolf’s inner circle had difficulty working with Fastolf’s document archives at Caister when a specific document was required. The storage system was evidently not sound enough to avoid documents being misplaced: ‘Item, as to the x article of youre seid lettre, there as ye write that ij or iij of vs shuld go in to youre evidence hous, þere to fynde a box ful of evidence longyng to Roys. Ser, please you to wete, we have made serche in youre seid evyidence hous, but we can non fynde of Roys evydencys’ (letter 965, ll. 50-56, 12th January 1449, my emphasis). Fastolf’s men knew that the documents existed, but were baffled about where exactly they were kept: ‘Nertheles bothe we, Ser Thomas and Watkyn, knowen verryly that there was one dede of Roys lyvelode about a iiij yeer passed a-monges youre evydencez, but and it be nat wyth you at London jt is right straunge and it be so gon’ (letter 965, ll. 50-56, 12th January 1449, my emphasis). On occasion Fastolf complained that his associates were negligent in their duties when Fastolf asked for a document to be found and sent to him. However, it is possible that these servants were delayed by the inefficient storage of documents, rather than by their own inefficiency.

The potential for confusion within Fastolf’s system of information storage was compounded by the fact that his documents were divided between London and Caister. On one occasion, Fastolf was searching for information about the costs he had incurred in a legal case. However, he was having difficulty tracking down exactly what he needed at Caister, and needed the co-operation of his men in London: ‘I hafe serched to the vpmost heere of all maaner costes in pleez and processes. And so I pray you to doo there, and sende it me be tyme, to th’entent I may cast the sommes
payd out by you and by myne officers there to the costes that y hafe payd heere’ (letter 1009, ll. 26-32, 24th June 1451). The following statement demonstrates that documents relating to Fastolf’s matters were dispersed even farther afield: ‘I hafe wreten to Thomas Plummer to speke wyth one Aston hys landlord for the recuuere of certeyn evidenses...and there ys one [John] Hannam duellyng at Tendryng yn Essex that sold it me, whych hath mo evidenses by lyklyness...And a wedewe duellyth yn Surré...she hath ij dedes of my seyd tenement. Christofre may speke wyth hyr for delyueraunce of hem’ (letter 579, ll. 34-42). As long as Fastolf’s men were diligent, co-operative, and quick about retrieving the information he needed, Fastolf could cope with such a dispersed document storage system. Access to important documents was such an important concern that it influenced Fastolf’s choice of servants. For example, John Emond’s ability to get hold of certain documents appears to have swayed Fastolf’s decision to take him on as a servant: ‘[John Emond] hath certeyn evidenses that may do me ease, whych that y may the better and esyer com bye when he ys my man’ (letter 1009, ll. 53-54, 24th June 1451). Emond evidently was being hired purely for the reason that he could grant Fastolf access to certain documents that he needed for his legal cases.

It is clear, though, that even if Fastolf had some associates who had a grasp of the protocol for document storage and retrieval, there could be problems for men who were unfamiliar with the system. Fastolf’s stepson, Stephen Scrope, experienced difficulties when he took on property that had been managed by Fastolf: ‘[Fastolf’s] feoffementis made vn-to diuerce persones vn-kownen to me, be my seid fader, that I sholde not inow esyly entre with-oute trouble; for nowthir I knowe where to haue the

185 John Emond (or Edmonds) of Taverham. A letter of the year before (1450) demonstrated Emond’s access to important documents: Fastolf told Thomas Howes to consult him about a document that was needed in his dispute over Dedham: ‘that the parson of Castelcombe speke with John Emond of Tauerham by a secret and good meyane, the whiche hathe certeyn evidences of on that pretendid hym a title to Dedham Ouerhalle’ (letter 985, ll. 22-25). See also letter 178, which shows that in 1465 he was helping the Paston family to acquire documents.
evidences that longeth to the seid lyveloode, ne the entent of the seid feoffementis, ne no man, for me, that I wote of’ (letter 1012, ll. 42-48, about 1450-1451). This letter reveals that it was not only Scrope who was baffled by Fastolf’s document storage system: he had asked his own associates for assistance, and none could provide it.

There were certain members of Fastolf’s circle who appear to have been unfamiliar with the content of his documents, and so could not be relied upon to provide the correct ones if asked: ‘Item the parson of Brandeston hath delyuered in to the audyt a bundell of French papirs and billes whych be of no substauce, ne make no mencion of the maters that I wroet vn-to yow; wylyng that ye serche better, and sende me yff ye onye fynde’ (letter 989, ll. 48-51, 15th - 18th October 1450). This disorganisation in the management and administration of Fastolf’s individual manors made getting hold of the right documents at the right time an arduous task for Fastolf and his closest associates.

Finally, because Fastolf’s legal and business matters were so diverse and numerous, he had to enlist a diverse and numerous group of men to administrate the documents connected with these matters. With so many men involved, it was difficult for Fastolf to monitor the competence of their work, especially when they were in Norfolk and he was in London. A mistake made in 1448 by one of these men was very costly indeed for Fastolf: Fastolf’s servant John Rafman had thrown away a valuable document. Fastolf made his displeasure known in a letter that he sent to his men at Caister: ‘I wolde it were knowe to alle men... what harme I hadde by [John Rafman] whan he kest an obligacion of iij mark... wheche was owyng me by the Duchesse of Bedford’ (letter 962, ll. 29-34, 12th May 1448). The Fastolf Letters record that documents relating to his interests were dispersed among his numerous associates, and getting them back when he needed them could be excruciating. This was especially true if a man died whilst in possession of Fastolf’s documents. In the following example, Fastolf had to attempt to obtain documents from the widow of his
servant Henry Sturmer, which was an arduous process and required the persistence of Thomas Howes: ‘ye sent me but a bille or two. And therfor I pray yow efftsonys to speke wyth Sturmer wyff... and wete of hyr yff she hafe found ony mo wrytynges touchyng Sellyng and me. And yff she hafe not, that ye wold pray hyr to serche ayen of all such evidences’ (letter 1011, ll. 40-45, 23rd July 1451). The safety and prosperity of Fastolf’s wealth and reputation was truly at the mercy of the men who administrated his legal and business matters, and Fastolf’s letters testify that he was well aware of this.

In the years following Fastolf’s death, access to the documents associated with him became even more important. In the process of administering his will, it was essential to be aware of what belonged to Sir John Fastolf. However, just as in the case of Fastolf’s moveable belongings, Fastolf’s documents became dispersed after his death.186 FP 90 is a memorandum of evidences relating to the manor of Fastolf’s manor of Netherhall, which were in the custody of Thomas Howes, together with other deeds, in boxes in the principal room of his rectory at Blofelde. The next document in the Fastolf Papers corpus, FP 91, lists the enquiries to be made about the deeds and evidences of Sir John Fastolf and his furniture and goods. The second part of this document is a list of bonds and other documents in the custody of Sir Thomas Howes. Evidently there was a need to itemise and locate the documents that would inform Fastolf’s executors of exactly what Fastolf owned. In a later document, a memorandum from William Worcester to William Waynflete, Worcester wrote that upon Waynflete’s command to find the documents associated with Fastolf’s manors, he had found in his own coffers at Pokethorpe only some ‘scrowys schedulys &
papyrs of lytill substaunce to long to expresse’. ¹⁸⁷ Worcester gave the names of other individuals who might be able to give information about the documents that Thomas Howys had formerly possessed. ¹⁸⁸ With many men involved in the administration of Fastolf’s properties, there appears to have been some uncertainty about the manner in which his documents were managed after his death, just as there had been during his life. As a consequence, FP 91, then later FP 95, were both desperate attempts to make sense of the storage of documents relating to Sir John Fastolf.

¹⁸⁷ See FP 95.
¹⁸⁸ See FP 95.
The use of paper in the circle of Sir John Fastolf: watermarks.

There are several recurring watermarks in the corpus of letters and documents associated with Sir John Fastolf. This section examines these marks for any information that they may provide about this written material. As is shown below, the evidence suggests that there is a chronological pattern in the use of watermarks. In addition, there appears to be some connection between these marks and certain writers within the circle. This means that a survey of watermarks has potential to aid the dating of hitherto-undated material and the identification of hitherto-unidentified scribes.

A frequently-appearing mark in the Fastolf Letters is that of a bull, in profile:

![Figure 18: Watermark of a bull in profile, with added annotation to define the shape, FP 26.](image)

This watermark appears predominantly in documents concerning rent and expenses and in accounts associated with Fastolf. For example, it appears in FP 25, an account of rents received and expenses in an un-named manor dating from 1444 or 1445. It also appears in FP 26, a long roll of account of John Rafman, who was at one time head of Fastolf’s household at Caister (see letters 953 and 961), and was later imprisoned by Fastolf (see letter 962 and page 148 above). It appears in FP 62, a rent-

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190 The date of this document comes from the unpublished catalogue of the Fastolf Papers, which is kept at the Magdalen College archives in Oxford and was compiled by William Macray. Many thanks to the archivist, Robin Darwall-Smith, for allowing me access to this catalogue.
roll. It can also be found in one of the Fastolf Letters, FP 61, a letter from Thomas Hert (parson of Hellesdon) to William Worcester, which was written in 1455. The appearance of this watermark in documents that were produced in a diverse range of locations, by several different men, suggests either that paper from this mill was commonly used around East Anglia, or that Fastolf distributed paper to his associates around the county from a central supply.

Another bull-themed watermark that appears frequently in written material associated with Fastolf is a bull’s head with a star protruding from the forehead.191

![Watermark of a bull’s head with star protruding from forehead, with added annotation to define the shape, FP 77.](image)

Figure 19: Watermark of a bull’s head with star protruding from forehead, with added annotation to define the shape, FP 77.

This watermark appears in a variety of written material, mostly material that was associated with Caister Castle. Most written items on paper with this watermark were written by members of Fastolf’s inner circle of associates. For example, it appears in FP 48, which is a draft petition, written in the 1450s by Luket Nantron and corrected

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191 The Gravell Watermark Archive has one record of this watermark, from 1469, on paper originating from Belgium. It was originally entered into Charles Briquet’s ‘Papiers Briquet’ as ‘Tête de Boeuf’. See The Thomas L. Gravell Watermark Archive, compiled and maintained by Daniel W. Mosser and Ernest W. Sullivan, II, www.gravell.org [accessed May, 2011], ‘bull’s head’. For the watermark in Briquet’s compilation, see Briquet, Filigranes, ‘tête de boeuf,’ numbers 14096-15459, but especially number 14161.
by William Barker. It also appears in Hickling 132 which is a document relating to Fastolf’s dispute with the prior of Hickling, in the hand of William Barker. Finally it appears in FP 77, which is a rough draft of a list of furniture, armour, tapestry, and other items at Caister, which dates from the 1460s. The watermark also appears in two texts in London, College of Arms, MS. Arundel 48, a compilation of ninety-six different texts, which appears to have been compiled by William Worcester. The two texts that appear on the paper with this watermark have contrasting subject matter: one is a list of emperors (folio 43), and the other is proceedings against Jean duc of Alençon for high treason (folio 224). However, the connection between this watermark and the members of the inner circle of Sir John Fastolf indicates that it was a stock of paper that his main scribes had access to. There is less of an association between this watermark and Fastolf’s other manors, and outer circle of associates, which suggests that this was a supply of paper that he kept at Caister.

The watermark of a pair of shears or scissors also occurs several times, predominantly in material associated with the 1440s. Like the bull’s head mark discussed above, this mark appears several times in MS. Arundel 48: on folios 29, 141, 195, 317, and 329. The texts in which this watermark appears are: a genealogy of kings of England up to Henry VI (folios 22-29), ordinances of the reign of Edward II (folios 141-152), process and articles against Richard II, 1399 (folios 194-195), and nineteen propositions regarding the recovery of English provinces in France, dated August 1449 (folios 329-332). Page 328 below explains a possible link between this watermark and the scribal work of one of Fastolf’s clerks, Luket Nantron. The shears mark also appears in two letters of the year 1450, each of which was associated with scribes in the inner circle of Sir John Fastolf. The first was

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192 The Thomas L. Gravell Watermark Archive, ‘scissors/shears’. See also Briquet Filigranes, ‘ciseaux,’ numbers 3647-3771.
193 For more information on the nineteen propositions and the context around its composition, see page 326, note 175 below.
written by Thomas Howes and William Barker to Sir John Fastolf in October 1450 (BL, MS. Additional 39848, folio 49), and the second was from Fastolf to Howes and John Bokkyng in December 1450 in the hand of William Worcester (BL, MS. Additional 39848, folio 53). So this evidence suggests that the paper with the shears watermark was used by the main scribes of Sir John Fastolf in the late 1440s and early 1450s.

Finally, there is a watermark that was categorised under ‘grapes’ by Charles Briquet.\textsuperscript{194} The grapes watermark appears on several folios of MS. Arundel 48. Folios 76 to 87 of the manuscript are a single gathering, and within this gathering the watermark is visible on three folios: on folio 81 (on which is written a \textit{Collectanea de regibus Britonum}), on folio 85 (\textit{De Coronatione quorumdam Regum Franciae}), and folio 86 in (\textit{the descendants of Rollo} and \textit{Historia regum Britonum et Saxonum ad finem Heptarchiae}). The ten texts in this gathering are all in the same scribal hand. This watermark does not appear anywhere else in the corpus of written material associated with Sir John Fastolf, and neither does the scribal hand. The \textit{Gravell Watermarks Archive} presents an example of this grapes watermark in a manuscript of 1465 from Konstanz in Germany.\textsuperscript{195} The lack of association between this watermark and the inner circle of Sir John Fastolf indicates that this was a stock of paper that belonged to someone outside of Fastolf’s immediate circle. This suggests that the texts on this gathering were written elsewhere, then collected into the volume as the compiler, probably William Worcester, put it together.

There are several other watermarks that appear in the written material associated with Sir John Fastolf. These include \textbf{the profile of a head, with an upturned nose}\textsuperscript{196} (See MS. Arundel 48, folio 319 and Oxford University, Magdalen College, Titchwell

\textsuperscript{194} Briquet, \textit{Filigranes}, ‘raisin,’ numbers 13055-13056.
\textsuperscript{196} Briquet, \textit{Filigranes}, ‘Tête humaine,’ numbers 15584-15752, but especially numbers 15629-15638.
64 and Guton Hall 290), and a pair of scales (MS. Arundel 48, folio 283),\(^{197}\) and a tulip (FP 43, folios 9 and 13).\(^{198}\) Unlike the bull, bull’s head, shears, and grapes, marks described above, these marks do not appear frequently in the corpus of written material. However, the evidence that has emerged about the marks that do appear in several written items suggests that if more examples of these watermarks could be found, there would be further implications for the dating of material associated with Sir John Fastolf, and for revelations about the work of Fastolf’s scribes.

\(^{197}\) *Ibid,* ‘balance,’ numbers 2365-2608.

\(^{198}\) *Ibid,* ‘fleur,’ numbers 6636-6668, but especially number 6645.
Chapter Four: Interactions between writers in the Fastolf Circle.

Chapter Two above revealed how closely William Worcester, William Barker, and John Bokkyng worked when they were assigned general duties such as collecting Fastolf’s money, and transporting his belongings around the country. Life for an individual within the circle of Sir John Fastolf was greatly affected by the movements and activities of other men. This dependence on others was clearest when John Bokkyng found that his services were pulled in multiple directions: he was required to attend to Sir John Fastolf as a scribe, yet his skills in legal administration also made him popular as an assistant to Fastolf’s lawyer, John Paston. On one occasion, when Paston asked Bokkyng to assist him in London, Bokkyng was willing to attend but was not able to leave Caister. The reason, he wrote, was that: ‘All men ar owte at þis tyme, as þe Parson, Worcest<er>, and Barker’ (letter 590, ll. 4-6, 2nd April 1455-59). In this case Fastolf evaluated the presence of Thomas Howes (the ‘Parson’), William Worcester, William Barker, or John Bokkyng to be equivalent, and was satisfied as long as one of them was in attendance. On this occasion, Bokkyng’s freedom to leave Caister depended on the movements of his fellow servants.

The connection between these individuals transferred into the context of their writing duties. Literate servants were frequently co-addressed by letters from Fastolf, and as the previous chapter demonstrated, they drafted and copied each other’s work. On certain occasions, individuals even collaborated to write a single letter. At times resentment brewed between these men. Worcester made this especially clear when he referred to William Barker using the unflattering term: ‘my felow Barker, as of such othyr berkers ayenst the mone’ (letter 566, ll. 40-41, 12th October 1456). These frustrations were probably at least partially a result of the close working relationships that these men maintained.
There will now be a closer examination of exactly how these writers co-operated. This will consider how writing duties were distributed amongst Fastolf’s servants, whether there were any training and supervisory relationships between scribes, and whether there were any lasting effects of their connection (such as an influence on each other’s grammatical and rhetorical style, and handwriting).
Chapter Four: Interactions between writers in the Fastolf Circle.

a) Co-operation and collaboration in writing in the Fastolf circle.

William Worcester was Sir John Fastolf’s most prolific scribe. He referred to himself, and was referred to by others, as Fastolf’s ‘secretary’, which distinguished him from other literate men in the circle. After the death of Sir John Fastolf, Worcester shared with William Wainfleet the detailed knowledge that he had gained about Fastolf’s documents (specifically, his will). This indicates that he was especially privy to written information concerning Fastolf: ‘[I] made you declaracyon in a boke...[about the] chargys, legattys, bequestys and ordenaunces made in the laste testament and wyll that my seyd master Fastolf wyllyd shuld be performyd by hys executors aftyr hys decese’ (letter 1046, lines 13-16, 1st March 1470). Years earlier, when Worcester wished to visit his family in Bristol, he was prevented by Fastolf’s desire to make this will: ‘I asked licence to ryde yn-to my contree, and my maistre dyd not graunt it; he seyd hys wille was for to make &c’ (letter 537, ll. 8-9, 6th January 1456). This indicates that when it came to writing important documents such as a will, Fastolf would accept only the services of William Worcester. This is further evidence that Worcester was at the top of a hierarchy of scribes, and was entrusted with the most important, or specialised, duties. The question is: was Worcester expected to extend this seniority to training other men within the circle to write? And was there an organised system wherein one man would supervise another? This chapter searches for annotations that indicate that one scribe was correcting the work of another. It will take a closer look at draft letters in order to establish whether the process of drafting and copying was organised within a hierarchy, with a junior scribe drafting and a more experienced writer checking the work. This palaeographical study is supplemented with an interpretation of the circumstantial evidence that is

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1 For example: ‘per diligenciam Willelmi Wircestre secretarij predicti Iohannis Fastolf’ (title to London, College of Arms, MS. M. 9, folio xxxi written by William Worcester himself); and ‘W. W. militis secretario’ (letter 610, ll. 36, written by Friar Brackley probably in 1460).
presented in letters between members of Fastolf’s circle, which might contain more information about working relationships between scribes.

The royal Chancery had a system in place for the correction of lower-level clerks by their superiors. In fact, there were two nets through which documents had to pass before they left the Chancery. First the clerk and his immediate superiors would inspect the work, which Malcolm Richardson wrote would catch ‘outright blunders and other problems’. The second stage that a document had to endure was scrutiny by the ‘examiners’, important Masters nearer the top of the clerkly hierarchy who were specifically appointed for this purpose. So did a similar relationship exist between the writers of Sir John Fastolf’s circle? It has been shown that, despite the parliamentary ruling of 1406 against the service of insurgent lords by Chancery clerks, there were Chancery clerks who served private lords in the 1400s. An example was the deputy chancellors in the duchy of Lancaster, who were also clerks of the royal chancery in the 1440s. With this in mind, it would be unsurprising if writing practices in private households, including methods of supervision within a hierarchy of clerks, were modelled upon what was happening in the Chancery. If it were the case that private clerks corrected each other in the same way that Chancery clerks did, who was correcting whom, and what kind of amendments were being made? How did this supervisory relationship connect with each man’s non-writing duties?

There is no contemporary list of the names and rank of clerks within Fastolf’s circle, as there is for fourteenth- and fifteenth- century Chancery clerks. This is

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2 Richardson, The Medieval Chancery, 14.
3 Ibid.
5 The signatures of the deputy chancellors at Lancaster (John Dedwode, Henry Gairstang, and William Garnetz) also appear on chancery instruments. For example, John Dedwode’s signature appears on TNA, C 219/14/2 and 15/1, as cited in Smith, ‘A Conflict of Interest?’ 187.
unfortunate as it would have provided some answers about who was superior to, and responsible for, whom. Fortunately, circumstantial evidence contained within the letters, as well as the physical evidence of the letters themselves, provides information about where Fastolf’s men were working at any given time. This evidence informed Chapter Two’s case study, which captured the relative proximity of these men to Sir John Fastolf in a visual form. These diagrams will be re-visited for this chapter’s study of interaction between scribes, as they show which men worked closely enough to have a consistent supervisor-supervisee relationship.6 As these diagrams were based on a combination of palaeographical and circumstantial evidence, studying them might help to fill some gaps in purely palaeographical studies of the Fastolf letters. For example, William Worcester corrected a hitherto-unidentified scribe in 1456 (letter 538). The scribe is still unidentified because his hand has not yet been found in a piece of writing that specifies the name of its scribe. However, the Venn diagrams of Chapter Two show which men worked closely enough to Worcester to be potential candidates. The letter was written at Caister, and Figure 18 shows that there were several men who were living at Caister whose hands have never been found in a letter in the Fastolf Letters corpus. Many of these would have been illiterate. However, there were men such as Fastolf’s servant ‘Lowes’, who was mentioned several times in an administrative context at Caister up until 1456 (see letters 566, 572, and 1039), yet whose hand has not been identified in the corpus of written material associated with Fastolf.

Circumstantial evidence contained in letters exchanged between Sir John Fastolf and the men of his circle suggests that certain men routinely worked together in the course of their scribal and clerkly duties. Geoffrey Spirlg’s name was connected

6 There were two possible causal relationships between proximity and supervision: certain men might have acted as supervisors because their work conveniently brought them into proximity with less experienced clerks, but equally, men might have worked closely with each other because they were required to be available to check and correct each others’ written work.
with several men from the Fastolf circle in a way that indicates that he was integral to the practical administration of Fastolf’s affairs. This involved working with other men to write, store, and organise, written documents. In 1449, Spirlenge worked with Walter Shipdham to find a will that was required by Fastolf: ‘And now we send you the wil of the last Rauf, fader to William Louell... which we, the seid Watkyn and G. Spirlyng, found at Tychewell &c’ (letter 965, ll. 126-129, my emphasis). Then in 1457, there was further evidence for this particular working relationship. William Worcester wrote that, ‘Shypdam and Spyrlyng ought to labour fyrst of onye thyng that belongyth to audyt the accomptes of the resseyt and despenses of my maist houshold at Caistre’ (letter 572, ll. 6-8, my emphasis). As Walter Shipdham was Fastolf’s auditor, it is probable that Spirlenge’s role was to do the mundane scribal work that was involved in Shipdham’s auditing tasks. This closeness is represented in the Venn diagram in Chapter Two above (figure 17), which places Shipdham and Spirlenge together in the overlapping section between Caister Castle and other locations in Norfolk: both travelled around the county, but visited Caister frequently as a base for their work together for Fastolf.

When Fastolf moved to Caister in 1454, he began to send more letters to John Paston, who was acting as his representative in London. One of these letters was co-addressed to John Bokkyng, since Bokkyng was acting as an administrative assistant for Paston. The reason that Bokkyng was included in the address was probably because it asked him to show Paston some documents, so that he would be well informed when he met with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cromwell, and Fastolf’s council (letter 535, ll. 19-20). The suggestion that Bokkyng was an administrative assistant to Paston is confirmed by further circumstantial evidence concerning their

7 ‘y wryte to you to shew the chieff wrytynge of the copys of endentures...that he may be more ryppelyer grounded yn the seyd mater when he shall comyn wyth my lorde of Caunterbury, Cromewell, and wyth onye of my maister counsell’ (letter 535, ll. 15-20).
work together. Letter 511, written in 1454, specified that Bokkyng could deliver Paston any money that he needed for the case against Andrews. Letter 590, from Bokkyng to Paston, recorded that Bokkyng was sending a roll of patents to Paston along with other documents concerning Fastolf’s dispute with Philip Wentworth. This was invaluable to Paston since he needed them to support his work in the courts on Fastolf’s behalf. And when Paston himself could not be in London, since he was being called regularly into East Anglia on Fastolf’s business, Bokkyng acted on his behalf and provided frequent written updates. Paston kept in regular contact with his assistant, demanding such detailed information that at times Bokkyng had difficulty providing it all in writing: ‘I receyved a lettre from yow...jn whiche bothe moche þinge is conteyned whiche all at þis tyme I may nought answere vn-to myn comyng þe nexte weke’ (letter 548, ll. 3-5, 8th May 1456, my emphasis). Finally, the following statement, in a letter from Thomas Howes to Paston, reveals that Bokkyng acted as a scribe and messenger for Paston: ‘and [Fastolf] will feithfully labour as ye haue avysed hym by wrytyng of John Bookyng’ (letter 510, ll. 4-5, 13th November 1454). This all demonstrates that John Bokkyng was a scribe with considerable legal knowledge, who used his skills to provide other men in Fastolf’s circle with administrative assistance, and to act as their eyes and ears when they could not be in two places at one time. When one examines the pairings between Shipdham and Spirleng, and Paston and Bokkyng, one can see that Fastolf’s scribes routinely worked closely with men who were literate but were not scribes themselves. The general administrative assistance provided by these scribes was crucial to men such as Walter Shipdham and John Paston, who were busy with their own specialist tasks.

8 ‘Bokkyng hathe redy jn comavndement to make deleuery to yow what that ye nede, so there shall be no defaute in that &c’ (letter 511, ll. 30-32).
9 ‘I sende you at þis tyme the rolle of þe copies of all patente, and the appoyntement wþh Wentworth laste, and also a abstracte drawen as it come simply to my remembraunce’ (letter 590, 2nd April, ll. 1-4, 1455-1459).
The most circumstantial evidence for collaboration between writers concerns William Barker and John Bokkyng. Barker and Bokkyng seem to have had such a close working relationship in the mid to late 1450s that their fellow scribe William Worcester believed that they were colluding in order to persecute him: ‘so it ys ymagyned of me when I wryte lettres to London to Bokkyng or Barker, that yn such materes as please hem not, then yt is my doyng; yff it take well to theyr entent, then it ys her doyng’ (letter 566, ll. 9-11, 12th October 1456). This connection between Bokkyng and Barker is reinforced by evidence of them working as a pair. In 1454, Fastolf wrote that he had left ‘wrytyngys’ with Barker and Bokkyng regarding the administration of the duke of Bedford’s will (letter 509, ll. 39-43, 11th November 1454). Two years later, the two men were still working together on administrative tasks relating to this will. By then they were co-operating to compile an account of the whereabouts of Bedford’s jewels: ‘my seruantes Bokkyng and Barker haue wretyn to me lettres resseyved by Rauff Lampet that they must haue sent hem chief materes and writynges that makith mencion of the juell es and good es of my said lord deliuered to Ser Robert Whytingham that my seruauntes can not fynde there’ (letter 542, ll. 6-9, 12th February 1456). Additionally, when Thomas Howes wrote to John Paston, giving him an update on the status of his latest work for Fastolf, his letter suggested that he divided administrative work between John Bokkyng and William Barker. He sent a letter to William Barker with ‘jnstruccyon of my maysterez jntent vpon the same’ (letter 510, ll. 18-24, 13th November 1454), and simultaneously delivered a copy of a list of jurors to John Bokkyng (ll. 25-26). This close working relationship between Bokkyng and Barker is represented on Figure 18 in Chapter Two above by their placement together in the overlapping section between Caister Castle and ‘Fastolf Place’ in Southwark.
It seems that William Worcester had a close working relationship with John Bokkyng, as there is evidence that the pair shared property. This was indicated by, FP 58, which was an indictment against Phillip Wentworth by Worcester and Bokkyng for breaking into their house and enclosures at Bradwell and carrying off crops.\textsuperscript{10} Circumstantial evidence from another letter also connects Bokkyng and Worcester, this time in a letter patent: ‘Cristefore...shuld delyuer me no mony tyll the iiiij\textsuperscript{xx} li. where payed for Bokkyng and Wurcestre [patent]’ (letter 564, ll. 3-5, 6\textsuperscript{th} October probably 1456).

Certain men appear to have preferred to work together, whilst others kept more of a distance. However, flexibility was the key to collaboration in writing and administrating letters and documents. These men were required to adapt to the demands of any situation that related to Fastolf’s matters. For example, when the chaplain, Thomas Howes, became tied up in Fastolf’s dispute with Phillip Wentworth and had to travel down to London to defend himself, he and John Bokkyng, who was already living in London, began to receive letters together: ‘And as to Ser Thomas matier, I write vn-to yow and hym jointly’ (letter 565, ll. 41-42, 8\textsuperscript{th} October 1456). Whereas Howes and Bokkyng had previously worked separately, from 1456 onwards they were pushed into a close working relationship.

John Russe and Geoffrey Spirleng had a close working relationship in the course of their scribal duties. There is evidence that, on at least one occasion, they collaborated to write letters: ‘and soo [Spirleng and Russe] sent þei writyng from þens [to yow] of whiche I haue non answere nor e whethir it was wele doon or noo’ (letter 570, l. 26, 18\textsuperscript{th} November prob. 1456). However, they also carried out other

\textsuperscript{10} The joint purchase of property by men who were connected through their work can also be seen in the case of Adam Pinkhurst, scribe of Geoffrey Chaucer. Pinkhurst purchased property adjoining the Hospital of St. Thomas in April 1385, along with a tawer and an ironmonger, whom he presumably became linked with through his work with the Mercers’ Company. See Linne R. Mooney, ‘Chaucer’s Scribe,’ \textit{Speculum} 81 (2006): 97-138 (109), citing London, Corporation of London Record Office, Hustings Rolls of Deeds and Wills, roll 113, documents 97 and 98.
administrative duties together, and these general duties appear to have formed the
crux of their working relationship. An example of their collaboration in these general
tasks was an occasion when they rode together to Cotton in Suffolk to carry out some
tasks for Fastolf: ‘Vp-on the sight of þe same lettre and billes John Russe with
geffrey sperleng riden to Cotton to fulfille parte [or] as much as þei myght’ (letter
569, l. 6-8, 15th November 1456). A hitherto unedited document, FP 62, an undated
rent-roll of sir john fastolf’s manors in norfolk and suffolk with account of debts
due to him, contains further evidence of this close administrative working
relationship between sprleng and russe: ‘my mayster grantyd hym (one of fastolf’s
bailiff’s) daye of payment wîth sufficient suerte bounde for the seyd dutye by the
message of geffrey sperlyng which was had & made by... John Paston men as the
seyd John Paston knewe wele as he seyde which obligacion the same sperlyng
delyuered John Russe’ (my emphasis). So it seems that the shared scribal
responsibilities of John Russe and Geoffrey Sprleng were initiated by their mutual
involvement in the general management of Fastolf’s properties. This shows that every
duty relating to Sir John Fastolf, including the written work of his clerks or scribes,
had foundations in his legal matters and the general management of his properties.

There is circumstantial evidence in FP 43, an inventory of caister castle, to
support the suggestion that certain pairs of men formed working relationships.
Certain men were listed together on the inventory, and items such as clothing and
headwear were allocated to them as a pair. For example, David and ‘Mundo’ cooks of
the kitchen were listed together; John Bokkyng and Lewis Pole had certain items that
belonged to them both; and Thomas Howes and John Berney also had possessions
that were shared between them. It is not clear why these men were connected so
closely that they shared possessions. However, since the men of the kitchen were
linked by their role as cooks, it is likely that the others were also connected by their
shared responsibilities. This indicates that Fastolf’s associates formed such close working relationships that they divided their possessions just as they shared the tasks that they performed for Sir John Fastolf.

This study will now consider a letter that was corrected by one of Fastolf’s scribes, which might reveal something about how Fastolf’s associates interacted. This letter is BL, MS. Additional 39848, folios 35 and 36 (letter 538 in Davis’ edition). Though these two folios were edited as a single ‘letter’, they actually represent two very similar versions, each in a different scribal hand. Neither hand is one of Fastolf’s identified scribes. However, the existence of these two versions demonstrates a hierarchy amongst Fastolf’s writers. The earliest version was written by one scribe, and the later version, written five days later on 30th January 1456, was written by a second scribe. The earliest version was co-addressed to John Paston and Lady Whytyngham, whilst the second version was written to Whytyngham alone. The two versions caused some confusion for Norman Davis when he edited the letter. He wondered why two versions existed when the earlier copy was already very neat and contained very few mistakes. In addition, Davis noticed that the second version was corrected by William Worcester, who added the annotation ‘copia de nouo correcta’ (‘copy newly corrected’) in the margin and ‘examinatur per W. Botoner’ (‘examined by William Botoner’, Botoner being an alias for Worcester) underneath the letter. However, Worcester’s corrections were very minor and ‘hardly of substance’. This begs the question: why did William Worcester need to make any corrections?

When one compares these letters with the documents of the Chancery in the same century, one could argue that a similar system of checking and correction within a hierarchy of scribes was in place in the Fastolf circle.\footnote{See page 222 above for an outline of the document-correction processes that were apparently in place in the Chancery.} It seems that in the case of letter 538, the scribe wrote a letter addressed to Lady Whytyngham that was never
intended for her eyes: it was instead sent to John Paston, perhaps for him to check its content, or to store for his records. When the time came for the letter to be deployed to its recipient, the copyist was not the novice scribe, but a more experienced writer. It seems that the senior scribe copied the letter from the first scribe’s work (or a draft of it), and made several corrections. Then because this new copy was going to leave the Fastolf circle, and was going to be received by an important lady, William Worcester evidently needed to step in and check it. Norman Davis’s surprise at the minor nature of his corrections seems unfounded when one considers Worcester’s perfectionist nature. He was always a diligent corrector: one can see this from the several times that he declared explicitly that he had stepped in to check a written piece and was making changes for the ‘ready understanding’ of the text. He did not always make radical corrections, merely ones that made the written work more grammatically accurate and easier for the reader to decipher. What is interesting is that Worcester did not copy out the letter neatly once he had made his corrections. This was probably because the Lady would never see the corrected page itself, but would have instead heard it read out. Therefore, as long as the content of the letter was correct and tidy enough to read, it was acceptable for dispatch, despite its unsophisticated appearance.

Another text that was corrected by William Worcester demonstrates that the hierarchy within Fastolf’s community of scribes extended to their work as literary textwriters. Basset’s Chronicle, in College of Arms, MS. M.9 is a written piece in the

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12 For example, he made alterations between the singular and plural forms of certain nouns in order to make them fit with the rest of the sentence. On line 20 of letter 538 he changed ‘the seyd causes’, to ‘the seyd cause’, presumably to avoid any confusion about the number of matters to which Fastolf was referring.
13 Norman Davis, in the headnote to this letter, explained how he knew that the letter addressed to Lady Whytyngham was actually sent to her rather than being a draft: ‘from the appearance of the dorse it must have been sent to Lady Whytyngham - from whom Paston must have recovered it’. It is interesting that Paston that Fastolf wanted to recover this letter and that he succeeded in recovering it - this is testament to the diligent storage of important letters and documents by the Paston family.
hand of Luket Nantron in his capacity as a textwriter. The composition of this text was a collaborative effort between several members of Fastolf’s circle, as will be discussed in the next chapter on Fastolf’s circle as a readership community. After the stage of composition, the text passed through a process of quality control, which once again suggests a hierarchy amongst Fastolf’s writers. The title of the text, which was added to the manuscript by William Worcester, declared that the text was ‘peraffed for more opyn and redye vnderstanding’ by him. Other evidence in the Fastolf Letters and Papers corpus supports the notion that Worcester was generally responsible for making information easy to locate and understand. For example, BL, MS. Additional 28212, folio 21 is a letter that was co-written by two unidentified scribes for Sir John Fastolf. Though Worcester had no involvement in writing the letter itself, there is a note in his hand on the dorse, which reads: ‘xxvij RR. H vi’. It is likely that Worcester provided a date in order to give the letter its correct chronological place amongst the documents in Fastolf’s archives at Caister. This evidence demonstrates that William Worcester was capable of clarifying and improving written texts, which involved correcting the work of his fellow writers.

This kind of co-operation between Fastolf’s writers did not cease with his death in 1459. Certain scribes continued to work together beyond this date, which demonstrates that the relationships that formed when these men were scribes for Fastolf were strong enough to survive beyond the death of the man who initiated them. Correspondence between the men who worked together during Fastolf’s life continued after his death. For example, Colin Richmond has pointed out that John Bokkyng, after Fastolf’s death, sent a report of the Coventry parliament of 1459 to

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14 For more detailed information about Luket Nantron, his scribal output, and his relationship with other writers in Fastolf’s circle, see Chapter 5, page 292-300.
William Worcester - ‘a grete bille of tidinges’. In addition, there is a manuscript in the BL, MS. Sloane 4 that has so far evaded detailed study by scholars of the Paston and Fastolf circles. The manuscript as it exists today is a miscellany of texts, mainly recipes for the cure of various ailments. Most of the original texts were written by William Worcester, interspersed with short contributions by other, so-far unidentified, hands. The blank folios between these texts were later filled with additions by various sixteenth-century hands that range from instructions for making ink to a recipe for a cure for ‘the pestylence of King Henry the VIII’ (folio 27r). There is one text in particular that is interesting in relation to this study of the corrective work done by scribes. This is a text that spans folio 29r to 35v with the incipit, ‘Summa de crisi et criticis diebus’. The palaeographical features of this work suggest that it was the hand of Luket Nantron. The text, as is characteristic of Nantron’s work, is neat and mostly free of annotations and corrections. However, there is a single annotation that suggests that William Worcester was once again supervising Nantron’s work as a writer. In the margin of folio 30v, William Worcester drew a symbol that signified that the continuation of the text at this point could be found where he had drawn a corresponding symbol on folio 35v. This suggests that Worcester was re-organising Nantron’s text, or at least aiding its interpretation by the reader.

This supervisory relationship between William Worcester and Luket Nantron appears to have continued for decades. FP 84 is a petition from William Worcester to James Goldwell, which was written after 1472, but not by William Worcester himself (letter 1049). The letter was described as the work of an ‘unidentified’ scribe by Beadle and Richmond in their edition. However, it is clear from comparing the hand

16 See Chapter 5, page 293 below for a list of palaeographical features associated with Nantron’s hand that have helped to identify this as his work.
with the hand of *Basset’s Chronicle*, and documents that this thesis has shown were written by Luket Nantron, that this item was written by Nantron nearly twenty years after he wrote his first document as a novice clerk. As Beadle and Richmond pointed out, the petition was a draft and the text was rigorously checked and corrected by William Worcester. This demonstrates that Nantron’s work was still subject to supervision at an advanced point in his scribal career.

There were horizontal, as well as vertical, relationships between scribes in Fastolf’s circle. These relationships were so close that on some occasions a single letter was written as a collaborative effort between two scribes. Norman Davis showed that a testament written by Thomas Howes in 1467 was circumstantial evidence that numerous clerks could share a single piece of writing. Davis pointed out that John Paston had caused alterations to be made to the will of Sir John Fastolf, and that several men shared the task: ‘Water Shypdam, an avditour of the seyd Fastolf, *wrote a part of hyt*, Frere Brakeley, John Russe of Yermuth another parte, and Richard Calle, a seruant of the seyd Paston, *wrote also parcell of the forseyd maters* to the said scrowe’ (letter number 901, ll. 77-80).\(^{17}\)

The earliest surviving paleographical evidence of the sharing of scribal work is letter 953, which was probably written in 1429 from Sir John Fastolf in France to two of his representatives in England.\(^{18}\) The letter was the work of two scribes, who have not yet been identified. It is unclear why two men shared the work of writing a single letter. It might have been that the first scribe was called away from his duties by other pressing work. This certainly could have been true in the case of a much-later document, which was written by Fastolf’s scribe John Bokkyng in 1450. This document is a memo about Fastolf’s affairs and is mostly in Bokkyng’s hand apart

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\(^{17}\) See Davis, ‘Language in Letters,’ 332.

\(^{18}\) The date of 1429 is based on the subject matter of the letter, which was Stephen Scrope’s plans to marry Katherine Cobham, the widow of Sir Reginald Cobham the younger, who had died in September 1428.
Chapter Four: Interactions between writers in the Fastolf Circle.

from two items that were set down by an unidentified hand.\textsuperscript{19} There is no clue in the content of these two items to explain why they were written by this other man. Perhaps Bokkyng had been called away for some other purpose, and thus had been separated momentarily from his scribal work.

Letter 987, written in September 1450 from Sir John Fastolf in London to his legal representatives in Norfolk, is another example of collaboration that may have occurred because the main scribe had been called away from his work. The letter was begun by William Worcester, but was concluded by John Bokkyng.\textsuperscript{20} Every other letter written in this month, apart from the memo discussed above, was written entirely by William Worcester. With this in mind it would seem that the only feasible reason that Bokkyng would have taken over mid-way through would have been if Worcester was required urgently elsewhere.

Collaboration between scribes occurred in every part of the Fastolf circle. Fastolf’s chaplain, Thomas Howes, usually used either his assistant Geoffrey Spirlenge or the merchant John Russe as his scribe. However, on one occasion he had a letter written by two different men, who have yet to be identified (letter 1008, 9\textsuperscript{th} May 1451). Again, it is uncertain why these two scribes shared the work of writing a single letter, but this is further evidence for co-operation between scribes in the circle of Sir John Fastolf.

The address of a letter from Fastolf to Thomas Howes proves that Fastolf’s associates were peripatetic during this period: ‘[To Thomas Howes] being at Castre, or at Norwych, at Pokethorp, or at Haylysdon manere’ (letter 988, 15\textsuperscript{th} July 1450). This might explain why they had to split writing tasks in the way that has been described above: a scribe was likely to be called away from his work in order to

\textsuperscript{19} Letter 985.

\textsuperscript{20} This was stated by Beadle and Richmond in the headnote to the letter in their edition: ‘Two hands, the first William Worcester’s, the second John Bokkyng’s; Fastolf’s name subscribed by Bokkyng’. See headnote to letter 987.
attend to Fastolf’s matters at one of his other manors in East Anglia. If he was required to make a journey immediately, he would have had to leave his work to be completed by one of Fastolf’s other scribes.
b) The effect of co-operation and collaboration between scribes on their language:

This chapter has already described the frequent contact that the men of Fastolf’s circle had with him and each other, and the diverse ways in which they interacted, from collaboration in letter writing, to working together on legal cases. The fact that the members of Fastolf’s circle were so constantly in touch with each other led Norman Davis to suggest that they could be expected to have shared some linguistic characteristics. The work of Alexander Bergs also suggests that this should have been the case. In 2005 he made a detailed study of the linguistics of social networks, and focussed upon the Paston Letters as a fifteenth-century case study. He described the kind of social networks that typically led to conformity between men within the network: ‘dense multiplex networks with high transactional content, and therefore many strong ties, tend to generate and enforce uniform network norms’. So linguistic uniformity would indeed be expected within the tight Fastolf circle.

Over years of research into the Fastolf and Paston Letters and Papers, Norman Davis studied every minute linguistic feature of each scribe’s work. One of the observations that came out of his linguistic study was that despite the levelling effect that the close association between Fastolf’s men had on their written language, these men still maintained many idiosyncrasies. To give just one example, the use of þ (thorn) divided Fastolf’s scribes: Russe never used þ at all, Barker used it infrequently, and Bokkyng used it much more than he used th-. Davis argued that

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22 Bergs, Social Networks and Historical Sociolinguistics, 28.
23 The studies by Norman Davis of the language of the Paston and Fastolf writers are: ‘Language in Letters,’ 329-346; ‘The Epistolary Uses of William Worcester,’ 249-274; ‘The Language of the Pastons,’; and ‘The Litera Troli and English Letters,’ 233-244.
24 Davis, ‘Language in Letters,’ 340-341. To give some examples, Russe in letter 508 wrote ‘there’, ‘than’, and ‘thus’. Barker in letter 997 used the thorn in abbreviated words, but not in ‘ther-by’, ‘ther’ or ‘that’. Bokkyng in letter 985 used the thorn in abbreviated words, and in ‘pringe’ and ‘pe’. 
this demonstrated that, ‘individual choice had by no means been eliminated by their years of close association in the service of Sir John Fastolf’.25

McFarlane pointed out that William Worcester had contact with ‘men of divers kinds and nationalities’ due to the travelling he did in the course of his duties for Sir John Fastolf.26 This also applies to other servants who wrote for Sir John Fastolf. None of these men were restricted to a tight circle in Norfolk: each made journeys to London, where they would have encountered other servants, merchants, lawyers, and countless other men. Even when the men were not travelling, they were certainly not restricted to contact with men and women from the immediate locality. Alan MacFarlane summed this up with his argument that, ‘any particular community in England in the past was probably no more isolated than a Chicago suburb or twentieth century Banbury’.27 The diversity of the spoken and written social interactions undertaken by these men may account for the idiosyncratic linguistics of their work.

Since the 1950s and 1960s, when Davis conducted his influential linguistic studies of the Paston family, more letters have come to light that relate specifically to the interests of Fastolf and his circle. This section builds upon the work of Norman Davis to discover more about what the linguistics of the Fastolf Letters and Papers reveal about interactions and working relationships between Fastolf’s scribes.

This thesis first has to establish exactly what kind of linguistic influence one scribe might have had over another. If the implication is that interaction between scribes had an impact upon their spoken as well as written language, how can this be measured?

26 McFarlane, England in the Fifteenth Century, 206-207. To give just a few examples of William Worcester’s travels see letter 990, which recorded him carrying a quittance from Thomas Howes at Caister to Fastolf in London. Letter 558 of perhaps 1456 stated that he travelled to Yorkshire with Geoffrey Spirlen. In letter 883 of 1458 he was recorded riding to Cotton in Suffolk with John Paston.
27 Alan MacFarlane, Reconstructing Historical Communities (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 9.
Did certain linguistic variations in the written language of the *Fastolf Letters* also signify spoken variation? If so, which written variations signified phonetic variation, and which were purely orthographic?\(^{28}\) If this thesis had been founded solely upon the study of literary texts or legal documents, it would have been simpler to argue for a contrast between the written language of these texts and the language that people spoke.\(^ {29}\) However, most of the primary sources for this thesis are letters, and it has been argued that letters are the closest written record of medieval spoken language.\(^ {30}\) Since many of the letters within the Fastolf Letters corpus were written with noticeable urgency, we might indeed expect them to be close to the spoken language of their authors.\(^ {31}\)

There is one complication in the relationship between spoken language, and the written language of letters. Sir John Fastolf never wrote an autograph letter, and instead his messages were committed onto paper by scribes. As a result, it is possible that the written language of a letter from Sir John Fastolf reflected his spoken language verbatim if he were dictating, the scribe’s own language if the scribe were composing (what the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Middle English* terms ‘dictation of the mind’s ear’), or a combination of the two.\(^ {32}\)

One letter in the *Fastolf Letters and Papers* corpus, in particular, begs the question of how far linguistic variation in written language indicates spoken variation. This letter was from Thomas Howes to Sir John Fastolf, and was the work of two scribes,

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\(^{28}\) The compilers of *LALME* drew attention to this problem in determining which written variants were likely to have been phonetically significant. They believed that whilst some variants are easily placed in the category ‘orthographic’ or ‘phonic’, others such as ‘*qui*’: ‘*why*’ are less certain. McIntosh, Samuels, and Benskin, *LALME*, 1: 5.

\(^{29}\) Tim Machan argued that in the case of legal, ecclesiastical, or historical works, ‘traditional expressions, narrative conventions, or ideological imperatives may overlie any genuine spoken usage’. Tim Machan, *English in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 16.

\(^{30}\) Davis, ‘The Language of the Pastons,’ 124; Truelove, ‘Linguistic Diversity,’ 79.

\(^{31}\) Just one example of this urgency was written in a letter by John Bokkyng, ‘The messenger was on horsbak whanne I wrote yow *Dis* bill, and therefore it was doon in haste’ (letter 1036, ll. 13-14).

\(^{32}\) This supposition comes from Angus McIntosh’s suggestion about the way in which scribes copied exemplars: McIntosh, Samuels, and Benskin, *LALME*, 1:15.
with the following short addition in the hand of Howes himself: ‘I prey you be nowth displeased thow I have nowt subscribed’ (letter 1008, ll. 96-97, 9th May 1451). This spelling of the word ‘not’ as ‘nowth’ in the autograph part of the letter is localised to Norfolk by the LALME. In contrast, Howes’s scribes spelled the word ‘not’ (Scribe One, l. 14) and ‘noght’ (Scribe Two, l. 90). It is likely that the spelling difference between Howes’s ‘nowth’ and Scribe Two’s ‘noght’ was phonetically insignificant: Norman Davis has argued that there was no difference in pronunciation between words spelled with ‘-ght’ and those spelled with ‘-the’. He stated that both would have been pronounced without the fricative. In contrast the spelling difference between Scribe One’s ‘nat’ and Howes’ ‘nowth’ were likely to have been phonetically significant, as they contained different vowel sounds. This shows that this letter has examples both of phonetically-significant, and phonetically-insignificant, variation. In the case of the phonetically significant variation, if Howes and his scribe each signified different spoken sounds in their written work, this demonstrates that each was working from his own ‘internal dictation’, and that spoken language had an influence over the written work of scribes.

Though William Barker, John Bokkyng, and William Worcester were either Norfolk men or spent a considerable amount of time in Norfolk, they tended towards spellings that were not geographically specific to East Anglia. Richard Beadle noticed a lack of typically East-Anglian linguistic features in work of literary textwriters, and suggested the ‘possibility that some Norfolk scribes began to copy texts in the incipient standard form of English which became increasingly

33 See McIntosh, Samuels, and Benskin, LALME, dot map of East Anglia plotting the geographical distribution of variants of the word ‘not’ and its variants, 2: 200 (compared with pages 195-199, which represent other regions).
34 Davis referred to the ‘spreading of -ght to words historically without the spirant eg. wryght and abought’ in the written work of John Paston III as proof, as this ‘extension of the new spelling to words with no etymological right to them proves that the change of spelling does not apply a change of pronunciation’. Davis, ‘The Language of the Pastons,’ 127. See also Davis, ‘Language in Letters,’ 341.
recognisable during the latter half of the fifteenth century’. It is possible that this also applied to these three men. They were writing for Sir John Fastolf, who had spent almost twenty years living in London, and France before that, and had numerous connections with men who were not from Norfolk.

In contrast, there were other men within the circle who did use the dialectal features of East Anglia. At the time of Norman Davis’s study no letters had emerged in the hand of Geoffrey Spirlen, and so he was not included in the linguistic study. Since then, Richard Beadle and Colin Richmond, as part of their editorial work on the Fastolf Letters, have identified some letters in the hand of Spirlen. Letters 961 and 964, in the hand of Spirlen for Thomas Howes dating from 1447 and 1448 respectively, contain a number of spellings associated with East Anglia. For example, in, ‘Right reuerent and wurcepfull ser and mayster’ (letter 961, my emphasis), ‘wurcepfull’ is a distinctive Norfolk variant, as opposed to ‘wurchipfull’ or ‘worshipful’. Interestingly, the other man within Fastolf’s circle who used spelling variants associated with East Anglia was John Russe: he wrote ‘worshipful’ in letters that he wrote as a scribe for Sir Thomas Howes. Norman Davis pointed out that Russe was involved in the estates business of Sir John Fastolf, ‘often together with other household officials such as Howys or Geoffrey Spirlyng’. So Thomas Howes’ two scribes, Geoffrey Spirlen and John Russe, like Howes himself, used a remarkable number of Norfolk dialectal forms and personal idiosyncrasies.

36 For an example of the use of this non-Norfolk spelling of ‘worshipful’, see letter 974 from Howes in a different, unidentified, hand: ‘worshipful ser, I comaunde me to yow’.
37 For example, letter 510, l. 1; letter 511, l. 1; and letter 516, l. 1. However, Russe was particularly inconsistent with his spellings, and his variations appear to have been phonetically as well as graphetically significant. For example, he did not always write ‘worshipful’, he used both the i and e variants: ‘worshipful’/’worshipfull’ (see letter 666, l.1; and letter 516, l.1). Interestingly, in his autograph letters, the non-Norfolk i variant prevailed.
39 The written work of Thomas Howes presented spellings that were geographically specific to East
Howes, Geoffrey Spirleng, and John Russe were men who (at least in the early period of their association with Fastolf) spent most of their time in Norfolk interacting with Norfolk men. Hence they probably did not have the time or inclination to adapt to the conventions of an unfamiliar scribal dialect, even if it were more socially desirable than their own regional dialect. This contrasts greatly with the subgroup of Worcester, Bokkyng, and Barker, whose work was less geographically restricted to East Anglia, which was reflected in its regionally non-specific linguistic features.

Norman Davis pointed out the consistency of William Worcester’s spelling, observing that, ‘his spelling is unusually- not of course, completely- consistent and shows no important development or revision in the period covered by these letters’.40 He explained this by pointing out that Worcester was already nearly forty years old when he wrote the earliest of the surviving letters for Fastolf.41 However, this explanation prompts the question of whether Worcester was really so set in his ways as to be immune to variation according to the situation, and over time? Was he really resistant to the influence of other scribes, and their idiosyncrasies? As has already been stated, new letters have surfaced since Davis was researching these letters, which may contradict his argument that Worcester was stuck in his ways. The thesis will look at them, in order to ascertain where they converge and diverge with the work of other scribes. This study will include a survey of how individual differences fared over time.

Alison Truelove observed a general ‘lack of concern for maintaining consistent spelling’ in the letters of the Stonor family. She found that the words ‘worshipful’

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40 Davis, ‘The Epistolary Uses of William Worcester,’ 267. For example, he did not adopt the Norfolk spellings of x for sh in ‘shall’, qh or qw for wh-, or -t or -th for -ght, despite living in Norfolk for a long time.

41 Ibid.
Chapter Four: Interactions between writers in the Fastolf Circle.

and ‘mastership’ were particularly subject to variation. These two words were used most frequently in the opening formulae of the letters, which as Norman Davis described, set the tone through ‘minor variations upon a regular pattern’, within a set of formulae that was ‘preserved with remarkable firmness over a long time’. The fact that these formulae were standardised makes any variations particularly striking. For example, the frequency with which ‘I greet you well’ was used as part of the opening line makes William Worcester’s various spellings of ‘grete’ and ‘greete’; ‘well’ and ‘wel’; and ‘you’ and ‘yow’ particularly noticeable. This conventionality of the opening formulae of Sir John Fastolf’s letters makes them a good starting point for a comparison of the language of his scribes.

Once the appropriate form had been chosen for an opening formula, there was relatively little deviation from it. Even letters written by different scribes conformed to the same pattern:

Ryght trusty and welbeloved frendz, I grete 3ow weel...
(in hand of Barker, letter 966, l. 1, probably January or February 1449)

Ryght trusty and welbelovyd frendes, I grete you well...
(in hand of Worcester, letter 991, l. 1, 23rd November 1450)

Out of all the scribes, it was the work of John Bokkyng that was most likely to present unconventional words and phrases within the opening formula. For example, on one occasion he used the word ‘certify’, which did not appear elsewhere in the opening lines of letters for Fastolf:

Right trusty and welbeloued frendes, I grete you weel, and certify yow I haue received...
(in hand of Bokkyng, from Fastolf to Berney, Howes and others, letter 1002, l.1, 3rd January 1451)

42 Truelove, ‘Linguistic Diversity,’ 83.
43 Davis, ‘The Litera Troili and English Letters,’ 237.
44 This study of the linguistics of the opening formulae of letters has evolved from a pilot study that I conducted during my Master’s degree at Oxford University, under the supervision of Dr. Simon Horobin.
One might speculate that this word’s appearance in a letter written by Bokkyng was a result of his legal training. The word may have slipped in from its legal context: ‘to report or record officially; vouch for, attest, confirm’. This is especially likely if the letter were not dictated, but composed from notes by the scribe, as was proposed in the previous chapter. There is an example of the word in this legal context in the following comment from one of the later Paston Letters: ‘If ye certifie that ye toke the examinacion wyth-jn the yere and day... your certificat is sufficiant in lawe’ (letter 679, ll. 9-12, early July 1463). It is also possible that this word was used as a general synonym for ‘promise’, and the ‘Middle English Dictionary’ has an entry for the word in this context ‘(a) To declare the truth of, state as true; affirm, aver; ~ the soth (treuth), tell the truth; (b) to make a declaration or affirmation’. John Crop, for whom there is no evidence of a legal background, used the word in a letter from him to William Worcester: ‘Right hertily and welbylouyd, I recomaunde me vn-to yow, certifying yow that I laboured for yow the Friday’ (letter 969, ll. 1-2, mid-May 1449). ‘Certifien’ as a verb may have had a wider usage than the legal context discussed above but, equally, the time that John Bokkyng spent in the courts may have exposed him to the use of the word in its legal context, which may have encouraged him to use the word where Fastolf’s other scribes did not.

There were many phrases that could have been used in the opening formulae of letters for Sir John Fastolf, but were not. Several appear in letters between other men of his circle. For example ‘I recommanunde [me] to yow, and do yow to vndrestonde’ (letter 976, l.1, from Thomas Huntley to Henry Fylongley, probably 1450, my emphasis), ‘Please it yow to have yn knowledge’ (letter 535, l.1, from Worcester to Paston, 13th November 1455, my emphasis), ‘Plese it you to knowe’ (letter 1044, from John Aubry to Sir Henry Spelman, 6th July 1469, my emphasis).

45 McSparran, ed., ‘The Middle English Dictionary,’: ‘certifien (v)’.
Letters were sent to Fastolf containing further variations: ‘Right trusty and intierly wellbeloued, I grete yow wele, and pray you to be right sadly aduyseyd’ (letter 1000, l.1, from the Earl of Oxford to Sir John Fastolf, 2nd January 1451, my emphasis). However, it seems that Fastolf did not wish his scribes to vary too much from his preferred formulae.

So the evidence suggests that the linguistic restraint demonstrated by Fastolf’s scribes was demanded of them by their master. When Fastolf’s scribes wrote their own letters, they were apparently freer with the syntax of the opening formula. William Worcester, for example, could omit the preposition ‘to’ in ‘lyke yow wete’ (letter 498, l.1, Worcester to John Paston, 5th July 1454). William Barker, acting as scribe of a letter from Thomas Howes to John Paston, was able to use the following contracted version of the formula ‘please you to wete’: ‘And please yow that the chirche...’ (letter 662, l.1, February 1462).

Occasionally the scribes contracted the opening formula to its shortest possible form, such as, ‘Ser, I recomaunde me to yow’ (letter 1024, William Barker to William Worcester, early June 1455), or even just ‘Please yow to wete’ which lacked the reverent form of address (letter 566, l.1, from Worcester to Paston, 12th October 1456). In Worcester’s later years, when he wrote a letter to an un-named member of the Fastolf household, he played even more boldly with the conventions of letter writing. Worcester’s unconventional opening formula fitted with the informal tone of his letter, as he substituted a proverb for the customary opening formula: ‘A very frende at nede experience will schewe be deede’ (letter 604, l.1, 7th February 1460). 46

The second part of the opening formula linked it with the body of the message, signalling to the recipient that the letter was about to convey some information. This

46 This letter exists as a copy of Worcester’s original letter, which was made by Richard Calle for the purpose of demonstrating to John Paston how Worcester was acting in the aftermath of the death of Sir John Fastolf. See headnote to letter 604.
part of the formula was also affected by the status of the recipient. The forms ‘and let you wete’, ‘letyng you wete’ and ‘wolle you wete’ were used along with the less formal opening ‘right trusty...’. However, if the more formal opening of ‘worshipful’ was used, the sender preferred to continue with ‘lyke you to wete’, or ‘please you to wete’. For example, compare:

**Ryght trusty** frende, I grete you well. **And wolle ye wete**...
(letter 1015, 12th July 1454, from Sir John Fastolf to Thomas Howes in the hand of Worcester, my emphasis)

with:

**Worshipful ser** and brother, I recomaunde me to yow. **Please yow to wete**...
(letter 1018, 30th October 1454, unidentified copyist, from Sir John Fastolf to Henry Frowyk, my emphasis).47

In the earliest letters there appears to have been a divide between Fastolf’s scribes according to whether they used ‘lyke you’ or ‘please you’ in letters to higher-status recipients. In late 1454 and early 1455, William Worcester, William Barker and Geoffrey Spir leng wrote ‘lyke you’, whereas John Russe and John Bokkyng wrote ‘please you’.48 However, the scribes always used both forms interchangeably in their personal letters. For example, William Worcester used ‘lyke you’ in letter 496, but ‘please you’ in letters 883 and 884. In addition, these linguistic characteristics were susceptible to change over time. Though Worcester preferred ‘lyke you’ in his earlier letters for Fastolf, he used ‘please you’ in some of his later letters for Fastolf. It is possible that both John Bokkyng and John Russe adopted the form ‘please you’ as a result of their written work for other men. The Paston Letters show that John Paston routinely used the phrase ‘please you’ in his own letters (see for example, letter 51, ll. 1-3 and letter 53, l. 2). John Bokkyng was a close associate of Paston from 1455

47 Years before ‘please you to wete’ first appeared in a letter from Sir John Fastolf, Geoffrey Spir leng used it in a letter from Thomas Howes to his master, Sir John Fastolf (letters 961, l. 3 and 964, l. 3). This is further evidence of the use of this formula in letters addressed to superiors.

48 Letter 509 (Worcester), letter 513 (Bokkyng), letter 514 (Russe), letter 518 (Barker), letter 547 (Spir leng).
onwards, when he began to assist him in his legal work. John Russe corresponded with Paston consistently in the 1450s (see, for example, letter 508 that Russe sent to Paston in October-November 1454). During this time, both Bokkyng and Russe may have picked up some of Paston’s linguistic habits. In addition, the Paston Letters show that Worcester acted as a scribe for John Paston in 1458, and that the letter that he wrote contained ‘please you’ in the opening formula. With this in mind, it is quite believable that Fastolf’s scribes adopted linguistic trends from associates such as John Paston, believing them to be tried and tested amongst legal circles and gentry networks in London. These trends may have spread among Fastolf’s scribes once they observed that Fastolf had deemed them acceptable for the composition of his letters.  

This section has demonstrated that the opening formula was tailored to the status of the sender and the recipient. The evidence suggests that though the language of the scribes contained subtle individual differences, and it was possible for these men to influence each others’ work, every word written by these men had to meet the approval of their master, Sir John Fastolf. As a result, the language of these scribes shows relatively little variation from a set of pre-approved formulae.

A survey of the opening formulae of letters in the hand of William Worcester on behalf of his master Sir John Fastolf reveals some information about hierarchies amongst the men of Fastolf’s circle. Every letter from Fastolf to Thomas Howes begins with either ‘Trusty and welbelovyd’ or ‘Ryght trusty’. In contrast, though the earliest letter from Fastolf to John Paston opens with ‘Ryght Trusty’ (dated 1450), the others all begin with ‘Worshypfull ser’ or ‘Worshypfull and right welbelovyd’, which

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49 I am grateful for Linne Mooney’s suggestion of the possibility of formulae being approved of and adopted due to their acceptability in London and in legal circles.
appear to have been the appropriate forms of address for a recipient of high status.\textsuperscript{50} This indicates that whilst John Paston in 1450 might have been of a similar status to Thomas Howes, by the mid-1450s he was superior to Howes. Richard Beadle argued that Howes was of a high status, based on the evidence that so little written work survives in his hand: ‘[h]e was widely engaged in correspondence, but only one letter in his own rather crude hand...survives. The higher a mans social rank, the more likely he was to hire an amanuensis’.\textsuperscript{51} However, even if Howes was of high status, there does seem to have been a distinction between him and Paston, which was marked in the language of Fastolf’s letters. Perhaps this linguistic distinction was a manifestation of the distinction that William Worcester observed within the ranks of Fastolf’s associates: ‘He questioneth and despuyth wyth hys seruauntes here, and wolle not be aunsuerd ne satisfied...But when he spekyth wyth Maister 3elverton, yow [Paston], or wyth William Geney, and such othyrs as be autorised yn the law and wyth haboundaunce of godes, he ys content’ (letter 559, ll. 15-20, about 1456). Howes may have been of a relatively high status but, unlike John Paston, he had neither specialised legal knowledge, nor an abundance of goods. This linguistic evidence is supported by circumstantial evidence, as by 1457 Thomas Howes was acting as an assistant to John Paston.\textsuperscript{52}

The closing formulae of letters that were written for Sir John Fastolf are also useful samples for a comparative study of the language of scribes. Each letter closed with some form of appeal to God for the health and prosperity of the recipient of the letter. This was standardised to a certain extent. For example, William Worcester was

\textsuperscript{50} See letter 1017 to Richard Waller, ‘a senior official in the royal household’: ‘[W]orshypfull ser and ryght welbelowyd brothyr’ (l. 1), and letter 1018 to Henry Frowyk a ‘London mercer, alderman and sometime mayor, and J. P. for Middlesex’: ‘Worshipful ser and brother, I recomaunde me to yow’ (l.1). The descriptions of these men are taken from the headnotes of these letters.

\textsuperscript{51} Beadle, ‘Private Letters,’ 291.

\textsuperscript{52} See, for example, letter 1034 in which Howes was instructed to work with Paston to further Fastolf’s case at court: ‘geve credence to my cosyn Paston and to the seyd Ser Thomas yn the furtheryng of all my materys before yow attained’ (letter 1034, ll. 12-14).
scribe of two letters in May 1450, one in August 1450, two in September 1450, and one in November 1450 and they all closed with ‘(and) Allmyghty God kepe you’ (letters 981, 982, 983, 986, 988, and 991). In fact, the most Worcester varied from this phrase during the year 1450 was to use the participle ‘kepyng’ instead of the non-participle ‘kepe’: ‘Gode hafe you yn hys kepyng’ (letter 993, December 1450).

There was variation in the closing formulae of Fastolf’s letters, which demonstrated that, however much the scribes interacted, they maintained their individuality. The selection of letters that were written for Fastolf in January to March 1450, all from Fastolf to his representatives at Caister, provides a concentrated example of this individuality. Letters 1003 and 1004 were written by William Barker and closed with ‘And God kepe yow’. Letters 1005 and 1006 are in the hand of William Worcester and ended with ‘Allmyghty God kepe you’. Finally, letter 1007 was written by John Bokkyng and closed with ‘And God haue yow in kepyng’.

On occasions, the variety was even more obvious, especially when one of the scribes used a phrase that never appeared in the work of the other scribes, such as ‘[C]rist be your e speed’ (unidentified scribe, letter 957, l. 15, perhaps 1445 to 1446).

Certain words and phrases in the closing formulae were characteristic of individual scribes. For example, the invocation of ‘Jesu(s)’ was characteristic of the work of John Bokkyng, but was never used by William Worcester (see, for example, letter 560, letter 565, and letter 570). Letters for Fastolf by William Worcester frequently invoked the Trinity, whereas no letter in the hand of John Bokkyng closed with an appeal to the ‘Trinité’.

The relative variability of the language of the closing formulae suggests that Fastolf was more flexible about the way that his

53 Note the omission of the pronoun ‘his’, which is distinctive in Bokkyng’s work.
54 Beadle and Richmond edited this letter with ‘Trist be youre speed’, but this should be ‘Christ be youre speed’.
55 For Worcester’s invocation of the ‘Trinité’ see letter 1017, lines 15-16.
The closing formulae of letters were subject to alteration according to who was sending the letter. Thomas Howes’s closing invocations contained specialised adjectives and adverbs relating to God and prayer, which reflected his role as chaplain. For example: ‘And all myghty Jhesu haue yow in his blysfull kepyng’ (letter 961, ll.75-6, 26th October 1447, my emphasis) and ‘I beseke Almyghty Jesu haue yow, my good maystyr, eternaly in hese me[r]cyfful governaunce’ (letter 511, ll. 26-27, 18th November 1454, my emphasis). This feature can also be seen in a letter from Archbishop Thomas Bourchier to Sir John Fastolf: ‘And the blissid Trinitee have you euerlastingly in his keping’ (letter 1031, l. 16, my emphasis). The closing formula was even more subject to change according to the situation than the opening formula. If a letter from Fastolf was composed hastily, the closing invocation was likely to be omitted entirely (as in the case of letter 525), especially if it was addressed to a recipient of a lower status. In contrast, the formula was always at its most detailed when the letter was addressed to a higher status recipient: ‘I beseche the Holy Goste be with yow, and euere more sende yow the accomplisment of your right noble desires, to his plesir and youres’ (letter 1021, 2nd April 1455, to the Duke of Norfolk). The greater number of idiosyncrasies presented in the closing formulae compared with the opening formulae is unsurprising, since the end of a letter did not set the tone and formality of a letter in the same way that the beginning did. Though the scribes were always working under the constraint of a master, the minor differences referred to above suggest that each scribe exercised his individual linguistic choice to a certain extent in the closing formula.

Like the opening formulae, the closing formulae used in letters written for Sir John Fastolf developed over time. The invocation to the ‘Trinité’ in the closing
formula first appeared in a letter that was written in October 1454: ‘And I beseche the blessed Trinité to have yow in hys gouuernauence’ (letter 1017, ll. 15-16, 30th October 1454). Very soon after the first appearance of this formula in a letter from Fastolf, it was written in a letter to Fastolf from a member of his inner circle, suggesting that Fastolf’s men were influenced by what they knew were his preferences (letter 1020, ll. 19-20, 3rd November 1454). However, the scribes could be steadfast once they had chosen to use a certain manifestation of the closing formula. William Worcester in particular was a creature of habit: though his language did develop over time, he stuck to his preferred words and phrases for long periods of time. The invocation to the ‘Trinité’ first appeared in his letters in October 1457 and after that he never once deviated from this form, whether he was writing letters for Fastolf or for himself.

Alison Truelove showed that closing formulae preserved linguistic features which otherwise died out over the course of the fifteenth century, ‘indicating the conservatism of writers in the prescribed parts of their correspondence’. For example, she noted that William Stonor only used the past participle y-prefix (such as ‘I-wrytyn’) in the closing formulae of his letters. This demonstrates that this part of a medieval letter was especially consistent, and least susceptible to change according to trends and the influence of other writers.

With this in mind, it is surprising how much the closing formulae of autograph letters of Fastolf’s scribes did develop over time. Norman Davis pointed out that William Worcester was consistent in using variants of either ‘Lord kepe yow’ or ‘our lord be wyth yow’ in his early autograph letters, but he replaced these with appeals to the Trinity in his later letters: ‘and the blessed Trinite you prosper yn all felicitee’. Appeals to the Trinity were common in letters that William Worcester received from his own correspondents, such as in a letter that he got from John Crop in 1449:

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‘<...the> Holy Trinité kepe yow body and soule’ (letter 970, ll. 35-36). So it is possible that William Worcester was influenced by the language of his correspondents. Pages 245-246 above already suggested that the exact form of Worcester’s opening formulae was shaped by the influence of other writers. The evidence indicates that his closing formulae, too, were influenced by the language of his fellow scribes and correspondents.

A comparison between the letters that Fastolf’s scribes wrote for Fastolf and their own personal letters.

A comparison between letters that scribes wrote on behalf of Sir John Fastolf and their personal letters is useful in order to establish how much control Fastolf exercised over their language, and how much the scribes influenced each others’ work. The letters that Worcester, Barker and Bokkyng wrote for themselves do present linguistic features that indicate that they were working under less constraint than when they were acting as scribes for Fastolf. An autograph letter that William Worcester wrote, for example, presents spellings that are associated with East Anglian dialect, which do not appear anywhere in the letters he wrote for Fastolf (letter 1046, 1st March 1470). For example, he wrote ‘your lordshep’ (l. 51), which uses e rather than i (‘lordship’/‘lordshyp’) and was a feature of the East Anglian dialect. Worcester also used the spelling ‘profyth’ in his own letters (letter 1046, l. 140), which he did not use in letters for Fastolf. Even though, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the difference between ‘profit’ and ‘profith’ was not likely to have been

58 The dot map on page 517 of volume one of LALME shows that the ‘-shep(e)/shepp(e)’ spelling was most commonly found in manuscripts associated with East Anglia. McIntosh, Samuels, and Benskin, LALME, 1: 517. See, for example, Lydgate’s Pilgrimage of the Life of Man (BL, MS. Cotton Vitellius C.13, line 2926): ‘Yif ther [temporal lords’] sogetys wer put away, Ther lordshepe Sholde faylle, & ther power’ (my emphasis), as cited in McSparran, ed., ‘Middle English Dictionary,’ ‘fördish(e) (n.)’.
phonetically significant, it is interesting that Worcester used this spelling variant in his autograph letters, but never used it in a letter that he wrote for Fastolf.\(^{59}\)

However, most of the linguistic features of letters written for Fastolf *are* reflected in the autograph work of his scribes. These features are evidence that the work of these men as clerks influenced their personal written work. For example, compare this autograph letter by William Barker, with a letter that he wrote for Fastolf:

Almyghty Jesu preserue yow, myn worshipful mayster, to *youre desyre after his pleser* and *youre* trewe entent.

(autograph letter by Barker, letter 578, my emphasis, 24\(^{\text{th}}\) June 1458)

and:

I beseche the Holy Goste be with yow, and euere more sende yow the accomplishment of *you right noble desires, to his plesir and youres*

(letter for Fastolf, letter 1021, my emphasis, 2\(^{\text{nd}}\) April 1455)

The tone of the closing formula of Barker’s letter, and even its syntax, is very similar to the letter that he wrote for Fastolf. This demonstrates that, though Fastolf’s scribes were freer with their own letters, their own autograph letters nevertheless echoed the conventions that they were accustomed to using when they composed for their master.

There is some evidence that Fastolf’s scribes interacted with writers from outside of his circle. Henry Windsor, apparently of the Chancery, used Fastolf’s scribe Luket Nantron to copy a document for him because he did not have the time to do so himself: ‘I sende vnto you...iij copies writon by Luket bycause I had no leiser’ (letter 574, ll. 1-8). Paston had evidently sent a letter to Windsor in the Chancery asking him for copies of a document concerning the foundation of a chantry. However, Windsor was otherwise occupied, and so he asked Fastolf’s servant to sit in the Chancery and

\(^{59}\) See the following examples of the way that the scribes spelled the word in letters they wrote for Fastolf. Barker: ‘for myn weel, worship, and profyte’ (letter 553, l. 7), Bokkyng: ‘Proffitte and wele’ (letter 1045, l. 7) and Worcester: ‘worshyp and proffyt’ (letters 1009, l. 105).
copy the document himself. This not only shows that Nantron interacted with a Chancery clerk, but that he was deputized to do this clerk’s work for him. The willingness of a Chancery clerk to allow one of Fastolf’s scribes to sit in the Chancery and make copies of an original document is surprising, since Windsor could have earned extra income by doing the work himself. Windsor was possibly so busy, perhaps with more lucrative work elsewhere, that he was not worried about losing this income. Luket Nantron’s admittance into the Chancery for this purpose is evidence that at least one of Fastolf’s writers had exposure to the way that written work was done outside of the context of a gentry household.

The ‘Fastolf Papers’ in the Magdalen College archives include several that were addressed to Fastolf from the royal household. For example Oxford University, Magdalen College, Titchwell 207, a letter from Henry VI to Sir John Fastolf. Fastolf’s clerks also encountered royal documents as part of their administrative work. There are documents in the Fastolf Letters and Papers corpus dating from as early as 1420 that were connected with the king, such as an indenture between Henry V and Sir John Fastolf for the keeping by the latter of the Bastille in Paris for one year. With this in mind, it is feasible that the written style and linguistic features that were exhibited by the prestigious clerks of the royal household would have guided the work of Fastolf’s scribes.

William Worcester copied a letter from the Duke of York and others to King Henry VI, which he subsequently sent to John Paston for his information. He

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60 Malcolm Richardson described how Chancery clerks earned money by copying documents for the public. This appears to have been the task that Henry Windsor was being asked to do for John Paston: ‘The fifteenth century Chancery had thus become, in part, a bureaucratic office in the modern sense, producing form documents for a set fee for a public which dealt face-to-face only with Chancery underlings and lawyers’. Richardson, The Medieval Chancery, 9.

61 Norwich, Norfolk Record Office, Phi/612/6 578 x 6, written in 1420.

62 The original document that Worcester copied was written from Ware in Hertfordshire on 21st May 1455, shortly before the first battle of St. Albans. It is Anne Curry and Rosemary Horrox, eds., The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England, 1447-1460 (London: The Boydell Press, 2005), 12: 341, number 20 (see headnote to letter 1022 in Beadle and Richmond’s edition). This letter followed the
copied the letter in a hand that Davis and Richmond noticed was ‘larger and neater than normal’, which indicates that he was conscious of the formality and prestige of the letter and intended to convey this in the copy that he made for Paston. The opening formula of this letter was of the exaggerated style that was characteristic of letters addressed to the king: ‘Moste Cristen Kyng, ryght hygh and myghty Prince, and our mooste redoubted souuerayn lorde, we recomaunde ws as humblye as we suffice vnto your hygh excellence’ (letter 1022, ll. 1-3, ‘nominally’ 21st May 1455).63 This style filtered down from the aristocracy to the gentry: when Fastolf wrote to a recipient who was of a higher status than he, he used a form of address that resembled the way that a duke or earl would address the king. See, for example, the following letter from Fastolf to the Duke of Norfolk: ‘Right high and myghty prynce, my right noble and good lord, in my right humble wyse I recomaunde me to your[e] good grace’ (letter 1021, ll. 1-2). In this example, Fastolf’s scribe used the identical formula ‘high and mighty prince’, and the same declaration that the sender was recommending himself ‘humbly’.

Sir John Fastolf also received letters from men of a similar status to himself and so Fastolf’s scribes would have encountered the written work of the scribes of other men. It is likely that Fastolf’s scribes would have met and interacted with the servants of Fastolf’s gentry correspondents, since these men probably delivered the letters to Fastolf’s residence. So to what extent did interaction between Fastolf’s scribes and the scribes of other men influence their written work? One of Fastolf’s correspondents was a man named William Yelverton, who was a judge of the king’s release of the Duke of Somerset from the Tower in February 1455, which alarmed the Duke of York. See Thomas Rymer, Foedera (London: J. Tonson, 1726), 2: 61. Following the release of Somerset, he ‘constantly excited and stirred the king against [the Duke of York and others]’. See J. S. Davies, An English Chronicle from 1377-1461, Camden Society os 64 (London, 1855), 71. An excerpt from the Chronicle, concerning the months leading up to the Battle of St. Albans, is printed in Myers, English Historical Documents 1327-1485, 275.

63 This copy was dated to ‘nominally’ 21 May 1455 by Beadle and Richmond because the original was given this date. This copy was probably made ‘shortly afterwards’. See headnote to Letter 1022.
bench, and thus was an important contact for Fastolf during his frequent legal disputes in Norfolk.\textsuperscript{64} Fastolf received letters from Yelverton, as did his scribes (see letter 877 to Fastolf and letter 878 to John Bokkyng). Interestingly, letter 877 from Yelverton to Sir John Fastolf was copied by William Worcester: we know this as the letter now exists only as a copy in his hand, with ‘copia’ inscribed in the margin. This shows that Fastolf’s scribes not only read letters from other members of the gentry, but they also copied them, which involved even greater engagement with the language and style of the text. Yelverton’s letter contains language that is different from the language that Worcester was accustomed to using when he was writing letters for Fastolf: for example, he used the opening formula, ‘My moste worshipful and best betrusted maister, I recommaund me to yow’ (letter 877, ll. 1-2). However, we have already seen that Fastolf was steadfast in his choices of appropriate opening formulae. As a result, Worcester’s encounters with different styles of opening a letter had minimal influence over the way that he opened a letter on behalf of Sir John Fastolf. Worcester did adopt certain words and phrases from his fellow scribes, and Fastolf’s associates. However, these changes infiltrated slowly, and were limited to fairly subtle variations in phrasing. Yelverton’s letter ended with the closing formula ‘by the grace off God, whych hafe yow yn hys holye kepyng’ (letter 877, ll. 24-25). It would be more likely that the closing lines of Fastolf’s letters would have been influenced by the work of other writers, since they were slightly less formulaic than the opening lines, and thus were more flexible in their style. However, William Worcester never used the phrase ‘betrusted maister’, ‘grace off God’, or ‘holye kepyng’ in the closing lines either of an autograph letter for himself, or in a letter that he wrote for his master Fastolf, despite the fact that he encountered these phrases in letters from a man of high status.

So, it is certainly probable that Fastolf and his scribes were influenced by trends in the composition of letters - especially those that originated within the royal household. However, it appears that Fastolf was very exacting about his preferences, and that this was probably magnified by the diligence and perfectionism of his primary scribe William Worcester. Fastolf’s other scribes were more flexible in their choice of words, and stuck less rigidly to specific forms of the opening and closing formulae. Regardless, they were under the constraint of their master, and so the corpus of letters from Sir John Fastolf as a whole is remarkably standardised.

The final part of this section on the influence of ‘external’ scribes will consider scribes from France. Fastolf’s scribes would certainly have encountered documents from France, connected with Fastolf’s interests in Normandy up until 1439 when he moved back to England following a downturn in his fortunes in France in the years after the death of the Duke of Bedford in 1435. There are very few extant documents connected with Fastolf’s time in France, and most of the surviving letters and documents post-date his move to England in 1439. However, it is possible that Fastolf’s English servants may have encountered the documents that were written in French concerning his military activity in France. A small number survive, such as FP 7, a notarial instrument in French dating from 1430 concerning charges of Sir John Fastolf whilst in France, including guarding Verneuil with 43 men-at-arms and 9 archers. There are also a few documents that prove that money and possessions moved from France to Fastolf’s associates in England. For example, the records of

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65 The duke’s death in September 1435 was followed by the rising in the Pays de Caux where some of Fastolf’s prime estates lay; the annual value of his estates in that area was reduced from £200 to £8 sterling. See McFarlane, ‘Profits of War,’ 106. With English fortunes in Normandy worsening around him, Fastolf stayed long enough to act as Bedford’s executor in France for four years, before retiring from his last military post of Governor of Guernsey and returning to London in 1439. See FP 69, m. 5, and discussion in McFarlane, ‘Profits of War,’ 94.

66 This description was taken from William Macray’s catalogue of the Fastolf Letters and Papers in the archives of Magdalen College, Oxford. I would like to thank the Magdalen College archivist, Dr. Robin Darwall-Smith for access to this catalogue, which exists only in carbon copy.
John Kyrtlyng show that Kyrtlyng received money coming in from France. Accompanying letters probably made this journey along with the money, and so Fastolf’s men would have read letters that were composed in France, possibly by French scribes. There are two surviving letters from Fastolf in France to his servants in England, and each was written by an unidentified scribe. These may have been literate Frenchmen whom Fastolf encountered whilst in France. Indeed, the hand of Luket Nantron ‘of Paris’ in the later documents written for Fastolf suggests that Fastolf found suitable French scribes whilst he was in Normandy and, in the case of Nantron, brought them back to England.

A hitherto-unedited document in the Magdalen College archives, FP 98, could be evidence that Sir John Fastolf used certain men as clerks both in England and in France. The document is a list of grievances that Fastolf’s servant Nicholas Bokkyng had against his master. These were mainly expenditures that he had not been reimbursed for. The grievances were not presented during Nicholas’ life, but after his death by his son John Bokkyng. John wrote that Nicholas had paid money to ‘oon [James] Jamys Billery clerk of ffrauns & secretarie with the said knyght als wele for englond as for ffraunce aftre there covenantis to euyryche of them 4 v marc by yere’ (FP 98, my emphasis). Billery was described as a ‘clerk of France’, which suggests that he was of French nationality. A search of modern-day French family names shows that the name ‘Billerey’ is still alive as a family name (albeit an uncommon one), which is further evidence that James Billery was a Frenchman. John Bokkyng diligently pointed out that Billery also did secretarial work in England. So Fastolf

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67 FP 9.
68 The designation of Luket Nantron as ‘de Parys’ comes from William Worcester’s headnote to College of Arms, MS. M.9.
was evidently eager to keep hold of his best writers, even when he moved to a different country.

As Fastolf’s scribes seem to have been well acquainted with the work of French writers, it might be expected that their work would be influenced by French writing conventions. Henry Windsor’s concern with noting the French nationality of a scribe in the following comment is further evidence that there were French scribes who wrote the administrative material associated with Fastolf’s properties: ‘And also, sir, [William Worcester] hath caused me to examyn olde and mony recordes writon by som frenshman concerenyng the manoir of Dedham, that was a comberouse labour for these copies were full defectif’ (letter 574, ll. 11-15, 27th August probably 1458). The question is: would Windsor, looking at a document written by this ‘frenschman’, have noticed any differences between his work and the work of his English equivalents?

Scholars of the Fastolf circle have pointed out the difficulty of analysing the competence of foreign scribes writing in English. Benedicta Rowe explained that Christopher Hansson, ‘though apparently of German origin, made England his home and wrote in English’. However, it is not possible to judge the competence of Hansson’s written English because even though the signature of one of Hansson’s English letters was autograph and competently written, the letter itself was not in his hand, and so is not evidence of Hansson’s command of written English. There is more reliable evidence about the written English of Luket Nantron. His scribal work suggests that he was competent and experienced in using the English language: the mistakes that William Barker corrected in FP 25 were not mistakes in grammar, spelling, or vocabulary, but subtle corrections to the phrasing, of the type that might

70 The source of this information about Hansson’s origins is the heading to Basset’s Chronicle, which stated that Hansson was ‘de patria almannie (?)’. Cited in Rowe, ‘A Contemporary Account of the Hundred Years War from 1415 to 1429,’ 508.
71 See headnote to letter 613.
be expected in the work of a novice scribe being corrected by a writer who was more
experienced at composing documents. There were no noticeable differences between
his English composition and that of his corrector, Barker.\textsuperscript{72} Luket Nantron’s work
was all autograph, and since the evidence suggests that letters and documents were
composed and not dictated\textsuperscript{73} this is evidence of his competence in a language that
was not apparently his native tongue. So, the evidence suggests that there were
relatively few differences between the work of French scribes in the Fastolf circle
and the work of their English equivalents.

It seems that Fastolf’s French scribes were under as much scrutiny as his English
scribes. Fastolf expected high quality written work from them, and they demonstrated
competence in written English in return. The only errors that appeared were the errors
of inexperienced young scribes, of the sort that even a native English speaker would
commit. To mitigate this, their work was checked and corrected by more experienced
men such as William Barker and William Worcester.

Therefore, even if Fastolf’s English scribes were open to the influence of French
scribes, it seems that there were relatively few differences between the written
English of English and French scribes. Fastolf’s French scribes did not display any
linguistic idiosyncrasies, but instead adhered to the strict expectations of their master,
just as much as his English scribes did.

\textsuperscript{72} This demonstrates that the work of a foreign servant in a household cannot be identified reliably
through ‘oddities’ in their use of English in the way that was suggested by Kate Mertes in the
following comment: ‘it is not always easy to tell by a surname the origins of a servant, but oddities of
English usage...show that French people at least are not all that unusual in English households’. Kate
\textsuperscript{73} See page 152-168 above for this evidence on dictation and autograph composition.
Chapter Five: Fastolf’s circle as the readers and writers of texts in manuscript books.

Research into the circle of Sir John Fastolf has indicated that he had a large collection of books and that William Worcester was the translator, composer, scribe, reviser and later the owner, of many of them. Previous studies have emphasised the role of Fastolf’s stepson, Stephen Scrope, in the production of literature, and have shown that literature was exchanged between him and William Worcester.\(^1\) BL, MS. Additional 38692 is a compilation that includes a short verse epitaph to Stephen Scrope’s mother, Millicent. Millicent was first married to Sir Stephen Scrope and had a son, also called Stephen Scrope. In 1408, Millicent’s husband Sir Stephen died, and she remarried, to Sir John Fastolf, in 1409. The epitaph to Millicent includes detailed information about her life as part of the Scrope family prior to her marriage to Sir John Fastolf, such as an account of Richard Lord Scrope’s original purchase of the wardship of the Tiptoft heiresses. It is likely that Scrope was Worcester’s source for some of this knowledge.

If Sir John Fastolf, William Worcester, and Stephen Scrope were involved in a programme of education and intellectual debate centred upon Fastolf’s residence (and the home of many of his books), Caister Castle, then it is possible that they, and other literate men who lived at, or visited Caister, formed a ‘readership community’ - a group of individuals who were linked by their shared interest in reading certain types

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\(^1\) Jonathan Hughes pointed out that ‘Scrope and Worcester lived at Caister in adjacent rooms’. However, there is no contemporary evidence to suggest this: C. M. Woolgar’s floorplan of Caister Castle placed both William Worcester and Stephen Scrope in rooms ‘In Main Court, but location not known’ (this floorplan is reproduced on page 93 above). Regardless of their physical proximity at Caister Castle, the two men did evidently have a close association: Scrope evidently passed on written texts to Worcester as Worcester administered medical care to Sir John Fastolf, and, ‘one of his informants was Stephen Scrope who gave him in 1459 a remedy for pain while urinating and in January 1466, a cure for palpitations of the heart’ (FP 72, m. 7, and BL, MS. Sloane 4, folios 38v and 57v). Hughes, ‘Stephen Scrope and the Circle,’ 125.
of texts. This chapter will attempt to identify the readers and writers of texts in manuscript books within Fastolf’s circle, combining circumstantial evidence in letters to and from Fastolf with physical evidence such as book design, ownership inscriptions in manuscripts, annotations, and scribal hands.

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2 Catherine Nall described a ‘readership community’ of men who were connected by their interest in certain types of texts: a ‘disparate group [which] formed a community of readers who were interested in chivalry and military strategy’ (143). This thesis perceives a wider community of readers within the Fastolf Circle, which includes literate men who were not necessarily the patrons or intended readers of the texts, but who were part of the community because they composed, translated, or copied these texts. Other sources of information and scholarly discussion on the subject of literary networks are Katherine Kerby-Fulton, ‘Professional Readers of Langland at Home and Abroad: New Directions in the Political and Bureaucratic Codicology of Piers Plowman,’ in *New Directions in Later Medieval Manuscript Studies*, ed. Derek Pearsall (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press in association with Boydell Press, 2000), 103-129; Meale, ‘Patrons, Buyers and Owners,’ 201-238; Carol M. Meale, ‘The Politics of Book Ownership: The Hopton Family and Bodleian Digby MS 185,’ in *Prestige, Authority, and Power in Late Medieval Manuscripts and Texts*, ed. Felicity Riddy, York Manuscripts Conferences: Proceedings Series, IV (Woodbridge, etc.: York Medieval Press, 2000), 103-133; Raluca Radulescu, *The Gentry Context for Malory’s Morte Darthur* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading and English Literature*, and ‘Vernacular Humanism in England, c. 1440-1485,’ (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2002).
a) Identifying the reader:

The circumstantial evidence for reading activity.

Fortunately, this study of Sir John Fastolf and his books is supported by a large corpus of letters and documents. These items contain circumstantial evidence that contributes towards our understanding of reading and writing in the circle of Sir John Fastolf. There is one document that lists the books that were owned by Sir John Fastolf in 1448. Though Fastolf at this time was living in London, this 1448 inventory reveals that he kept a substantial library of books in the ‘stewe hous’, or bath room, at his primary residence in Norfolk, Caister Castle.

Richard Beadle listed the books that were in Fastolf’s bath house and showed that the French royal library of Charles V shared many of the titles. Unfortunately there is no circumstantial evidence to show exactly how Fastolf’s books got into his possession, or when. It is possible that Fastolf acquired French books through his service to John duke of Bedford (b. 1389 - d. 1435), who owned many of the royal manuscripts. Some of the book titles in the 1448 inventory are somewhat ambiguous,

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3 FP 43: an inventory of Caister Castle in Norfolk, written in 1448, with later additions made in 1455. There is a vast body of research into the compilation of inventories in France during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The work of Meiss and Off on the inventories of another book collector, Jean duc de Berry, is particularly interesting as a point of comparison with the inventory of Caister Castle. Their article presents a detailed description of the method of compilation by Robinet d’Estamps, which shows how much more detail an inventory of books might present, compared with Spirlenge’s inventory of the books at Caister Castle. Unlike Geoffrey Spirleng, d’Estamps compiled his list of books chronologically according to their date of acquisition, and gave information about how each book entered the collection of Jean duc de Berry. See Meiss and Off, ‘The Bookkeeping,’ 225-235.

5 See Appendix I.

6 This contrasts with the inventory written by Robinet d’Estamps for Jean de Berry in 1413, which was compiled chronologically, so that we can ascertain when he acquired his books. The inventory lists which books were purchased by (‘livres achaptez’), or given to (‘livres donnez’), the duke. See Meiss and Off, ‘The Bookkeeping,’ esp. 227.

7 For the collection of John duke of Bedford, see Stratford, The Bedford Inventories, 91-96 and 119-
and so Richard Beadle attempted to pin down exactly which medieval text each one referred to, and discussed whether these books had passed to Fastolf from the library of the duke of Bedford. For example, Beadle suggested that ‘Lez propretes dez choses’ referred to ‘Jean de Corbechon’s translation the De proprietatibus rerum of Bartholemaeus Anglicus, commissioned by Charles V in 1372, often found with schemes of illustration’. Beadle concluded that ‘The Cronicles of Titus leuius’ referred to ‘Livy, History of Rome (or Decades), in the translation by Pierre de Bersuire (1290-1362), known as the Histoire Romaine, originally commissioned by John the Good (1354-1356)’. Beadle pointed out that John Duke of Bedford had a copy of the text.

There is very little circumstantial evidence about Fastolf’s books from after 1448. Since Fastolf lived in London at his residence of Fastolf Place in Southwark from 1438 until 1454, it would be reasonable to suppose that he kept some books in London. Indeed, there is proof that he had at least one book with him in London as Geoffrey Boleyn, after Fastolf’s death, testified that Fastolf had made an oath ‘on his primer ther (in Southwark)’ (letter 619, ll. 5-6, 5th December probably 1460). Fastolf also kept books at his other residences, or at least brought them there when he visited. This included his manor at Heylsdon in Norfolk (modern day Hellesdon). Nicholas Bokkyng’s list of financial damages that he incurred as a result of his service for

8 Beadle debated about the provenance of the books in Fastolf’s book collection, and pointed out the evidence that his collection included several titles that were also in the French Royal library: ‘[i]t is impossible to say for certain whether any of [John Duke of Bedford’s books, which mostly passed to Cardinal Beaufort] came Fastolf’s way, but as we shall see, he did own a collection of “French books” which included a significant number of unusual titles, several of them otherwise unknown in England at this time, that are also found in the inventory of the French royal library’. Beadle ‘Sir John Fastolf’s French Books,’ 97, note 12 and 13.
Fastolf, testified that Fastolf had promised that Bokkyng would not incur any personal damages: ‘in whiche the said knyght promised feithfully and up on his sawter at heylesdon...that the said bokkyng shuld haue no wrong but in all maner of maters of his accomptis that towched conscience he wulde be rewled by maistre John Wysenhalle & maistre Richard Purlond’. These documents and anecdotes add to our knowledge of how Sir John Fastolf spent his profits of war, other than on properties and servants. They suggest what his library consisted of, and where he kept his books, and also provide evidence of Fastolf actually using his books.

Unfortunately, there is no inventory of the books of Sir John Fastolf that dates from later in his lifetime. Therefore, for information about Fastolf’s books in his later years, we have to piece together other sources of circumstantial evidence. For example, FP 70, is an account of what was given to William Yelverton at the funeral of Sir John Fastolf, and was written sometime in the period 1459-1460. It records a book passing to Yelverton in the period following Fastolf’s death in 1459, which may have been a book that was listed on the 1448 inventory. FP 70 reads, ‘Item the said William Yeluerton had of the said sir Thomas a boke clepyt Josephus and a byble of Wyrcestre’. This Josephus may have been the Liber de Sentence Josephus that was recorded by Geoffrey Spirleng in 1448, in FP 43. It is likely that ‘Josephus’ referred to the author Titus Flavius Josephus. If the book referred to by these two book lists

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11 FP 98.
12 Richard Beadle made this connection between the Liber de Sentence Joseph of FP 43 and the ‘boke clepyt Josephus’ of FP 70: ‘Liber de Sentence Joseph- it is not quite clear whether one book or two is referred to here, but the bracket underlining “Sentence Joseph” is continuous under the two words, and the greater likelihood is that one work was intended, evidently the “boke clepyt Josephus” subsequently given by Thomas Howes to Sir William Yelverton in the 1460s, valued by William Worcester at £5’. Beadle, ‘Sir John Fastolf’s French Books,’ 102.
13 There was a book by Flavius Josephus, which was also referred to as Josephus, in the inventory of John Badger, a scholar, which was compiled in 1577. See R. J. Fehrenbach and E. S. Leedham-Green, Private Libraries in Renaissance England (Tempe, Arizona: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998), 5: item 115.4. Daniel Wakelin pointed out that William Worcester used material from the work of Josephus in his Boke of Noblesse, and that date computations from Josephus appear in Worcester’s notebook, London, College of Arms, MS. Arundel 48, folio 94v. Wakelin, Humanism, Reading and English Literature, 123 and n. 89.
was indeed the same one, this not only records the provenance of the book over ten years, but also suggests that Fastolf’s books were separated after his death. This might explain why so few books that were listed in the 1448 inventory have survived as a collection into the present day.

An inventory from after Fastolf’s death shows that John Paston had lost track of Fastolf’s books by just three years after his death.\textsuperscript{14} This 1462 record of goods that had come into the hands of Sir John Paston recorded that Paston had ‘no very knowleche [ner] informacion’ beyond an old ‘note of an indenture’ about ‘bokes of Frenshe, Latyn, and Englyssh remaynyng in the chambre of the seid ffastolff’ (letter 64, ll. 64-65). Another note revealed that these books were ‘at his deyng in the kepyng of his servantes Nicholas Newman [and] Robard Boteler’, then repeated that ‘the seid Paston hath no certeyn informacion therof, ne nought therof com to his handes’.\textsuperscript{15} These books were evidently taken by Fastolf’s servants, along with such valuable items as ‘coyn’, ‘ryngges’, ‘jowellis’, and ‘clothes of silk, lynn, and wollen’.\textsuperscript{16} However, the lack of any other documentary evidence about Fastolf’s books after 1448 means that any additional circumstantial information about reading and writing in his circle has to be found in the passing references contained in his letters.

Unfortunately, references to reading and writing, and the production of literature, were sporadic in the letters connected with Sir John Fastolf. Fastolf himself never mentioned reading his own books, having them read to him, or having literature compiled or composed.\textsuperscript{17} Studies of the patronage of texts by other book collectors

\textsuperscript{14} BL, MS. Additional 39848, folios 50 and 51. Richard Beadle has shown that William Worcester maintained a much better grasp of the contents and whereabouts of the late Fastolf’s collection (see FP 70). Beadle, ‘Sir John Fastolf’s French Books,’ 100.

\textsuperscript{15} The note of indenture was written ‘at the tyme of his first dwellin at Caister’, which would have been 1454/1455). The further note was written subscript to l. 84 of the printed edition of the inventory (letter 64, 1.84).

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{17} The lack of evidence for Fastolf’s reading contrasts with the evidence concerning Humfrey, duke of Gloucester in the text On Husbandrie. Daniel Wakelin pointed out that in contrast with the The Fall of Princes (see note 19 below), On Husbandrie contains internal evidence that it was read by the duke
have suggested that though these men possessed the texts, the intended reader(s) of the texts were other men within their circles. There were a few times when men in Fastolf’s circle mentioned books they owned, or were reading. In 1448 a one-off correspondent of William Worcester, John Crop, wrote to him concerning the errands Worcester had asked him to take care of. One of these was to speak to ‘Sir Nicoll’ of Glastonbury, about ‘a tabyll of augrym, els a boke of augrym, els an asterlebe’ that he appears to have agreed to acquire for Worcester (letter 969, ll. 3-6, mid-May 1449). Worcester, being interested in medicine, would no doubt have been eager to use an astrolabe, as every physician and surgeon had been required to have one since 1437. Therefore, an explanatory text would have been useful to him. The same letter mentioned an additional task that Worcester had assigned to Crop, which was to speak to a man named Ralph Hoby about a collection of books: ‘I spake with Maystere Hoby as for ij queyers... and he seid me his bokes [wer] remevid of his chaumbre, for a lady that lay in his chaumbre, like as he told yow... Also he graunte me the copye of Wallens De vita et doctrina philosoforum, also the queiere of Oved, De vetula, De...

18 Daniel Wakelin put forward Lydgate’s The Fall of Princes as an example of a text that was superficially written for Humfrey, duke of Gloucester, but which had ‘real’ readers ‘from the ranks of civil society: gentry, lawyers, scholars and monastic houses’. Wakelin, Humanism, Reading and English Literature, 54-55, citing Mark Liddell, ed., The Middle English Translation of Palladius De Re Rustica (Berlin: Ebering, 1896), ll. 1202-1204.

19 Definition of ‘augrim’: ‘the practice of numbering or computing with Arabic numerals’. McSparran, The Middle English Dictionary.

remedio moris, De arte amande, and of the verse vp-on Boicius’ (letter 969, ll. 26-29, mid-May 1449).  

The man whom Crop was going to speak to about books, Ralph Hoby, was a professor of theology at Oxford. Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS. Laud misc 674 is a manuscript book that survives as evidence that, many years earlier, William Worcester had copied a star catalogue that was compiled by Friar Ralph Hoby (see folio 99v). This manuscript suggests that the connection between Worcester and Hoby was initiated during Worcester’s studies at Oxford University, and the circumstantial evidence in letter 969 shows that it was sustained beyond Worcester’s time as a student. It was not made clear in letter 969 whether Worcester was acquiring the books for Sir John Fastolf or for himself. However, this does show that Worcester used the connections he had made at Oxford in order to acquire books once he had moved into the service of Sir John Fastolf. The fact that this evidence about the book collecting is found in a letter that concerns genealogical research shows that reading and writing was organised around the practicalities of managing and protecting Fastolf’s properties.

It is possible that the book that John Crop referred to, ‘Wallens De vita et doctrina philosophorum’, went on to become the exemplar for the same text in Fastolf’s ornate

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21 Daniel Wakelin has identified these texts as John of Wales’ Breuiloquium de virtutibus (an account of ancient philosophy); the pseudo-Ovidian De vetula; Ovid’s De arte amande; and Boethius’s De consolatione philosophiae. Wakelin, Humanism, Reading and English Literature, 96.


23 MS. Laud misc. 674. The catalogue has the following inscription: ‘secundum tabulas Alfonsi et erudicionem fratris Radulphi Hoby professoris theologie ac discipulum librorum fratris Johannis Somour ordinis minorum’ (‘following the Alphonsine tables and the learning of friar Ralph Hoby, Professor of Theology and student of the books of Friar John Somer of the order of St. Francis’). As transcribed and translated in John Somer, The Kalandarium of John Somer, ed. Linne R. Mooney (The University of Georgia Press: Athens, 1998), 211.
Chapter Five: Fastolf’s circle as the readers and writers of texts in manuscript books.

Bodleian Library, MS. Laud misc. 570. Alternatively, it could have been used by Worcester to produce his own less elaborate copy of the text, which is now CUL, MS. Additional 7870. Catherine Nall pointed out the ‘extensive marginal annotation and colophon to end of first text by Worcester stating that...Guillem Worcestre dit Botener... was busy correcting the text in July 1450’. The annotations in MS. 7870 were written just a year after John Crop’s letter, and so prove that William Worcester was actively reading and revising John of Wales’ text in the year after John Crop promised him a copy of the text. In addition, Worcester made translations of the work of John of Wales, which he put into his composition for Sir John Fastolf: the Boke of Noblesse. This demonstrates that Worcester was effective at using his connections to acquire books, and suggests that he did so with the intention of revising the text either for Sir John Fastolf, or for himself.

Several studies have already been made of William Worcester’s historical research and literary activities, and have proven that he was an avid reader. In contrast, there is no evidence that any of the other men who acted as clerks or scribes for Sir John Fastolf were owners, readers, or writers of literary texts during his lifetime. Interestingly, we know that one of Fastolf’s servants, Geoffrey Spirleng went on to write manuscript books after Fastolf’s death (a point to which this chapter will return). However, despite this obvious interest in literature, neither his will, nor that of

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24 This text was John of Wales’ Breuiloquium de virtutibus. The Franciscan scholar John of Wales was born around 1210-1230, and wrote this text around 1260-1270. See Jenny Swanson, John of Wales: A Study of the Works and Ideas of a Thirteenth-Century Friar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). The Appendix to Swanson’s book contains a list of manuscript copies of texts by John of Wales.


26 See Wakelin, Humanism, Reading and English Literature, 121. Wakelin focussed particularly upon the phrase ‘bettir it is to lyue a pore life in a riche Roiaume in tranquilite and pease than to be riche in a pore Roiaume where debate and strife reignithe’, which Worcester translated from the French version of John of Wales’ Breuiloquium. Wakelin showed that there was evidence for Worcester’s process of translating and transferring from one text to another: the note ‘Exemplum notabilite’ next to the sentence he translated in his manuscript of the Breuiloquium (CUL, MS. Additional 7870, folio 23r-v).

his son Thomas, mentioned a single manuscript book.  This shows that a lack of circumstantial evidence about book readership was common, but was not necessarily indicative of a lack of interest in reading or book ownership.

There is one surviving reference to John Bokkyng, the third most prolific scribe of Fastolf’s letters, as a reader of legal texts: ‘I hadde of Margrete Goche a booke of lawe hat Wigge brought me’ (letter 549, ll. 5-6, 15th May 1456). Anthony Musson has explained how legal literature developed in order to support ‘word of mouth’ instruction that legal men were given ‘in county administration, in estate management and in private practice’. Musson gave some examples of treatises such as The Court Baron (composed c. 1265) and How to Hold Pleas and Courts (composed c. 1272), which ‘provided detailed instructions about local courts and templates for potential administrative and judicial encounters’. Donald R. Kelley described the ‘student guides’ that were read by would-be lawyers in the middle of the fifteenth century: ‘student guides, exhorting would-be lawyers to methodological study’. Unfortunately, Bokkyng did not give the title of the book that Wigge brought him. Regardless, his statement does show that he was in possession of a law book. The fact that he wrote to Paston to inform him that he had this book suggests that Paston himself might have wished to see it. This evidence might indicate that there were exchanges of legal texts between individuals in Fastolf’s circle.

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28 Norwich, Norfolk Record Office, Enrolled Deeds, Roll 20, m. 65d and Norwich, District Probate Registry, Spirrleng 12, vol. 31, 1514-1516. As cited in Manly and Rickert in The Text of The Canterbury Tales, 1: 187. For more about the relationship between Spirrleng’s literary output and his administrative work see pages 307-310 below.

29 Musson, Medieval Law in Context, 69.

As there is evidence that there were exchanges of literary texts between members of the Paston family and William Worcester, we might expect that a literate man like John Bokkyng would have encountered literary texts, as well as legal treatises.\(^{31}\) However, research has uncovered conflicting information about the extent to which clerks and high-level administrators were interested in texts other than those that were of practical use for their work. Studies of Chancery clerks and other high-level city administrators have shown that they maintained a literary culture outside of their work as professional administrators. For example, Thomas Hoccleve (c.1367-1426) wrote literary texts alongside his official clerkly duties as clerk of the office of the Privy Seal.\(^{32}\) He involved himself in literary composition by presenting *The Regiment of Princes* to the future Henry V, which he drew from Giles of Rome’s *De regimine principum*, the *Secretum secretorum* and Jaques de Cessoles’ *Le livre du jeu d’échecs*.\(^{33}\) Hoccleve was so involved in literary culture, that he contributed to the shaping of literary tastes in English readers (or at least, in creating an *image* of what English gentrymen were reading), by providing a reading list to Sir John Oldcastle.\(^{34}\) Adam Pinkhurst fit in his literary work for Geoffrey Chaucer alongside his work for the Mercer’s guild and the writing of petitions.\(^{35}\) There is a body of scholarship about

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the role of Chancery clerks in the literary dissemination of copies of Piers Plowman.\textsuperscript{36}
To give one final example, Estelle Stubbs has studied Scribe D, whose hand appears in literary texts such as Gower’s \textit{Confessio Amantis} and Chaucer’s \textit{Canterbury Tales}.\textsuperscript{37} Stubbs identified him as John Marchant, Common Clerk of London from 1399 to 1417, whose hand also appeared in official documents such as the City of London, Letter Book H, folio 42v.\textsuperscript{38} These studies have shown that it was possible, and likely, that men who held official positions as town or royal clerks would use their spare time in the pursuit of literary reading and writing.\textsuperscript{39}


\textsuperscript{38} This information on John Marchant comes from notes made from Estelle Stubbs’ paper at the Early Book Society Conference, 2011, which presented a selection of her findings as part of the AHRC-funded project ‘Identification of the Scribes Responsible for Copying Major Works of Middle English Literature’.

\textsuperscript{39} There is even more literature on the literary pursuits of clerks, aside from the ones cited above. For an example of a French clerk who was involved in the transmission of literary texts, see the essays by Gilbert Ouy and Anne Hedeman on Jean Lebègue, a French royal chancery official who actively directed the production of manuscripts for his own library and for those of his patrons. ‘Jean Lebègue (1368-1457), Auteur, Copiste et Bibliophile,’ and ‘Making the Past Present, Visual Translation in Jean Lebègue’s “twin” Manuscripts of Sallust,’ in \textit{Patrons, Authors and Workshops}, ed. Croenen and Ainsworth, 1-20 and 173-196. Some examples of other French clerks who did write literary texts alongside their administrative duties are: Alain Chartier, notary, and secretary to Charles VII. See James Laidlaw, ‘Alain Chartier and the Arts of Crisis Management,’ in \textit{War, Government and Power}, ed. Allmand , 37-53; Jean de Montreuil, secretary of finance to Charles VI. See Nicole Grévy-Pons and Ezio Ornato, ‘Qui est l’auteur de la chronique latine de Charles VI, dite du religieux de Saint Denis?’ \textit{Bibliotheque de l’Ecole des Chartes} 134 (1976): 85-102; and Noel de Fribois, secretary for Charles VII from 1425-1444. See Kathleen Daly and Ralph E. Giesey, ‘Noël de Fribois et la Loi Salique,’ \textit{Bibliotheque de l’Ecole des Chartes} 151 (1993), 5-36. For an overview of the convergence between the production of legal documents and English literature see Emily Steiner, \textit{Documentary Culture and the Making of Medieval English Literature} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
However, what can be seen in the work of royal clerks may not have applied to Sir John Fastolf’s busy household clerks (ie. John Bokkyng, William Barker, and Geoffrey Spir leng). The evidence from Fastolf’s letters about the responsibilities of these men suggests that they would have had scant time for reading or writing outside of their practical administrative work. In addition, the clerks of the Fastolf household would not have been likely to have the financial impetus to pursue extra written work outside of their daily duties, nor the same opportunities to meet such a range of potential patrons of their work.\(^{40}\)

Though the evidence on the literary culture of Chancery clerks discussed above is strong evidence against Malcolm Richardson’s claims that the book collections of Chancery clerks were ‘remarkably narrow’, his arguments do have relevance in relation to the clerks of gentry men such as Sir John Fastolf.\(^{41}\) Though more recent research has shown that Chancery clerks copied literary texts (and that some were very prolific copyists of texts), his argument that a clerk’s intellectual efforts might be restricted by the demands of his professional work might apply to the clerks of Sir John Fastolf, whose time and effort was consumed by the demands of administering several estates, and many legal battles at court. So, the following description of Chancery clerks by Richardson, might actually be more appropriate for the hard-working clerks of the Fastolf circle: ‘The clerks’ entire intellectual efforts from their

\(^{40}\) Ian Doyle showed this diversity within Hoccleve’s literary community in his point that ‘[t]he three autographs of Hoccleve’s own poems...include dedications to a London stationer, the Town Clerk, several of the royal dukes, Joan Bohun, countess of Hereford and Joan Beaufort, countess of Westmorland, as well as allusions to a number of acquaintances of court and in offices of state, besides Chaucer and Gower’. He also showed that authors might use the Chancery or other government offices as a convenient source of suitable scribes for to write their texts: ‘it is as likely that [John Gower] employed some of the secular clerks with whom he had come into contact and of whom there were many expert in comparable anglicana and secretary scripts, across the river in Westminster or London’. A. I. Doyle, ‘English Books In and Out of Court from Edward III to Henry VIII,’ in *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. V. J. Scattergood and J. W. Sherborne (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1983), 163-181 (172).

\(^{41}\) Richardson argued that the scope of the book collections of Chancery clerks beyond legal texts was ‘remarkably narrow’: ‘Chancery clerks...showed little literary interest. Only two literary works appear in the wills of Henry V’s Chancery clerks’. Malcolm Richardson, *The Medieval Chancery*, 54.
teenage years had been aimed at mastering legal and administrative technical matters, making them deeply learned in an intellectually shallow field... By the time they were financially secure and had leisure time for wider reading they were already in their thirties and their habits formed.\textsuperscript{42} The level of interest that Fastolf’s clerks showed in written literary texts depended on whether their training and day-to-day duties, allowed them the intellectual energy to develop interests beyond their practical roles. So, regardless of his access to manuscript books, whether a man like John Bokkyng actually \textit{read} literary texts depended on whether he had the time and inclination to do so.

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Ibid.}
The book itself as evidence for reading activity:

Books themselves present evidence for their use within a readership community. Carol Meale has examined the design of books for what it suggests about reading activity. She argued that the introduction of new chapters with three-line lombard initials in Oxford University, MS. Digby 185 implies that ‘the volume was meant to be read, not simply placed on display in a domestic setting as an article of conspicuous consumption’. In contrast to this modest, utilitarian, way of decorating a manuscript, the finest of Sir John Fastolf’s surviving manuscripts, Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS. Laud misc. 570, is punctuated by beautifully-decorated enlarged initials, with the addition of Fastolf’s motto ‘me fault faire’ around more than twenty of them. This book was evidently intended to be a display of what Fastolf could afford: the medieval equivalent of owning a top-specification car for the sake of proving one’s wealth. However, sumptuous decoration and utility were not mutually exclusive, so the fact that certain of Fastolf’s books were suitable for display did not mean that they were not actually read.

Fastolf’s choice to pay for an expensive customised manuscript such Laud misc. 570 to be written and illuminated corresponded with his impressive castellated residence at Caister, which had walls that were adorned with tapestries celebrating his achievements and identity as a military man. Laud misc. 570 was not just a book

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43 The discussion offered in Alexandra Gillespie’s article ‘Books’ offers a useful perspective of the book as an object with many levels of significance, from the materials a book was made from, to the relationship of each book to other books. Gillespie quoted Foucault’s argument that ‘we need to read books - to read their very dust’, and then broadened the idea: ‘until the idea of “dust” includes not only the material from which the books were made, but all our ideas about books. At the moment of its production, the book was “caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences” in the dust-like swirl of its possible meanings’. Michel Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge (London: Routledge, 2007), 23. Gillespie, ‘Books,’ 91.
46 ‘Fastolf’s tapestry of the siege of Falaise (hung in the winter hall at Caister)...' was designed to
that Fastolf bought, but one that he had designed by its team of scribe and illuminator to meet his rising expectations. A document written in 1452 testified to Fastolf’s high opinion of his own status, which he cultivated through his periods in the service of great men. He pronounced himself to be: ‘the kyngys trewe ligeman, soo beynge and contynuyng, sithe I hadde age of discrecion, norischid and broughte forthe in the courtys and werrys of hym and the pryncys of blessid memoreye, his noble progenitourys.’

The importance of the visual way in which a lord could display his wealth should not be underestimated. Display was a conspicuous way in which a lord could form and represent his identity. Heraldic devices were popular forms of decoration in the great houses, signalling the lord’s armigerous status. The inventory of Caister Castle from 1448 shows that Fastolf owned many expensive and ornate items and that, in addition, many of them were decorated with his coat of arms, which reinforced his pride in his identity. For example, in the chamber of his ward, Thomas Fastolf of Cowhaugh, there was ‘j testo seler of red say wþe armes of Fastolfe’. This shows that when a great man walked around his house, an image of his greatness would be reflected back at him - and, importantly, at his visitors, associates, and servants. Books were just one part of this conspicuous display of wealth and status. The duke of

celebrate his achievements’. Woolgar, The Great Household, 73. See FP 43, folio 4v: ‘Item a clothe of the sege of ffaleys for the westside in the neder halle’ (my transcription).


49 To give just one example from outside of the Fastolf Circle, the Lion Tower at Warkworth castle, dating from the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, has a lion, the heraldic emblem of the Percies, over the doorway into the hall. See C. M. Woolgar, The Senses in Late Medieval England (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 183.

50 FP 43, page 23.
Bedford acquired the great library of Charles V and VI.\(^{51}\) However, Bedford appears to have valued them more as objects of wealth than as opportunities for learning, and they equated with the ‘tapestries, chapel and domestic furnishings’ and ‘plate’ of the house. Gerald Harriss pointed out that once Bedford had this impressive collection of books he ‘had little need to commission more’, which suggests that Bedford was mindful of his appearance of wealth, rather than his literary edification.\(^{52}\) Evidence from medieval wills supports this impression that books were objects that represented the wealth of their owner. Primers especially, being small books that were suited to personal and portable use, were particularly likely to be endowed with decorated bindings.\(^{53}\) Anne Harling (d.1499), for example, left a primer to her daughter ‘wt silver and gylte’.\(^{54}\) Indeed, the 1448 inventory of Fastolf’s residence Caister Castle reveals that he owned a finely bound psalter: ‘I sauter closped with silvere and my maistres armys and my ladies therupon’.\(^{55}\) By carrying around a book with ornamented binding like this, the book’s owner simultaneously displayed his or her wealth, and honoured God by possessing the most gloriously decorated psalter possible.

\(^{51}\) G. L. Harriss has argued that in the cases of Humfrey, duke of Gloucester, and John duke of Bedford, there was more emphasis on visual display than on literary patronage: ‘literary patronage in any form was a less conspicuous element in the households of Bedford and Gloucester than wall-painting, illumination, tapestry, gold and silver work, jewellery’. The evidence for Bedford’s preoccupation with visual display was that each of the works that he commissioned was notable for its wealth of illumination: the Psalter illuminated by Herman Scheere, the Bedford Hours that was made for his wife Anne, and the Salisbury Breviary. Harriss, *Shaping the Nation*, 40.

\(^{52}\) Harriss, *Shaping the Nation*, 40. For a description of the manuscripts in the collection of John Duke of Bedford, see Stratford, ed., *The Bedford Inventories*, 91-96, and 119-126. Stratford emphasised the element of visual display of Bedford’s wealth in his collections, and aligned Bedford’s books alongside other visiblly expensive and desirable objects, for example in the following statement: ‘in terms of prestige, these growing collections, enhanced by the cups and spice-plates, the copes and other vestments, the tapestries, and the manuscripts which the regent himself ordered to be made, fulfilled an important purpose. They ensured that Bedford’s court was the equal in magnificence of the courts of other great European princes’ (126).


\(^{55}\) FP 43, entry for the chapel (page 2v). The tester and seler were both parts of a bed, the tester being the headboard, and the seler being the ceiling of a four-poster bed.
There was a similar element of visual display in Sir John Fastolf’s collection of books: he not only acquired an impressive number of books, but he ensured that certain of the books that he had made for him were given expensive decoration. It has already been shown that John, Duke of Bedford, had a number of sumptuously decorated books made for him. Sir John Fastolf invested money in having similarly sumptuous books made for himself. Sir John Fastolf’s most expensively decorated surviving book, Bodleian Library, MS. Laud misc. 570 is a deluxe manuscript written in the ornate hand of Ricardus Franciscus, and expensively decorated by the Fastolf Master.\textsuperscript{56} So when Fastolf opened a book like Laud misc. 570, he saw his status reaffirmed on every sumptuously-decorated page.\textsuperscript{57}

However, though Meale was justified in stating that the plainness of a manuscript suggests that a book was actually read, rather than simply placed on display, it is much more difficult to prove the opposite. It could be argued that Laud misc. 570, with its ornate decoration, was primarily an object of display, and was not actually read. But equally, Laud misc. 570 might have been pored over by Fastolf himself, who would have taken delight in its beautiful illumination. There is evidence that certain of Fastolf’s books were used actively, to the extent that they were transported around the country for him. This is recorded on page 17 of the 1448 inventory of Caister Castle, FP 43. This page lists items in ‘my maister is chambre and the with draughte with the stewe house’, including several ‘ffrenshe bookes’.\textsuperscript{58} A later annotator of the inventory, who was writing in 1454/1455, wrote ‘London’ above ‘the

\textsuperscript{56} For more on the ‘flamboyant’ script of Ricardus Franciscus see Scott, \textit{Later Gothic Manuscripts}, 2: 318. For more information about the Fastolf Master see \textit{ibid} 297-299.

\textsuperscript{57} Richard Beadle argued that Fastolf’s commissioning of Laud misc. 570 was a direct attempt at emulating the ducal library of John, duke of Bedford: ‘it also appears that this segment of Fastolf’s library had been assembled with a view to emulating the choicest items in the princely and ducal collections that he would have known from his time in France’. Beadle, ‘Sir John Fastolf’s French Books,’ 105.

\textsuperscript{58} The ‘with draughte’ here referred to the withdrawing room: a place of retirement or retreat within a house, a private chamber. See McSparran, ed., ‘The Middle English Dictionary,’ ‘withdraught (n.) Also withdraw(gh)te’.
chronicles of titus leuius’. The same hand wrote ‘caret’, ‘alio loco’, and ‘mis
London’ superscript to many other items on the inventory. The items that were
missing from Caister were all items from the chapel and garderobe such as ‘a gowne
of blewe velvet’ and ‘I hood of blak satyn’, and so had probably been requested by
Fastolf himself, who was living in London from 1438 until 1454. The fact that
someone went to the trouble of moving one of Fastolf’s books to his residence in
London suggests that the book was going to be read there, for, or by, Fastolf. If
Fastolf was an advocate of education and a promoter of literacy, this suggests that
Fastolf’s books circulated as part of a readership community that spanned both
Norfolk and London.
Annotation as evidence for reading

Carol Meale examined the annotations that members of the Hopton family, a gentry family from Yorkshire, made in their books. She used these marks to hypothesise about the motivations of the family as readers. She argued that the marginal annotation ‘Nota de muleriibus...If that this come vnto the audience/ Of womman I am sur I schal be shent’ in *The Regiment of Princes* in Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS. Digby 185 suggests that the text could have pointed to duality in the nature of women. This indicates that the annotations that were made in books owned by, or associated with, Sir John Fastolf, have the potential to reveal what Fastolf and his discourse community found particularly interesting about the texts in his books.

Geoffrey Lester found that the annotations in the Oxford University, Magdalen College, MS. Latin 30 copy of the first English Translation of Vegetius’ *De re militari*, ‘involved the provision of a plausible alternative to a difficulty in the text’. The annotations within the books associated with Sir John Fastolf functioned in the same way: serving to explain and clarify the content for Sir John Fastolf and to relate the text to his specific interests. A parallel is found in letters of correspondence, where the written letter itself was only the bare bones of the information that the correspondent was communicating to Fastolf. If Fastolf wished, the letter could be clarified or supplemented with oral information by his servants. In the same way,

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60 This annotation was written in red on folio 140v of the tales of Jereslaus and Jonathan. As transcribed and cited by Meale in ‘The Politics of Book Ownership,’ 130.
61 The terminology ‘discourse community’ to describe those who annotated books is quoted from Nall, ‘The Production and Reception of Military Texts,’ 101.
63 For example, Thomas Howes wrote to Fastolf that Reginald Eccles had been beheaded. If Fastolf wanted extra information, Howes had sent more details to Worcester in a separate letter, which Worcester could explain to him on demand: ‘as Wyllyam Wurcestre can enforme you by a lettre I haue sente hym &c’ (letter 961, ll. 6-9, October 1447). See pages 125-151 above for the orality of the Fastolf Letters.
Fastolf’s literate associates were able to furnish the text of his books with explanatory notes.

A considerable amount of work has been done on the annotations made by William Worcester, which signposted connections between the texts and the life and interests of Sir John Fastolf.\(^{64}\) Worcester’s identity is strongest in the inscriptions that he made external to the texts themselves, such as in the flyleaves of books and in the blank spaces preceding the texts, in which he described the way in which he had engaged with the text. In the inscriptions that he made in the 1430s, his notes signalled his involvement with the text as scribe. For example, he wrote in the St. Peter’s Church, Tiverton manuscript of John Somer’s *Kalendarium*: ‘scriptum Bristolle per manum Willelmi Worcestre ad instantiam Richard Roper’ (written at Bristol by William Worcester by insistence of Richard Roper).\(^{65}\) By the 1450s, the inscriptions had begun to signpost his work as a compiler and editor of texts, rather than merely as a copyist. Worcester had strong historical interests, and was an avid collector of historical source material. He certainly used his collections to compose literature: BL, MS. Additional 28206 has been catalogued as ‘fragments of information probably preparation for the *Acta Domina Johannis Fastolf*’.

Worcester’s independent interests make it difficult to distinguish between his personal enterprises and the historical work that he carried out on behalf of his master. The *Acta Domina Johannis Fastolf* itself does not survive, but the material in MS. Additional 28206 shows how Fastolf benefitted from the education that he provided his servant: he was able to draw upon Worcester’s research skills in order to receive a piece of work that praised his military achievements. It can be shown that Worcester

\(^{64}\) The most comprehensive study of the annotations by William Worcester is Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature*, esp. 99-125. The editor of *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*, C. F. Bühler, pointed out ‘various notes “pro johanne ffastolf”’ in Cambridge University, Emmanuel College, MS. I.2.10, and went on to describe how these annotations related to the text (folios 3r, 11r, 14r, 19r, 46r, and 54r). Scrope, *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*, xxiv.

\(^{65}\) Octave 1, pages 1 and 2.
had literary interests that were not merely part of his responsibilities for Fastolf. William Worcester was particularly active in his own literary pursuits whilst in the service of his master: the existence of CUL, MS. Additional 7870, which was also owned in a much more expensive form by Sir John Fastolf (Bodleian Library, MS. Laud misc. 570), shows that he was a book owner in his own right. As well as owning this book, he made extensive annotations to the end of the first text in MS. Additional 7870, which stated that he was correcting the text in July 1450. So Worcester was not only an independent owner of manuscripts, but he was interested in the translation and adaptation of literary texts. These apparently independent interests suggest comparisons between Worcester and John Shirley (b.1366-d.1456), secretary to Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick (b.1382-d.1439). The sixteenth-century antiquarian John Stow noted that Shirley ‘painfully collected the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, Iohn Lidgate and other learned writers, which workes hee wrote in sundry volumes to remayne for posterity’. Margaret Connolly has shown that this activity was fueled by Shirley’s own interests: she pointed out that BL, MS. Additional 16165, has a ‘versified list of contents which explicitly addresses an audience of ‘dere sirs...boþe þe gret and the comine’, but contains ‘no other indications in the manuscript that Shirley prepared this collection for anyone but himself’. Sir John Fastolf seems to have fostered an literary environment within his circle: this was suggested by the interest that William Worcester and Stephen Scrope shared in literature. William Worcester wrote an epitaph in honour of Millicent Fastolf, Stephen

66 William Worcester owned more books in addition to this. For example, Bühler showed that Cambridge University, Emmanuel College, Cambridge MS. I. 2.10 probably belonged to Worcester by pointing out a note reading ‘pro Botoner’ on folio 11b alongside, ‘hevynes is a passion touching thingis passed and sorrowe is a fere of thingis for to come’. ‘Botoner’ was the pseudonym of William Worcester. Scrope, The Dicts and Sayings, xxiv.

67 See Nall, ‘The Production and Reception of Military Texts,’ 207.

68 Griffiths, ‘Shirley, John (c.1366-1456)’.

69 John Stow, A Survay of London (London: John Windet, 1603), 377 (this passage is not in the original 1598 version).

70 Connolly, John Shirley, 33.
Scrope’s mother. Additionally, Worcester used a chronicle that was partly compiled by Stephen Scrope’s cousin, William Scrope of Masham, for his Boke of Noblesse. K. B. McFarlane showed that there was ‘nothing unfashionable’ about Sir John Fastolf’s interest in the patronage of literature, as there was a great interest in literature amongst the East Anglian nobility: ‘the Lancastrian nobility widely imitated - and nowhere more than in East Anglia - the literary patronage which its royal house had exercised since John of Gaunt’s bereavement inspired the Book of the Duchesse’.

However, Fastolf’s interest in literary texts had to be balanced with the practical requirements of managing his properties and fighting his legal cases. Even William Worcester, who was so central to the composition and copying of literature for Fastolf, complained about Fastolf’s dependency on him for practical administrative work: on one occasion he was not allowed the time to visit his relations in the west country because Fastolf wanted him to write his will. Mundane secretarial duties would have undoubtedly taken up most of the time that Worcester might have otherwise spent on literary composition. If Worcester, who was especially interested in literary texts, struggled to find time for anything apart from his administrative work, this suggests that other men would have even less time for literary writing. So this begs the question: would these men have had the time to gain a literary education and to write texts, even if Fastolf would have liked them to?

Several of Fastolf’s associates, besides William Worcester and Stephen Scrope, were literate. Even those who were ridiculed for the lack of finesse in their written work were actually quite competent writers. For example, Norman Davis pointed out

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71 BL, MS. Additional 38692, folios 139-141.
72 See Hughes, ‘Stephen Scrope and the Circle,’ 118. For this chronicle by William Ferriby and William Scrope, see John Creton and John Webb, Translation of a French Metrical History of the Deposition of King Richard the Second (1823), 152.
74 ‘I asked licence to ryde yn-to my contree, and my maistre dyd not graunt it; he seyd hys wille was for to make, &c’ (letter 537, II. 8-9, 6th January 1456).
that John Russe, who gained most of his writing experience through managing Fastolf’s properties, ‘was described by Robert Cutler, vicar of Caister, as illiterate and unable to understand Latin’.\footnote{Davis cited Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS. Top. Norfolk c.4, abstract in James Gairdner, ed., The Paston Letters, 2: no. 565. Davis, ‘Language in Letters from Sir John Fastolf’s Household,’ 334.} However, Davis argued that Russe was, ‘ample literate in English, writing in three somewhat differing styles’.\footnote{Davis, ‘Language in Letters from Sir John Fastolf’s Household,’ 334.} However, the question is: how much were Fastolf’s literate associates involved in reading and writing beyond the practical administrative work that they did for Sir John Fastolf?

Several of the manuscripts associated with Sir John Fastolf contain annotations in unidentified hands. Some of these annotations concerned subjects that William Worcester was also enthusiastic about. For example, Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodley 179 contains translations of French words relating to medicine, which were made by an unidentified scribe. For example, next to ‘du feie’, an annotating hand wrote ‘þe lyver’ (folio iii r). We know that William Worcester had knowledge of medicine: one piece of evidence for this is a note in Oxford University, Magdalen College, MS. Latin 65, folio 50v that concerned the signs of ill health.\footnote{The annotating hand of this text of Walter Burley’s Aristotelis Problemata, which appears to be Worcester’s, wrote: ‘le suer est signe que le corps nest mie encore suffisaument purgie de la matiere de la maladie et la maladie ne cesse Jusques la cause est cesse du tout soit par bounte ou par aut器 manere la sueur faut et lors le corps Amende’ which translates as, ‘Sweat is a sign that the body is not at all sufficiently purged of the substance of the illness and the illness does not cease. Until the cause has completely ended, whether through goodness or by another manner, the sweat is lacking and then the body is healed’. I would like to thank Katharine Bilous for her assistance in translating this passage.} However, the annotations in MS. Bodley 179 show that another member of Fastolf’s circle had enough medical and linguistic knowledge to translate the contents of these French medical treatises, and they prove that Worcester did not have a monopoly on interpretive annotations in Fastolf’s books. Other manuscripts also contain additions by unidentified hands, often alongside William Worcester’s annotations. For example, BL, MS. Cotton Domitian A.II, The Chronicle of John Somer, which was annotated
by Worcester, contains seventeen different hands in total.\textsuperscript{78} Cambridge University, Emmanuel College, MS. I.2.10, which was Worcester’s copy of Stephen Scrope’s \textit{Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers}, contains corrections in two hands: one in darker ink which ‘supplies corrections to the Scrope text’, and another that ‘gives the readings of the Worcester version as well as correcting still other mistakes in the manuscript’.\textsuperscript{79} The writers of these annotations have not yet been identified, although it is possible that they were written by later hands, it is likely that at least some of these fifteenth century hands were contemporary with ownership of the books by Fastolf. This is especially likely in the case of the medical annotations, considering the interest that members of his circle would have had in illness and cures, as Fastolf dipped in and out of illness towards the end of his life.\textsuperscript{80} Therefore, it is possible that these unidentified annotations were made by literate men from the circle of Sir John Fastolf.

Bodleian Library, MS. Laud misc. 674 is an interesting example, as despite the fact that the text was compiled by William Worcester, the dominant text hand may not have been his. It has been suggested that the hand of at least part of the text was that of John Dunstaple (b.1390-d.1453), who owned at least one other astrological treatise.\textsuperscript{81} There are two different claims for the scribal work in the manuscript: folio 30 recto bears the inscription, ‘Explicit hec medicina scripta per W. Wyrcstre, dictus Botoner’, whilst folio 31 recto has the gloss, ‘In scriptura manus Johannis Dunstaple’.

\textsuperscript{78} See John Somer, ‘The Chronicle of John Somer,’ 210-211.
\textsuperscript{79} Scrope, \textit{The Dicts and Sayings}, xxxiii.
\textsuperscript{80} There is a wealth of evidence of interest in medical texts in the Fastolf circle. There is evidence that William Worcester and Stephen Scrope traded medical treatises, including texts that are written in BL, MS. Sloane 4 (for example, folios 50v, and 56r, which contain references to Stephen Scrope). MS Sloane 4 is an entire book of miscellaneous medical treatises and recipes for the cure of various ailments, which contains the hand of Worcester alongside many other unidentified hands (see page 288-289 below). FP 72, m. 7 reveals that William Worcester ministered to Sir John Fastolf’s growing bodily needs as he grew older and more infirm towards the end of his life. Cited in McFarlane, \textit{England in the Fifteenth Century}, 203, note 28.
\textsuperscript{81} The other treatise was Cambridge University, St John’s College, MS. 162. For more information about John Dunstable, see Margaret Bent, ‘Dunstable, John (d. 1453),’ \textit{ODNB}, online edn. 2004, http://www.oxforddnb.com/index/101008286/JohnDunstable [accessed February, 2011].
Dunstaple may have been in the service of the Duke of Bedford from the early 1420s as a member of his chapel. If Dunstable and Bedford were connected, then Dunstaple and Fastolf were probably associated with each other in France. If so, it is feasible that when Worcester was compiling a book for his master, he would have turned to an educated man like Dunstable, who by then had long been part of Fastolf’s circle, for material. If Dunstable did indeed have a hand in writing this manuscript, and the manuscript was compiled at the command of Sir John Fastolf, then this expands the group of men who had connections with Fastolf’s book collection.

Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodley 179 is, as Richard Beadle described it, a ‘well-produced early fifteenth-century copy of medical treatises by Aldobrandius of Siena’. Folio 1r of the text bears Fastolf’s motto ‘me fault fayre’ within the marginal decoration, which suggests that the text was commissioned especially for Sir John Fastolf. If this was the case, and if the text was indeed produced in the early fifteenth century, then it is surprising that it was not found in his ‘stewe hous’ at Caister in the 1448 inventory. It is possible that it was stored at the house where Fastolf lived at this time: Fastolf Place in London. If so, this is further indication that Fastolf owned other books in addition to the titles listed in his inventory. The manuscript has a note of contents that, like the text, was written in French by a French or French-trained scribe (folios. ii r - viii r). This note of contents appears to have been added after the text itself was written. It is in a different hand from the hand of the text that follows, and lacks the elaborate illumination of the rest of the manuscript: it never even received the enlarged capital that the scribe left space

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82 For this possible connection between Dunstable and Bedford see Stratford, ed., The Bedford Inventories, 67 and 95, which describes Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS. Don. b. 31 which may connect Dunstable with Bedford.

for. The palaeographical features of this script suggest that this table of contents were written by the French scribe, Luket Nantron. Nantron would be a feasible suggestion as the contents were written in French, and were written after the manuscript was originally compiled, and so may date from the time when we know that Nantron was writing texts associated with Fastolf: the mid-to-late 1450s.

The contents page of MS. Bodley 179 is further proof that Fastolf was part of an active community of readers, which encompassed men other than William Worcester, Stephen Scrope, and himself. In this case, someone within Fastolf’s circle (the evidence suggests Luket Nantron) read the medical treatises in MS. Bodley 179 and made a list of contents in order to improve the readability of the manuscript. Another individual later took this one step further by adding explanatory annotations to the contents, which provided translations for certain French phrases. For example, ‘de freses’ has the note ‘strawberyes’, and ‘des raignons’ has ‘þe feet of fowles’ (folio iii r). So someone within Fastolf’s circle was providing the kind of interpretive annotations that Geoffrey Lester found in the manuscript of De Re Militari. In the case of MS. Bodley 179, the annotator was helping an English reader with the interpretation of French phrases that he might have found difficult to understand. This shows that it was certainly not only William Worcester and Stephen Scrope who read, and wrote in, Fastolf’s books.

What is perhaps surprising is the lack of annotations in some of the books that were owned by Sir John Fastolf. Bodley 179 has ‘lyber manere Johanni Ffastolffe’, written on its back pastedown, which should link it with the readership community in Fastolf’s circle, if one did exist. However, the book has very few marginal

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84 See page 293 for a description of the features of Luket Nantron’s hand, which are shared by the hand of this table of contents.
85 See pages 293-299 below for a description of Luket Nantron’s scribal work associated with Sir John Fastolf.
86 Lester, introduction to The Earliest English Translation of Vegetius’ De re militari, 40.
annotations. Aside from the few notes on the contents page described above it is otherwise very sparse in annotations. Magdalen College, MS. Latin 8 contains headings in the scribal hand, but the additional annotations made by William Worcester were made after Fastolf’s death. Magdalen College, MS. Latin 26 has an inscription commemorating its donation to William Waynflete after Fastolf’s death, but otherwise the only mark is on the final folio of the text, folio 54r: ‘nota conclusionem’. Oxford University, Magdalen College, MS. Latin 206 has frequent marginal headings in red, but these were all made by the Italian scribes who wrote the texts. Oxford University, Magdalen College, MS. Latin 198 has a note reading ‘constat Willelmo Botener dicto Worcestre’ followed by his monogram. However, despite this note that announced that Worcester possessed the manuscript, the only annotations in the book are marginal finding aids written by the main scribal hands, additions by the second scribe to the work of the first (for example, folio 28r), and running titles in red. None of these annotations appear to be in the hand of William Worcester. Magdalen College, MS. Latin 166 has an inscription by William Worcester in the front, but yet, again, no annotations other than those made by the scribal hand.

This research shows that the three most common types of marginal annotations in the books associated with Sir John Fastolf were those made by the scribes of the texts themselves, those made by Worcester during Fastolf’s life to correct or revise the work for Fastolf, and those made by Worcester after Fastolf’s death as part of his

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87 Translated by Daniel Wakelin as: ‘To his most worshipful master William Waynflete, bishop of the seat of the cathedral church of St. Swithin of Winchester, which once before the time of the consecration was called the temple of Dagon in the era of the pagan people’ (Oxford University, Magdalen College, MS. Latin 26, flyleaf folio ii v). Wakelin, Humanism, Reading and English Literature, 97. There is evidence in Worcester’s Itineraries that such literary gifts were given little recognition by Waynflete. Worcester donated another manuscript, a copy of his translation of a work by Cicero, to the bishop but did not receive the reward that he was expecting: ‘1472. Die .10.Augusti presentau W. Episcopo Wyntoniensi apud Esher librum Tulij de Senectute per me translatum in anglis s[ed] nullum regardym recepi de Episcopo’ (1472. On 10 August I presented W[illiam Waynflete] Bishop of Winchester at Esher Tully’s book Of Old Age translated by me into English. But I got no reward from the Bishop’). Worcester, Itineraries, 252-253.
independent programme of learning. There were some interpretive annotations by unidentified hands, but these were relatively sparse. The most prolific of the types of annotation listed above were the first and last, and William Worcester’s hand dominates the annotations that were not made by the books’ textwriters.

BL, MS. Sloane 4 contains multiple layers of evidence about writing and reading from the fifteenth century onwards. This ‘book’ is a miscellany of separate recipes for various purposes, from cures for medical conditions to making ink, or catching fish. The majority of the texts bound into this book were the work of William Worcester. He apparently wrote these texts in the 1470s, long after Fastolf’s death, yet his hand in these texts is the neat script that was characteristic of his youth rather than the larger, scruffier hand that characterises the letters and documents that he wrote in the later years of his life. His work so dominates this manuscript that though a later hand acknowledged that this was the work of ‘seuerall Authors’, Worcester was the only one that he named: ‘Booke of medicines... By W[illia]m Wircestre or [Botim] Botanier’ (front flyleaf). Worcester’s work in this manuscript is diverse, which is testament to the range of his interests: for example folio 6-26r is ‘De virtute olei oliue arboris’ (about the virtues of olive oil, in Latin), folio 37r is a recipe for ‘Aqua vitae’ (in Latin), and folio 43r contains instructions to make black and white soaps (in English). Perhaps most interesting about this manuscript is the way that subsequent readers approached the texts that Worcester wrote in it. The activities of these later writers are a window into readership communities from Sir John Fastolf’s lifetime onwards.

The later hands in MS. Sloane 4 used the blank spaces that William Worcester left after his Latin remedies and recipes to add their own English additions, which were usually unrelated to the content of Worcester’s texts. For example, on folio 26v, there is a remedy for Hydropism, which was copied by William Worcester. The blank space
after this text was used by a total of five later writers. One of them added ‘a good sawce for a rosted capone’ (folio 26v), and another wrote ‘a medycyne for the pestylence of King Henry the VIII’ (folio 27r). These readers treated this book as a true miscellany, probably using it as a convenient place to jot down recipes at the moment that they encountered them. The hand of a later reader, Anthony Shupton, is particularly conspicuous throughout MS. Sloane 4. As well as writing his name several times throughout the manuscript, Shupton made his own textual additions and even deleted some of William Worcester’s work from the book by crossing it out. On folio 101r, Shupton wrote his name adjacent to where he had crossed out Worcester’s work, which may have been an attempt to preserve a record of his work as an editor of the text. MS. Sloane 4, then, is an important record of the editor being edited. This manuscript is special because it was the only book in which William Worcester’s work was annotated, amended, and added to, in the way that he annotated, amended, and added to the work of others.

The number of annotations that were made by William Worcester in comparison with those made by other writers may not be so surprising. Worcester’s daily duties involved a great deal of writing: he was Fastolf’s secretary, his most prolific letterwriting scribe, his collector of genealogical information, and the compiler and composer of his literature. Not only this, but Worcester had an independent interest in reading and writing that was probably sparked by his studies at Oxford, and which continued long after Fastolf’s death. The notebooks of William Worcester, compiled without the intervention of a patron like Sir John Fastolf, are the best indication of his own scholarly interests. As McFarlane wrote, ‘they were intended for one eye only.

88 There are no clues about the identity of Anthony Shupton, aside from the fact his hand appears in this manuscript.
89 These notebooks are Cambridge University, Corpus Christi College, MS. 210; BL, MS. Additional 28208; BL, MS. Cotton Julius F. vii; BL, MS. Royal 13. I.; BL, MS. Sloane 4; and College of Arms, MS. Arundel 48.
their writer’s’. They are evidence that William Worcester did not read, write, translate, and edit texts merely because Fastolf wanted him to. It may be that other men within Fastolf’s circle did not have the same need, or motivation, to make annotations in books. So, for more evidence of a readership community within Fastolf’s circle beyond Fastolf, Worcester, and Scrope, one has to look beyond the annotations, and instead at the scribal hands of the texts themselves.

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90 McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, 221.
Chapter Five: Fastolf’s circle as the readers and writers of texts in manuscript books.

b) Textwriters in the circle of Sir John Fastolf:

This section will focus upon the scribes who copied the extant manuscripts that have been connected with Sir John Fastolf and other members of his circle. It will question what identifying the scribal hands of his manuscripts might reveal about the way in which Fastolf co-ordinated the writing of his books. If we imagine Fastolf as part of a readership community then the men who wrote these books were also part of this community, since scribes were readers as well as writers.\(^{91}\) Alexandra Gillespie pointed out how varied the spheres of book production were in the fifteenth century:

The sites for English medieval book production remained multiple and shifting: Chaucer's desk; the household of the earl of Warwick (where the scribe John Shirley sometimes worked); Hoccleve’s office of the Privy Seal; the cells of monks like John Lydgate at his monastery at Bury St Edmunds; the room of William Abell, fifteenth century London Limner (and so, by 1450, ‘Stationer’); and eventually the printshop kept by Caxton in Westminster from 1476.\(^ {92}\)

This section investigates how Fastolf encountered and selected the writers within his own sphere of book production, and how closely the composition and writing of literature related to other writing activities, such as the tasks of a clerk or administrator. There was a large number of men who were responsible for writing texts for Sir John Fastolf. Many of them have not yet been identified.\(^ {93}\) Other men were named as scribes of Fastolf or members of his circle, but cannot be linked with any palaeographical evidence of their work. For example, there was John Bussard, who was described writing books for Worcester.\(^ {94}\) The Venn diagram, figure 13, shows that Bussard was living at Caister in the post-1454 period, along with Fastolf and

\(^{91}\) Cato and Mooney pointed out that the fact that William Worcester made a copy of John Somer’s *Kalendarium* in 1438 is evidence that he read a manuscript of this text at this time. Somer, ‘The Chronicle of John Somer,’ 214.


\(^{93}\) Godfried Croenen noted a similar gap in the scholarship on French-produced manuscripts, and pointed out that there was work still to be done on identifying French scribes: ‘Most late medieval scribes...remain largely unknown. Even when we know their names - because they signed their manuscripts or identified themselves in the colophons - these scribes can often not be identified in other documentary sources’. Croenen, introduction to *Patrons, Authors and Workshops*, ed. Croenen and Ainsworth, 1-20 (16-17).

\(^{94}\) See FP 72 for the mention of John Bussard.
Worcester, and so would be quite a likely figure as a scribe of literary texts for Fastolf. However, Bussard’s hand has not yet been identified in the written corpus associated with the Fastolf circle. In contrast, some of Fastolf’s textwriters *can* be named and linked with palaeographical evidence and their work is described and analysed in this section.
Luket Nantron

Circumstantial evidence in the letters connected with Sir John Fastolf shows that a man with the unusual name ‘Luket Nantron’ was working as a clerk within Fastolf’s circle. In a letter tentatively dated by Norman Davis to November 1456, Fastolf told John Paston I that he had received a letter from William Barker, written in Nantron’s hand, regarding his servants at Cotton. A later letter reveals that Nantron wrote for another of Fastolf’s associates Henry Windsor: Windsor wrote to John Paston I, excusing himself for using ‘Luket’ as his secretary but he ‘had no leiser’ to write the letter himself (letter 574, ll. 7-8). This is evidence that Nantron was working at the bottom of a hierarchy of clerks, since he acted as a scribe for men who were also servants of Sir John Fastolf and who were accustomed to writing their own letters.

Until now, the only palaeographical evidence of Nantron’s scribal work was his hand in London, College of Arms, MS. M.9. This book contains Basset’s Chronicle, which Benedicta Rowe described as a ‘plain soldierly account of the wars’, that was intended to be presented to Sir John Fastolf. It was composed by Peter Basset, Christopher Hansson, and Luket Nantron, and is in the hand of Nantron. To briefly

95 Date of birth uncertain. William Worcester wrote that his date of Nantron’s death was ‘about’ 4th October 1471 (Worcester, Itineraries, 255). However, this would contradict the palaeographical evidence of FP 84, which the evidence suggests was written by him, and which is entered under ‘after 1472’ in William Macray’s catalogue of the Fastolf Papers. The training, and scribal work, of Luket Nantron is also described in my article, Deborah Thorpe, ‘Documents and Books: A Case Study of Luket Nantron and Geoffrey Spirleng as Fifteenth-Century Administrators and Textwriters,’ Journal of the Early Book Society 14 (2011): 195-216 in the context of examining the milieu from which administrative clerks were drawn, and the overlap between their administrative work and their literary textwriting.

96 ‘I receyvid by Henré Hansson on Thordsay last passid at iiiij after none certeyn lettres, amonges whiche I receyvid on from William Barker writen of Lukettes hande’ (letter 569, ll. 1-3).

97 There is further evidence that even men who were able to write, and who had writing as their primary occupation, at times used clerks to write for them. In a document of William Worcester’s expenses after Fastolf’s death, he wrote that ‘in expensis clerici mei...xvi d.’, which shows that he had his own clerk (FP 72).

98 Rowe believed that Basset’s Chronicle was ‘plain’ because it was ‘almost entirely free from the rather vainglorious spirit in which Hall writes’ and ‘less prolific of adjectives than the sixteenth-century chronicle’, and ‘soldierly’ because it was ‘rich in the names of those companions in arms and well-tried foes whom Fastolf would delight to recall’ and was ‘marked by a genuine respect for the enemy’. Rowe, ‘A Contemporary Account of the Hundred Years War,’ 513.

99 The application of Luket Nantron’s name to the scribal hand of MS. M.9 is based on the title that
digress in order to describe some of the characteristics of Luket Natron’s hand, he used a very tall capital A (see Appendix E, l. 1 ‘Avaint’), he wrote a g with ‘horns’ and a looped descender that curls to the right (Appendix D, l. 36 ‘grant’), he used a biting de (Appendix E, l. 4 ‘de’). His p has a looped hook (Appendix E, l. 17 ‘piquet’), and his h has an ascender that reaches to the right, and a descender that curls to the left as he finished the letter (Appendix E, line 32 ‘henry’). His capital B is distinctive (Appendix E, l. 16 ‘Baron’ as is his y (Appendix E, l. 33 ‘Gyugy’).

K. B. McFarlane suggested that Nantron not only contributed towards this text in the capacity of scribe but that, since he was a clerk, it was in fact he who led its composition.100 The Basset’s Chronicle manuscript demonstrates the link between ‘literary’ collaboration, and the other contexts in which men interacted within a gentry circle. Basset, Hansson, and Fastolf formed their connection when the three men were in the service of John Duke of Bedford in Normandy.101 Nantron was a French native, thus it is quite possible that Fastolf first encountered him in France too - perhaps Nantron was one of Fastolf’s clerks in France.102 Fastolf’s connection with Basset, Hansson, and Nantron, which had originated in their shared military experiences, subsequently developed into a readership community as the three men worked together to compose a piece of literature.

William Worcester added to the text, in which Nantron was the only man whose clerkly duties were mentioned: ‘& Christoforum Hanson de patria almayn quondam cum Thoma Beaufort duce Excestrie ac luket Nantron natus de Parys vnus de clericis Johannis fastolf’ (folios xxxj-lxvj, my emphasis). He is also the only man in the list who did not have a direct military connection with Fastolf. This, of course, does not mean that the hand is certainly his, but makes it likely.

100 McFarlane, England in the Fifteenth Century, 211.
101 Christopher Hansson was an archer in the garrison of St. Valéry from 1424. See Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. Fr. 25707,52, cited in Rowe, ‘A Contemporary Account of the Hundred Years War,’ 506. G. L. Harriss neatly summarised how connections were formed through shared military experiences in the following statement: ‘[b]y 1421 the majority of gentry had acquired a professionalism in arms that far exceeded that of their fourteenth-century ancestors. War, rather than family, inheritance, or shire magistracy, had guided their careers, reinforcing the links between lords and retainers, forging bonds of brotherhood in arms, and fostering both discipline and opportunism’. Harriss, Shaping the Nation, 179.
102 Worcester refered to Nantron as a ‘natus de Parys’ in the title that he gave to Basset’s Chronicle.
More circumstantial evidence, largely from after Fastolf’s death, demonstrates how closely Christopher Hansson and Luket Nantron worked together, which makes it unsurprising that Nantron was the scribe of Basset’s Chronicle. In 1461, Clement Paston wrote to John Paston I promising him five marks and assuring him that, ‘pe remnawnte I trow I xall gett vp-on Cristofire Hanswm and Lwket’ (letter 116, ll. 38-39, 25th August 1461). Then in a letter written after 1466, Fastolf’s executors claimed: ‘Item, dictus Johannes recepit per manus dicti Thome Howys, Willelmi Paston, Thome Playter, Thome Plummer de London, scryvaner, Christofori Hansson, armigeri, et Luce Nantron ad diuersas vices tam Londonijs quam in Suthwerk’ (letter 906, ll. 103-106, my emphasis). This indicates that Nantron was working as an assistant to Hansson whilst Hansson was the receiver of Sir John Fastolf’s revenues in London. Interestingly, there is no record of Nantron doing scribal work for Hansson, despite the fact that he was evidently accustomed to doing written work for other men. FP 51 is an account roll of Christopher Hansson, of rents due to Sir John Fastolf, but the scribal hand is not that of Luket Nantron. Regardless, it does seem that the pair worked together during Fastolf’s lifetime, in both an administrative and a literary context, and that they later passed together into the service of John Paston.

The preceding two paragraphs have described the evidence contained in College of Arms, MS. M. 9 that links the name of Luket Nantron to the hand that wrote Basset’s Chronicle. The research of this thesis has found evidence for Nantron’s involvement in the writing of other non-administrative texts in manuscript books - for this evidence, see page 325-326 concerning several texts in College of Arms, MS Arundel

103 Christopher Hansson’s role was evidently diverse, for as well as his duties in London, he had also been appointed searcher of the ships in the port of Great Yarmouth in December 1458. See Calendar of Fine Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office: Henry VI, 1452-1461, 220.
104 For evidence of Hansson’s role of receiver: he was described in one of the documents associated with Sir John Fastolf as ‘collectoris redditum firmarum, et denariorum forinsecorum Johannis Fastolf’ (FP 51, written in 1454-1456).
48, and pages 285-286 for the possibility that he provided a table of contents in Oxford University, MS. Bodley 179. However, this section of the thesis will now compare Basset’s Chronicle with Nantron’s administrative written work, in order to demonstrate the link between literary writing and clerkly administration.

There is palaeographical evidence for Nantron’s non-literary writing in the unpublished documents associated with Sir John Fastolf. This evidence suggests that Nantron was a prolific, adaptable scribe whose main duties were the practical clerkly tasks associated with the management of properties and the administration of legal matters at court.

A document in the Fastolf Letters and Papers corpus in the archives of Magdalen College in Oxford is partially in the hand of Luket Nantron. This document, FP 48, is a draft petition on behalf of Sir John Fastolf concerning the dispute between himself and Huw Fastolf over his estate of Bradwell in Suffolk (See Appendix F and G). There is no date on the document, but since the dispute was referred to in a letter dated to around 15th November 1456, it is likely that the petition was written around this time.\(^{105}\) The document was begun by a scribe who, judging from the palaeographical features of his script, was probably Luket Nantron. This identification comes from a comparison of the hand of FP 48 with Nantron’s hand in the College of Arms’ text of Basset’s Chronicle. Luket Nantron then broke off his work part way through, and another scribe continued (see Appendix G). The second scribe made extensive corrections to Nantron’s work. The palaeographical features of the correcting scribe’s work suggest that he was another of Fastolf’s servants, William Barker. This identification arises from similarities between the corrections and FP 26,

\(^{105}\) ‘I shuld haue disseasid Ser Hue Fastolf of þe manere, where as I haue sufficent evidences preuyng a trewe saale and purchace’ (letter 569, ll. 20-32, 15th November, probably 1456). Norman Davis dated this letter to ‘probably 1456’ because it refers to the Archbishop and Chancellor as different people, which was only the case after October 1456, when William Waynflete succeeded the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Bourchier, as Chancellor.
a letter that Barker wrote on behalf of his master Sir John Fastolf (See Appendix H). Barker in Appendix G and the correcting hand of Appendix F both wrote the same looped d (Appendix G, l. 3 ‘trowbled’, Appendix H, l. 7 ‘payed’), f (Appendix G, l. 6 ‘of’, Appendix H, l. 11 ‘for’), sigmoid s (Appendix G, l. 6 ‘this’, Appendix H, l. 12 ‘was’), looped w (Appendix G, l. 7 ‘wheche’, Appendix H, l. 7 ‘wherefore’), loose anglicana e (Appendix G, l. 8 ‘bille’, Appendix H, l. 1 ‘where’), k (Appendix G, l. 9 ‘kyng’, Appendix H, l. 4 ‘lyke’), looped b (Appendix G, l. 9 ‘beyng’, Appendix H, l. 3 ‘bille’), p with a very long descender (Appendix G, l. 11 ‘put’, Appendix H, l. 5 ‘prisoner’), y (Appendix G, l. 13 ‘they’, Appendix H, l. 10 ‘employment’), and long s (Appendix G, l. 13 ‘seyd’. Appendix H, l. 13 ‘present’).

To reinforce the palaeographical evidence that identifies the corrector as Barker, there is circumstantial evidence that connects him with administrative duties associated with Bradwell. FP 35 records Christopher Hansson’s expenses in the dispute over Bradwell. The majority of these expenses were payments made to William Barker for various clerkly duties, primarily the copying and delivery of documents. The working relationship described above, with Barker apparently having seniority over Nantron, is also suggested by the circumstantial evidence. There is a comment by Fastolf in another letter of correspondence stating that Luket had written a letter on Barker’s behalf: ‘I receyvid [a letter] from William Barker writen of Lukettes hand’ (letter 569, ll. 3-4, 15th November 1456, my emphasis).

A document that was written after the death of Sir John Fastolf is a further example of Nantron drafting and another scribe correcting. This document is Fastolf FP 84, a petition from William Worcester to James Goldwell, bishop of Norwich. The main hand appears to be that of Luket Nantron, and this time the corrections were made by William Worcester himself. FP 70 is the final example of a document that

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106 Line numbers here refer to the line number within the image in the Appendices, rather than the line number of the original document.
contains the hands both of Luket Nantron and William Worcester. It is an account of what was given to William Yelverton at the funeral of Sir John Fastolf, and in goods afterwards, including, ‘a fynger of Seynt John the Baptist’. Palaeographical features of the script of the account show that it was written by Luket Nantron, then it was copied out underneath by William Worcester. This is evidence that Nantron and Worcester were still working together in the years following the death of Sir John Fastolf. So, returning to the text of Basset’s Chronicle, William Worcester claimed that he had a hand in the composition of the text, in the capacity of the corrector of the text: ‘per diligenciam Willelmi Wircestre’. This relationship is not surprising when it is considered in the light of their collaboration in an administrative context, in FP 70 and FP 84.

The integral role that Nantron played in the composition and writing of Basset’s Chronicle whilst he also held an important role as a clerk, administrator, and assistant, shows how closely aligned Fastolf’s ‘readership community’ was with the management of his military, legal, and administrative matters. The fact that years after Nantron wrote Basset’s Chronicle he returned to writing these administrative documents indicates that literary scribal work was just one aspect of his work within the Fastolf circle. The task of writing Basset’s Chronicle may even have been a direct outcome of his administrative work, if it was assigned to him as a result of his administrative connection with Fastolf’s fellow military man, Christopher Hansson.

Jeremy Goldberg pointed out the divide between manuscript books and the ‘bulk of manuscript material’ such as accounts, indentures and memoranda that were

107 See the heading to Basset’s Chronicle in London, College of Arms, MS. M. 9, folio xxxi.
written by ‘professional writers including scriveners’. This differentiation does apply to some of the written work associated with the Fastolf circle. For example, the neatly written, exquisitely decorated, text of Bodleian Library, MS. Laud misc. 570 is a complete contrast with the highly corrected, highly abbreviated, Latin text of many of the documents in the ‘Fastolf Papers’ in the archives of Magdalen College, Oxford. However, the work of Geoffrey Spirleng suggests that the line between ‘literature’ and ‘administration’ was not always so easily drawn: his work in the 1448 inventory, FP 43, is as neat and readable as his work in the Glasgow University, MS Hunter 197 (U.1.1) copy of The Canterbury Tales. In addition, the inventory is in English, rather than the Latin that might be expected in such a document. And though Spirleng and Luket Nantron were the scribes of administrative written material, they were never described as ‘scryvaners’ in the way that Thomas Plummer was in Letter 906. So it seems that Fastolf’s writers were in a class of their own besides the ‘professional writers’ and ‘bookhands’ that Goldberg described.

The scribe William Ebesham, who wrote a great volume of written material for John Paston II years after the death of Sir John Fastolf, had a great breadth of written output. Unlike Nantron, Ebesham recorded his written work in two letters to his patron. The circumstantial evidence in these letters displays exactly how wide a scribe’s repertoire could be, and supports the argument made above, that administrative and literary written work were not perceived as distinct by these scribes. Ebesham listed seven written items in letter 751 of 1468, and fourteen

111 Ian Doyle has pointed out that the textwriting work done by Ebesham for John Paston II had the characteristics of a document hand rather than what one might expect in high-end literary text production: ‘[John Paston’s Grete Boke was] not on membrane in a bastard anglicana and with illustrations and armorials...but on paper in a current secretary with simple flourishing’. This is evidence for the narrow boundaries between document production and literary textwriting. Doyle, ‘English Books In and Out of Court,’ 178. Doyle cited his own article, ‘The Work of a Late Fifteenth-Century Scribe, William Ebesham’.
items in letter 755 of 1469. The list in the later letter included ‘a litill booke of pheesyk’, ‘wrytyng of half the prevy seal’ (both on paper and then more clearly on parchment), the well-known still extant ‘Grete Booke’ of John Paston, and the *Epistle d’Othea* (the ‘Othea Pistill’). So, this single scribe was responsible for a medical treatise, administrative documents, entire compilations such as the ‘Grete Booke’, and literary work such as his copy of Stephen Scrope’s *Epistle d’Othea*. He did drafting work as well as neat copies, and he also rubricated his work, for which he also asked for payment: ‘Item, for the rubrissheyng of all the booke iij s. iiij d.’ (letter 755, ll. 32, spring 1469). Thomas Howes, Fastolf’s former chaplain, acknowledged the large volume of Ebesham’s written work, since when Ebesham informed him that he was lacking some payment for his work, Howes recommended that he write an itemized list. William Ebesham wrote: ‘Sir Thomas desirid me to remembir wele what I haue had in money at soondry tymes of hym’ (letter 751, ll. 8-11, between July and end of October 1468). This diversity in Ebesham’s duties is contextualised by a literary depiction, in *Mum and the Sothsegger*, of a bag of ‘bokes vnbreded’.

This bag of books contains a variety of written material: ‘pamphiletz’, a ‘copie’, a ‘scrowe’, a ‘writte’ and a schedule. This variety, as Alexandra Gillespie has said, ‘describes a moment in the history of England when textual material seemed suddenly to proliferate in a wide variety of forms’. The fictional bag of ‘bokes’ gives some context to the wide variety that we see in records of the work of the scribe William Ebesham, as one of the men whose responsibility it would have been, in real-life fifteenth century London, to write such diverse written pieces.

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113 ‘hym’ referred to John Paston’s servant, John Pampyng, who it seems was responsible for the payment of William Ebesham.
Geoffrey Spirleng and Luket Nantron were adaptable, literate, servants whose responsibilities included any written work that was requested of them by their master, whether it was literary text writing or property administration. The palaeographical evidence described above suggests that they (Nantron especially) would have had scribal repertoires that were just as diverse as William Ebesham’s. It is likely that more examples of literary work in their hands will come to light.
Chapter Five: Fastolf’s circle as the readers and writers of texts in manuscript books.

Ricardus Franciscus

The connection that Ricardus Franciscus had with Sir John Fastolf’s books was in some ways similar to, and in other ways very different from, that of Luket Nantron. Franciscus was also an administrator. He was in London at the time when Fastolf was living in the capital, and he was a prolific writer of administrative documents. For example, he wrote the statutes of the Archdeaconry of London, dated 1447. Then later in his career he was scribe both of a patent of arms in French that was dated 24th September 1456, which was signed and sealed by John Smert, Garter King of Arms, and of a two-volume cartulary compiled by John Cok in the 1450s and 1460s. Like Nantron, he was probably French. However, unlike Nantron who was trained and did most of his writing as a clerk within the circle of Sir John Fastolf, Franciscus appears not to have written any documents or letters for Fastolf or his associates.

Franciscus was the only named scribe of Sir John Fastolf’s manuscript books whose hand has not been identified in the legal and administrative documents associated with him. There were other anonymous scribes whose hands have been found only in literary manuscripts. However, apart from this small number of


118 The hands of Ricardus and Abell are further found in a two-volume cartulary compiled by John Cok in the 1450s and 1460s’. Martha Driver, ‘Me fault faire,’ 429. See also Kathleen Scott, ‘A Mid-Fifteenth-Century Illuminating Shop and Its Customers,’ Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 31 (1968): 170-196 (170, n. 3).

119 Lisa Jefferson pointed out that the ‘minor emendations, alterations and small additions to the text’ of Nancy, Archives Départementales de Meurthe et Moselle, MS. H. 80 were those that could only have been introduced by someone who was fully fluent in continental French, not just Anglo Norman’. Lisa Jefferson, ‘Two Fifteenth-Century Manuscripts,’ 23. See also Nall, ‘Ricardus Franciscus,’ 429; and Richard Hamer’s assertion that Ricardus, ‘seems to have been French, or at least strongly influenced by French scribal models’, in Hamer, ‘Spellings,’ 69.
unidentified textwriters, almost every man whose name can be linked with Sir John Fastolf in *any* way did some kind of administrative or advisory work for him. For example, John Paston, who was his distant relative and neighbour, had the important role of legal advisor to Fastolf. William Worcester composed literature for Fastolf, but his tasks were primarily secretarial. Thomas Howes, his chaplain, had probably one of the most diverse roles: directing Fastolf’s Norfolk-based associates, managing his documents, and disciplining his servants.

There is some evidence in the documents associated with Fastolf’s properties and lands that might suggest that Franciscus rented land from Sir John Fastolf. FP 69 contains a list of Fastolf’s acquisitions in Norfolk, some of which he rented to others. Among them is, ‘Mesuagium in Castre vacat [sic: ‘vocat’] Ffraunceys cum terris arabilibus et ceteris pertinencijs sine proquitirur’. The name of the mesuage in the document acts in the genitive case, referring to possession of the land by a man named ‘Franceys’. If ‘Francey’ was in fact Richardus Franciscus, then Franciscus was a feoffee of Fastolf as well as a scribe. Malcolm Parkes has argued that Ricardus Franciscus was actually a London man: ‘Franceys’ (who signs documents as Ricardus Franciscus) has sometimes been regarded as a French scribe working in London, but Franceys was a common name in many trades in London during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Whether Franciscus was a London man, or a Frenchman, Parkes’s belief that the man who signed his name ‘Franciscus’ was known as ‘Franceys’ strengthens the possibility that the ‘Ffraunceys’ in FP 69 referred to him. If the man named in the document *was* the same man who wrote manuscripts for Fastolf, this is evidence for a connection between the two men that extended beyond

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120 A mesuage was ‘a residence, dwelling house; farmstead; also, a household’. See the entry for ‘mesuage’ in McSparran, ed., ‘The Middle English Dictionary’, ‘mesuāge (n.)’.
the writing of manuscript books. There is evidence further down the same document that one of Fastolf’s other writers, William Barker, was holding land from Fastolf: ‘mesuagium vocat Barkers in Saxthorpe cum terras pratus pastueis’. Therefore, it would be feasible that Franciscus rented land from Fastolf.

Looking at the extant manuscripts in the hand of Richardus Franciscus reveals that most of the text writing that Franciscus did was for individuals who were associated with Sir John Fastolf in some way. For example, he wrote for other military men such as John Smert, Garter King of Arms. In addition to this, it seems that Franciscus wrote for men who, like Fastolf, had served John Duke of Bedford: the fact that another book in the hand of Franciscus, BL, MS. Harley 2915, contains a prayer for the duke has led Cath Nall to suppose that it was written for someone in his service. Franciscus also wrote for Anne Harling, Fastolf’s niece. He even wrote for Fastolf’s servants: he produced a copy of Des Quatre Vertus Cardinaux for Fastolf’s servant William Worcester (CUL, MS. Additional 7870).

The fact that the scribal skills of Ricardus Franciscus were employed by a number of individuals who were connected with Sir John Fastolf supports the suggestion that Franciscus was part of Fastolf’s community of readers. This circle centred upon the literate military leaders who had served the duke of Bedford in France. The consistent connection between Ricardus Franciscus and limnours such as William Abell suggest that he worked within a collective of professional scribes and illuminators in London. So Franciscus was involved with a circle of manuscript consumers, and a

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122 A list of the manuscripts attributable to Ricardus Franciscus can be found in Driver, ‘Me fault faire,’ appendix, and in Nall, ‘Ricardus Franciscus,’ 209-210. Lisa Jefferson challanged this list in ‘Two Fifteenth Century Manuscripts,’ 22. James-Maddocks and Thorpe have merged and re-explained these lists in ‘A Petition Written by Ricardus Franciscus’.

123 John Smert’s book is Nancy, Archives Departmentales de Meurthe et Moselle, MS. H. 80.

124 BL, MS. Harley 2915 is a Book of Hours for the use of Sarum in Latin. Nall, ‘Ricardus Franciscus,’ 299.


126 Martha Driver looked at the several manuscripts copied by Franciscus that demonstrate repeated co-operation between certain scribes and artists, and concluded that these connections ‘imply the existence
corresponding community of manuscript producers. It could have been an individual from within either of these communities who recommended Ricardus Franciscus to Sir John Fastolf as a competent scribe. It is equally likely that Franciscus would have become part of the Fastolf circle outside of the context of book production: it has been shown that book trade members had first-hand contact with fellow London citizens in the context of serving as mainpernors in legal cases, being named as guardians, and acting as arbitrators. It may have been in one of these contexts that Franciscus promoted his work as a textwriter to Fastolf or one of his associates. Then once Fastolf had begun to employ Franciscus as a scribe of his literary manuscripts, Franciscus became a member of an even wider readership circle that incorporated literate servants such as Worcester who themselves wished to own literary texts. The fact that Worcester would enlist Franciscus to write a manuscript, when he was a scribe himself, reinforces the impression that Franciscus was a professional textwriter whereas Worcester was first and foremost a secretary. Worcester’s awareness of a distinction between himself as a literate servant and a professional writer like Franciscus is confirmed by the following statement that Worcester made in the introduction to a text in his Itineraries: ‘Excerpta ex calendario sub custodia scriptoris text wryter commorantis apud Seynt Mary Strond’ (Cambridge University, Corpus Christi, MS. 210, page 58). Worcester explained that he was copying an excerpt from a text that was in the possession of a ‘text writer’. This is the only place in which the title of ‘text writer’ was written in the corpus of written


127 Martha Driver identified the complementary groups of manuscript producers and consumers in London. Along with the ‘coterie of artists’ mentioned in the note above, she found a corresponding ‘network of aristocratic patrons’. Driver, ‘Me fault faire,’ 431.

material associated with Sir John Fastolf, and it suggests that Worcester perceived
textwriters as a category of writers that was distinct from those who copied
administrative and legal documents.
Geoffrey Spirleng

Like Luket Nantron, Geoffrey Spirleng began his career doing clerkly work for men within the circle of Sir John Fastolf. He worked initially as an assistant to Fastolf’s chaplain, Thomas Howes. Letter 961 written in the year 1447 is the earliest extant letter in Spirleng’s hand in this capacity. Fastolf routinely received letters from Howes, Spirleng, and Fastolf’s receiver Walter Shipdam, jointly. When Fastolf received these letters from the trio, the letter was usually in Spirleng’s hand, which suggests that he was junior to the other two in status, or at least was more accustomed to doing scribal work. Richard Beadle supposed that Spirleng may have been trained by Thomas Howes. If this were the case, the relationship between the two was similar to the relationship between Luket Nantron and William Barker (see pages 295-296 above). However, as an alternative, Beadle suggested that Spirleng might have been schooled ‘in business and estate management of the kind that was available, for example, in Oxford’. There is also a possibility that Spirleng might have trained in London. These two suggestions have contrasting implications about the organisation of reading and writing activity within Fastolf’s circle. Either training occurred ‘in-house’ amongst a community of writers of varying degrees of expertise and experience, or clerks moved into his circle having already been trained at an institution such as Oxford University. Whether scribes were trained within the circle

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129 Oxford University, Magdalen College Archives EP 176/9 is an example of Spirleng’s personal accounts, which were drawn up for Howes. Cited in Richard Beadle, ‘Geoffrey Spirleng,’ 122.
130 Beadle, ‘Geoffrey Spirleng,’ 123.
131 There is a general lack of research into the training of clerks in London, but for some information about the training of clerks in London, see Dodd, ‘The Rise of English,’ 121. E. W. Ives explained how London-trained lawyers might make the transition to the provinces: ‘Over half the lawyers trained in the Inns of Court, and an even greater proportion of those who attended the Inns of Chancery, failed to secure a position in the central courts and therefore went into provincial practice’. It is possible that this movement towards the provinces was also made by men who trained as clerks in London. Ives, The Common Lawyers in Pre-Reformation England, 150-151. For the training of non-lawyers, see Dodd, Justice and Grace, which described the ‘large, amorphous, and for the most part, anonymous group of writing clerks’ in London who ‘[a]lthough not directly employed by the crown, many of these clerks like their counterparts in the localities, would have received their initial training in the Inns of Chancery and other departments of state’ (312).
or not, it certainly seems that they developed their literary interests whilst in the service of Sir John Fastolf. Richard Beadle supposed that Geoffrey Spirleng’s interest in literature grew as a result of his interaction with bibliophiles in the circle of Sir John Fastolf. Spirleng did have contact with literary manuscripts whilst in the service of Sir John Fastolf. In 1448, when Spirleng was just twenty-two years old, he walked around Caister Castle compiling an inventory of the belongings of Sir John Fastolf. These ranged from the copious number of items of clothing in Fastolf’s wardrobe, to the vestments in the chapel, to the brass pots in the kitchen. Among the most interesting items, though, were the numerous books that Fastolf kept in the ‘stewe hous’ next to his chamber. Spirleng diligently recorded seventeen books of wide-ranging content including a Bible, chronicles, romances, and numerous classical works including those of Aristotle (see Appendix I). The books that Spirleng would have seen in Fastolf’s stewhouse were in French, English, and Latin and many, especially those in French, may have come from John duke of Bedford, whom Fastolf served in France until Bedford’s death in 1435.

The question is: did Spirleng ever actually read any of the diverse books that he encountered in Fastolf’s stewhouse? After Fastolf’s death Spirleng went on to demonstrate a strong interest in writing and reading literature: in the 1470s he found the time to write the copy of The Canterbury Tales that is now Glasgow University Library, MS. Hunter 197 (U. 1.1), which Beadle pointed out he did as ‘a part-time undertaking, fitted in piecemeal amidst a variety of other activities’. By this time Spirleng was a civic and guild official of Norwich. Manly and Rickert suggested that

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133 For the duke of Bedford’s books see Stratford, ed., The Bedford Inventories, 96-99, and 119-123. Richard Beadle pointed out that it was impossible to know whether the duke’s books made their way into Fastolf’s collection, but that several of the unusual titles in Fastolf’s collections were shared by the French royal library that Bedford bought in 1425. Beadle, ‘Geoffrey Spirleng,’ 98, note 12 and 13.

134 Beadle, ‘Geoffrey Spirleng,’ 123.
the fact that Geoffrey Spirleng managed to get hold of one of the exemplars of MS. Hunter 197 (U. 1.1) from William Boleyn is a reason to suppose that he had risen to a high status as an official in Norwich by the 1470s.\textsuperscript{135} However, it may also be significant that William was the son of Geoffrey Boleyn, who was associated with Sir John Fastolf decades earlier. The Boleyn family purchased the manor of Blickling in Norfolk from Fastolf, and Geoffrey Boleyn was Lord Mayor of London in 1457-1458: thus the Boleyn family had connections with both locations in which Fastolf spent most of his time.\textsuperscript{136} This suggests that Geoffrey Spirleng as a fifty-year-old town clerk and enthusiastic reader may have still been making use of the contacts that he made as a literate young man in the circle of Sir John Fastolf. However, unlike Luket Nantron, there is no record that Spirleng wrote \textit{any} literary manuscripts while Fastolf was alive.

The dedication that Geoffrey Spirleng showed in his elder years to producing books of literature, even whilst he was busy with other administrative duties, makes his apparent abstinence from the production of literary manuscripts during Fastolf’s life particularly conspicuous.

\textsuperscript{135} Manly and Rickert, \textit{The Text of The Canterbury Tales}, 1: 187.

\textsuperscript{136} See letter 619, 12\textsuperscript{th} October 1460, which is a letter from Geoffrey Boleyn to John Paston I, and mentions Boleyn purchasing a manor from Sir John Fastolf. See also Geoffrey Boleyn’s testament, after Fastolf’s death, that Fastolf had made an oath ‘on his primer ther (in Southwark)’ in letter 619, lines 5-6, 5\textsuperscript{th} December probably 1460.
Other textwriters

This section has described the overlap between administrative and literary written work in the Fastolf circle. There is still work to be done on putting names to hitherto-unidentified scribal hands in administrative and literary material.

Twelve letters that were written by scribes on behalf of Sir John Fastolf are in unidentified hands, as well as two that were written for his chaplain Thomas Howes. In addition, there is an account of the Battle of St Albans, which was sent to Fastolf in May 1455, and which was also written by an unidentified scribe (letter 1023). Most of the writing in books associated with Fastolf was the work of unidentified scribes. Since many of these hands appear in the written corpus alongside the hands of Fastolf’s main scribes such as William Worcester and William Barker, it is likely that these men worked together. If some of these unidentified hands could be given names, a greater understanding could be gained of interaction between the individual writers of the circle of Sir John Fastolf. Even if these men were one-off scribes - perhaps the clerks of the men with whom Fastolf was corresponding - this could enhance our understanding of how scribes were used in fifteenth-century gentry networks.  

It has been possible to identify the work of men such as William Worcester and William Barker because they either signed their work for Fastolf, or wrote autograph letters that can be used as a sample of their work. Identifying the scribes of Fastolf’s letters of correspondence is an ongoing process: the latest discovery was published by Richard Beadle and Colin Richmond in 2005 and showed that letter 547, written in May 1456, which was previously labelled as ‘unidentified’, was written by Geoffrey

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137 One-off work may have been necessary if one of Fastolf’s correspondents had sent a letter to him, carried by his scribe. Fastolf, needing to reply immediately, or perhaps not having one of his regular scribes at hand, may have asked his correspondent’s scribe to write the reply. This would have had the advantage that Fastolf could send the reply back to his correspondent immediately, with the returning scribe.
Spiroleng. Beadle and Richmond were able to make this identification because Spiroleng wrote his name alongside his hand in Glasgow University Library, MS. Hunter 197 (U. 1.1) copy of The Canterbury Tales. With more rigorous searching amongst the letters associated with Fastolf, it is possible that the other scribal hands may be identified. This may be a more difficult process in the case of some of these anonymous scribes, whose scribal output was much smaller than that of Fastolf’s usual scribes - especially if they worked on a one-off basis.

Alexander Bergs described how, ‘it has been shown in sociology that most innovations enter a given network through weak ties, i.e. through the peripheral members acting as bridges, not through the central, prestigious actors... it is to be expected that people who act as bridges and peripheral members in general are less subject to normative pressures than central members’. Though Bergs admitted that this was an oversimplification and that some individuals may have been more likely to adopt some types of change than others, it is a model that is worth considering in relation to linguistic trends in the Fastolf circle. It is possible that it was the peripheral members of the circle that accepted certain language trends, and thus introduced them into the circle, rather than the writers who were closest to Fastolf. This makes the identification of these mysterious scribes even more important. If these peripheral members of the circle had such an important influence over the linguistic characteristics of writing in the circle, it is crucial to know who they were, and from which circles they were bringing their linguistic influence.

We have seen that William Worcester was the textwriter of much of the material in manuscript books associated with Sir John Fastolf, and that Luket Nantron and

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138 See Beadle and Richmond, eds., Paston Letters and Papers, xxxi.
139 See Beadle, ‘Geoffrey Spiroleng,’ 120. For the attribution of the text in the Huntarian Canterbury Tales to Geoffrey Spiroleng see Manly and Rickert, The Text of The Canterbury Tales, 1: 184.
Richardus Franciscus were the other men who have been identified as his textwriters. The work on Luket Nantron on page 292-300 above answers some questions about who wrote some of the unidentified texts associated with Fastolf, and about the link between these texts and the rest of the written material associated with him - ie. the administrative material linked with the management and defence of his properties. However, the number of unidentified textwriters in literary texts is still larger than the number of identified hands. Unlike the letters in unidentified scribal hands, which were either addressed to Fastolf or written from him, in literary texts it is often only because of the diligence of William Worcester that we can associate them with Sir John Fastolf and his circle at all. For example, Worcester wrote an annotation on the flyleaf of the *liber de sacramentis ecclesia*, Oxford University, Magdalen College, MS. Latin 26, that linked the book with Sir John Fastolf. This book, written entirely by an unidentified scribe, does not otherwise contain any clues to associate it with Fastolf.

There are several other books that were annotated by Worcester in a way that links them explicitly to Fastolf’s readership community, which were written by hitherto-unidentified scribes. Magdalen College, MS. Latin 8 is a text of Isidore of Seville, which was annotated in the margins by William Worcester. In addition, it was donated to William Waynflete in memory of Sir John Fastolf in 1473, which indicates the strength of its connection with Fastolf. However, the text itself was written by an unidentified scribe. We also know that Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodley 179, *Aldobrandinus of Siena*, belonged to Fastolf, as it has Fastolf’s motto ‘me fault fayre’ inscribed within its marginal illumination. The book also has an inscription stuck onto the inner side of the modern front board, in a fifteenth-century hand, proclaiming ‘lyber moncere Iohanni ffastolff’. However, the main text hand

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141 This was presumably cut from the former front pastedown or flyleaf when it was re-bound.
itself is not recognisable as any of the men who we know wrote texts for Fastolf. London, College of Arms, MS. Arundel 48 examined on page 314 below is another good example of the proliferation of hitherto-unidentified hands in manuscripts associated with Fastolf.

Linne Mooney and Jeremy Catto have discussed the textwriter of John Somer’s Chronicle in BL, MS. Royal 13 C.i, folios 43-50v. The manuscript is a composite volume of several texts in the hands of Worcester and other writers, which includes part of Higden’s Polychronicon, Elmham’s Life of Henry V, as well as Somer’s Chronicle. The manuscript contains notes that record that it was put together by or for William Worcester. Mooney and Catto point out that though the cataloguers state that the Somer chronicle in the manuscript was copied by William Worcester, it was probably actually written by its author-compiler, who based his work on the same copy that was used by the authors of the two other extant versions of the Chronicle. Mooney and Catto supposed that this hitherto-unidentified author completed the annals of this manuscript’s version of the text in between 1459 and July 1460, but that he had particular interests in the 1440s and 1450s. They pointed out that this version of the text has some French sources, and that it is ‘not surprising’ that the compiler had access to these French texts since there is evidence that some made their way across the channel; for example, several passed to John Duke of Bedford, and

143 Mooney and Catto pointed out that the Chronicle also survives as two earlier versions, in BL, MS. Cotton Domitian A.ii, folios 1-7 and Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS. Digby 57, folios 24-31. The former was probably Somer’s own copy and was likely to have been made in the late 1380s, and the latter was made in Oxford in about 1376 or shortly afterwards. The former evidently passed into the hands of William Worcester after the death of Sir John Fastolf, since it contains an annotation by Worcester, who recorded the date of the death of Sir John Fastolf in 1459, and the evidence of sixteenth-century annotations suggest that it remained in Norfolk after Worcester’s death. See Somer, ‘The Chronicle of John Somer,’ 215-219.
144 The evidence for this is that the last event that was recorded in the annals was in the autumn of 1459. Somer, ‘The Chronicle of John Somer,’ 218.
others to Sir John Fastolf.\textsuperscript{145} Sometime after 1459, this manuscript then evidently passed into the hands of William Worcester, who was eager to collect such historical material, as is testified by the fact that he also acquired another copy of Somer’s \textit{Chronicle}, as well as his vast collections of diverse texts, such as in College of Arms, MS. Arundel 48.

The appearance of so many unidentified hands in the literary texts associated with Fastolf can be accounted for in books that were not patronised by him originally, but were instead acquired from other literate men. In these books it is logical that the text was not written by the same scribes who wrote Fastolf’s letters and documents, as the books were written prior to their acquisition by Fastolf. In addition, there is an alternative explanation for the unidentified hands that appear in manuscripts such as MS. Latin 8 described above. These books may indeed have been commissioned by Fastolf, but he may have used scribes who were part of his wider circle of literate men, rather than his inner circle of servants and clerks. These men might have had greater access to certain exemplars, may have possessed specific writing skills, or simply may have had more time than his busy clerks.

\textsuperscript{145} Mooney and Catto pointed out the thirty or so entries on events in France in Somer’s \textit{Chronicle}. They found that the passages that concerned these events were paraphrases from either the Latin chronicle of \textit{Guillaume de Nangis} (up to 1300) and his continuator (up to 1358), the French \textit{Grandes Chroniques de France}, the Latin \textit{Chronique} of the Religieux de St-Denis, or the \textit{Speculum Historiale} of Vincent of Beauvais. Mooney and Catto cited L. Doué d’Arq, \textit{Inventaire de la bibliothèque du roi Charles VI, fait au Louvre en 1423} (Paris, 1867); Stratford, ed., \textit{The Bedford Inventories}, 96-99, 119-123; and McFarlane, \textit{England in the Fifteenth Century}, 208.
London, College of Arms, MS. Arundel 48: a case study of reading and writing in the circle of Sir John Fastolf.

This chapter has already outlined William Worcester’s position as a collector, compiler, translator, and scribe, within Fastolf’s circle of literate men. It has also described the involvement of other clerks and literate associates of Sir John Fastolf in the production of literary texts about and for him. To support and enhance this analysis of writing in the circle of Sir John Fastolf, there will now be a closer examination of a manuscript book that is in the archives of the College of Arms in London.146

College of Arms, MS. Arundel 48, is testament to the networks between individual readers and writers in the circle of Sir John Fastolf, as several men were involved in the composition and writing of its composite texts. The collection can be divided roughly into three sections: the texts on folios 1 to 157 comprise a shelf encyclopaedia of lists of emperors, popes, and kings, as well as other historical texts, which might have contributed chronological information for a chronicle. To give just one example of similar encyclopaedic material in another manuscript book, folio 8r of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 171A, a fifteenth-century manuscript of The Scotichronicon, includes a list of popes on folio 8r, and a list of emperors on folio 9r.147 In contrast, folios 158 to 348 of MS. Arundel 48 is a collection of rare documentation of the events of the Hundred Years War: from short notes on specific campaigns in the wars, such as a note of the capture of the town and castle of Fougères in 1448 (folio 285r), to long self-contained texts, such as a history of Henry V’s wars in France. Finally, the third section comprises a single text, the Cronica de

146 I would like to thank Dr. Craig Taylor for providing me with a descriptive list of the contents of this manuscript, which greatly aided my analysis of its content.
translacione imperii romani in Germanos, by the thirteenth-century canon lawyer Alexander von Roes.148

The observation that William Worcester’s hand appears throughout MS. Arundel 48 was made by K. B. McFarlane.149 However, though McFarlane observed that these texts ‘have headings, corrections, and additions from his pen, and a few he wrote throughout’, he went no further in analysing Worcester’s contribution as compiler, scribe, and annotator, of these texts. Just five short texts in the book were written by William Worcester himself, such as a note of the capture of the town and castle of Fougères in 1448 (folio 285v onwards).150 Some of the texts in MS. Arundel 48 appear to have been sent to Worcester, perhaps at his request, or perhaps because an associate of his believed that they would be of interest to him. For example, the text that begins on folio 21r Cognomina conquestorum Anglie, cum domino Willelmo Duce Normanie, Conquestore Anglorie, bears the inscription ‘[t]o my most weele beloved and trusty frend William Worcetre’ on its verso. Other texts were copied for the information of Sir John Fastolf, sent to him, and subsequently collected together by his secretary Worcester. Two texts, a report of the first battle of St. Albans (May 1455) on folio 341 and a commission for Gough and Eytton regarding delivery of Maine (March 1448) on folio 310, have notes of address to Fastolf on their versos.151

The document recording the first battle of St. Albans shares its subject matter with

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148 The same text also appears in San Marino, Huntington Library, MS. HM 1342, a historical miscellany also of the fifteenth century, under the title: Cronica de translacione Imperii Romani ad almanos (folios 114-132). For a printed edition see H. Grundmann, ed., Alexander von Roes, De translacione imperii und Jordanus von Osnabrück, De prerogativa romani imperii (Leipzig, 1930).
149 McFarlane, England in the Fifteenth Century, 209.
150 For more information about the capture of Fougères see Curry, The Hundred Years’ War: 1337-1453, 88. The texts in the hand of Worcester are those on folios: 192r, 193r, 218r, 218v, and 285r.
letter 1023 in the Fastolf Letters corpus, which was written between 25th and 29th May 1455. Letter 1023 contains an account of the battle in the form of a letter of correspondence that was sent to Sir John Fastolf. This letter pays special attention to the bravery of Fastolf’s nephew Henry Filongley. This shows that Fastolf was interested in receiving this kind of information, and that his associates were accustomed to sending it to him. Worcester subsequently collated this material into collections of miscellaneous, but related, documents.

Certain texts in MS. Arundel 48 were neither written by Worcester, nor addressed to him, but were annotated by him. He wrote notes in their margins, which demonstrate that he read them, and had chosen to include them in his compilation. These marginal notes were usually descriptions of the text, perhaps finding aides for the next time he needed this information. He gave several of the texts descriptive titles where they previously had none, thereby giving the collection that he was creating an organisational framework. For example, on folio 183r he added the descriptive heading, ‘De ponderibus Auri et Argenti’. K. B. McFarlane noted a similar relationship between the texts and organisational notes in LPL, MS. 506, which was a collection of contributory material for Worcester’s Boke of Noblesse: these pieces were copied in a number of hands and ‘provided with explanatory headings from Worcester himself’. Comparing MS. Arundel 48 and LPL, MS. 506 reveals that though the manuscripts have no texts in common, the two books share the feature of being collections of separate texts relating to the wars in France, which were not written by Worcester, but were collected together into a group by him. Folios 8 to 38v of LPL, MS. 506 present a group of texts in the hand of the same scribe, each of which was given short annotations by Worcester, and some of which were given titles

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152 McFarlane, England in the Fifteenth Century, 216. See Wakelin, Humanism, Reading and English Literature, 108-109 for an example of one of these headings: ‘pro comodo reipublice Regni [sic]’ translated by Wakelin as ‘for the benefit of the commonweal’, but this might be more accurately be ‘for the benefit of the power of the commonweal’. Wakelin cited LPL, MS. 506, folios 3-4.
by him that described their content. For example, at the beginning of the text that begins on folio 14v, Worcester pointed out that this text related to Maine ‘tempore Johannis ffastolf militis’ (at the time of John Fastolf, soldier). The titles and marginal annotations of MS. Arundel 48 and LPL, MS. 506 are codicological evidence to support Worcester’s claim that he clarified the content of texts to make them easier to understand.\footnote{Worcester annotated College of Arms, MS. M. 9, to make the claim that he had ‘peraffed’ the text ‘for more opyn and redye vnderstanding’ (title to Basset’s Chronicle in College of Arms, MS. M.9, folio xxxi)} The similarities between LPL, MS. 506 and MS. Arundel 48 suggest that Worcester compiled the latter, like the former, to act as contributory material for a text that he was composing.

Though the texts bound into MS. Arundel 48 are indeed miscellaneous, and are in the hands of numerous different scribes, there is some thematic cohesion in the manuscript. First there are several lists of succession: of kings of England (folios 22r-30r, and 71r-75v), of popes (folios 33r-38v, 47r-54, 65r-67v, and 69r-70v), and of emperors (folios 39r-42v, 43r-44v, and 55r-57v). These numerous chronological lists, as well as individual texts that focus on individual kings and queens (for example the testament of Henry III on folio 139), were contributed by a number of different individuals, probably because they had access to information that Worcester did not, and were aware that Worcester required copies. The testament of Henry III was written by a scribe whose hand can not be seen anywhere else in MS. Arundel 48, which indicates that his contribution was a one-off, initiated because Worcester wanted this testament in his compilation. It is also possible that Worcester delegated the work of copying texts to other men because he did not have the time to do it himself. A text in the similar compilation, LPL, MS. 506, supports this suggestion: the text that begins on folio 38 was started by William Worcester but the rest of the text
Chapter Five: Fastolf’s circle as the readers and writers of texts in manuscript books.

was written by another scribe, as if Worcester decided to leave the bulk of the work to a fellow scribe.  

The collection of texts that was most directly connected with Sir John Fastolf related to his military activities in France, such as a note of the capture of the town and castle of Fougères (‘Fugiers in Bretayng’) in 1448 (folio 285v). Though Fastolf had been returned to England for over ten years by 1448, he remained interested in English interests in France - the fact that William Worcester planned his Boke of Noblesse in the 1450s for Fastolf, as part of an attempt to encourage a resurgence of English military activity in France, is testament to this interest.  

The second section of MS. Arundel 48 also contains documents that might appear fragmented and miscellaneous, but that actually have connections with Fastolf’s participation in the wars in France. For example, there is a very short text on folio 205b, the household expenses of ‘Jeooffey’ in London at the household of Thomas Montagu count of Salisbury (b. 1388), which is dated 1421. Thomas Montagu was in France at the time that this document was written, and had been present and in command at many of the same battles as Fastolf, such as Harcourt, Caen and Falaise. Montagu, like Fastolf, was under the command of the Duke of Bedford, and played an important part in Bedford’s preparation for the battle of Verneuil in

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154 Perhaps this text was written by Worcester’s clerk, who was referred to in FP 72: ‘in expensis clerici mei...xvi d.’.
155 For more information about the capture of Fougères see Curry, The Hundred Years’ War: 1337-1453, 88.
156 For Worcester’s perception that the common profit might be restored by recovering English possessions recently lost in France, see Allmand and Keen, ‘History and the Literature of War,’ 93.
Chapter Five: Fastolf’s circle as the readers and writers of texts in manuscript books.

1424.¹⁵⁸ Mark Warner has made the important observation about the biography of Thomas Montagu that he was a man whose fortune had been made through his participation in the wars in France: he received a large état (yearly payment) of 750 livre after the siege of Orleans (compared with the next highest état, for the Burgundian commander, John of Luxembourg, who received 600 livre).¹⁵⁹ Montagu died in 1428.¹⁶⁰ John Paston’s ‘Grete Boke’ also contains a text that was associated with Montagu: the ordinances issued by the earl of Salisbury for his campaign in Maine and a summons of a surrender issued by the latter during the siege of Le Mans in 1425 (152v–153v).¹⁶¹ Lester suggested that the text in Paston’s book was acquired from William Worcester.¹⁶² It is logical that Fastolf had possession of this document that concerned the surrender of Le Mans, since Fastolf led its capture, along with Lord Scales.¹⁶³ As Montagu was in command of this campaign, there was a clear connection between the two men.¹⁶⁴

Montagu was, like Fastolf, a patron of literature: the prologue to John Lydgate’s Secrees of Old Philisoffres in BL, MS. Harley 4826 states that it was begun in 1426 at the command of ‘my lord [o]f Salisbury’.¹⁶⁵ Therefore, both Fastolf and Montagu were educated military leaders, who were interested in the composition of literature. It

¹⁵⁹ Warner, ‘Chivalry in Action,’ 150.
¹⁶⁰ ‘Le Mistère du siège d’Orléans,’ in Collection de Documents Inédits sur l’histoire de France (Paris 1867). See Warner, ‘Chivalry in Action,’ 146-147, for a description of the earl’s death as a result of the injuries he incurred at the siege of Orleans in 1428.
¹⁶¹ John Paston’s ‘Grete Boke’ is BL, MS. Lansdowne 285. See Warner, ‘Chivalry in Action,’ 157-159, for an explanation of Montagu’s part in the siege of Le Mans, capital of Maine, on 20th July 1425.
¹⁶³ See Edward Hall, Chronicle (London: J. Johnson: 1809), 125
¹⁶⁵ The Secrees was a part of the Secretem Secretorum tradition, concerning the education of King Alexander by Aristotle, and was begun by Lydgate but unfinished by the time of Lydgate’s death in 1467, and was completed by Benedict Burgh. See John Lydgate, Secrees of Old Philisoffres, ed. R. Steele, EETS es 66 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1894).
is unclear how the document about ‘Jeofrey’ came into the hands of William Worcester. However, the military connection between Fastolf and Montagu could explain why a text concerning one of the earl’s servants would have made it into William Worcester’s compilation. Perhaps this miscellaneous document was bundled in with other documents relating to their shared involvement in the battles of the Hundred Years War. In addition, it is likely that Worcester had a personal interest in this document, which concerned the responsibilities of a fellow servant of a great military commander - perhaps the responsibilities of ‘Jeofrey’ were similar to William Worcester’s own responsibilities as the secretary of Sir John Fastolf.

The book also contains a compilation of historical material that is listed in the College of Arms catalogue as Botoner’s Annals, which comprise year-by-year accounts of historical events from 1324 to 1468. Botoner was the maiden name of William Worcester’s mother, which he used as his pseudonym in his written work. K. B. McFarlane diminished the association between these Annals and Worcester by showing that no more than fifty words of the Annals were actually contributed by William Worcester. He found that the stretch of events from November 1459 to May 1463 was in fact, ‘contributed by a writer at work in 1491’. McFarlane spotted that this hand also annotated the list of emperors on folios 39 to 42. If McFarlane’s research suggests that Worcester had less of a hand in the composition and scribe work of MS. Arundel 48, it also suggests that other men in Fastolf’s circle must have made a significant contribution to the manuscript. The annotations made in the 1490s also demonstrate the ongoing use of, and contribution to, MS. Arundel 48 by various individuals for decades after the deaths of both Sir John Fastolf and William Worcester. The ongoing use of Worcester’s compilations is also suggested by LPL,

166 McFarlane, England in the Fifteenth Century, 209. Anne Curry has also stated that a connection between Worcester and the Annals was ‘unlikely’. Curry, The Battle of Agincourt, 85, note 46.
167 McFarlane, England in the Fifteenth Century, 209.
Chapter Five: Fastolf’s circle as the readers and writers of texts in manuscript books.

MS. 506, a similar miscellany that also contains alterations that were made after its compilation by Worcester. For example, two short texts that were written on folio 28r by William Worcester were altered several times by a subsequent reader. The texts in the second section of MS. Arundel 48 were written by a variety of unidentified scribal hands, and many of the watermarks of the paper in this section are not shared by any other documents associated with Fastolf. In contrast, several of the texts of the first section were written by the same scribes. For example, there are nineteen texts spanning folios 67 to 111 that were all written by the same scribe. Plus, in this first section, out of ten visible watermarks, five can be seen elsewhere in letters and documents associated with Fastolf. The most frequently occurring watermark is that of a bull’s head, face on, with a star protruding from the forehead, which is also the most common watermark in the Fastolf Letters and Papers corpus (see pages 215-216 above). This suggests that the ‘shelf encyclopaedia’ texts of the first section were more closely associated with Fastolf’s circle of readers and writers, and were probably copied by men of his inner circle, whereas the texts concerning the wars in France were perhaps original records that were collected by William Worcester, or were copied by men outside of the immediate circle and sent to Worcester for his information.

Worcester’s involvement aside, this manuscript provides information about a community of writers and readers that extended beyond Fastolf’s literate servants. Numerous men outside of Fastolf’s inner circle were connected with the texts in the manuscript. There is a name that appears consistently in separate texts in MS. Arundel 48: Robert Hungerford. Hungerford was another man who served in France along with Sir John Fastolf: like Fastolf, he was in the retinue of the duke of Bedford.\textsuperscript{168} Hungerford was described as a knight banneret in Normandy on folio 10 of LPL, MS.

506, which is another text that was associated with William Worcester and Sir John Fastolf. William Worcester annotated this text in the Lambeth Palace manuscript in order to point out the connection between Hungerford and Sir John Fastolf. Hungerford’s name was written in MS. Arundel 48 by an annotating hand on folio 98, part way through the text that begins on folio 96: ‘De connubis et prole Regum, ab Aluredo ad Willielmum I’. His name was also written, twice, in the blank spaces of the text of ‘Provisions of the Oxford parliament of 1258’, which spans folios 131 to 138. Hungerford’s name was written yet again on the text of the supplication for the release of Jean II from captivity, which appears on folios 158 to 168 of the manuscript.\(^{169}\) Finally, his name was written on folio 263r of the manuscript, in the text of a history of Henry V’s wars in France. The annotating hand, a different one from the main scribe, wrote ‘Comme lee Roye de France et Dangleterre vuidrait, Robartt Hyngerfford Benedycko Louge’. If Hungerford, or someone in Hungerford’s circle, was composing histories of the wars in France, this would explain the proliferation of Hungerford’s name in several texts containing information about events of the Hundred Years War such as the text on the ransom of Jean II described above. There is evidence that other men who served alongside Fastolf were interested in learning in deeds of arms: the interest of James, fourth earl of Ormond who, like Fastolf, served in 1419 at the siege of Rouen, in such texts is well attested.\(^ {170}\) The evidence shows that Robert Hungerford, too, had an interest in historical texts, and as a consequence, their source material. The proliferation of Hungerford’s name at several different points in this book makes the connection between MS. Arundel 48 and him very strong. There are two potential ways in which Hungerford could have been connected with the collection of written material in MS. Arundel 48: either as a

\(^{169}\) Jean II had been taken prisoner at Poitiers in 1356, and was ransomed in 1360. See Curry, *The Hundred Years War*, 125.

contributor of material, or as a later reader of the manuscript. As Hungerford died in 1459, it seems that the former is more likely. The association of these texts in MS. Arundel 48 with Hungerford suggests that he had some part in Fastolf’s community of readers and writers.

MS. Arundel 48 contains evidence of editorial work by unidentified hands, in the list of ‘al the Kynges that euer reigned in Ingelonde that is to saie from Brut that first inabitet this londe vnto Kyng Henry the vj’ (folios 22r-32v). The text contains the work of two scribes. The first scribe wrote the list of kings itself, and the second provided additional biographical information about some of these kings. For example, next to ‘Archogallus’, the annotating hand wrote, ‘he deide and lithe at Pikeryng’ (folio 23r, l. 3). Neither the text writer nor the annotator was William Worcester, which demonstrates that men other than Worcester wrote texts associated with the Fastolf circle, and that men other than Worcester edited and annotated them ‘for their ready understanding’. The same relationship between text writer and annotator can be seen in the book’s list of emperors (folio 43r) and its list of popes (folio 33r). The annotators embellished these otherwise bald lists of names with additional information. For example, in the former text, the annotating hand wrote next to the name of the emperor Probus: ‘Probus was the first man that yaf the Frence men leue to plant wynes’ (folio 43r). In the latter text Worcester was the annotator. So, MS. Arundel 48 confirms that though William Worcester held a position at the centre of this circle of readers and writers, he was not the sole reader and editor of texts in this circle. Though he was the individual who brought the written texts of MS. Arundel 48 together and compiled them into a thematic manuscript book, the book passed through the hands of several other men, who also made important contributions and alterations to its content.
Chapter Five: Fastolf’s circle as the readers and writers of texts in manuscript books.  

College of Arms, MS. Arundel 48 has a final important contribution to make to the study of the community of readers and writers that was associated with Sir John Fastolf. Pages 292-300 above described how the identification of Luket Nantron’s hand in MS. M.9, Basset’s Chronicle, helped to attach his name to hitherto unidentified scribal work in the administrative documents associated with Fastolf. Though Nantron’s written output, and circumstantial evidence about him, suggests that he worked as a clerk and administrator, the fact that he wrote (and perhaps composed) the chronicle in MS. M.9, confirms that he also worked on literary texts. However, apart from Basset’s Chronicle, there has been no evidence of his literary output. This might suggest that Basset’s Chronicle was merely a diversion from his day-to-day activities, initiated by his connections with the fellow composers Peter Basset and Christopher Hansson. However, palaeographical work on MS. Arundel 48 might dispel this impression of Nantron as an ‘administrator’. If he were the scribe of texts in this manuscript, this would confirm that he had a diverse writing role in the circle of Sir John Fastolf, and that he made a more significant contribution to non-administrative texts than has been thought previously.

Page 293 above lists the palaeographical features of Luket Nantron’s hand in MS. M.9 (Basset’s Chronicle), which is the only sample of this hand that contains his name. These features of Nantron’s hand in the Chronicle, when compared with the hand that wrote several of the texts in MS. Arundel 48, suggest that Nantron was the scribe of the following texts: 171

1) folios 131r- 138v: the ‘Provisiones Oxon. etc. edite et advise per magnum parliamentum ibidem tentām citra festum sancti Barnabe Anno Christi 1258, et regni regis H terciij xliij - Provisum est’. This text is the Provisions of Oxford of 1258, the central reform programme that arranged that four knights were chosen from each county who would attend the county court that met to hear complaints of trespasses.

171 The titles of these texts were provided to me by Dr. Craig Taylor as part of a list of the contents of this manuscript that he compiled.
Chapter Five: Fastolf’s circle as the readers and writers of texts in manuscript books.

and injuries done by sheriffs, bailiffs and others.\footnote{172} Though the beginning of the text, on the recto of folio 131, is in Latin, the rest is in French.

2) folios 141r-152v: the ‘Ordinances of Edward II passed under the great seal’, also written in French (originally written in 1311).\footnote{173}

3) folios 155v-157v: ‘Quod sanctiti domini nostri summi pontificisclare pateat quod juste petit dominus Rex Anglie, Jure hereditario Regni Francie, datur Informacio quo sequitur per nuncios dici Regis’. Arguments before the papacy in 1344. In Latin.\footnote{174}

4) folios 329v-332v: nineteen propositions relative to the recovery of the English provinces in France; written in August 1449. In Latin.\footnote{175}

5) folios 333r-338v: an incomplete tract on the increase and improvement of the current coin of the realm. In Latin.\footnote{176}


\footnote{174} The original document for this conference at Avignon in October and November 1344, along with English accounts of the meeting and various letters, is preserved in BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra E.ii. It was edited in Jean Froissart, Chroniques, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove (Brussels, 1867-1877). This document, which defended the Plantagenet claim to the French throne, was an abbreviated version of a fuller ‘factum’ that was written up in 1340. As cited in Craig Taylor, ‘Edward III and the Plantagenet Claim to the French Throne,’ in The Age of Edward II, ed. J.S. Bothwell (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press in association with Boydell and Brewer, 2001), 155-169 (158-159, n. 16), and see also 164-165.

\footnote{175} These propositions date from the year following that in which the Englishmen holding the capital of Maine, Le Mans surrendered (March 1448). In the same year as the surrender, the position of the English weakened, as Charles VII issued an order that each parish should provide one archer, producing a total of 8,000 French archers. Anne Curry, The Hundred Years War: 1337-1453, 87 (Curry’s book contains a typing mistake here, where ‘Charles V’ is printed instead of ‘Charles VII’, which I have rectified in the quotation above). In May 1448, Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, replaced the Duke of York as lieutenant-general and attempted to improve the military discipline and deal with the complaints of the inhabitants (ibid, 88). However, there was little improvement in the English territorial position, and by January 1450 only Caen, Falaise and the Cotentin remained in English hands, and despite a brief revival under Sir Thomas Kyriell, the English suffered a decisive blow at the battle of Formigny on 15\textsuperscript{th} April 1450, and the last English-held territory, Cherbourg, was surrendered in August 1450 (ibid).

\footnote{176} The second paragraph of this text explains its design: ‘Ea propter protector hujus cedule decrevit scribere articulos circiter Ia per quos sperat evidenter demonstrare unde prosperitas universalis hujus incliti regni Anglie, a xxx. annis citra, paulatim de die in diem latenter immolata est: et cum hoc aperrire viam utilem et honestam per quam dicit prosperitas faciliter poterit restaurari absque danno injuria aut gravamine cujusquam’. Cited in William Henry Black, Catalogue of the Arundel Manuscripts in the Library of the College of Arms (London: S. and R. Bentley, 1829), 89.
Two of these texts share not only their palaeographical features, but also the watermark of a pair of shears (see folios 141 and 329), which is further evidence that they were written by the same scribe. It may be significant that out of three times that the name of Robert Hungerford was written in this manuscript, two were in texts in the hand of Luket Nantron: the provisions of the Oxford parliament of 1258, and the supplication for the release of Jean II from captivity. Therefore, it is possible that Nantron had some connection with Robert Hungerford.

Nantron’s hand is the only hand that appears constantly throughout the manuscript, appearing in texts in both Section One and Section Two. This begs the question: why did Nantron copy these texts in particular? If Nantron was indeed a composer of literature, as has been suggested by McFarlane concerning Basset’s Chronicle in MS. M. 9, then he would have been as keen to compile historical material as William Worcester was, especially sources that concerned the wars in France. However, since the texts written by him in this manuscript relate to an earlier period than Basset’s Chronicle, they could not have been direct source material for the Chronicle. If the material were not source material for Nantron’s own composition, it is possible that William Worcester asked him to copy these texts. The texts in LPL, MS. 506 are evidence that William Worcester used source material that was copied by other scribes for his composition of the Boke of Noblesse: all of the ten texts up to folio 23 in the book were written by a single unidentified scribe. Therefore, it is quite likely that Luket Nantron provided written texts for William Worcester, who compiled them into MS. Arundel 48. There is no thematic cohesion between the texts that are in the hand of Nantron; they have a diverse range of subject matter. Therefore, there is no simple explanation for why Nantron wrote certain texts in the compilation, and not others. Nantron may have copied the text in French on folio 131r

For the suggestion that Nantron was responsible for the composition of College of Arms, MS. M.9 see McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, 211.
because of his ability to read and write French. He may even have translated this text from Latin - the fact that the initial lines of the text are in Latin would support this suggestion. Nantron may have copied the other texts for Worcester simply because he had access to them, perhaps through his connections with other military men such as Christopher Hansson. This is especially likely in the case of documents relating to events in France such as the nineteen propositions relative to the recovery of the English provinces in France, which begins on folio 329.

Only one of the texts in the hand of Luket Nantron contains a date of composition: the text on folio 329v was written in August 1448. Despite the lack of dates in the other texts in the manuscript, there is a general trend towards texts relating to the late 1440s. Where they concern dateable events, these texts relate primarily to events between 1447 and 1449. For example folios 290v-304v record the proceedings of a convention that ran between 31th October and 1st November 1447. The text on folio 285v concerns the capture of the town and castle of Fougères in 1448. Finally, the text beginning on folio 226r describes an event that occurred on 29th October 1449. There are certainly texts in the manuscript that were composed much later: Le premier Jorney Seynt Albons on folio 341r concerns the first Battle of St. Albans in 1455. Botoner’s Annals record historical information up until 1468. Regardless, the majority of the texts in the manuscript are associated with the years 1447 to 1449. This interest in the events of the 1440s mirrors the interest in these years in John Somer’s Chronicle, another text that was connected with the circle of Sir John Fastolf.

The connection of the manuscript with the late 1440s and early 1450s is supported by the watermark that appears on several of the folios in this manuscript: a pair of

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178 See page 296 above for Nantron’s connections with Christopher Hansson.
179 See McSparran, ed., ‘The Middle English Dictionary,’ ‘journey’: ‘a military expedition or undertaking; a campaign, crusade, siege, etc’.
180 This observation was made by Linne R. Mooney and Jeremy Catto, see pages 313-314 above.
shears. This watermark is visible on folios 29, 141, 150, 195, 317 and 329 of Arundel MS. 48. The only other place in which this mark has been found in the corpus of written work associated with Sir John Fastolf, is on folio 49 of BL, MS. Additional 39848. This is a letter that was written from Thomas Howes and William Barker to Sir John Fastolf in October 1450. Folio 53 of the same book of letters, which is a letter from Fastolf to Howes and John Bokkyng, written in December of 1450, also has the same shears watermark. This supports the dating of most of the material in MS. Arundel 48 to the period around 1447 to 1449, providing the paper stock with the shears watermark was specific to this period. If the texts written by Nantron in this manuscript do date from this period, they would be the very earliest surviving examples of his hand. This would be evidence that he copied non-administrative texts at a very early point in his career, long before the date of the first surviving administrative document in his hand, which he wrote circa 1456.\textsuperscript{181}

Conclusions about MS. Arundel 48 and Fastolf’s readership community

The new attribution of the texts listed on page 324-328 to the hand of Luket Nantron demonstrates that he was much more involved with written work (other than letters of correspondence, petitions and other administrative documents), than was thought previously. William Worcester, having more time for reading in the aftermath of Fastolf’s death, probably collected together the texts in the 1460s and compiled them into a single book. He gathered some texts that were written by men who have not been identified, some written by men whose names are known, such as Luket Nantron, and Worcester himself, and others that were sent to him by his literate associates. This demonstrates that the readership community that existed during

\textsuperscript{181} This first administrative document was FP 48, which was probably written around 1456. See pages 295-296 above.
Fastolf’s lifetime continued to exist after his death. MS. Arundel 48, as a collection of texts written by various men, edited and annotated by many others, and compiled and organised by Fastolf’s chief writer and secretary, is physical evidence of a complex network of writers and readers in the circle of Sir John Fastolf.
Chapter Five: Fastolf’s circle as the readers and writers of texts in manuscript books.

331

c) A sub-community of west country readers within Fastolf’s circle.

It remains to consider the indication that is given by the letters associated with Sir John Fastolf, and by ownership inscriptions in books connected with his circle, that there was a sub-community of readers who were from the west country: Bristol, Bridgewater, Glastonbury, and Wells especially. It appears that the formation of this community was initiated by William Worcester, who was himself a west country man. There are several possible ways in which Worcester made these connections with literate men from his part of the country. Perhaps he met them during his years as a young man in Bristol, or perhaps they were relatives or neighbours. Alternatively, he may have met these men whilst he was studying at Oxford University, which was especially likely if men from the same part of the country formed affinities within the colleges. In the late 1470s, Worcester compiled a historical guidebook that demonstrated his ongoing interest in this part of the country, as it included a detailed study of Bristol, as well as other areas in the south-west such as Wells and Glastonbury.182

In 1438, William Worcester wrote the copy of John Somer’s Kalendarium that is now in St. Peter’s Church in Tiverton, Devon. This text had west country associations, since Somer was a Bridgewater man: ‘Chronica quedam brevis fratris Johannis Somour, ordinis S. Francisci de conventu ville Briggewater’, and several of the surviving manuscripts of the Kalendarium have southwest provenance.183 The St. Peter’s Church manuscript reveals that Worcester was in Bristol when he wrote it: it

has a note stating, ‘Explicit kalendarium secundum laborem fratris Johannis Somour scriptum Bristollie per manum Willelmi Worcestre ad instantiam Richard Roper Anno Domini 1438 incompleto, et anno regni regis Henrici 6ii post conquestum 16°, 14° die mensis Augusti in meridie Deo gratias’ (my emphasis), which confirms the west country association, and reveals that Worcester did the work for Richard Roper (‘probably a well-to-do inhabitant of Bristol’). This manuscript shows that William Worcester was already making literary connections with literate west country men at a young age.

William Worcester had a connection with a west country man named John Crop in the 1450s. This was another connection that Worcester probably made years before, which he was able to call upon later for help with a one-off errand. Worcester’s primary concern was a genealogical enquiry that he was making in the Wells area on behalf of his master Sir John Fastolf. However, Worcester was an opportunist book collector and realised that his contact with a literate man in the west country was a chance to acquire books in the area. He wanted a ‘tabyll of augrym, els a boke of augrym, els an asterlebere’ from a man named ‘Sir Nicoll’ of Glastonbury, and enlisted Crop to visit Sir Nicholl and request these books. Crop also spoke to Ralph Hoby on Worcester’s behalf to obtain the books by Ovid and Boethius that he wanted. A manuscript that belonged to Worcester, BL, MS. Laud misc. 674, shared companion texts with one of the manuscripts of Ralph Hoby’s Treatise on Astrological Medicene, and Worcester named Hoby in the manuscript.

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185 See letter 969, ll. 10-13: ‘And then a-morrow after, I went to Wellis and spake with Edmond Wexchaundelere, and he seid me that Syr Thomas Louel is fadere was a sqwiere, and Syr Thomas Louel had a sone deyed at Bruanston by sides Bruton’ (John Crop to William Worcester).
186 Definition of ‘augrim’: ‘the practice of numbering or computing with Arabic numerals. McSparran, ed., ‘The Middle English Dictionary’. The ‘asterlebere’ is likely to have been a text which accompanied an astrolabe. See The Riverside Chaucer, 662-684
an Oxford professor, and it is likely that Worcester sought out this compiler of star
catalogues at Oxford, since he was so fascinated by astronomy and astrology.¹⁸⁸ John
Crop’s contact with Hoby indicates that Hoby also had access to a collection of books
in the west country. Unfortunately, it is difficult to establish how many books Hoby
would have had access to in Hereford, where he was based as a Franciscan. As Voigts
pointed out:

Surviving evidence of the library holdings of the Hereford Franciscans
consists mostly of manuscripts that have fetched up elsewhere. Only
twenty-some codices have been identified from booklists, colophons,
and late fourteenth-early fifteenth century shelfmarks from a medieval
library that James believed was a collection of more than 300 books.¹⁸⁹

However, it seems that Hoby had access to enough books to justify being sought out
by John Crop for books that were requested by William Worcester. The evidence
concerning Ralph Hoby and William Worcester suggests that their connection was
founded both on their mutual intellectual interests and on their shared west country
origins.

Following Fastolf’s death in 1459, William Worcester had more time to develop
his intellectual interests: it was in the post-Fastolf years that he wrote his notebooks.
Amongst these notes were a topography of Bristol in his Itineraries and a list of the
bishops of Bath and Wells that were to be depicted in a new window in Wells

¹⁸⁸ Linda Ersam Voigts’s article on the medical astrology of Ralph Hoby provides a useful list of
William Worcester’s written work that was connected with astrology: his 1437 compilation of Hoby’s
treatise; his 1438 copy of John Somer’s Kalandarium; his 1440 note in Bodleian Library, MS. Laud
misc. 674 with a list of stars; and his 1459 notation of Fastolf’s death in a manuscript of Somer’s
Voigts pointed out the manuscript evidence that shows that Hoby was a professor at Oxford University:
‘Hoby’s expertise and presence in Oxford at a date relevant to 1437 is confirmed by a notation by
William Worcester in Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS. Laud misc. 674, folio 99v: “Expliciant
1022 stelle fixe… anno gratie 1440 secundum tabulas Alfonsi et erudicionem Fratris Radulphi Hoby,
professoris theologie ac disciplinam librorum Fratris Johannis Somour, ordinis Minorum”.’ Voigts,
‘Wolfenbüttel,’ 3, n. 7.
¹⁸⁹ Voigts, ‘The Medical Astrology,’ 167. For the holdings of the Hereford library, Voigts cited M. R.
James, ‘The Library of the Grey Friars of Hereford,’ in Collectanea Franciscana, ed. A. G. Little, M.
R. James, H. M. Bannister, British Society of Franciscan Studies 5 (1914): 114-123.
Cathedral. This shows that the death of Worcester’s master afforded him more time to visit his home county. In the course of these visits, he probably ignited, or re-ignited, his connections with literate men and book collectors in the area. There is evidence in his Itineraries that this was the case: Worcester’s introduction to ‘Exerptions de antiquis chronicis Britonum in Gallica lingua quae incipiunt en la cite de grande Troye estoit un noble chevalier’ states that he got the excerpts from the books of Benedict of Bodmin. Worcester stated that a French book in this collection was titled Aristotilis ad Alixandrum. This must have been the Secretum secretorum, which was a text that purported to be a letter of statecraft addressed to Alexander from his tutor Aristotle. There was an Anglo-Norman version of c. 1275 and an Old French version of c. 1300. There was also a versified version by John Lydgate and Benedict Burgh: the Secrees of Old Philisoffres. Coincidentally, this Lydgate text

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191 A. I. Doyle has discussed networks of book production and patronage in the west country, centred upon Bristol, focussing on the patronage of the Berkeleys in the early fifteenth century, which he suggested emulated what they witnessed in the royal court: ‘One may wonder if the manuscripts of this group [of prose Passions, the gospel of Nicodemus and connected texts, and Rolle’s English Psalter] are not Bristol products, as the most obvious regional centre for a book trade, comparable with York or Norwich’. See Doyle, ‘English Books In and Out of Court,’ 173.
193 Steven Williams pointed out that the text was one of the most widely diffused of the Aristotelian pseudopigraphs during the Middle Ages, and one of the most popular books of the entire period (there are more than 130 extant manuscripts), plus, translations were made into eight languages aside from the original Latin. For a comprehensive description of this text see Steven Williams, The Secret of Secrets: the Scholarly Career of a Pseudo-Aristotelian Text in the Latin Middle Ages (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), esp. Chapter One ‘The Contents and Formation of the Secret of Secrets’. See also Richard Stoneman, Alexander the Great: a Life in Legend (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 238-239. I would like to thank Katharine Bilous for helping me to find this information about the Secretum Secretorum.
194 See Nall, ‘The Production and Reception of Military Texts,’ 141. Nall has discussed the scribal hand that wrote two of the extant Lydgate and Burgh manuscripts: Pierpont Morgan Library, MS. M 775 and Philadelphia Free Library, MS. Lewis T. 15/488 (page 67). She also discussed the pairing of the Secrees text with the prose translation of De re militari in five manuscripts (page 74), which she argued demonstrated an interest by the readers of the text in both warfare and government. Fastolf, as a
was patronised by a military associate of Sir John Fastolf, Thomas Montagu, earl of Salisbury.\textsuperscript{195} Not only did Worcester have access to a number of books in this Bodmin collection, but there is further evidence that he had access to books in other collections across the west country. For example, there is an inscription in William Worcester’s hand in Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS. Auct. F. 3. 25 that states that Worcester, who was from Bristol, acquired the book from John Free who was also born in Bristol (folio 1v).

Some of Worcester’s connections with men in the west country were long-lasting, and were revisited by him several times over his lifetime. Worcester’s encounters with the work of John Somer is one example of his ongoing interest in certain west country writers. Linne Mooney and Jeremy Catto pointed out that around 1459, Worcester obtained a copy of the \textit{Chronicle} of John Somer.\textsuperscript{196} Since, as Mooney and Catto pointed out, the manuscript seems to have been in Bridgewater after John Somer’s death (some time between 1409 and 1419), Worcester must have got hold of it in Bridgewater. Worcester already had access to manuscripts in Somer’s hand during Fastolf’s life,\textsuperscript{197} and his new-found freedom after Fastolf’s death probably afforded him the opportunity to search for another Somer manuscript in Bridgewater. It may have been Worcester who added the heading to the text in BL, MS. Cotton Domitian A. ii, which drew attention to the fact that the text’s composer was a west country man: ‘[c]ronica quaedam breuis fratris Johannis Somour ordinis sancti Francisci de Conuentu ville Briggewalter’. Many years later in 1478, when Worcester was an old

\textsuperscript{195} See BL, MS. Harley 4826, which contains an inscription specifying that the text was written for the earl of Salisbury. See pages 319-320 above for the connection between Sir John Fastolf and Thomas Montagu.

\textsuperscript{196} BL, MS. Cotton Domitian A.ii. It must have acquired after 1459, since Worcester entered the date of Sir John Fastolf’s death (1459) into the annals. Before that date, it was evidently in the possession of the Bridgewater convent, since several different hands recorded events, many of them of geographical specificity to Bridgewater, up until 1457. As cited in Somer, ‘The \textit{Chronicle} of John Somer,’ 214.

\textsuperscript{197} For example, Bodleian Library, MS. Laud. misc. 674.
man, he met and spoke to a friar John Wells whom he found out was formerly a servant of the same John Somer (‘quondam servientis Fratris Johannis Somour’).\textsuperscript{198} These links between literate west country men continue: Ralph Hoby was, as Worcester wrote, a ‘discipulum librorum fratris Johannis Somour ordinis Minorum’ (‘a student of the books of John Somer, franciscan friar’) (Bodleian Library, MS. Laud misc. 674, folio 99v).\textsuperscript{199} This shows that the circle of literate west country men who Worcester knew personally, and whose work he read, was highly interconnected. These west country men had an impact upon William Worcester’s reading activity, and thus probably Fastolf’s as well, as they either compiled the texts that interested Worcester, or allowed him to exploit their contacts in the west country in order to find and acquire books.

A book that comprised texts that were written long after Fastolf’s death demonstrates that the readership community that Fastolf and Worcester built up in the west country continued to influence William Worcester’s reading and writing after Fastolf’s death. The editor of Worcester’s Itineraries, John H. Harvey, pointed out that Worcester sought out information about King Arthur in the west country. Worcester, in his description of his journeys around the country, described himself: ‘asking the monks at Glastonbury for bibliographical details of the chronicles of the time’\textsuperscript{200} Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 210 also contains other texts apart from Worcester’s Itineraries, including a text called De Arturo rege Britonem on page 314. It is possible that this was the text about Arthur that Worcester received following his discussions with the monks. Another manuscript book also shows the ongoing influence of these west country writers and readers: BL, MS. Sloane 4. This

\textsuperscript{198} Somer, ‘The Chronicle of John Somer,’ 213.
\textsuperscript{199} \textit{Ibid.} The connection between John Somer and Ralph Hoby has also been discussed by Linda Voigts in ‘The Medical Astrology,’ 154-155.
book is a collection of recipes for all manner of things - from medical complaints to cooking - most of which are in the hand of William Worcester. Most of Worcester’s work in the manuscript was done in the late 1460s and early 1470s. One of these recipes reveals that the west country man John Wells passed him a medical recipe: on folio 37r of the manuscript there is a recipe for ‘Aqua vitae secundum Fratrem Johannem Wellys, ordinis Minorum, conventus Bryggewater’. Linda Voigts has pointed out that this may be significant to Worcester’s association with Ralph Hoby, because John Wells was an Oxford Franciscan contemporary of Hoby.201 This is further evidence that Worcester sustained his contact with literate men in the west country, who were also his associates in Oxford, and that this contact included the exchange of written texts. In addition, on the next folio there is a text of ‘Aqua vitae secundum doctrinam magistri Godard’ in Worcester’s hand that was copied in Bristol: ‘apud Bristoll[e]’ (folio 38r). The original text may not have been be in the hand of William Worcester (it states ‘per Johannem Grene, medicum, scriptum’), but this does demonstrate that texts written in the west country in the late 1460s eventually passed into the hands of William Worcester.

201 Voigts, ‘The Medical Astrology,’ 164.
Conclusion.

An important conclusion that has been reached in this thesis is that the letters associated with Sir John Fastolf and his circle are a unique record of oral communication within the circle. The information that these letters contain about orality in the Fastolf circle can be divided into four categories: a) orality in the composition of a letter, b) orality in the delivery of a letter, c) orality in the most ‘oral’ part of the letter: the postscript, and d) oral communication that was quoted or described in the letters.

Regarding the oral dimension of the composition of a letter, the research of this thesis has found evidence that Fastolf’s scribes composed from their notes, as opposed to being dictated to as has been suggested in the past. Nevertheless, a letter of correspondence can be studied as a record of an oral conversation, since the scribe would have taken notes during a face-to-face meeting with the sender of the letter. Additionally, letters that the scribes composed for Fastolf concerned immediate business, legal, and estate-management concerns. This immediacy, plus the managerial function of the letter, and the element of dialogue between sender and recipient, makes letters a closer relative of spoken conversation than other written forms such as literary texts and administrative or legal documents. The letters are also a unique indication that the information that Fastolf and his associates sent to each other in a written form was only the tip of the iceberg of what was actually conveyed around the group. This indication comes from numerous references to what would be conveyed by the letter bearer orally, as opposed to being included in the written letter. There were several instances where the sender indicated that oral delivery of information was preferable to written. However, without the survival of the written

1 See pages 152-167 above.
2 For example, see page 144 above, which gives an example of John Bokkyng’s preference for communicating certain information by mouth, refusing to write any more until he saw John Paston in
component of the letter, there would be no record of this preference for oral communication.

A close examination of the tone and content of the Fastolf Letters has suggested that the postscript of Sir John Fastolf’s letters was where orality and written communication converged. This appendix to the main letter often had the most spontaneous tone, the most urgent commands, and the most colloquial, dramatic, and direct language. Thus, the postscript of the letter, perhaps added as a last-minute addition before the letter was dispatched, was, of all the content of Fastolf’s letters, the part that most likely was dictated orally. Thus, the postscript may have been the most faithful record of Fastolf’s spoken language. Additionally, there is evidence that the postscript was used to convey the most sensitive information that it was possible to send in the written form, as it could be cut away by the recipient prior to the storage of the letter. Providing the recipient obeyed the request to cut away the postscript, this part of the letter was unique as the only part that would not leave any record. Thus, of all the parts of the letter, the postscript was potentially the closest written relative of transient oral communication. The final way in which letters are a unique record of oral communication is through their direct references to speech, when correspondents relayed spoken conversations to each other via the medium of the written word. Fastolf displayed acute awareness that his wealth and status rested on his reputation, and so when his enemies attempted to compromise his good reputation, he quoted their malicious spoken words verbatim. Oral promises carried great weight, and thus there are several instances in the written letters when these promises were described carefully, down to the smallest detail of when and where

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3 See page 168-177 above on the postscripts of the Fastolf Letters.
4 See page 128 above, which explain the evidence that correspondents frequently ignored these requests, probably due to the importance of keeping written records as future legal evidence.
5 In 1455, Fastolf questioned John Paston I about a report that had come to him of ‘skornefull language’ that had been heard about him at a dinner table in Norwich (letter 514). Fastolf repeated the gossip that had been reported to him word for word. See page 165-166 above.
they were spoken.\textsuperscript{6} This all shows that the Fastolf Letters record a unique range of spoken conversation, and so are an unrivalled insight into the spoken world of a gentry man and his servants: from dinnertable gossip,\textsuperscript{7} to reports about the behaviour of servants,\textsuperscript{8} to arguments and backbiting amongst servants,\textsuperscript{9} to the most important promises that had the potential to make or ruin a man.\textsuperscript{10}

Though the overall impression that has come from this examination of the written material associated with Fastolf is that a lot of communication has escaped the written records (ie. the information that was never recorded in written form), the letters also reveal how important the written form was to Fastolf. Fastolf used written correspondence to maintain up-to-date records, to keep his associates informed, and to give directions to those men whom he did not see in person on a day-to-day basis. This recognition that the written word was so important for Fastolf’s continuing success in his legal and business matters has led to a more sophisticated understanding of why he and his servants so diligently drafted and copied important letters and documents,\textsuperscript{11} and why Fastolf was so concerned with storing written material efficiently.\textsuperscript{12} The research has shown that Fastolf was an extremely prolific sender of letters.\textsuperscript{13} However, since Fastolf never wrote a single letter himself, this thesis has had to examine the scribal work of other men on his behalf. As a result, this thesis has become an in-depth study of those men who wrote any written material

\textsuperscript{6} See, for instance, page 145-147 above, which discusses Stephen Scrope’s written recollection of a spoken promise that he claimed was made to him by Sir John Fastolf.

\textsuperscript{7} See Chapter One, page 15 above.

\textsuperscript{8} Fastolf wrote that he had heard: ‘straunge rapportes of demenyng of the gouuernaunce of my place at Castre’ (letter 982, ll. 39-45, 27\textsuperscript{th} May 1450).

\textsuperscript{9} William Worcester described his fellow servants ‘jangl[ing]’ against him, and giving false reports to their master, in letter 566 (letter 566, ll. 12-18, perhaps 1456).

\textsuperscript{10} See footnote 6 above.

\textsuperscript{11} See Chapter 3, pages 178-192, which describe what can be ascertained about drafting and copying by Fastolf’s scribes, and explain what this tells us about the employment and deployment of letters and documents by Fastolf and his associates.

\textsuperscript{12} See pages 207-213 on the storage of written material in the Fastolf circle.

\textsuperscript{13} When Sir John Fastolf was living in London, he wrote many letters to the men who were managing his properties in Norfolk. There are eighteen extant letters from Fastolf to his chaplain at Caister Castle from the year 1450 alone. Fastolf’s move from London to Norfolk in 1454, which resulted in his separation from his legal advisor John Paston, increased the volume of his written correspondence further, as he needed to correspond with his distant advisor via letter.
on behalf of Sir John Fastolf. It has asked the question of how writing activity was co-ordinated and conducted within this circle. The answers that have come out of this enquiry have revealed more information about exactly **who** wrote for Fastolf, **what** work these literary servants did, and **how** the workload of these men was organised. As this thesis is about an entire circle of men, it has focussed on how Fastolf’s individual scribes interacted with each other in a co-operative, supervisory, or corrective context.\(^\text{14}\) The conclusion that has come out of this scribal study is that the Fastolf Letters and Papers are unique for the palaeographical and circumstantial evidence that they contain for Fastolf’s numerous literate servants working together as a **team**.

Perhaps one of the strongest conclusions that have arisen from this examination of the administrative work done by Fastolf’s writers of documents and correspondence, is that their work was remarkably diverse. Not only did they conduct their administrative work alongside their other managerial, religious and merchantile duties, but some of them also wrote literary texts for Sir John Fastolf. The discovery of a very close alignment between literary and practical administrative work has been an unexpected outcome of the research of this thesis. This study of the literate men associated with Fastolf has shown that men who wrote documents for Fastolf also wrote (and, in several cases, composed) literature for him. This demonstrates the broad repertoire of the scribes, and the equally broad expectations of their master. The most prominent example in this thesis is Luket Nantron, who was discussed on page 294-302 above, who in the mid-1450s was a novice scribe whose administrative responsibilities included drafting petitions,\(^\text{15}\) who went on to write a chronicle for Sir John Fastolf only a few years later, as well as several other miscellaneous non-

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\(^{14}\) See Chapter 4 on co-operation and collaboration in writing in the Fastolf circle

\(^{15}\) See FP 48, a petition drafted by Luket Nantron, and corrected by another of Fastolf’s scribes, William Barker.
administrative texts.\textsuperscript{16} This study of the scribes of the Fastolf circle has suggested that the milieu from which the scribes of his literary texts in manuscript books were drawn was formed around the heavy administrative burden of his properties and legal matters.

\textsuperscript{16} See page 285-286 above on Nantron’s hand in Oxford University, MS. Bodley 179, and pages 324-327 for his hand in College of Arms, MS. Arundel 48.
Appendices

Appendix A

A table of the property acquisitions of Sir John Fastolf. These property names, and the dates of their acquisition, come from the list that was compiled by Smith in ‘Aspects of the Career of Sir John Fastolf,’ 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inherited property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 manors at Caister on Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reppes with Bastwick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land at Herringby and Stokesby (by 1420) to which he subsequently added two manors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle Combe and Bathampton in Somerset (acquired through Fastolf’s marriage to Millicent Scrope)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bentley¹ and Wighton² in Yorkshire (acquired through Fastolf’s marriage to Millicent Scrope)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acquired property, in order of acquisition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beighton: in Norfolk (acquired in 1415)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradwell (1417-1419)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land at Runham: near Caister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property at Great Yarmouth (acquired before 1420)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stokesby (pre-1420)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tittleshall (pre-1420)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorleston: near Yarmouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradwell: near Yarmouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fritton: near Yarmouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobland: near Yarmouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levington (1420)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowestoft (1426)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herringby Spencers (1426-1427)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentlow (1425-1433)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akethorpe: in Lowestoft (1426)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davington: in Kent (1426)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedham Overhall and Netherhall: in Essex (1428)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loundhall: in Saxthorpe (1428): near Norwich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hickling (1428)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added Bozuns in Caister to his two inherited manors at Caister (1428)³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saxthorpe (1428)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mundham (1428-1430, sold 1450): near Beighton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mundham in Sisland (bought 1430, sold 1450): near Beighton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caister Castle (built in 1430s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---
¹ See Calendar of the Fine Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office: Henry VI, 1422-1461, 270.
² The property of Wighton was later passed to Fastolf’s stepson to farm. See letter 568, probably written in 1456, in which Sir John Fastolf wrote to John Paston to give his stepson Stephen Scrope permission to farm Wighton.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year (if known)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hellesdon</td>
<td>1430s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drayton</td>
<td>1430s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hainford (manor)</td>
<td>1430s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near Drayton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blickling</td>
<td>1431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor properties in Lothingland (Suffolk)</td>
<td>1430-1436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near Lowestoft</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winterton</td>
<td>1430s?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North of Caister</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mesuage at Tunstal near Acle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near Yarmouth (1420-1433)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titchwell</td>
<td>1431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolthorpe</td>
<td>1432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fritton</td>
<td>1434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorleston</td>
<td>1434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holmhale</td>
<td>1436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guton</td>
<td>1436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near Drayton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Stratton</td>
<td>1436-1445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herringby Fennes</td>
<td>1436-1445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runham</td>
<td>1437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Fastolfe Place’ in Southwark</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>1439-1446</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 A mesuage was ‘a residence, dwelling house; farmstead; also, a household’. McSparran, ed., ‘Middle English Dictionary’ : ‘mesuāge’.

Appendix B:

William Worcester’s scribal hand in manuscript books. This is based on the list compiled by Wakelin in ‘William Worcester Writes a History of his Reading,’ 71, with the addition of some supplementary information from my own research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worcester’s hand as the main scribal hand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Peter’s Church, Tiverton, Devon manuscript: the <em>Kalendorium</em> of John Somer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS. Laud misc. 674: astronomical texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL, MS. Additional 28208: estate records relating to Castle Combe. (see Poulett Scrope, <em>History of the Manor and Ancient Barony of Castle Combe</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL, MS. Royal 18 B.XXII: William Worcester’s <em>Boke of Noblesse</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL, MS. Royal 13. C. i: notes on classical history.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL, MS. Cotton Julius F.VII: notes on classicism and history and lists of texts or incipits from Statius, Lucan and Cicero (see Wakelin, ‘William Worcester and the Commonweal of Readers,’ 94).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL, MS. Cotton Julius E.IV: <em>Gesta Henrici Quinti</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL, MS. Sloane 4: medical collections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge University, Corpus Christi College, MS. 210: <em>Itineraries</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge University, Emmanuel College, MS. 1.2.10: <em>The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge University, Pembroke College, MS. 215: Chaucer’s <em>Boece</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUL, MS. Additional 7870: John of Wales’s <em>Breiuiloquium de Virtutibus</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUL, MS. Gg I 34.2: Scrope, <em>Dicts and Sayings</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London, College of Arms, MS. M.9: <em>Basset’s Chronicle</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London, College of Arms, MS. Arundel 48: miscellaneous collections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford University, Balliol, MS. 124: Diodorus Siculus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS. Auct. F.3.25: Greek Literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford University, Magdalen College, MS. Latin 8: <em>Isidore of Seville</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford University, Magdalen College, MS. Latin 26: <em>Liber de Sacramentis Ecclesiae</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford University, Magdalen College, MS. Latin. 166: Cassiodorus, <em>Variae</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford University, Magdalen College, MS. Latin 206 part ii: <em>Nonius Marcellus</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford University Magdalen College, MS. Latin 198: Boccaccio, <em>De casibus virorum illustrium</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford University, New College, MS. 162 <em>Arnoldus de Villanova, De Febriibus</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: A diagram of the Paston network, and a diagram of their external links. See Bergs, Social Networks and Historical Sociolinguistics: Studies in Morphosyntactic Variation in the Paston Letters, 69-70 (figures 12 and 13).

Figure 12. The Paston network(s): internal links

Figure 13. The Paston network(s): external links
Appendix D: Evidence of a hired messenger being employed to carry letters by Mercers (see line 17). Though this document does not concern the Fastolf circle, it is documentary evidence of this method of transporting letters. Transcription: ‘Item to Ienyue Bakker currour for beryng of a letter to Caxton ovir þe see’.
Appendix F: lines 10-20 of a draft petition by Sir John Fastolf, in hand of Luket Nantron. FP 48. By permission of the President and Fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford.
By permission of the President and Fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford.
Appendix I: Excerpt from the inventory of Caister Castle in Norfolk, 1448, showing the contents of the ‘stewe hous’ at Caister, and accompanying transcription. Page 16 of the manuscript booklet. In the hand of Geoffrey Spirleng. FP 43. By permission of the President and Fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford.

Transcription:

In the stewe hous of ffrenshe book\ys/ the bible, the Cronycles of france, the Cronicles of Titus leuius, a booke of Jullius Cesar, lez propretes dez choses, petrus de Crescencis, liber Almagesti, liber Geomancie, liber de Roy Artou'r/ et Romance la Rose, Cronicles Danglele Veges de larte de Chevalerie, Institutes of Justien Emperer, Brute in ryme liber Etiques, liber de Sentence Joseph, problemata Aristotilis, Vice et Vertues, liber de Cronykes de grant Bretayn in ryme meditacions saynt Bernard...
Definitions

List of Abbreviations

Bodl. Lib  Oxford University, Bodleian Library.
CPC  Cambridge University, Pembroke College.
CUL  Cambridge University Library.
EETS  Early English Text Society
ns  new series
os  original series
ss  supplementary series
es  extra series
FP  Items from the Oxford University, Magdalen College, ‘Fastolf Papers’ collection.
LALME  Linguistic Atlas of Late Middle English
LPL  London, Lambeth Palace Library.
ODNB  Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
TNA  London, The National Archives: Public Record Office

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Manuscripts cited

*Manuscripts, or a facsimile of, that have been consulted over the course of the research of this thesis are marked with an asterisk.*

Beverley Corporation Archives

  Town ‘Chartulary’

Cambridge, Cambridge University, Corpus Christi College

  MS. 210*

Cambridge, Cambridge University, Emmanuel College

  MS. I.2.10*

Cambridge, Cambridge University, University Library

  MS. Additional 7870*
  MS. Gg I.34.2

Cambridge, Cambridge University, Pembroke College

  LC. II.230
  MS. 215

Cambridge, Cambridge University, Trinity College

  MS. R. 3.2

Cambridge University, St John’s College

  MS. 162

Glasgow, Glasgow University Library

  MS. Hunter 197 (U. 1.1) *

London, Archives of the Corporation of the City of London

  Letter Book H

London, British Library

  MS Additional 10628
  MS. Additional 27443*
MS. Additional 27444*  
MS. Additional 27944  
MS. Additional 28205-13  
MS. Additional 28206*  
MS. Additional 28208*  
MS. Additional 28212*  
MS. Additional 34888*  
MS. Additional 38692*  
MS. Additional 39848*  
MS. Additional 43488*  
MS. Additional 43489*  
Additional Charter 3779  
Additional Charter 17242  
Additional Charters 18207-556  
MS. Auct. F.3.25*  
MS. Cotton Cleopatra E.ii  
MS. Cotton Domitian A.ii*  
MS. Cotton Faustina A.ii  
MS. Cotton Julius E.IV*  
MS. Cotton Julius F.VII*  
MS. Cotton Tiberius B. XII  
MS. Egerton 1991  
MS. Egerton Roll 8783  
MS. Egerton Roll 8364  
MS. Harley 782  
MS. Harley 861  
MS. Harley 2915  
MS. Harley 4012  
MS. Harley 4763  
MS. Harley 4826*  
MS. Harley 7334  
MS. Lansdowne 285*  
MS. Rawlinson D.238  
MS. Royal 13 C.i*  
MS. Royal 18 B.XXII*  
MS. Sloane 4*  
Stowe Charter 212

London, College of Arms

MS. Arundel 48*  
MS. M.9*

London, Corporation of London Record Office,

Husting Rolls of Deeds and Wills, roll 113, documents 97 and 98.

London, Lambeth Palace Library

MS. 491
MS. 506*

London, The National Archives: Public Record Office

C 219/14/2
C 219/15/1
E 101/46/24
E 405/48 m. I
SC 8/8/82/4082
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Nancy, Archives Départementales de Meurthe et Moselle

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MS. Plimpton 265

New York, Pierpont Morgan Library

MS. M 775

Norwich, District Probate Registry

Reg. Surflete, folio 187v
Spirleng 12

Norwich, Norfolk Record Office

Enrolled Deeds, Roll 20,
Norwich City Records 16/d/1
Phi/612/6 578 x 6

Norwich, Norwich Central Library

MS. Walter Rye 32

Oxford, Oxford University, Balliol

MS. 124

Oxford, Oxford University, Christ Church

MS. 148
Oxford, Oxford University, Corpus Christi College

MS. 67

Oxford, Oxford University, Bodleian Library

MS. Auct. F.3.25
MS. Bodley 179*
MS. Bodley 294
MS. Bodley 855
MS. Bodley 902
MS. Digby 57
MS. Digby 185
MS. Don. b. 31
MS. Laud misc. 570*
MS. Laud misc. 674*
MS. Top. Norfolk C. 4

Oxford, Oxford University, Corpus Christi College

MS. 198

Oxford, Oxford University, Magdalen College

Numerous estate papers relating to Sir John Fastolf and his circle, from the following classes:

Fastolf Papers*
Guton Papers*
Hickling Papers*
Lovel Papers*
Titchwell Papers*

EP 176/9,
MS. Latin 8*
MS. Latin 26*
MS. Latin 30*
MS. Latin 65*
MS. Latin 166*
MS. Latin 198*
MS. Latin 206*

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale

MS. 7443
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Philadelphia, Philadelphia Free Library

MS. Lewis T. 15/488
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