

Schools of clerks, schools of knights: John Grandisson and Hugh de Courtenay's French correspondence, 1329–40*

Edward Mills

University of Exeter, United Kingdom

e.mills4@exeter.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

The private letters within the *Register* of John Grandisson (bishop of Exeter, 1327–69) provide a fascinating insight into the intellectual climate of his episcopate, and attest to his strained relationship with the immensely important local magnate Hugh de Courtenay. Based on a re-examination of the manuscript *Register* (now held at the Devon Heritage Centre), this article offers the first modern edition and translation of a series of exchanges between the two men during Grandisson's episcopate. Grandisson's replies represent an assertion of clerical authority, as the two men fought over what was – in one case, literally – contested terrain.

John Grandisson (1292–1369, bishop of Exeter from 1327) is well known for his literary output. Central to Grandisson's legacy in the administrative sphere is a single source: his *Register*. Comprising three volumes, now housed at the Devon Heritage Centre (MSS. DEX/1/a/3–5), the *Register* represents the chief record for the administration of his episcopate, and was edited to a high standard by F. C. Hingeston-Randolph in the late nineteenth century. Of particular interest to this note, and to the documents of which it provides the first modern critical edition and complete translation, is the portion of the *Register* devoted to *litteratum privatarum* ('private letters'; vol. i, fols. 52r–88v). This section of the text contains a total of 269 pieces of correspondence sent to and by Grandisson, of which approximately 20 per cent (fifty-three in total) are written in French. One theme to emerge from the *Register*, and specifically from the private letters, is Grandisson's tempestuous relationship with one of the major magnates of the region, Hugh de Courtenay. As John Jenkins has astutely summarized, the Courtenay family had exercised considerable power in Devon since the late thirteenth century, and 'for the duration of Grandisson's episcopate ... ran Devon almost as a personal fiefdom with the tacit consent of the King'. Even prior to Hugh's creation as earl of Devon in 1335, the Courtenay family constituted a significant challenge to 'Grandisson's heightened sense of episcopal authority'.¹ Precisely how significant an obstruction Hugh de Courtenay represented can be seen in how much ink Grandisson devoted to him: of the fifty-three letters in this portion of the *Register*, eight letters

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¹ J. Jenkins, "Despite the prohibition of the Lord Bishop": John Grandisson and the limits of episcopal power', in *Episcopal Power and Local Society in Medieval Europe, 1000–1400*, ed. P. Coss and others (Turnhout, 2017), pp. 271–89, at pp. 278–9.

concern Hugh directly (six sent to him, one received from him and another sent to his wife, Agnes). Of all the letters written in French, this quantity is second only to the number sent to the king (nine). It is these eight letters, dated between 1329 and 1340, that are edited and translated here from the manuscript *Register*.

The ease with which such summaries can be offered is testament to the thoroughness of Hingeston-Randolph's edition of the *Register*, which has remained an essential source for Grandisson's episcopate for over a century, both on account of its high-quality transcriptions and the detailed introductory and critical material, including the dating of the letters themselves.² The readability of Hingeston-Randolph's text to the modern reader is, however, hampered by the late nineteenth-century conventions that he follows: punctuation and capitalization are inconsistent, while diacritics are entirely absent, leading to ambiguity in places. Also absent, and essential for modern scholarship, is a translation of this correspondence into English. The 'Preface' to the third volume of Hingeston-Randolph's *Register* (1899) does offer a number of paraphrases of certain letters – corresponding to Documents 1–4 (xv–xvii), 7 (1–li) and 8 (li–lii) edited here. However, the relationship of the paraphrases to the original French texts is obscured by their placement within Hingeston-Randolph's broader summary of Grandisson's career, and by the use of the third person throughout. Hingeston-Randolph's paraphrases also freely mix summary with interpretation: describing Hugh de Courtenay's response to a request of Grandisson's, Hingeston-Randolph writes that 'with a callous indifference to the hardness of the Bishop's position, [Courtenay] advised him to live within his means, and to render to all, both rich and poor, their due.'³ A new edition and translation of these letters, then, is long overdue. While Hingeston-Randolph's edition has served as a valuable point of reference and correction in producing this edition, the starting point has remained the manuscript *Register* itself.

The manuscript attests not merely to the long-running conflict between Grandisson and Hugh de Courtenay, but also to Grandisson's own command of French in a literary register. The first four documents edited and translated below record a tense initial exchange between Grandisson and Courtenay in 1329, shortly after Grandisson's election as bishop of Exeter. After Courtenay refuses Grandisson's request for a loan of 200 *livres* to fund a payment to the Papal Curia, and implies in turn that the bishop would do well to live modestly ('vivre du vostre et meynement', 2.10), Grandisson issues a lengthy riposte replete with Old Testament allusions and sarcastic wordplay. The specific accusations levelled against Grandisson by Courtenay – that he has levied significant taxes, lives in opulence and is aloof from the people that he is supposed to serve – are commonplace in anticlerical literature of the later fourteenth century, particularly that which has been characterized as broadly 'Wycliffite', but found less frequent expression in the first part of the century.⁴ It is in the French literature of medieval Britain that the roots of Courtenay's critique might be found: London, British Library, Harley MS. 2253, probably produced for a wealthy Ludlow family around 1340, attests to a strong anticlerical, and specifically anti-fraternal, critique of mendicant orders among noble elites.⁵ The *Ordre de bel eyse*, a satirical proposition for a new order of monks and nuns, advocates for an order that might be characterized by the perceived vices of each of the major existing orders: among them, close company between men and women, abundant eating and drinking, and lodging solely with the rich and powerful.⁶ Tracts that are specifically anti-episcopal in nature are rarer in both Wycliffite and earlier writings of the thirteenth century, although the tradition of estates satire provides a rich vein of material on which Courtenay may have been drawing in his critique. The Franciscan friar Nicole

² *The Register of John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter*, ed. F. C. Hingeston-Randolph (3 vols., London, 1984–1899; hereafter *Register*). Hingeston-Randolph provides a summary of the three manuscript volumes of the *Register* (now Devon Heritage Centre, MSS. DEX/1/a/3–5) in *Register*, ii, pp. iii–vi.

³ *Register*, iii, p. xv.

⁴ For a concise overview of later fourteenth-century anticlerical writing in English, which presents eight categories into which 'anticlerical rhetoric of the fourteenth century' can be subdivided, see E. Campbell, *The Gawain-Poet and the Fourteenth-Century English Anticlerical Tradition* (Kalamazoo, Mich., 2018), pp. 33–90.

⁵ On the provenance and dating of the Harley MS., see C. Revard, 'Scribe and provenance', in *Studies in the Harley Manuscript: the Scribes, Contents, and Social Contexts of British Library MS Harley 2253*, ed. S. Fein (Kalamazoo, Mich., 2000), pp. 21–110.

⁶ Art. 86, *Ordre de bel eyse / The Order of Fair Ease*, in *The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript*, iii, ed. S. Fein (Kalamazoo, Mich., 2015) <<https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/fein-harley2253-volume-3-article-86>> [accessed 26 Oct. 2023].

Bozon's *Lettre de l'empereur Orgueil* (Letter of Pride, Emperor), produced around the early fourteenth century, presents the Papal Curia ('Court de Rome') as willing to submit to Pride in exchange for splendour and money.⁷ An unedited French poem on the three estates, also dated to around 1300 and found in the same manuscript as Bozon's *Lettre*, draws on Paul's epistle to Timothy to condemn bishops who extract money from their charges and do not carry out their tasks as akin to robbers.⁸

If Grandisson was 'chastened' after Hugh's comments, as John Jenkins has suggested, it is not evident from the tone of his reply (Document 3).⁹ Sarcastically invoking Courtenay's 'grant sen' ('great wisdom') in comparison to his own 'petit sen' ('little wisdom', 3.5), Grandisson proceeds to rebut Courtenay's allegations in great detail, invoking bishops' status as 'peres espiritualx' ('spiritual fathers', 3.42) through a dense web of biblical quotation and allusion. His final reference, from 1 Corinthians 2:15, is introduced by a stark division being drawn between domains of expertise, as the 'escoles de clers et de prelatz' are set against the 'escole de chivaler' ('schools of clerks, prelates and knights', 3.45–55). This present edition looks to clarify Grandisson's biblical allusions in this and other letters, providing references to both the Latin Vulgate and (for translations) the New International Version. This first group of four letters concludes with a letter from Grandisson, unusually written not to Hugh himself, but to his wife, Agnes. The reasons for Grandisson writing to Agnes are unclear, but it is possible that the letter was intended to accompany his reply to Hugh. Its contents, which seek to further justify the bishop's position, speak to the expansion of what may otherwise have been a purely personal feud into a broader sphere, one in which Hugh's wife – who is not otherwise mentioned in the letters – is implicated.

Document 7 (from 1335) is in a similar vein to Grandisson's earlier admonishment, with warnings of judgement and biblical quotations accompanying a document intended for the 'correction of the soul' (7.2). It is not until 1340, shortly before Courtenay's death, that we see in Document 8 a softening of the relationship between the two men, as Grandisson asks of the ailing Courtenay that the two might seek *bien pardurable* (everlasting good, 8.11–12). The obvious interest that these exchanges hold for historians has led to it being seen as something of a touchstone in studies of Grandisson's episcopate and episcopal authority, including in the aforementioned work of Jenkins; R. J. Burls, in his overview of the dispute, memorably describes Courtenay as '[Grandisson's] *bête noir*[e]'.¹⁰ Grandisson's lengthy rebuttal to Hugh (Document 3) has attracted further attention for its linguistic dexterity, with William Rothwell highlighting his 'mastery of the semantics of Anglo-French' throughout, which itself challenges the notion of Anglo-French as 'nothing but a corrupt form of the "correct" French of Paris'.¹¹ This lexical ingenuity and forthright anger remain on display on the sixth document edited below, a 1335 letter from Grandisson to Courtenay that is absent from any of the aforementioned studies of episcopal authority. In response to allegations that his men have damaged Courtenay's property, Grandisson denies any responsibility for the damage itself, but nevertheless defends his right to treat his villeins in whatever manner he chooses, without interference (or advice) from the newly created earl of Devon. The long-simmering dispute between the two men is summarized as Grandisson widens the terms of their debate, encapsulating their decades-long feud in a single demand: 'Leave others', he argues, 'to be kings or bishops' (3.25–6).

Document 6 further illustrates the long-running nature of the feud between the two men: six years after their original dispute, the two men clash over a purported appeal made to Courtenay by Hugh's own men in Ottery St. Mary. It also, however, places their disagreements in a concrete (and altogether more quotidian) context: that of a land dispute, and a debate regarding the rights and obligations of a ruler – secular or ecclesiastical – towards their *vileyns*. In spite of their differences,

⁷ 'Nous delitoums en grant nobleye / Et moult desiroms blancke moneye' (We delight in great splendour and greatly desire silver money). See N. Bozon, 'Lettre de l'empereur Orgueil', in *Deux poemes de Nicholas Bozon: Le char d'Orgueil, La lettre de l'empereur Orgueil*, ed. J. Vising (Gothenburg, 1919), pp. 61–75 (ll. 66–8).

⁸ 'pers a laroums', fol. 1v. The text in question (found exclusively in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Douce 210, fols. 1r–15r) is no. 625 in R. J. Dean and B. M. Boulton, *Anglo-Norman Literature: a Guide to Texts and Manuscripts* (London, 1999).

⁹ Jenkins, "Despite the prohibition of the Lord Bishop", p. 279.

¹⁰ See Jenkins, "Despite the prohibition of the Lord Bishop", p. 279; and R. J. Burls, 'Society, economy and lordship in Devon in the age of the first two Courtenay earls, c. 1297–1377' (unpublished University of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 2002), p. 124.

¹¹ See W. Rothwell, 'Stratford Atte Bowe revisited', *Chaucer Review*, xxxvi (2001), 184–207, at p. 192.

the two most powerful men in the region nevertheless had to conduct business together, as shown further in Document 5. Sent later in 1329, only months after the outbreak of their feud, this letter sees Grandisson adopting an altogether different register, asking Courtenay to consider appointing Hugh de Bishopston, a clerk of Grandisson's, as a portioner of the benefice of the church at Waddeston; if not, he might instead consider Grandisson's own nephew, who is 'a Paris estudeaunt' ('studying in Paris', 5.11). Courtenay, it can be inferred, knew the individual to whom Grandisson is referring – probably Johannes Northwode¹² – a fact that highlights the personal bonds between the two men. Courtenay's own brother, William Montagu (the 'Count of Sarum' mentioned in Document 8) had married Grandisson's sister Catherine, and several of the bishop's amiable letters to him are recorded in the *Register*.¹³ Read in context, the private letters of the *Register* certainly do speak to a strong-willed bishop, but also point to an individual with a keen awareness of the interplay between the spiritual and the secular.

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The present article offers a modern critical edition of this body of correspondence according to standard conventions for the edition of Anglo-Norman texts, and based on a re-examination of the manuscript *Register*. Accordingly, I have standardized punctuation throughout in the French text, most notably with respect to apostrophes (clarifying, for instance, 'd'argent' for 'dargent' in Hingeston-Randolph's edition), as well as adding diacritics where necessary (to distinguish, for instance, 'obligé' from Hingeston-Randolph's 'oblige', and disambiguating 'meine' from 'meine'). Capitalization has in most cases been normalized, with significant notable instances of scribal capitalization indicated in notes, but otherwise silently amended.

These editorial interventions are made for the sake of clarity; they should not, however, be read as an attempt to obscure the intriguing palaeographical and codicological characteristics of the *Register* itself, which merit further examination. The *Register* itself, and specifically the 'private letters', appear to be written in several hands of cursive Anglicana, with multiple aspects and colours of ink throughout. The differences in hand are possibly responsible for the variation in orthography found throughout the French letters, with *AND*₂ *BENEIÇUN*¹ realized variously as 'beniscoun' (1.2), 'benisçun' (4.2) and 'beneiceoun' (8.2). However, *AND*₂ *AIDE* is realized as both 'eide' (1.5, 1.8) and 'eyde' (1.5) in the same letter. Document 5 is unique in showing a preference for 'esglise' over 'eglise', while Documents 1 and 2 alone spell the magnate's name as 'Courteney'. The standard suite of Latinate abbreviations are employed, although differing approaches to abbreviation are found throughout: the word-final downward hairline stroke, here expanded to give the final 'e' in 'Criste' (8.9), is not employed consistently in other letters. Likewise, 'Sire' is most commonly written in full, but Document 5 also attests to it as 's' followed by a hook (5.3), 'sir' with a final flick (5.4) and 's' followed by a hook with word-final 'e' (5.7). In instances such as this, where abbreviations might be expanded in multiple ways, I have prioritized consistency; this also leads to the expansion of 'q' plus macron as 'qe', rather than 'que', since the former is more frequent when written out in full (although 'q' followed by the 'three-shaped mark' is expanded as 'que', as in 'evesque' (2.6)).¹⁴ The Tironian nota is likewise expanded to 'et' rather than 'e' based on the preponderance of the former in unabbreviated forms, although 'e' predominates in Document 3 alone.

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Following the characteristics set out in Ian Short's *Manual of Anglo-Norman*, the French of these letters is recognizably insular.¹⁵ Raising of /o/ to /u/ (MAN § 6.1) is present throughout

¹² See W. J. Courtenay, *Parisian Scholars in the Early Fourteenth Century: a Social Portrait* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 180.

¹³ *Register*, i. 211, 243, 253 (Hingeston-Randolph's nos. 110, 175, 194).

¹⁴ On the 'three-shaped mark', see O. Pluta, 'Abbreviations', in *The Oxford Handbook of Latin Palaeography*, ed. F. T. Coulson and R. G. Babcock (Oxford, 2020), pp. 9–24, at p. 10.

¹⁵ I. Short, *Manual of Anglo-Norman* (2nd edn., Oxford, 2013).

the letters, including 'pur' (for *por*, throughout), as is 'seignur' for *seigneur* (*Conspectus*) and the graphy '-oun' (MAN § 6.1, seen in 'resoun' (1.4), 'dount' (3.12), 'counforter' (2.12), 'faudrayount' (3.47)). Lexis is largely conventional, with the only term absent from the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* at the time of writing being 'porcionaire' (5.4, 5.5), with the sense of 'portioner' in a benefice.¹⁶ The use of *peiser* in the metaphorical sense of 'to trouble, upset' ('il nous poyse' (4.7), 'moult nous poise' (7.3)) offers a new earliest attestation for this sense in *AND*₂ PEISER¹, sense 5.

**DOCUMENT 1: LETTER FROM JOHN GRANDISSON TO HUGH DE
COURTENAY, 24 JANUARY 1329 (DEVON HERITAGE CENTRE, MS.
DEX/1/A/3, FOL. 62R)**

- 1 [91] **Litera missa domino Hugoni de Courteney.**¹⁷
 2 Salutz et trescheres amysteiz, ové la beniscoun de Dieu et la nostre.
 3 Purceo, sire, qe nous avoms a faire hastivement une graundezyne paie d'argent a la
 4 Court,¹⁸ par la resoun de nostre eglise d'Excestre qe estoit par nostre predecessour si
 5 grandement obligé, et tot l'eyde qe nous est fet ne suffit mye, saunz eide de bons amys, a la
 6 mieté de la some nous devons illoeqes, vous prioms si chèrement, sire, come nous pooms,
 7 qe vous nous voillez a prestre taunqe un an .cc. livres d'esterling par tiele seurté come vous
 8 volez ordenier, si qe parmy vostre eide, sire, et de autres bons amys, nous puissoms estre
 9 deliverés de la decte avantdite. E si vous plest, sire, nous voillez escrire par le portur de cestes
 10 quoy vous plest faire de cestre nostre priere.
 11 Sire, nostre seignur vous eit en sa garde !
 12 Escripte a nostre manoir de Chuddeleghe la .xxiiij. jour de Jenever.

[91] (1) **Letter sent to Hugh de Courtenay.**

(2) Greetings and salutations to you, with the blessing of ourselves and of God.
 (3–10) Since, Sir, we must soon make a significant payment to the Court, on account of our Church at Exeter, which was so greatly indebted by our predecessor; and since all the assistance that we have been offered would not account for half of the sum we owe there without the aid of good friends; we beg you as dearly as we can, Sir, that you might lend us 200 pounds for one year, against whatever security you see fit, in such a way that through your help and that of other good friends, Sir, we might be delivered of the aforementioned debt. And may it please you to write to us, Sir, by return of this letter, how it pleases you to respond to this request of ours.

- (11) Sir, may our Lord keep you in his protection!
 (12) Written at our manor of Chudleigh, 24th January.

¹⁶ The *Dictionary of Medieval Latin From British Sources* records *portionarius* as current throughout the medieval period ('portionarius', *Dictionary of Medieval Latin From British Sources* <<https://logeion.uchicago.edu/portionarius>> [accessed 27 Oct. 2023]). *AND*₂ *porcioner* is recorded in its verbal sense ('to apportion, divide up'), but not as a substantive. All citations from the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* can be accessed via *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* <<https://anglo-norman.net>> [accessed 27 Oct. 2023].

¹⁷ Numbers in square brackets correspond to Hingeston-Randolph's numbering of the letters in his edition.

¹⁸ Grandisson here refers to the Papal Curia.

DOCUMENT 2: REPLY FROM HUGH DE COURTENAY TO JOHN GRANDISSON, NO DATE (DEVON HERITAGE CENTRE, MS. DEX/1/A/3, FOL. 62R) (FIGURE 1).

1 [93] *Litera missa domino, per domini de Courteney.*

2 A seon treshonourable seignur et pierre en Dieu, honurs e tutes reverences. Purceo, sire, qe
3 vous nous prietz par voz letres qe nous vous dussoms aprester une certeyne somme d'argent,
4 voillez savoir, sire, qe nous avomps taunt mys a maryer nostre fille et de acquiter le
5 testament nostre chere miere, qe Dieuz assoille, qe nous ne pooms vostre priere faire a ceste
6 fietz, dount il nous poise. Et d'altrepart, vostre predecessour, l'evesque James, nous est tenu
7 en une somme d'argent, et nous ne pooms pas avenyr si nous ne pledoms ové les executurs.

8 Sire, voz clerks dyunt parmy vostre eveschee qe vous avezz fait une grande quillete
9 d'entre euy, la qele chose ne fust unkes fait par nul Evesque avant ces heures; et entent le
10 people qe vous avezz grant aver. Et bon est, sire, de comencer a vivre du vostre e meynement,
11 et faire droecture et grace a riches et a poveres. Et sire, sachez qe Evesque ne ne doyt mye
12 estre synguler, mes sovent soy doit moustrer pur counforter les almes del people; et touz doit
13 escuter, et ne mye trop legerement crere, qar bon juge deit tost conceyvre et tart doner
14 jugement pur avys aver.

15 Sire, le seynt Espirit vous sauve et gard.

[93] (1) Letter sent to the lord [Grandisson] by Hugh de Courtenay.

(2–7) To his most honourable lord and father in God, honour and all due reverences. Since, Sir, you have asked in your letters that we might lend you a certain amount of money; know, Sir, that we have dedicated so much money to our daughter's dowry, and to settle the affairs of our dear mother (may God absolve her), that we cannot at this point grant your request, much to our regret. And besides, your predecessor James took out a loan from us, and we cannot receive this money short of pleading with the executors.

(8–14) Sir, the clerks around your bishopric say that you have levied a great tax from them, the like of which was never taken by any bishop before now; and the people understand that you are very rich. It is good, Sir, to begin to live off your own means and in moderation, and to dispense justice and mercy to rich and to poor alike. And know, sir, that a bishop should never be aloof, but should often

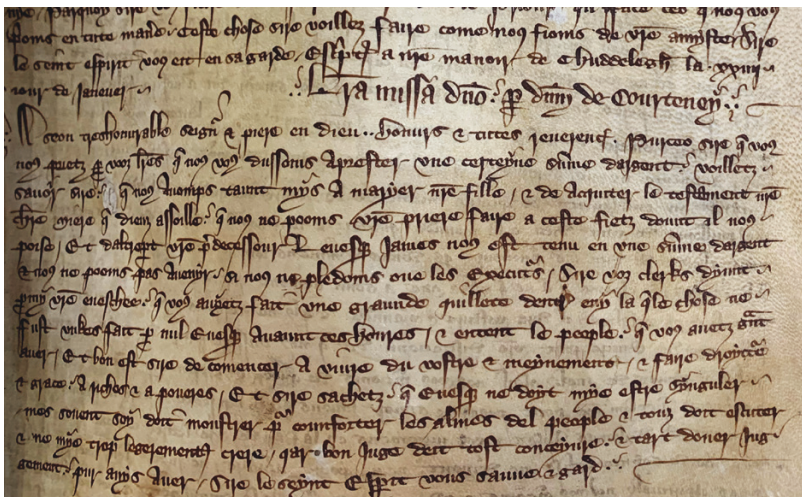


Figure 1. Document 2, Reply from Hugh de Courtenay to John Grandisson, no date.
Source: Devon Heritage Centre, MS. DEX/1/a/3, fol. 62r

show himself to soothe the souls of the people. He should listen to all, but not give credence too easily, for a good judge should be apprised of all matters early, so that he might take counsel.¹⁹

(15) Sir, may the Holy Spirit save and protect you!

DOCUMENT 3: REPLY FROM HUGH DE COURTENAY TO JOHN GRANDISSON, 27 JANUARY 1329 (DEVON HERITAGE CENTRE, MS. DEX/1/A/3, FOL. 63V)

1 **[94] Litera missa domino Hugoni de Courtenay, responsales ad literas domino missas**
2 **par euromdem, ut scriptu proxime.**

3 Saluz, ové la beniscoun de Dieu et la nostre, ové aprise de pierre et amour de mere.

4 Nous avoms, sire, resceu voz lettres, par les queles nous avoms bien entendu, solom nostre
5 petit sen, vostre grant sen. E endroit, sire, du mariage vostre fille et d'acquiter le testament
6 vostre mere, molt sumes liee de quoe de si parfites oeuvres, par quoy, sire, nous vous tenoms
7 quant a nous, vostre pier, estre excusé de habundaunte filiele charité, cy et devant Dieu.

8 Des autres choses que vous nous escryvez : purceo, sire, que vous estes sage, coment que ly
9 sage deyne double consaile de respoudre a tieux, il nous semble que nous devons tenir le
10 deroyne quant a ore. Endroyt de ceo que noz clers, ou les voz par aventure, come mez quidoms,
11 dyent que nous avoms fet une grande quillete entre eaux, quele chose nul évesque ne fist avant
12 ces hores, dount le peple que vous dites que nous avoms grand aver; nous nous
13 emmerveyloms de vostre grant saver, qar qey que l'en dye, verité ne se musce mye.

14 Et vous, seigneur, si vous plest, poez saver, e tot le peple siet, que unques nul évesque avant
15 ne trova cest éveschee si destrute de totes pars, ne si endetté come nous avoms ore fet, Dieu
16 set sans nostre peccé. E nepurquant, coment que nous par grand damage et travayl du corps
17 avoms amenusé merveylousement par l'eyde nostre bone dame, cele summe loialment tote la
18 quillete ne se estent a la meisté du remenant.

19 E nepurquant seigneur, Deu et reson volent et comaudent que les bons fiz, solum lour
20 power, eydent lour pere et mere a mester, coment que les denaturels ne le font mye, e les altres
21 poy ou nient. Mes ceo ne dyoms mye pur nous, qar nous ne ent viveroms mie, ne en nostre
22 boche ne entera. Mes de nostre plus issera. Et nepurquant a ceste charge fumes apellé come
23 Aaron, et ne le ravymes mye come les filz Chore.

24 Quant a cele summe, seigneur, que vous aprestastes a nostre predecessour, l'évesque James,
25 que Dieux assoille, pur overe de charité: s'il ne vous paie en deners en cest secle, vous esperez,
26 comme nous quidoms, de trover le tresor par ses prieres en cel.

27 De rechef, de ceo que vostre savoyr dit a nostre foliez, que bon est de comencer vivre de
28 nostre et menement, nostre court sen ne l'entent mye clerement si vous par aventure ne nous
29 surmettez que nous avoms avant ces heures vesqy d'autruy ou en menduiant ou emblaunt, de
30 queles maneres de vivre nous quidoms al eide de Dieu que vous nous puissoms devant Dieu et
31 le mounde quiter, e touz nous auncestres.

32 Quant a menement vivre : al eyde de Dieu nostre purveyour, que donne a jumens lour
33 viande, e as poucyns de corbyns a ly criaunde, que il ne faudra mie a son servent, qar come il
34 nous promist, cely que ad doné le corps e l'alme, il dora vesture e viande, e plus ne desiroms
35 nous mye ové sa grace en cest mounde.

¹⁹ On the translation of *avis aver* as 'to take counsel', see AND₂ avis.

36 D'autre part, vostre discrecioun dit qe nous dussoms faire droyture e grace a riches e
 37 povres, de quel conseil nous vous mercioms de quoer. E esrooms, par la grace de nostre
 38 creatour et gouverour qe solom nostre petit poaer e saveir, l'avons fait, et par s'eyde tojours
 39 le ferroms de meüz en meüz.

40 E de voz bones apries et voz jugemens en la fyn de vostre lettre, coment qe les fiz de
 41 Dieu ne de Seynte Eglise ne deivont ne ne poont apprendre ne juger lour mestres ne lour
 42 peres espiritualx, nous vous mercioms et pardonoms.

43 E quant a la singulareté qe vous nous suremettez, dioms qe pleyse a Dieu e a la Virge
 44 singulere qe nous seyoms en bien singular et sengle, et ne mye double come ly seclesages.

45 Quant a nus demouster sovent pur conforter les almes, plese a Dieu qe sa voluté, et ne
 46 mie nous, pussoms a eaux demoustrer.

47 Quant a touz escoter, sachez sire qe il nous faudrayout oures et orayles, et nepurquant
 48 Jetro dit a Moyses qe il se gasteroyt [fol. 64r] ensi sanz resoun, et ly dona autre consal, qe est
 49 esprovez par nos seynz peres en Dieu: de crere de leger, et tost conceyvre, et tard jugement
 50 doner, pur avis aver. Le mestre qe nous aprent et de nous si de leger mal creit, et tost conceyt
 51 qele chose il ne seit ne ne veyt, et sanz avys aver, a tort nous voet jigger. Primes deveroyt de
 52 son oyl le trefe en gitier, et puis de l'autri buchete oster.

53 Cestes choses dioms pur nostre fiz, si bon seyt aprendre et si autre seyt a reprendre, qar
 54 coment qe nous seyoms en age plus tendre, nous savoms s'il covent de tuz nos faitz raison
 55 rendre. E voillez, seignur, entendre qe nous avoms si longement a les escoles de clers et de
 56 prelatz apries nostre lescon rendre qe nous ne devons de celes sciences en autre escole
 57 licences prendre. Par qey vous, seignur, nous devez pardonner si prelat ne voyse a l'escole de
 58 chivaler. Qar Seint Poul dit qe spiritualis omnia judicat et a nemine judicatur.

59 Le sen del seint esprit garde vostre saver et vostre aver !

60 Escripte a nostre manoir de Chuddeleghe, le vendredi apres la conversioun de Seint Poul,
 61 l'an de nostre sacré seconde.

[94] (1–2) Letters sent to the Lord Hugh de Courtenay, responding to the letter to the Lord
 Grandisson sent by the same, on the aforementioned topic.

(3–7) Greetings, with the blessing of ourselves and of God, and with the wisdom of a father and the love of a mother. Sir, we have received your letters, thanks to which we have, according to what little wisdom we have, recognized your own great wisdom. And, sir, we are delighted to hear such perfect news as the marriage of your daughter and the payment of your mother's debts. As a result of these things, sir, we as your father release you from any significant acts of filial charity, here and before God.

(8–13) On the other things of which you write: sir, since you are wise, and given that the wise man's wisdom is doubled by responding to him,²⁰ to respond to such things, it seems to us that we should undertake our defence immediately. Concerning the sayings of our own clerks – or perhaps your clerks, as we rather believe – that we have levied a great tax among them, the like of which no bishop had previously levied, on account of which the people believe (as you say) that we are very rich: we are astonished at your great wisdom, since whatever one might say, the truth will out.

²⁰ The original French here is challenging, corresponding approximately to 'the wise [man] gives double advice from [one] responding to such things'.

(14–18) And Sir, if it pleases you, you may know (as all the people know) that no bishop prior to ourselves found their bishopric to be in such ruin all over, nor so indebted, as we have now come to be (and not by our fault, God knows). And nevertheless, even though we have through great expense and through hard labour, and all with the help of Our Lady, reduced our debts to a remarkable degree, this amount that we have amassed through the tax does not cover even half of our debts.

(19–23) And nevertheless, sir, God and reason alike wish and command that good sons help their mothers and fathers in their time of need, even if the cruel-hearted²¹ do not do this at all, and others very little or not. But we say this not for our own benefit, since we ourselves will not live off this money, nor will we receive it; indeed, more money will come from us. We were called to this office as Aaron was, and did not seize it in any way, as the sons of Korah did.²²

(24–6) On the topic of that sum, Sir, which you lent as a work of charity to our predecessor, Bishop James (may God absolve him): if he has not paid you in money in this world, you should hope, as we believe it, to find the treasure through his prayers in Heaven.²³

(27–31) On the topic of what you in your 'wisdom' say about our 'foolishness', about how it is good to live modestly and according to one's own means: our meagre wisdom does not understand you, if by chance you imply that we have hitherto lived off others, or by begging or thieving. We would hope – God help us – to be acquitted of ever having lived in such a way before God, the whole world and before all our ancestors.

(32–5) On the topic of living modestly: by the grace of God, our provider who gives cattle their food, and gives food to the young ravens who call out to him,²⁴ we hope that He will not fail His servant; for as He promised to us, he who has given up his body and soul will receive clothing and meat; and by His Grace we desire nothing more in this world.²⁵

(36–9) On another topic, you suggest in your discernment that we should do right and give grace unto rich and poor alike. We thank you wholeheartedly for this advice, and hope, through the grace of our Lord and Creator, that we have done so according to what little ability and understanding we have; and that with His help we will continue to do this better and better.

(40–2) On your good teachings and judgements at the end of your letter: we thank you for them but pardon you for having done so, since children of God or of Holy Church should not and cannot teach or judge their masters or spiritual fathers.

(43–4) As for the aloofness [*singularité*] of which you accuse us: we say, may it please God and the special [*singulere*] Virgin that we might be straightforward [*singuler*] and solitary [*sengle*], and not deceitful [*double*] like the wordly-minded.

(45–6) As for showing ourselves often to soothe others' souls: may it please God that we may show His will to them, rather than showing ourselves.

(47–52) As for listening to all: know, Sir, that we lack enough hours and ears to do so;²⁶ nevertheless, Jethro said to Moses that in listening to all, he was wasting himself to no avail, and gave him different advice, advice that has been tested by our holy forefathers in God: to give credence easily, to be apprised of all matters early and to come to judgement slowly, so that he

²¹ The French adjective *denaturel* appears initially to have had the sense of 'unnatural' before expanding in scope to encompass 'heartless' in the early fourteenth century. Grandisson is therefore accusing Courtenay of perversity, as well as cruelty, as underlined by the lexis of family found throughout. A financial matter, then, is infused with a further dimension of what is right and proper.

²² The first of several Old Testament references that Grandisson deploys in this correspondence. The reference here is to Moses' elder brother, Aaron, who is called to serve as a priest in Exod. 28:1. The *filz Chore* probably refers to the revolt against Aaron by Korah detailed in Num. 16. Grandisson's interest in Old Testament texts is suggested by his personal glosses in what is now Bodl. Libr., MS. Auct.D.1.18; see M. W. Steele, 'A study of the books owned or used by John Grandisson, bishop of Exeter (1327–1369)' (unpublished University of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1994), pp. 35–6.

²³ See Matt. 6:19–20.

²⁴ Ps. 147:9.

²⁵ This is likely to be a second reference to the Sermon on the Mount (Luke 12:23–4; and Matt. 6:25).

²⁶ Grandisson is here exploiting the near homophony of *oures* ('hours') and *orayles* ('ears').

might take counsel.²⁷ The teacher who suspects us of such a minor indiscretion, and quickly comes to judgement on something that he neither knows nor has seen, and seeks to judge us incorrectly and without advice, should take the log out of his own eye first, and then remove the stick from the eye of another.²⁸

(53–60) We say these things to our child, if he is ready to learn, and if another child requires punishment; for while we may be younger than you are, we know, when necessary, how to account for our deeds. And know, Sir, that we have learned to recite our lessons for so long at clerical schools that we need not receive qualifications in these fields from any other school. Pardon us then, Sir, if a prelate will not attend the school of a knight, for as Saint Paul says, *The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments.*²⁹

(61) May the wisdom of the Holy Spirit keep you in your wisdom and in your wealth!

(62–3) Written at our manor at Chudleigh, on the Friday after the Conversion of St. Paul, in the second year of our bishopric.

DOCUMENT 4: LETTER FROM JOHN GRANDISSON TO AGNES DE
COURTENAY, NO DATE (DEVON HERITAGE CENTRE, MS. DEX/1/A/3,
FOL. 64R)

1 [95] **Litera missa domine de Courtenay.**

2 Saluz, come a nostre quor de meiné, ové la benisçun de Dieu et la nostre.

3 Sachez, treschere chosine, qe nous priames l'autre jour nostre cher fiz, vostre seignur, pur
4 asaier sa bone volunté vers nous de une priere qe, le nous qydoms, qe vous bien savez. E il
5 nous respondy en sey excusant ore quant a cele besoyne, de qele excusaciony nous fumes et
6 sumes bien payé. Mes pur ceo qe il nous escript d'autres resouns solum sa segnurele volunté,
7 nous ly respondoms derechefe, qar il nous poyse molt qe coment qe il seyt sage, il se tent
8 meymes tropsage, et autres trop fous, qele chose n'est pas signe de saver ; qar l'en dyt en
9 Fraunce qe nul n'est fol qe ne quide estre sage. Et nous esperoms, chere chosine, par la grace
10 de Dieu et l'eyde sa bone mere, qe nous ne fumes mye si a reprendre, ne aprendre, come il
11 nous fet entendre. Et coment qe nous poy savoms e valoms, nous sumes nepurquant prestre et
12 evesque, e soun pere en Dieu, en vie e mort. Mes nepurquant sachez de voirs qe nous ne
13 sumes pur ceo ren mal payé ne mieu³⁰ de quoer, qar nous entendoms qe il le fit pur bien,
14 coment qe nul ne doyt de leger crere ne dire mal de evesque pur pe peril qe ent vient al alme
15 contre Dieu, qi ministre il est, nul ne doyt fere autre pecché le seon.
16 Chere cosine, le seynt esperit vous gard.

[95] (1) Letter sent to the Lady de Courtenay.

(2) We offer greetings, as to our own household, with the blessing of God and ourselves.

(3–15) Know, dear cousin, that the other day we beseeched our dear brother, your lord, to show his good will to us, through a request of which we believe you are aware. He responded by

²⁷ Grandisson's counter-example to Hugh's accusation draws on Exod. 18:17–23.

²⁸ References here are to Exod. 18 and Matt. 7:3–5 (with the latter again referring to the Sermon on the Mount).

²⁹ 1 Cor. 2:15.

³⁰ AND₂ mover.

excusing himself from this obligation, and we are well satisfied with his justification. But since he, in his lordly desire, writes to us on other matters, we are replying to him once more; for it troubles us greatly that however wise he may be, he thinks himself wiser still, and thinks others to be foolish. Such a thing is not a sign of wisdom, since as they say in France, 'There is not a foolish man who does not think himself to be wise.' And we hope, dear cousin, by the grace of God and the aid of his Mother, that we did not merit being upbraided or instructed as he leads us to believe. However little we may know, and however unworthy we may be, we are nevertheless a priest and a bishop, and his spiritual father in God, in life and death. But nevertheless, know truly that we are not at all ill-treated or troubled at heart by this, since we understand that he did this with good intention, even if no one should easily believe or speak ill of a bishop on account of the peril that comes unto his soul from this before God; for no one should make another man's sin his own.

(16) Dear cousin, may the Holy Spirit keep you.

**DOCUMENT 5: LETTER FROM JOHN GRANDISSON TO HUGH DE
COURTENAY, 19 OCTOBER 1329 (DEVON HERITAGE CENTRE, MS.
DEX/1/A/3, FOL. 72R)**

1 [162] *Litera missa domino de Courtenay.*

2 Saluz, ové la benissoun de Dieu et la nostre.

3 Voilletz savoir, trescher sire, qe nous avoms entendu pur certain qe par mescheaunce qe
4 est avenuz, un sire Johan Gentilcorps, porcionaire en l'esglise de Woddesdoun en le countee
5 de Bokyngham et un autre porcionaire de meisme l'esglise ount occiz l'un l'autre, par la mort
6 des quels lour porciouns en la dite esglise qe sont de vostre patronage sont ore voides. Par
7 qoy, sire, vous prioms chèrement de cuer pur nostre cher clerc, Meistre Hughe de
8 Bysshoptestoun, q'est de celes parties nee, q'il vous ploise vouchier saufe en lui l'une des
9 dites porciouns et lui presenter a ycele. Et nous vous serroms, sire, tenuz le plus a touz temps
10 a venir. Et si vous ne vouchetz mye sauf en le dist Meistre Hughe, voillez si vous plest penser
11 de nostre nevoeu, qi est a Paris estudeaunt.

12 Sire, le seint esprit vous sauve touz jours en corps et en alme !

13 Escripte en nostre manoir de Chuddeleghe, le .xix. jour du mois d'Octobre.

[162] (1) *Letter sent to the lord de Courtenay.*

(2) Greetings, with the grace of God and ourselves.

(3–11) May you know, dearest sir: we have heard for certain that through ill fortune, sir John Gentilcorps, portioner in the church of Waddesdon in the county of Buckinghamshire, and another portioner in the same church have killed one another, as a result of whose deaths their portions in the aforementioned church, which are under your advowson, are now unfilled. Therefore, sire, we advocate to you sincerely and wholeheartedly for our dear clerk, Master Hugh de Bishopston, who was born in these parts, so that you might vouchsafe him one of the aforementioned portions, and present him to the same. And we would most be indebted to you, sire, for all time to come. And if you will not vouchsafe at all the aforementioned Master Hugh, kindly think, if it pleases you, of our nephew, who is studying in Paris.

(12) Sir, may the Holy Spirit save you always in body and in soul!

(13) Written at our manoir of Chudleigh, on the 19th day of the month of October.

**DOCUMENT 6: LETTER FROM JOHN GRANDISSON TO HUGH DE
COURTENAY, 30 AUGUST 1335 (DEVON HERITAGE CENTRE, MS.
DEX/1/A/3, FOL. 84V)**

1 [245] Au counte de Deveneshire.

2 Trescher sire, endroit de ceo qe vous nous avez mandé qe noz gentz de Otery sount venuz
3 a vous affaire pleynte de chose qe nous n'oyismes unqes parler, nous esmervailloims mout,
4 qar si hom les eust grevé a tort, il devoient plus tost avoir moustré la chose a nous qe a
5 vous. Qe verroient, sire, ceo n'est pas mout convenable chose ne honeste de vous meller
6 entre nous et noz vileyns, nient plus qe nous fesoms de voz vileyns de Tuverton ou aillours.

7 Et voillez savoir, sire, qe nous nous garderoms bien al eide de Dieu et touz les noz de faire
8 riens qe soit countre la pees nostre seignur le Roi ou countre la lei de sa terre. Mais sire, pur
9 desobeisance et malice de noz ditz vileyns d'une chartre q'il nous detienent qe ne touche rien
10 lour estat, et autres malices et trespas et retours q'il ount fait sovent deinz ces .xv. jours sur
11 nous et noz baillifs et taillages q'il ount fait entre eux pur pleider countre nous, si les avoms
12 comandé a destreyndre come bien nous list et voloms faire si sovent come il nous plerra, et
13 mestier serra sanz congé demander de nuly.

14 Endroit de ceo qe vous nous prechez et apernez et repernez si sovent come bon filz doit
15 faire son piere, nous merceoms mout. D'autre part, de ceo qe vous dites qe nous ne leveroms
16 jamés nos coustages en destruyant noz povres gens, il nous semble q'il malgist en vostre
17 bouche de ceo dire, qar nous amoms et bienfisons si Dieu plest les povres, come Dieu nous
18 doynt grace. Mais orgulous vileyns nous n'amoms mie, ne Dieu ne fait de nul prodomme.

19 De ceo, sire, qe vous avez achaté plus de terre qe nous n'avoms, il nous plest mout, mais
20 nous n'achatasmes unques, ne ne pensoms rien pur nous ne pur noz heirs, mais pur Dieu et
21 Seinte Eglise. Et come l'en dist, vous avez plus de livres qe nous deniers, de qoi nous sumes
22 bien paieez,³¹ issi qe vous ne nous facez nul mal, qar poy de bien nous avez fait uncore.

23 Et nepurquant il nous semble qe nous n'avoms mie deservi mal devers vous, ne les voz.
24 Plust a Dieu, sire, qe chescun se tensit païé de son estat propre, et s'entremist de ceo qe a lui
25 apent, qar il vous doit suffire estre chivaler et counte, et lesser les autres estre roys ou
26 evesques.

27 Endroit de la fyn de vostre letre ou vous dites que nous ne pooms clamer autre estat qe noz
28 feoffours n'avoient, vous mercioms qe vous estes si tendre de l'estat qe nous avoms en le dit
29 manoir, quel nous meintendroms ové l'eide de Dieu, sanz quere gaires d'eide aillours save
30 de lei et reson. En la garde de Dieu, sire, soiez touz jours.

31 Escripte a Cliste le .xxx. jour d'auste.

[245] (1) To the count of Devonshire.

(2–6) Dearest sir, we are most surprised at your report that our men of Ottery³² have come to you to make a complaint about something of which we have never heard mention; for if anyone has done them wrong, they ought to have brought the matter to our attention rather than to yours. For truly, sir, it is not a fitting or honest thing to interfere in the affairs of ourselves and our villeins, any more than we do in your villeins at Tiverton³³ or elsewhere.

³¹ Grandisson's verbal dexterity here allows him to draw out both meanings of the verb *paier*: 'to pay' (money) and 'to be contented'.
³² Ottery St. Mary, a town approximately 10 miles east of Exeter. Grandisson was heavily involved in the local area, as best seen in his establishment of the Collegiate Church of St. Mary. See *Register*, i, 121–33.

³³ Tiverton is approximately 13 miles north of Exeter, and was the location of one of Courtenay's principal seats.

(7–13) And know, sir, that with God's help, we and our own men will keep from doing anything that might be contrary to the peace of our lord the King, or contrary to the law of his land. But sir, our villeins have been disobedient and malicious on account of a charter that they are withholding from me, even though it is of no relevance to their estate, and have frequently over the last 15 days undertaken malicious acts and trespasses against ourselves and our bailiffs, and have levied taxes among themselves in order to bring a case against us. Therefore we have ordered our bailiffs to distrain them as we are entitled to do, and we intend to do so whenever we choose and deem it to be necessary, without seeking permission from anybody.

(14–18) Concerning how you so often admonish, teach and reproach us, just as a good son should do to his father, we thank you greatly. On the other hand, your suggestion that we will never recoup our expenses by mistreating our poor folk seems unfitting, since (God willing) we love and do good unto the poor, as God allows us to. Yet we do not love prideful villeins, nor will God make a loyal man out of any of them.

(19–22) It pleases us greatly, sir, that you have purchased more land than we have; but we never bought or thought of land for ourselves or our heirs, but for God and Holy Church. And as people say, you have more pounds than we have pennies, which satisfies us greatly, on the condition that you do us no ill, since you have done little good unto us until now.

(23–6) Yet nevertheless, it seems that we have not in the slightest harmed you or your subjects. May it please God, sir, that everyone might be content with his own position in life, and meddle only in what concerns him; for you should be content to be a knight and a count, and leave others to be kings and bishops.

(27–30) Concerning the end of your letter, where you state that we cannot lay claim to land that was not owned by our feoffors, we are grateful that you are so concerned for the estate that we have in the aforementioned manor, which we will maintain with the help of God, seeking no other help elsewhere save according to the law and to reason. May God, sir, always keep you in His presence.

(31) Written at Clyst on 30th August.

DOCUMENT 7: LETTER FROM JOHN GRANDISSON TO HUGH DE
COURTENAY, 22 DECEMBER 1335 (DEVON HERITAGE CENTRE, MS.
DEX/1/A/3, FOL. 85V)

1 [251] Au counte de Devonshire.

2 Amendement d'alme !

3 Cher sire, moult nous poise de tut nostre cuer qe vous de jour en autre pursuez
4 voluntrivement, contre Dieu et droit, Seinte Eglise et ses membres, nous et les noz, qi coment
5 soioms noundigne, sumes ministres et lieu tenantz Jhesu Crist en cest pais tant come lui
6 plerra, et duissoms estre vostre piere, si vous vorriez estre bon filz de Seinte Eglise. Parqoi
7 nous vous prioms et consaillons et amonestoms qe vous de part Dieu vous amendez, et en
8 pees suffrez Seinte Eglise et ses ministres ; et autrement ne pernez a mal s'il nous conveigne
9 mettre remedie, qar nous ne pooms ové bone conscience plus suffrir come nous avoms fait
10 tantque ore, en espoir de plus grant bien. Et Dieu le sache qe tantque ore nous lui avoms prié
11 noet et jour pur vous, et ore, dount nous sumes dolentz, covient il prier q'il vous tost amende
12 ou venjance preigne (qe Dieu defende), s'il lui plest, qi dit par son prophete, *Nolo mortem*
13 *peccatoris, sed ut mages convertatur et vivat.*³⁴ Mais en autre lieu dit il, Apprehendite
14 disciplinam, nequando irascatur Dominus, et pereatis.³⁵
15 Escripte a nostre manoir de Chuddeleghe, le .xxij. jour de Decembre.

³⁴ Cf. Ezek. 33:11 ('Dic ad eos: Vivo ego, dicit Dominus Deus, nolo mortem impii, sed ut convertatur impius a via sua, et vivat'). The precise phrase cited by Grandisson is found in the prologue to the Benedictine Rule: 'Nam pius Dominus dicit: *Nolo mortem peccatoris, sed ut convertatur et vivat*' ('For the merciful Lord saith: *I will not die the death of a sinner, but that he should be converted and live*'). See *The Rule of Saint Benedict, in Latin and English*, ed. and trans. J. McCann (London, 1952), pp. 10–11 (italics in original).

³⁵ Cf. Ps. 2:12 (Vulgate); and Ps. 2:11 (NIV).

[251] (1) To the count of Devonshire.

(2) For the correction of the soul!

(3–14) Dear sir, we are greatly distressed with all of our heart that daily, arbitrarily, and against God and law, you pursue the Holy Church and its members, ourselves and our fellows. However unworthy we may be, we are ministers and lieutenants of Jesus Christ in this land insofar as it pleases him, and we ought to be your father, if you should like to be a good son of Holy Church. Because of this we ask, advise and exhort you that you make amends unto God, and tolerate in good graces Holy Church and its ministers; and moreover, do not take amiss if it is fitting for us to provide redress, for we cannot in good conscience suffer any longer as we have up to now, in the hope of a greater good. And may God know that until now we have prayed unto him for you day and night, and now, much to our sadness, it is fitting that he should soon correct you, or (God forbid) take vengeance, should it please him who says by his prophet, *Serve the Lord with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling*.

(15) Written at our manor at Chudleigh, on the 22nd day of December.

DOCUMENT 8: LETTER FROM JOHN GRANDISSON TO HUGH DE
COURTENAY, 3 NOVEMBER 1340 (DEVON HERITAGE CENTRE, MS.
DEX/1/A/3, FOL. 88R)

1 [264] **Comiti Devoniensis.**

2 Saluz en Jhesu Crist, ovesque sa grace et sa beneiceoun.

3 Trescher sire, nous avoms resceu yceo jeodi dedeinz la noet certeynes lettres et certeynes
4 nouvelles de nostre frere, le Counte de Sarum,³⁶ et de l'estat de pardela, come Maistre Beneit
5 de Pastoun, vostre clerke, vous savera meutz et plus pleynement dire qe nous ne vous pooms
6 escrire. D'autre part, trescher sire, pur ceo que nous avoms entenduz qe vous estes feble de
7 corps come nous sumes, nous desiroms mout, et prioms a Dieu chescun jour, qe vous et nous
8 puissoms sa volenté faire et nostre propre volenté lesser. Nous vous prioms en charité, et
9 vous consailloms come nous devons faire a nostre filz en Jhesu Criste qe vous et nous
10 faceoms selonc qe piere et filz devount faire espiritals, issint que nous quergeoms son honur
11 et sa volenté, et ne mie la nostre. Et nous esperoms donqes qe tut se turnera a bien pardurable,
12 coment que ceo soit de choses passeez. Et nous offroms, en tant come en nous est, de faire
13 ceo qe a nous partient, et vous requeroms et consailloms en le noun de Jhesu Criste qe mesme
14 cele chose facez de vostre part, issint que Dieu nous doint al un et a l'autre en son roiaulme
15 part.

16 Sur cestes choses, sire, avoms enjoyngt le dit Maistre Beneit sur son serment de vous dire
17 bonement et humblement nostre avys, a qi, s'il vous plest, voillez pacientemente et doucement
18 oyer, et vostre volenté dire come il vous plerra. Nous prioms a Dieu, treshonorable sire, q'il
19 vous doint sa volenté parfaite.

20 Escripte a Chuddeleghe, le .iij. jour de Novembre.

³⁶ This individual is probably William Montagu, 1st earl of Salisbury.

[264] (1) To the Count of Devon.

(2) Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, with his grace and blessing.

(3–15) Dearest sir, during the night of this past Thursday we have received certain letters and certain news from your brother, the Count of Sarum, and on the state of affairs overseas, of which Master Benedict de Paston, your clerk, will be able to inform you better and in more detail than we can in writing. Moreover, dearest sir, since we have heard that you like us are weak in body, we greatly desire, and pray to God every day, that you and we might do his will and leave our own will aside. Out of charity we pray of you, and we advise you as we should our son in Jesus Christ, that you and we might act as spiritual fathers and sons should act, such that we might seek his honour and will, and not at all our own. And we hope, therefore, that all things will come to everlasting good, whatever the case may be with respect to past events. And we offer, insofar as we can, to do what is becoming unto us, and we ask and advise in the name of Jesus Christ that you might do the very same thing yourself, such that God might give to one and the other their share in his kingdom.

(16–19) On these matters, sir, we have ordered the aforementioned Master Benedict, on his oath, to give to you well and humbly our opinion; to whom, if it pleases you, you should listen patiently and quietly, and state your will as it pleases you. We pray to God, most honourable sire, that he might give you his perfect will.

(20) Written at Chudleigh, on the 3rd day of November.

NOTES TO THE TEXTS

1.3 escrire] MS. escrue 1.5 et] interlinear addition 1.5 deliverés] Hingeston-Randolph has 'deliveréz' 1.9] decte] Hingeston-Randolph has 'dette' 2.3 voz] MS. vooz 2.8 aveetz] Hingeston-Randolph has 'avyetz'; the scribe appears to have corrected the original 'avyetz' to the more standard form 2.13 juge] MS. Juge 3.10 Endroyt] MS. En droyt 3.12 grand] Hingeston-Randolph has 'grande' 3.16 nepurquant] MS. ne pur quant 3.30 devant] MS. de vant 3.37 quel] The scribe appears to have erased an otiose final 'e' 3.40 E de voz ... lettre] The first possessive pronoun has been added interlinearly, while the second has been corrected (probably from 'vos') 4.10 ne aprendre] Added interlinearly 5.4 porcionaire] MS. Porcionare 5.5 porcionaire] MS. Porcionaire 5.6 esglise] MS. Esglise 5.4 Woddestoun] Hingeston-Randolph has 'Woddestone' 5.8 Bysshopestoun] Hingeston-Randolph has 'Bysshopestone' 5.10 a venir] Hingeston, following the MS., has 'avenir' 5.11 nevoeu] MS. Nevoeu 6.14 Endroit] MS. En droit 6.15 autre part] MS. autrepart 6.22 fait] Added interlinearly 7.1 Devonshire] Hingeston-Randolph has 'Devone'; the macron suspension as an abbreviation after MS. 'Devon' suggests the former. 7.2 jeodi] MS. Jeodi 7.7 de part] Hingeston-Randolph has 'depart' 7.19 parfaite] MS. parfaire 8.3 yceo] Hingeston-Randolph, following the MS., has 'y ceo' 8.4 de pardela] Hingeston-Randolph, following the MS., has the less clear 'de par de la' 8.6 autre part] MS. autrepart 8.12 pardurable] Hingeston-Randolph has 'perdurable' 8.13 est] Hingeston-Randolph here reads what appears to be a following punctuation mark, giving 'estait' 8.13 partient] Hingeston-Randolph has 'pertient' 8.15 roiaulme] MS. Roiaulme