

Faculty of Arts
Master's Thesis
Digital Text Analysis

God among family, friends, and business partners.

Appendix A: Annotation guidelines

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1. Introduction

This document serves as a guideline for the annotations applied to the letter collections of Jeake and Marescoe-David, in the context of the thesis *God among family, friends, and business partners. Appealing to the divine in merchant letter writing based on the correspondents' connection, 1640-1730*. The thesis looks at the written correspondence of two merchant families, The Jeake family of Rye and the Marescoe-David family, to explore the differences of how the divine (i.e. references to God and Jesus) was invoked between informal and business connections.

The workflow of this thesis is as follows. First, the two letter collections were digitised using Tesserae's optical character recognition (OCR) engine. Based on each page's `.hocx`¹ data, the digitised corpora were processed into datasets, in which each line of every letter in the corpora formed a data point. These lines were annotated to outline the letter's segments. After reconciling the annotated data with the `.hocx` files, the digital corpora were finalised, enriched with the metadata extracted from the annotations. By querying these finalised corpora for words referring to the divine, that is, God or Jesus, we extracted all instances in which correspondents appealed to the divine, and in which segment of the letter the divine was called upon. A divine appeal is an instance where the correspondent calls upon a higher power, that is, God or Jesus, for assistance within a certain domain of the correspondent's life. As such, it implies an act from God, and the manner in which the appeal is formulated provides information on the degree in which the correspondent themselves acts along to achieve the desired outcome (divine approval), or, at the other end of the spectrum, remains passive, putting the course of events entirely in God's hands (resignation).

The described workflow implies two different annotation procedures which will be described in this document. The guidelines for the first procedure, laid out in Section 2, were used as a logical layout analysis to assign layout element tags to outline the letter's segments.

The second annotation procedure, explored in Section 3, involved annotating the queried corpora for the nature of every instance in which the divine was called upon, and were laid out by the research project '*Back to the Future: Future expectations and actions in late medieval and early modern Europe, c.1400–c.1830*'. The intention of this scheme was to investigate how it governs the subject's future thinking. Hence, the scheme can be divided into three parts:

1. In which letter segment the divine was called upon;
2. In which subject domain of the correspondent's life the divine was called upon;
3. The formula type used to call upon the divine.

The formula type itself is divided into three classes:

1. Referring to future actions, that is, actions yet to be completed;

¹ Tesserae's `.hocx` file extension is shorthand for `HTML OCR`. These are Extensible Hypertext Markup Language files, containing metadata for the OCR output, including coordinates for word and line bounding boxes. We extract each line from these files along with their location on the page that is calculated with these coordinates, and save them to a `.csv` file.

2. Events that lie in the past, or future events considered to be an already accomplished fact;
3. Mentions of the divine, but not called upon as an acting force.

The goal of these annotations is to investigate whether the divine appeals testify of a specific way of future thinking.²

Before going further, we would like to make a note on ambiguity. Typically, the context in which the divine appeals are made can cover topics spanning different domains. One example is Robert Oursel's comment on an outbreak of the plague in France:

'Comme vous dittes le change a diminué la semaine passée quoy que a mon advis c'est sans beaucoup de fondement, car le peu qu'il y a de contagion en cette ville fait grand peur a tous noz voisins quy ont interdit nostre commerce [...]. Dieu veuille nous en delivrer par sa grace' (*trade & finances, prayer*).³

This particular appeal is on an interesting intersection between *health & sickness*, *politics & war*, and *trade & finances*. I opted to go with *trade & finances*, because either way, the divine appeal is ultimately concerned with trading. Ideally, these ambiguities could be dealt with through inter-annotator agreements.

2. Logical layout analysis

Logical layout analysis is the detection of page elements such as headers, footers, and body text.⁴ As mentioned in Section 1, once digitised, we annotate each individual line from both Jeake and Marescoe-David collections to assign them a page layout element, and thus outlining the letter segments.

Both collections adhere to different layout styles. So, the letters contain layout elements unique to each collection, which raises the necessity to go over every page element for each collection separately.

2.1 The Jeake collection

- **ADDRESSEE_RAW**
This element contains the name of the recipient as written by the sender, that is, not as it appears in captions or titles, which are not part of the letter itself.

Examples: — Goodman Coulton
— Mr Sa: Jeake Junior

² University of Antwerp, Budts and Heijmans (2023).

³ Roseveare (1987, pp. 87, 241).

⁴ Smith (2009, p. 241).

- **ADDRESSLINE**

The name and address of the recipient as written by the sender. This line does not belong to captions or titles that are not part of the letter itself.

Examples: — These To Mrs Frances Hartridge in Marden private
— For Mr Samuell Jeake Junior at Rye in Sussex, these

- **BILL**

The bill of lading that is included with the letter. The bill of lading is a shipping document that describes the shipped goods, their quantities, and prices.

Examples: — One small barrell of mealle for the accoumpt of Master Jeake
— Nett 81=3=08 att 36 per Cent 47

- **BODY**

This is the letter's content, excluding any element that is not part of the letter's topic of discussion such as salutation, sign-off, address line, or the bill of lading,...

Examples: —You may thinke me too bold in presuming to present these
confused lines
— thou marriedst twice against thy will why not a third time to thy
poor friend?

- **CHAPTER**

The title of the current chapter in the collection. This is not part of a letter.

Examples: — Religious conflicts in Rye
— The persecution of dissenters, 1684

- **DATE**

The date of writing mentioned in the letter.

Examples: — March the 24 1653
— July the 16

- **DATELINE**

The date and place of writing mentioned in the letter. Other elements like sender name can be included as well.

Examples: — London, 10 November 1668
— Loving Bro & Cosin Pembroey September 29 1676

- **FOOTNOTE**

Supplementary text provided by the collection's curator to clarify the content of a letter, or any other written passage in the collection.

Examples: — The most foolish of bipeds.
— Dowlass was a coarse linen cloth. DTGC, 'Doublet — Dozens'...

- **HEADER**

The page header. Contains the title of the overarching part of the collection, as well as the page number.

Examples: — Conflicts and Courtships, 1640-c.1662 23
— Adolescence and Starting Out, 1668-1669 75.

- **ID**

The unique document or letter identifier.

Examples: — ESRO FRE 4842
— RMA, Selmes Manuscripts, RYEYT N39.59.1

- **LATIN**

Untranslated Latin text written by the correspondent.

Examples: — Filius tuus obedientis[simul]s:
— audiendi cupidus maneo, scribebam Raptissime

- **LOCATION**

Place of writing, as stated by the sender in the letter.

Examples: Southwarke
{from the] Gatehouse Westminster.

- **MULTI**

A line containing multiple layout elements. In the case of the Jeake collection, it can contain both the letter's title and unique identifier, the sign-off and dateline, the date and sender_raw information, or the sign-off and sender_raw information.

Examples: — with heading. ESRO FRE 4223 fos. 102-3
— Rye January 28" Your very lo: father

- **NOISE**

This can either be unintelligible data or data without apparent meaning. It can also refer to data that is useless to our analysis. An example is the companion text in the Jeake collection written by Murphy to contextualise the selection of letter presented in the collection.

Examples: — He was apparently well-intentioned but acting on limited experience and received
— aoe G d

- **POSTSCRIPT**

A supplement that the sender chose to add to the letter after it had already been signed off.

Examples: — I have forgotten to tell you that your letter dated of the 19" March I did
— Excuse my evil writing but I slept but half an hour last night [damaged]

- **SALUTATION**

The sender's greeting to the recipient at the opening of the letter.

Examples: — My deare and loveing Cosin
— Ah my dear (but unkind) Heart

- **SENDER_RAW**

The author mentioning his own name within the letter, usually at the conclusion of the letter.

Examples: — Ch: Blackwood
— Aunt Elizabeth Dighton

- **SIGN-OFF**

The sender's concluding notes before ending the letter.

Examples: — Farewell, desirous of your health,
— Remember me to all friends, yours here remember to you.

- **TITLE**

The letter's title, given by the curator of the collection.

Examples: — [5] Samuel Jeake senior to Frances Hartridge, 1 July 1650. Copy letter.
— [221] Nathaniel Hartshorne to Elizabeth Jeake, undated. Original letter,

2.2 The Marescoe-David collection

- **BILL**

The bill of lading that is included with the letter. The bill of lading is a shipping document that describes the shipped goods, their quantities, and prices.

Examples: — Ardasse 16 to 17s [per lb.]
— From which Mr Simons has drawn £1.300

- **BODY**

This is the letter's content, without the salutation, sign-off, addressline, bill of lading, or any other element that is not part of the letter's topic of discussion.

Examples: — 'Wee writt you, Mr Lethieullier, the 6th instant in answer to yours of the 2nd past when
— Concerning the Tar Company's bill of exchange, the matter will be settled as soon as Mr

- **CHAPTER**

The title of the current chapter in the collection. This is not part of a letter.

Examples: — B. LETTERS TO LEONORA MARESCOE & PETER JOYE
— C. LETTERS TO LEONORA MARESCOE & JACOB DAVID

- **DATE**

The date of writing. In this collection, this information is standardised by its curator at the beginning of each letter.

Examples: — (ii)⁵22 FEBRUARY 1668
— July the 1617 JANUARY 1670

- **DATE_OF_ARRIVAL**

The date on which the addressee received the letter. This information is standardised by the curator of this collection at the beginning of each letter.

Examples: — 3 Feb.
— 16 Mar.

⁵ Often, letters were copied. This Latin number indicates that the author of the collection chose to include a copy of the letter, because the original was damaged (Roseveare 1987, p. 209).

DATE_OF_REPLY

The date when the addressee replied to the letter. This information is standardised by the curator of this collection at the beginning of each letter.

Examples: — 2 Mar.
— 3 Apr.

- **DATELINE**

The date and location of writing. This information is standardised by the curator of this collection at the beginning of each letter.

Examples: — SEVILLE 29 NOVEMBER 1667
— YARMOUTH 20 JULY 1668

- **EXCHANGE_RATE**

The sender's update on the current exchange rates in relevant locations.

Examples: — London 34s 7-6g (at 2 usances)
— Antwerp: 2 3/8% (at sight)

- **FOOTNOTE**

Supplementary text provided by the collection's curator to clarify the content of a letter, translations, or any other written passage in the collection.

Examples: — News had reached the West of England of large catches of fish in Newfoundland, and the season later proved
— 2 'Sy syn luyden van grote concepten en veel omslach.'

- **FRENCH**

Untranslated French text written by the correspondent.

Examples: — Plusieurs navires sont arrivés au bas de nostre riviere entre lesquels sont Thomas Frost et
— Puisque la Triple Alliance s'est faite entre l' Angleterre, Hollande et Suede l'on croit que

- **HEADER**

The page header. Contains the title of the part of the collection, as well as the page number.

Examples: — Markets and Merchants of the Late Seventeenth Century 227
— Appendix A 573

- **ID**
The unique document or letter identifier.

Examples: — 13
— [A5]

- **LANGUAGE**
A tag denoting the original language of the translated letter.

Examples: — [D]
— [D] & [F]

- **LOCATION**
The location of writing. This information is standardised by the curator of this collection at the beginning of each letter.

Examples: — STOCKHOLM (i)
— VENICE

- **MULTI**
This line contains multiple layout elements. In the case of the Marescoe-David collection, it can contain both the letter's title and unique identifier, the language tag and part of the letter's body, or multiple languages on a single line, where the writer switches from one language to the other.

Examples: — 124 J. REENSTIERNA to CM
— as was intended, for it is now too late in the season. Au reste
Mademoiselle je ne puis finir celle

- **NOISE**
This can either be unintelligible data or data without apparent meaning. It can also refer to data that is useless to our analysis.

Examples: — [unendorsed]
— 14 eT es

- **POSTSCRIPT**
A supplement that the sender chose to add to the letter after it had already been signed off.

Examples: — [P.S.] Advise how insurance runeth to and from Vergine
and Barbads.'
— [P.S.] I intreat you to send me the remnant of your promise.
My man hath a generall

- **SALUTATION**

The sender's greeting to the recipient at the opening of the letter. There is only one instance of this in the Marescoe-David collection.

Examples: — Sir,

- **SENDER_RAW**

The author mentioning his own name within the letter, usually at the conclusion of the letter.

Examples: — [H. Potter].
— Eduard Walker.

- **SIGN-OFF**

The sender's concluding notes before ending the letter.

Examples: — Yours att command, W.S.'
— Bless you, and with heartiest regards I remain, &c.

- **TITLE**

The letter's title, given by the curator of the collection.

Examples: — ABRAHAM MOMMA to CM
— TAR COMPANY DIRECTORS to CM

- **YEAR**

The year during which the letter was received and answered. This information is standardised by the curator of this collection at the beginning of each letter.

Examples: — 1668
— 1669

3. Corpus annotation

3.1 Letter structure

The letter structure was broken down into four chunks labelled *opening*, *body*, *bridging*, and *closing*, based on the methodology laid out by Rutten and Van der Wal.⁶ Examples of opening formulae are:

'Lo Cousin After my kind love with my wives to youer good selfe and wife hoping
youer health as blessed be the Lord we are att present.'⁷

⁶ See Rutten and Van der Wal (2014, pp. 85–114).

⁷ Murphy (2018, p. 208)

'I last wrote you on the 9th of October, from Hamburg. Since then I have arrived here in good health and have found all my people likewise well, praise be to God who protects us.'⁸

Closing formulae mostly consist of commendation formulae, which serve both to place the addressee under divine protection, as well as to construe the writer's identity as religious.⁹

'I Commit you to the Lord & rest Sir Yours to Command.'¹⁰

'Shall weare them for your sakes, so praying God to accumulate you with his blessings we kindly salute you and rest, honoured Cosin your most obliged servant and kinsman, &c.'¹¹

Rutten and Van der Wal (2014, pp. 111–2) In our data set, these have been annotated as bridging formulae provide a final piece of intersubjective information:

'I desire you to excuse my suddaine departure when I was last at Rye which was for diverse causes necessitated, but future opportunity god willing may ocreation a longer tariance.'¹²

'For some days I have been lying in a fever so I have been unable to write myself. However, with God's help I hope to be well soon, although I am still very weak.'¹³

3.2 Divine appeal formula types

We classify the divine appeal hits according to how they were used in discourse. More specifically, we annotate for instances in which a correspondent calls upon divine assistance, that is, an action of God to aid them. This classification is of particular importance to the Back to the Future project because these annotations provide information about the degree to whether the subject considered themselves in charge of their actions, or if they perceived God was in control, and that these divine appeals testified of a specific way of future thinking and could factor as one possible representation of secularisation.¹⁴

Class 1: Future-oriented. These hits are oriented towards the future and future actions.

- Divine approval: the writer asks for God's assistance to carry out his own intentions. Although it is a joint agency between the subject and God, the subject has control over these intentions.

'...as for your shute and other things that you writ for **I intend to send god willing** the next weeke the Taylor.'¹⁵

8 Roseveare (1987, p. 258)

9 Rutten and Van der Wal (2014, pp. 83–5).

10 Murphy (2018, p. 200).

11 Roseveare (1987, p. 389).

12 Murphy (2018, p. 47)

13 Roseveare (1987, p. 251)

14 Budts and Heijmans (2023).

15 Murphy (2018, p. 144).

'...and, if **God permits, I shall** at once inform you of their arrival.'¹⁶

- Confidence: the writer is confident that God will take care of things.

'...as **God shall** save my soule which is of far greater worth than a watch this is true.'¹⁷

'I most heartily thank you and pray to God to preserve you, your wife and children in good health and prosper you in every way he can in this and many coming years, which **I trust the Lord will do**.'¹⁸

- Prayer: the writer prays to God for something beneficial to happen. These hits are in reference to events or circumstances beyond the subject's own sphere of control.

'Oh that the **lord would** give me a spirit to bear these troubles.'¹⁹

'**May God** bring him and also Thomas Master in safety!'²⁰

- Preservation: similar to prayer, except here the writer appeals to God for the addressee's well-being.

'...the good **Lord keep you & direct you**.'²¹

'I wish you much happiness, **God's blessing** and all prosperity.'²²

- Resignation: the writer asserts that, ultimately, God is in control of events.

'I yet am resolved to rest on providence & **let the Lord do with me as seemeth good in his sight**.'²³

'...but we must bear patiently with **the will of the Lord**, against which there is nothing we can do.'²⁴

Class 2: These hits refer to divine actions that have happened in the past, or when no modality is possible anymore²⁵, because the author perceives the future as an accomplished fact.

- Presupposed or past divine actions: divine actions in if-clauses, or actions that have happened in the past:

16 Roseveare (1987, p. 450).

17 Murphy (2018, p. 52).

18 Roseveare (1987, p. 527).

19 Murphy (2018, p. 181).

20 Roseveare (1987, p. 543).

21 Murphy (2018, p. 191).

22 Roseveare (1987, p. 445).

23 Murphy (2018, p. 170).

24 Roseveare (1987, p. 314).

25 According to Portner (2009, p. 1), modality is "the linguistic phenomenon whereby grammar allows one to say things about, or on the basis of, situations which need not be real".

'...for the **Lord** seemed to hide himselfe from her.'²⁶

'...if the **Lord** is pleased to bless me again.'²⁷

- Gratitude: the writer thanks God for an intervention advantageous to him:

'**Thankes be to the lord** wee are all pretty well at present.'²⁸

'I see that Capt. Nicolas Payton has arrived safely at Harwich, **God be praised!**'²⁹

Class 3: Hits in this class differentiate from the other classes in the sense that they do not relate to direct action performed by the divine. Rather, these hits are found in formulaic constructions, or God is referred to as an object instead of an acting agent.

- Fixed phrase: these are conventional formulaic uses containing the word God or one of its near-synonyms. A non-exhaustive list of examples are dates:

'...only is it expected a great many will be excommunicate for not receiving the sacraments at Easter or the next **Lords day** according to the order of the B. of London.'³⁰

Another example are standard forms used in letter formatting:

'This is all by way of reply; **may God bless you, &c.**'³¹

- God as object: instances in which God is mentioned, but not called upon.

'...I may walke close with **God** in this crooked and perverse generation among whome I live.'³²

'...but the idea that any monopoly should arise from that is odious and accursed of **God**.'³³

The Jeake correspondence, however, is a special case in this regard. While God as object occurs only five times in the Marescoe-David corpus, it does so 97 times in the Jeake corpus. I therefore created five subcategories of this formula, which are as follows.

- Allegiance to God: the writer refers to the religion professed by the subject.

26 Murphy (2018, p. 23).

27 Roseveare (1987, p. 308).

28 Murphy (2018, p. 97).

29 Roseveare (1987, p. 456).

30 Murphy (2018, p. 170).

31 Roseveare (1987, p. 456).

32 Murphy (2018, pp. 48-9).

33 Roseveare (1987, p. 399).

'...she **professed Jesus Christ**, and also she was a sister by Baptisme.'³⁴

'And about 10 the last night when her speech was not articulate being asked by another whether **she had any sense of the love of God upon her heart**.'³⁵

- Duty to God: the writer argues that something is a divine rule to which they must abide. This rule is usually dictated by holy scripture.

'It is both commanded and practised as **a duty in the word of God as a rule for us to walke by**.'³⁶

'Remember to pay the resolutions you made to god in the time of your trouble.'³⁷

- Guidance: writer sends words of (spiritual) advice or encouragement.

'**Encourage your selfe in god** in all hard times.'³⁸

'let all the dispensations of providence **draw you nearer to God**.'³⁹

- Citation: writer directly cites holy scripture.

'...Gen 8 20:21 verses **And Noah builded an alter unto the lord**...'⁴⁰

'...for the meek shall inherit the earth Math 5:5 & **ther shall bee abundance of peace for as long as the sun & moon endure the lord**...'⁴¹

- Manipulation: the writer uses God to change the recipient's opinions or actions.

I know thou expectest **mercy at Gods hands** (which I pray God grant in the hour at death & day of judgement) **but how canst though looke for any & exercise so much cruelty and falseness?**⁴²

'...but my Love there will be atime of searching all the secrets of our hearts, no covers nor pretences **can cloake us from the all seeing eye of God**.'⁴³

34 Murphy (2018, p. 26).

35 Murphy (2018, p. 204).

36 Murphy (2018, p. 25).

37 Murphy (2018, p. 47).

38 Murphy (2018, p. 46).

39 Murphy (2018, p. 278).

40 Murphy (2018, p. 155).

41 Murphy (2018, p. 156).

42 Murphy (2018, pp. 53–4).

43 Murphy (2018, p. 54).

3.3 Divine appeal domains

These annotations refer to the context in which the correspondent appeals to the divine. Domains are collections of subdomains grouped by topic relevance.

Domain Subdomains	Explanation
Health & sickness Death Health Sickness	This domain refers to all conversation topics concerning the health (or lack thereof) of senders, addressees, or third parties mentioned throughout the correspondence.
Politics & war Peace Politics Prosecution War	Referring to all topics discussing the political climate. These can range from policies concerning the sender or addressee, to the expression of concerns regarding peace or ongoing war, to legal troubles affecting the sender or addressee.
Social life Birth Communication Courtship Family Marriage Meeting Welfare	Informal topics discussing the social lives of the correspondents. Such topics include family matters, expectations towards communication style, meeting arrangements, or material welfare outside of trading life. Other subdomains include correspondents courting one another, the expansion of social circles through marriage, or the birth of a child.
Trade & finances Crisis Debt Economy Investment Loss Trade	Topics regarding commercial trade. Typically these include trading arrangements, but can also be about crises affecting the trade, such goods being destroyed by fire or bankruptcy, investments made by the sender or addressee, loss of either money or trading wares, the debts of the sender, addressee, or third parties discussed, or the economical situation locally or internationally.
Travel & transport Travel Transport	Topics referring to any type of movement of a person or ware from point a to b. It is annotated as <code>travel</code> when the movement concerns a person, <code>transport</code> when the movement concerns trading wares.
Other	Divine appeals that cannot be placed in a meaningful context. Usually these are highly formulaic instances such as sign-offs, where the writer commends the addressee into the hands of God.

Table 1
Domains, their subdomains, and what they mean to the topic of conversation.