



Changes of perspective
and focus in the
Peterborough Chronicle
as reflected in the use
and distribution of place
elements modifying
titles paired in
apposition with
personal names

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Abstract The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was first composed in retrospect over the important national events of the previous millennium probably in Wessex in the late ninth century and continued separately in multiple ecclesiastical centers across England contemporaneously or near-contemporaneously until as late as 1154 in the *Peterborough Chronicle*, one of its seven main extant versions. There was inevitably a shift in perspective from retrospective to contemporary after annals began to be recorded in real or near-real time, and this has implications on the use and non-use of place elements modifying titles paired in apposition with personal names, such as *of Wessex* in *Alfred, king of Wessex*. Titles help identify or introduce persons named, and the accompanying place elements assist in doing so. The amount of information deemed necessary for effective communication ultimately depends on the writers' perspective and focus. From a contemporary perspective, with more out-of-text contextual information shared with readers, national matters may have been backgrounded and local matters foregrounded, potentially reflecting the aims and biases of the institutions in which the records were made.

Keywords apposition, names and titles, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*

1. Introduction

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was first composed in retrospect over the important national events of the previous millennium probably in Wessex in the late ninth century and continued separately in multiple ecclesiastical centers across England contemporaneously or near-contemporaneously until as late as 1154 in the *Peterborough Chronicle*, one of its seven main extant versions and the text chosen for this study.¹ Although it may be too simplistic to assume, as it has traditionally been done, independent, as well as separate,

¹ Henceforth MS E. All subsequent references to this text will be to Irvine (2004). The relevant part of the text will be indicated by its annal and line numbers in the following manner: 449.18 (line 18 of annal 449), for example. For details of the seven manuscripts, conventionally designated as A through G, and their relationship, see Bately (1991), Clark (1970), Dumville & Keynes (1983–), Lutz (1981), Plummer (1952), and Whitelock (1996). Particularly for MS E and its language, see Clark (1970) and Irvine (2004).

local continuation of the *Chronicle* manuscripts after the initial distribution of the copies in the 890s,² each manuscript, or part of each manuscript, has its own identity, showing the aims and biases of the particular center in which it was written.³ These changes in perspective from retrospective to contemporary and in focus from national to local have implications on the use and non-use of place elements modifying titles paired in apposition with personal names, such as *of Wessex* in *Alfred, king of Wessex*. Titles help identify or introduce people, and the accompanying place elements assist in doing so. The amount of information deemed necessary for effective communication depends on the amount of contextual information already supplied to or unconsciously expected from readers, and such judgement is affected by the writers' perspective and focus. This article aims to examine how the shifts of perspective and focus are reflected in the distribution of appositive expressions involving a place element in MS E.

2. Text

MS E is assumed to have been compiled in about 1121 in Peterborough and updated intermittently over the next few decades until around 1154 (for textual transmission, see Home 2007, 2015; Irvine 2004: xxxii–ci). It was copied by two scribes, conventionally referred to as Hands 1 and 2 (see Irvine 2004: xviii–xxiii for scribal hands and stints). Hand 1 is responsible for annals up to 1131, and Hand 2 for entries from 1132 to 1154. The entries up to 890 ultimately draw on the original compilation, known as the Common Stock, which is represented by MSS A, B, C, and G. A copy of this was taken north, and a new version incorporating northern materials, called the Northern Recension, was compiled probably in York in the late tenth or early eleventh century.⁴ MSS D, E, and F derive from this branch of the Common Stock. In the mid-elev-

² Brooks (2011), for example, supposes intermittent but continued dissemination until at least 1131 of sections of the annals from the royal household.

³ See Home (2015: 5) for how MS E “is simultaneously part of a received tradition of vernacular history, as well as a new text constructed from scratch at a particular moment in time, within a special local, cultural and literary milieu”.

⁴ See Irvine (2004: xxxvii–xxxviii) for an argument that the Northern Recension is southern in origin, just incorporating northern sources that were brought south.

enth century, a copy of this recension was brought south to Canterbury and maintained there with the addition of entries 1023–1061, and then through another unlocalized religious center, where annals 1062–1121 were added, it finally reached Peterborough Abbey in approximately 1121. This version is what Hand 1 is assumed to have copied; therefore, the entries up to 1121 are called the Copied Annals. They are generally written in the standardized Late West Saxon literary variety (see Clark 1970: xli–xlv).

The original vocabulary and word order of the entries composed at each stage of textual development may be transmitted through multiple layers of scribal intervention to the Copied Annals largely as they were, given that the *Chronicle* scribes, while introducing their own orthographical practices relatively freely, copied their exemplars essentially word for word.⁵ This is apparent from a comparison of shared Common Stock materials in different versions. See, for example, the opening lines of annal 755 of MSS A and E, the oldest and newest surviving manuscripts, the Common Stock parts of which were written at the end of the ninth century and in the early twelfth century, respectively (the text of MS A is taken from Bately 1986):

MS A (755.1–6)

Her Cynewulf benam Sigebryht
his rices 7 Westseaxna
wiotan for unryhtum dędum buton
Hamtunscire, 7 he hæfde þa oþ he
ofslog þone aldormon þe him
lengest wunode, 7 hiene þa Cynewulf
on Andred adræfde, 7 he þær wunode
oþ þæt hiene an swan ofstang æt
Pryfetesflodan: 7 he wręc þone
aldormon Cumbran.

MS E (755.1–6)

Her Cynewulf benam Sigebrihte
his mæge his rice 7 Wæstseaxna
witan for unrihtum dædum buton
Hamtunscyre, 7 he hafde þa oð he
ofsloh ðone ealdormon þe him
lengst wunode. 7 hine þa Cynewulf
on Andred adrefde, 7 he þær wunode
oþ þet an swan hine ofstang æt
Pryftesflodan; sæ swan wręc ðone
ealdormon Cumbran.

‘Here Cynewulf and the West Saxons’ councilors deprived Sigeberht, his kinsman, of his kingdom for unrighteous deeds, except Hampshire, and he had that until he killed the ealdorman who remained with him longest; and then Cynewulf drove him into Andredesleag, and he stayed there until a herdsman stabbed him by the stream at Privett; and he [the herdsman] avenged the ealdorman Cumbra.’

⁵ The exception is the F-scribe, who omitted some entries and shortened and reworded others in compiling MS F, a bi-lingual Latin and Old English epitomized version of the *Chronicle*.

The difference is primarily that of spelling. MS A has *Westseaxna*, *wiotan*, and *unryhtum* for *Wæstseaxna*, *witan*, and *unrihtum* in MS E, for example. Other than this, there are only minor differences: MS E has *his mæge* in apposition to *Sigebrihte* at line 2 of the quotation; the pronominal object between the subject and the verb (*an swan hine ofstang*), not before the subject and the verb as in MS A (*hiene an swan ofstang*), at line 8; no Tironian *et* at line 9; and the nominal subject *sæ swan*, not the pronoun *he* as in MS A, at line 9. Although word order is not affected, *benam Sigebryht his rices* in MS A and *benam Sigebrihte [...] his rice* in MS E at lines 1–2 have different syntactic constructions. The verb takes the accusative of the person and the genitive of the thing in the former, and the dative of the person and the accusative of the thing in the latter.⁶ Orthographical (or underlying phonetic) changes have morphological consequences, and different morphology may have triggered a different choice from multiple syntactic patterns that the verb of depriving takes. It thus seems possible to trace the diachronic development of appositive expressions even within the Copied Annals. Admittedly, the problem of provenance remains. The information on the centers of production is patchy, and the provenance of exemplars and that of those underlying them can only be guessed at. However, it may be possible to postulate a style of chronicle writing, given the close, and sometimes direct, genealogical relationship among the *Chronicle* versions: MS G is a copy of MS A, MSS B and C show special agreements between them, MS D is a conflation of the northern version and a version close to MS C, the bilingual MS F draws on MS A itself and an ancestor of MS E for its English material, and the F-scribe, collating MS A with the ancestor of MS E, makes more than thirty interventions in the text of MS A. At least, appositive patterns are very similarly distributed in these manuscripts (see Shinkawa 2024: 166–167).

6 The verb takes the dative of the person and the genitive of the thing in MSS B and C, as in *benam Sigebrihte his rices*, and also in MS D, as in *benam Sigebryhte his mæge his rices*. In MS F, the verb takes the dative of the person and the accusative of the thing, as in *benam Siberte cinge his rice*. The quotations are from the following editions: Taylor (1983), O'Brien O'Keeffe (2001), Cubbin (1996), and Baker (2000) for MSS B, C, D, and F, respectively.

For convenience, this study distinguishes three periods of Old English: early (annals up to 890), middle (892–1080), and late (1081–1121).⁷ Early annals up to 890, potentially reflecting the linguistic features of Early West Saxon, in which the Common Stock was originally composed, are assigned to the early Old English period, and late annals from 1081 to 1121, written well after the establishment of standardized Late West Saxon in the late tenth century (see Kornexl 2017), are attributed to the late Old English period. Here, the starting year of late Old English is somewhat arbitrarily set at 1081, from which year onward no annals are available in any of the other *Chronicle* versions.⁸ Annals 892–1080, in the middle, are assigned to the middle Old English period. Since these entries were composed contemporaneously before, during, and for some time after the standardization of the language, they are expected to be the least linguistically homogenous; therefore, the relevant instances in this period are divided into earlier and later halves in referring to them, as appropriate. The dividing year is roughly around 1040.

Hand 1 incorporated into the Copied Annals twenty passages concerning Peterborough, called the Peterborough Interpolations (PIs), sometimes while copying was in progress, and at other times later in the available space and margins. They range in length from a few words to several manuscript leaves. Most of them were added at the end of relevant entries, and others in the middle or as independent annals. They are printed in small type in Irvine (2004). Although the PIs are generally regarded as written in Early Middle English (see Clark 1970: xlv–lxiii), they, being added mostly to early and middle Old English entries, may be influenced by the surrounding texts, making it difficult to place their language historically. Therefore, they are left out of the discussion when attempting to trace a diachronic development of some features concerned.

After compiling the Copied Annals, Hand 1 appears to have added further entries for the years 1122–1131 in six blocks at different times over

7 There is only an annal-number for the year 891.

8 The exception is MS H, a single-leaf fragment containing annals 1113 and 1114, which is printed in Plummer (1952: I, 243–245). However, these annals are composed independently from those in MS E. MS D ends in 1080, *MILLESIMO .LXXX.*, which appears to have been misread as *MILLESIMO .CXXX.* and is followed by a record for the year 1130.

the next decade or so. Then Hand 2 took over and wrote annals 1132–1154 continuously in one block approximately two decades later. He did not conform to the traditional annal format, dealing mainly with local events and arranging them “topic by topic” rather than “year by year” in retrospect over the years covered.⁹ These additions by Hands 1 and 2 are called the First (Peterborough) Continuation (C1) and the Second or Final (Peterborough) Continuation (C2), respectively. They, or rather their exemplars, were almost certainly composed by the natives of Peterborough, constituting a very rare precisely dated and localized linguistic record of Early Middle English (see Clark 1970: xxxvii).

MS E may thus provide continuous evidence of appositive constituents and their relative arrangement in the tradition of English historiography, if not in any particular dialect, potentially from the early through middle and late periods of Old English in the Copied Annals, excluding the PIs, to the Early Middle English period in the PIs, C1, and C2.

3. Components of an appositive group and their combinations

Personal names (Ns) and titles (Ts) often constitute appositive pairs by themselves. Ts are sometimes accompanied by what is now called a definite determiner (D), such as a demonstrative (Dem) or a genitive of a noun or personal pronoun, a prepositional phrase (P),¹⁰ or both, and rarely by an

9 See Clark (1970: xxv–xxvi). Brooks (2011: 60–61) argues that these annals may represent “local retrospective writing”, “what a Peterborough author would compose, when bereft of the support of a regular annalistic record, disseminated from the central government”.

10 In most cases, a P can be taken as modifying either the T or the whole appositive group. It can also modify the N alone, as in *se eorl Rotbert of Bælæsme* ‘the earl, Robert de Bellême’ (1102.3), but in rare cases. Robert de Bellême had his earldom in Shrewsbury. However, in appositive groups involving a T expressing a familial or personal relationship, such as *son* or *wife*, which requires a genitive of a noun or personal pronoun specifying the person with whom he or she is related (e.g. *the king’s*, *Alfred’s*, *his*; such a D is henceforth referred to as a person, Prsn), a P is attached to the N rather than to the T or the whole group, as in *Willelm of Ou þes cynges mæg* ‘William of Eu, the king’s kinsman’ (1096.5). The relevant appositive pair in the examples is translated literally in the original order with its second component, the N or the T-phrase, set off by commas. These commas are not intended to show an intonational break, with respect to which the present writer is noncommittal.

indefinite determiner or an adjective alone or in combination with other components. Ts of social or religious status, such as *king* or *bishop*, which are the main concern of this study, may be accompanied by a place element in the form of a P or genitive noun that specifies the place either directly by its name (e.g. *of England, England's*) or through the people living there (e.g. *of the Northumbrians, the Northumbrians*).¹¹ Ds of the former type will be referred to as places (Plcs), and those of the latter as peoples (Ppls). When followed by a P, Ts may or may not be modified by a Dem, which is almost exclusively *the/that*. The Dem must originally have been employed to indicate the T's specific identity, but the definiteness expressed by the Dem appears to have been neutralized in the presence of a very specific and identifiable N that precedes or follows the T-phrase.

In most cases, one mononymous N is paired with one T in the singular form, and only one D and/or one P, if present, accompanies the T. This study focuses on such typically occurring appositive patterns in prose annals.¹² Those involving multiple Ns, Ts, or Ds, Ts in the plural, polynymous Ns, or adjective modifications are excluded. So are Latin Ts in English, as well as Latin, entries. *Saint* (Latin *sanctus*) prefixed to an N, originally being an adjective, is not counted as a T here, although it developed into a noun already in Old English and possibly formed an appositive group with the following N.¹³ Appositive patterns consisting of an N, a Ppl, and a T in this order, for example, are represented by NPplT. Occasionally, the N- and T-phrases are separated from each other, and the P is detached from the rest of the group. Such breaks are marked with hyphens, as in N-PplT and NT-P.

Mainly for lack of information on intonational breaks that most probably affected the syntactic construction of the appositive patterns, as they do

11 Adjectives such as *Roman* serve as a place element but do so rarely in appositive groups. See, for example, 649.1, 890.2, and 1003.1. There are two occurrences of *be norðan* 'in the north', which specifies the direction, in middle Old English.

12 Passages laid out as verse in Irvine (2004) are treated as such. The following entries consist of or include verse lines: 959, 975, 979, 1075, 1086, and 1104. They are, however, more often regarded as written in rhetorically heightened prose (see Cubbin 1996: lx; Whitelock 1996: 225, n. 4; 228, n. 2).

13 Allen (2002: 70) analyzes 'saint X' as a compound noun.

today,¹⁴ the choice of different arrangements in Old and Early Middle English is treated simply as a matter of preference. See Shinkawa (2024: 160–162) for possible motivation behind such different choice.

Table 1 shows preferred appositive patterns with or without an accompanying place element in each of the three Old English periods and the three Early Middle English specimens. Those involving a T of familial or personal relationship, in which a P, if present, is attached not to the T or the whole group but to the N, are excluded. This table lists all the instances of a P that can be interpreted as being part of the appositive group and may include some in which the P modifies a verb in the sentence, not a T in the appositive group.

Table 1: Preferred appositive patterns in MS E.

	Old English			Early Middle English			Total
	early	middle	late	C1	C2	Pls	
Basic patterns							
DemTN	14	36	82	21	6	32	191
DemT-N	0	1	4	1	3	3	12
NDemT	13	3	1	0	0	0	17
N-DemT	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
NT	163	244	27	2	7	54	497
N-T	3	14	4	1	0	1	23
TN	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Subtotal	194	298	118	25	16	93	744
Patterns with a Plc							
PlcTN	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
NPlcT	7	1	1	0	0	0	9
Subtotal	7	1	1	0	0	1	10

14 See Mitchell (1985: I, 611). Heringa (2011), for example, focuses on loose appositions, which are separated by comma intonation, and Acuña-Fariña (2016) on close appositions without such intonational separation in Present-Day English. Way (1970), with its very narrow purpose of describing the order of modifiers in Old English noun-headed objects of prepositions that occur in C1 and C2 of MS E, is largely irrelevant.

Patterns with a Ppl							
PplTN	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
PplT-N	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
NPplT	69	1	1	0	0	1	72
N-PplT	7	1	0	0	0	0	8
Subtotal	77	3	1	0	0	1	82
Patterns with a P							
DemTNP	0	1	27	26	1	6	61
DemT-NP	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
DemTPN	0	0	4	2	0	1	7
NDemTP	1	0	1	1	0	0	3
NTP	9	28	20	3	8	18	86
NT-P	0	2	2	1	0	0	5
Subtotal	10	31	54	34	9	25	163
Total	288	333	174	59	25	120	999

In early Old English, there is an explicit tendency to specify a larger land-area (kingdom, shire, etc.) with a Ppl, as in *Claudius Romana cining* [NPplT] ‘Claudius, the Romans’ king [emperor]’ (47.1), and a smaller one (city, town, etc.) with a Plc or P, as in *Iðamar Rofecestre biscop* [NPlcT] ‘Ithamar, Rochester’s bishop’ (655.1) or *Tobias biscop in Rofecestre* [NTP] ‘Tobias, bishop in Rochester’ (727.1).¹⁵ However, during and after the middle Old English period, Ppls and Plcs are practically no longer used, leaving Ps as the only place element available for either larger or smaller land-areas (see Figure 1).

15 See Shinkawa (2024: 155–157) for details of the place element modifying the title paired in apposition with a personal name in MS E.

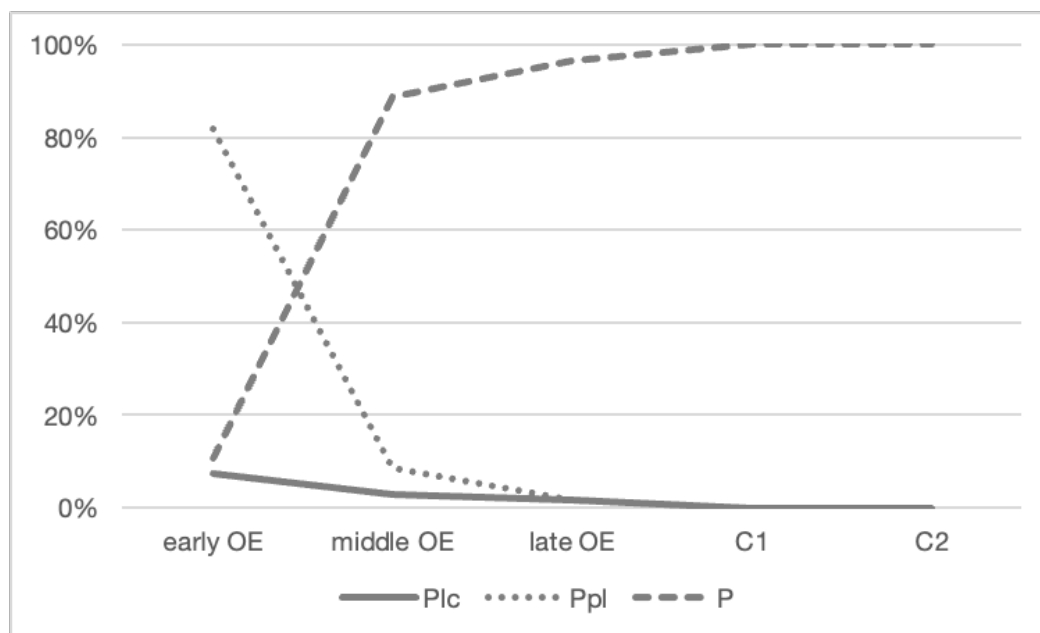


Figure 1: Preferred place elements in appositive construction.

Ps are typically attached to the dominant basic patterns at the time to form NTP, as in *Cnut cyng of Englande* ‘Cnut, king of England’ (1028.1), in middle Old English and DemTNP, as in *se biscop Roger of Seresbyrig* ‘the bishop, Roger, of Salisbury’ (1123.5–6), in C1, for example, but NTP is generally favored, except in C1. Separated patterns are strongly preferred in genitive contexts, as in “*Annan dohter Eastengla ciningas [N-PplT]*” ‘Anna’s daughter, *the East Angles’ king’s*’ (639.5–6). Detached Ps occur very occasionally in non-genitive contexts, as in “*þa geceas he Æðelsige munuc þærto of Ealdon Mynstre [NT-P]*” ‘then he chose *Æthelsige, monk*, for it, *of Old Minster*’ (1061.6–7), as well as in genitive contexts, as in “*Malcolmes cynges dohter of Scotlande [NT-P]*” ‘*Malcolm’s, king’s, daughter, of Scotland*’ (1100.43–44). Various prepositions heading a P come to be limited to *of* during the Old English period, probably showing the formularization of appositive patterns (see Shinkawa 2024: 157–160).

4. Changes of perspective and focus in chronicle writing

There was inevitably a change in perspective after new annals were added to the original compilation. This appears to be reflected in the use and non-use of a place element modifying a T paired in apposition with his/her N, particularly *king*, the most frequently occurring one. Many distant kings had to be

identified by their kingdoms in the Common Stock, which was composed in the late ninth century, looking back mainly on the national events of the prior millennium, whereas in continuations, recorded contemporaneously or near-contemporaneously, probably with an unconscious expectation of the shared understanding with their contemporary readers, the chroniclers were allowed to be less specific and did without such geographical information more frequently. This assumption is corroborated by the marked reduction, from 50.7% (73/144) in early Old English to 8.4% (19/225) in later periods,¹⁶ of instances in which *king* in such an appositive group is accompanied by a place element (see Figure 2). The number of kings who were of immediate concern to contemporary chroniclers and readers would have been limited, and further specification by territory was probably deemed unnecessary.¹⁷

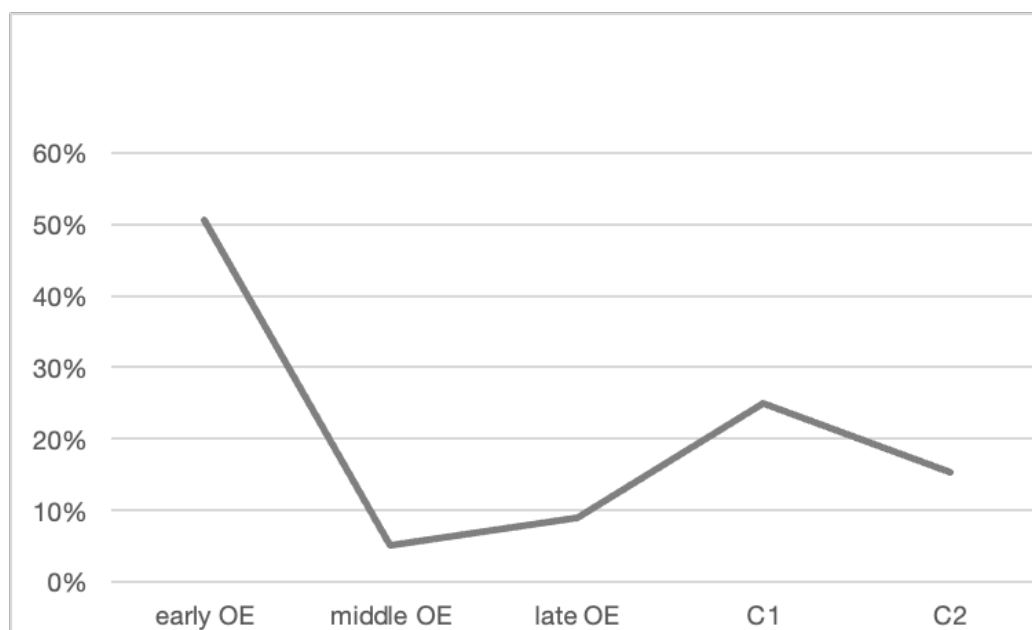


Figure 2: Geographically specified *kings* paired in apposition with their name.

The composer or composers of the Common Stock themselves had their own contemporary king, Alfred the Great, and modified his T with a place element, as in “*Ælfredes bene Westseaxna cyninges* [N-PplT]” ‘*Alfred’s* request,

16 The breakdown for each of these periods is 5.1% (5/98) in middle Old English, 9% (7/78) in late Old English, 25% (4/16) in C1, 15.4% (2/13) in C2, and 5% (1/20) in the PIs.

17 The gradual unification of England during the ninth and tenth centuries may also have contributed to making such specification redundant.

the West Saxons' king's' (885.17–18), only once out of nineteen times (5.3%).¹⁸ Historical kings, too, were often not provided with the information on their territory in subsequent and, particularly repeated, mention after it had been supplied, as in:

7 þy ilcan geare gefeaht *Ecgeberht Westseaxna cining* [NPplT] 7 Beornulf Myrcena cining æt Ellandune, 7 *Ecgeberht* sige nam [...] 7 þy ilcan geare Eastengla cining 7 seo þeod gesohte *Ecgbriht cining* [NT] him to friðe 7 to mundburan for Myrcena ege [...]

‘And the same year *Egbert, the West Saxons' king*, and Beornwulf, the Mercians' king, fought at Ellendun, and *Egbert* took the victory [...] And the same year the East Angles' king and the people sought *Egbert, king*, for their peace and as their protector for fear of the Mercians [...]’ (823.1–10)

or generally when such information could be recovered from the contexts, as in “7 þa fengon his .ii. sunu to rice: *Æðelbald to Westseaxna rice* and to Suðrigean, 7 he rixade .v. gear. / Her *Æðelbald cining* [NT] forðferde [...]” ‘And then his two sons succeeded to the kingdom, *Æthelbald to the West Saxons' kingdom* and to Surrey, and he ruled for five years. / Here *Æthelbald, king*, passed away [...]’ (855.7–9, 860.1).¹⁹ It may be that the composers of continuations, primarily dealing with contemporary topics, could rely more on out-of-text contextual information.

Ealdorman and *earl* are equivalent titles for rulers under kings before and after the beginning of the Danish dynasty (see *OED* s.vv. *alderman*, n.; *ealdorman*, n.; *earl*, n.; *jarl*, n.). The former is the native title of Anglo-Saxon nobles, and the latter was originally applied to Danish jarls. They are the second most frequently employed Ts of social status paired with an N in early through

18 Alfred's predecessor and brother, *Æthelred*, is accompanied by such an element 16.6% (1/6) of the time, and *Egbert, king of Wessex*, who offers the second most relevant instances after Alfred, 33.3% (3/9).

19 There are only annal-numbers for the intervening years.

earlier middle Old English and in later middle Old English and afterward, respectively.²⁰

In contrast to *king*, *ealdorman* in such an appositive construction appears with a place element, as in *Æpælmund ealdorman of Hwiccum* [NTP] ‘Æthelmund, ealdorman of the Hwicccians’ (800.4), only once out of twenty-one times (4.8%) in early Old English. The territories of ealdormen – and, in the same manner, of earls – may have been known by those of the kings they served or by the people they fought with. For example, Beorht is introduced as an ealdorman of Ecgfrith, king of Northumbria, in “Her on ðissum geare sende Ecgferð here on Scottas 7 Briht his ealdorman [NPrsnT] mid” ‘Here in this year Ecgfrith sent an army against the Scots and *Beorht*, his ealdorman, with it’ (684.1–2),²¹ and Weohstan is reported to have fought against his enemy with the people of Wiltshire in “þa gemette hine *Weohstan ealdorman* [NT] mid *Wilsætum*” ‘then *Weohstan*, ealdorman, met him with the people of Wiltshire’ (800.5). However, in many cases, such geographical information is not given at all or can only be guessed at to differing degrees, as in “7 Æðelheard ealdorman [NT] forðferde on kalendas Augusti” ‘And Ætherheard, ealdorman, passed away on 1 August’ (794.6–7) or in “7 þam ilcan geare feoht *Beorhtfrið ealdorman* [NT] wið *Pyhtas betwix Hæfe 7 Cære*” ‘And the same year *Beorhtfrith*, ealdorman, fought against the Picts between the Avon and the Carron’ (710.2–3). In the latter example, Beorhtfrith’s fight against the Picts around the Anglian frontier suggests his affiliation with Northumbria. Apparently, the chroniclers were not as meticulous about rulers under kings as they were about kings. *Ealdorman* occurs thirty-three times in such appositive pairs in earlier middle Old English, always without a place element, and is no longer

20 *Ealdorman* is found eleven times in the PIs added to early through earlier middle Old English entries, and *earl* twice, once each for an Anglo-Saxon earl and a Danish jarl, in the PIs added to later middle Old English annals. None of these examples is accompanied by a place element. The instances in the PIs, spanning multiple periods of Old English, will not be discussed further.

21 Ecgfrith is already introduced as a successor to Oswiu, king of Northumbria, in “Her Oswiu forðferde *Norðanhymbra cining* on .xv. kalendas Martii, 7 *Ecferð his sunu* [NPrsnT] rixade æfter him” ‘Here Oswiu passed away, the Northumbrians’ king, on 15 February, and *Ecgfrith*, his son, ruled after him’ (670.1–2).

found during and after the later middle Old English period, by which time it was completely replaced by *earl* (see Figure 3).

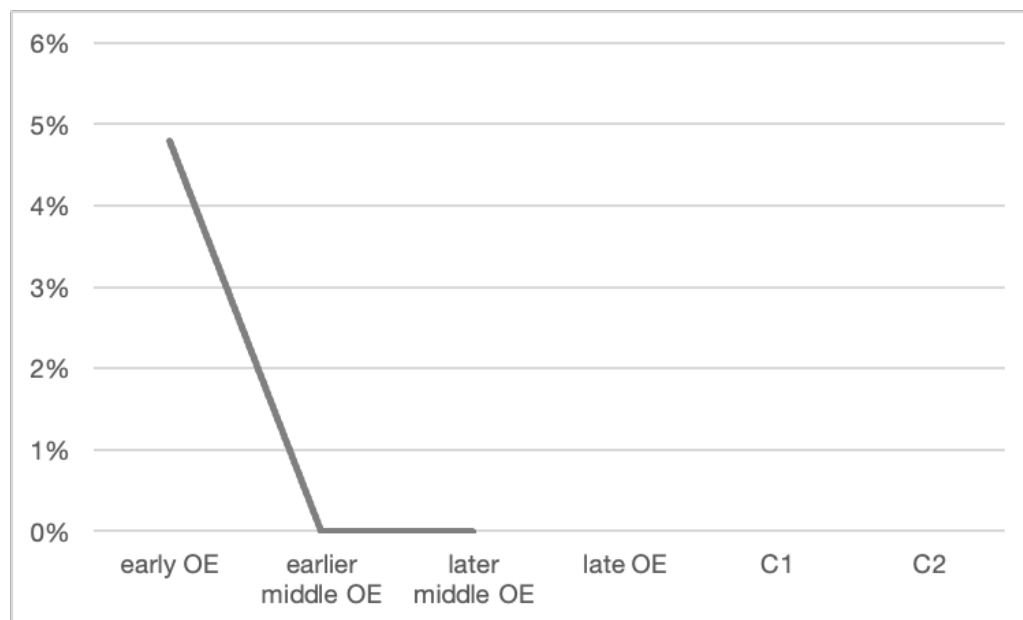


Figure 3: Geographically specified *ealdormen* paired in apposition with their name.

All three early Old English examples of *earl* paired with an N refer to Danish jarls (Fræna, Harald, Osbern) who were killed in a battle against Alfred's army. This title is soon generalized to comparable titles, both Insular and Continental, and is employed six times for Anglo-Saxon ealdormen/earls (Leofric, Thored, Uhtred, etc.) and once for a Danish jarl (Thorkell) in earlier middle Old English, and sixty-nine times for Anglo-Saxon earls (Godwine, Harold II, Swein, etc.), three times each for Danish jarls (Beorn, Hakon) and Flemish counts (Baldwin V, Baldwin VI, Robert I), and twice for Norman dukes (Richard I, William I) in later middle Old English. None of these instances of *earl* is accompanied by a place element, as in *Swegen eorl* [NT] 'Swein, earl' (1045.5). However, from the late Old English period onward, more than half of the *earls* in relevant constructions are geographically specified: 53.8% (21/39) in late Old English, 50% (5/10) in C1, and 66.7% (4/6) in C2 (see Figure 4). This is in contrast to the situation presented by *king*, in which only 9% (7/78), 25% (4/16), and 15.4% (2/13) of the instances involve a place element in respective periods.

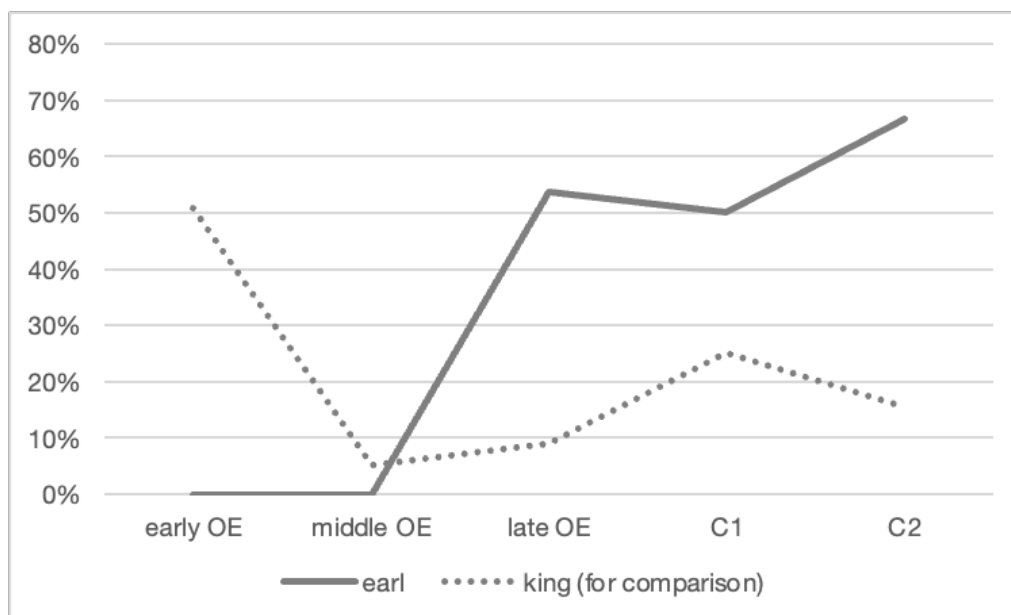


Figure 4: Geographically specified *earls* paired in apposition with their name.

While the number of kings who were of immediate concern to contemporary chroniclers and readers would have been limited enough to make further specification by territory unnecessary, there were naturally more rulers under kings to be distinguished at any time and place, and particularly after the cataclysmic political and social changes ensuing the Norman Conquest, chroniclers may have felt a stronger need to specify them than kings, who were probably taken for granted and backgrounded. The *earls* in and after late Old English are used mostly for Continental titles, with twenty-two and fifteen references to counts (Elias I, Eustace III, Robert II, etc.) and a duke (Robert II), respectively, as against eighteen to Insular earls, all of whom are of Continental lineage (Hugh d'Avranches, Robert de Mowbray, Roger de Montgomery, etc.).

Counts and dukes are usually introduced along with their geographical affiliation except when such information is supplied by context, as shown by the two instances of Robert in:

[...] 7 eac þurh þone eorl Rodbert of Normandig [DemTNP] þe mid unfriðe hider to lande fundode. And se cyng syddan scipa ut on sæ sende his broðer to dære 7 to lættinge, ac hi sume [...] to þam eorle Rotberte [DemTN] gebugan.

‘[...] and also because of *the earl [duke], Robert, of Normandy*, who set out with hostility hither to the land. And the king then sent his ships out to sea to injure and hinder his brother, but some of them [...] submitted to *the earl [duke], Robert.*’ (1101.5–9)

and so are earls, particularly when persons with the same name are recorded in the same annal, as in “7 on þam fare wurdon adruncene *þæs cynges twegen sunan Willelm 7 Ricard* [PrsnTN] 7 *Ricard eorl of Ceastre* [NTP] 7 Ottuel his broðor [...]” ‘And on the journey were drowned *the king’s two sons, William and Richard*, and *Richard, earl of Chester*, and Ottuel, his brother [...]’ (1120.6–8). The place elements involved here are all in the form of P, with twenty-one referring to Continental places (Bellême, Boulogne, Flanders, etc.) and nine to Insular ones (Gloucester, Northumbria, Shropshire, etc.).

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is also about bishops and archbishops. The chroniclers, members of religious communities themselves, continued to modify Ts of religious status with a place element to a certain extent from the early Old English period onward. *Bishop*, which provides the largest number of relevant instances, is geographically specified, as in *Godune Galwala biscop* [NPpIT] ‘Godun, the Gauls’ bishop’ (693.2), 31.9% (15/47) and 31.1% (14/45) of the time in early and middle Old English, respectively. *Archbishop*, the second most frequently employed, is so specified, as in *Ecgberht ærcebiscop in Eoferwic* [NTP] ‘Egbert, archbishop in York’ (766.1), to the lesser extent of 6.3% (2/32) and 4% (1/25) in respective periods, evidently because there were fewer archbishoprics than bishoprics – one in Canterbury before the establishment of the other in York in 735. Similarly, *pope* is modified by a place element, as in *Agatho papa of Rome* [NTP] ‘Agatho, pope of Rome’ (675.9), only twice out of thirty-one times in the entire text (6.5%), there being only one papacy in Rome.²²

22 The other possible instance is *se papa Gelasius on þas halfe þære muntan* [DemTNP] ‘the pope, Gelasius, on this side of the mountains [Alps]’ (1119.14–15). Gelasius II may be so identified because he was in exile in France on the other side of the Alps from Rome, where Gregory VIII was antipope. The P here can also be interpreted as modifying the verb *forðferde* ‘passed away’ in the sentence, specifying where he died. The breakdown for each of the relevant periods is 0% in early (0/14) and middle (0/4)

Geographically specified instances increase noticeably during and after the late Old English period: to 44.4% (8/18) in late Old English and 100% in Continuations (11/11; 10/10 in C1 and 1/1 in C2) in the case of *bishop*,²³ and to 68.8% (11/16) in late Old English and 75% in Continuations (9/12; 8/11 in C1 and 1/1 in C2) in that of *archbishop* (see Figure 5).²⁴ *Abbot*, the third most frequently employed T of religious status after *bishop* and *archbishop*, shows a similar jump from 20% (1/5) and 45.5% (10/22) in early and middle Old English, respectively, to 88.9% (8/9) in late Old English and 71.4% (5/7) in C1, although it dips to 33.3% (1/3) in C2 (see Figure 5).²⁵ Here, it must be recalled that *earls* too have come to be found in significant numbers with a place element from the late Old English period onward. This may show an increased local, rather than national, focus.

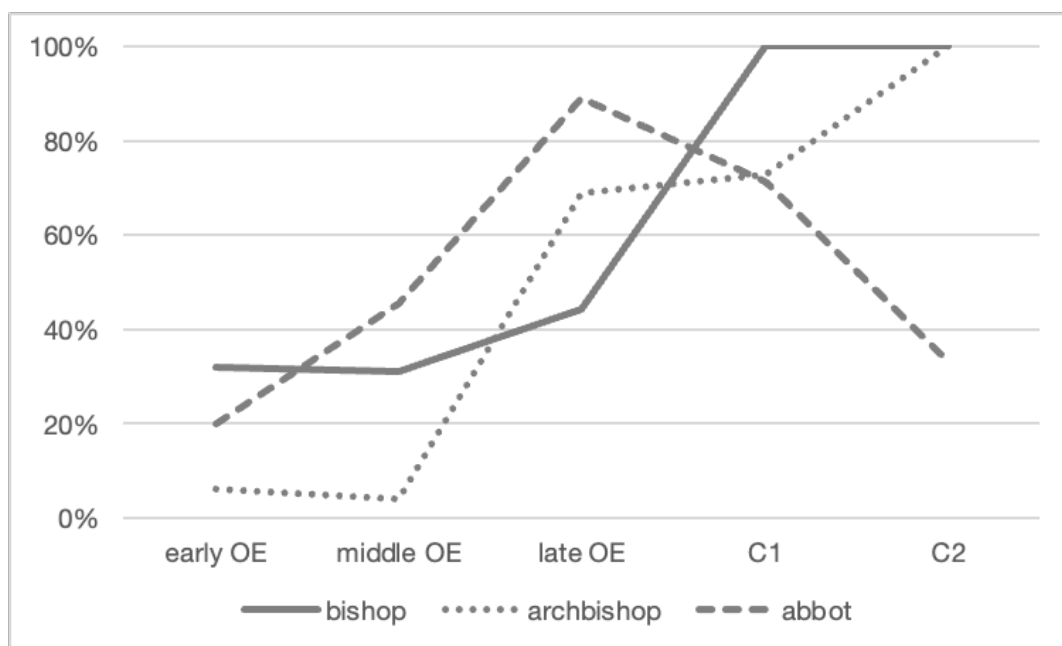


Figure 5: Geographically specified *bishops*, *archbishops*, and *abbots* paired in apposition with their name.

Old English, 25% (1/4) in late Old English, 0% in C1 (0/3) and C2 (0/1), and 20% (1/5) in the PIs.

23 The percentage for the PIs is 26.1 (6/23).

24 The percentage for the PIs is 50 (9/18).

25 The percentage for the PIs is 29 (9/31).

5. Conclusion

Titles help identify or introduce persons named, and the accompanying place elements assist in doing so. The amount of information deemed necessary for effective communication ultimately depends on the writers' perspective and focus. Past events, for their distance, need to be provided with more background information, and things of interest, for their relevance, tend to be reported in fuller detail. Thus, *kings*, who were the main concern throughout the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, particularly those in the distant past, were geographically specified in most cases. Contemporary *kings* were not done so as often probably because their territories were assumed to be known to contemporary readers, nor were distant *ealdormen* or *earls* apparently because they were of less concern to the composers than *kings*. Contemporary *earls*, however, began to take center stage in the political and social confusion that followed the Norman Conquest; it would have been difficult to properly identify or introduce many Continental nobles without providing information about their geographical affiliation. *Bishops* and *archbishops*, who continued to attract a certain level of attention from the beginning, also appeared with a place element much more frequently during and after the late Old English period.

This apparent shift in focus from national to local events is closely connected with an inevitable shift in perspective from retrospective to contemporary after annals began to be recorded in real or near-real time. From a contemporary perspective, with more out-of-text contextual information shared with readers, national matters may have been backgrounded and local matters foregrounded, potentially reflecting the aims and biases of the institutions in which the records were made. National events, however, remained the central topics throughout the *Chronicle*, except in C2, which was chiefly concerned with Peterborough issues. **N**

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