OUR DEAREST BROTHER: STUDIES IN CHANGING EXPRESSIONS OF KINSHIP IN THE RECORDS OF MEDIEVAL ROYALTY

by Michael Andrews-Reading [1]

Abstract

Surviving royal documents from the medieval period not infrequently include statements of relationship. A detailed examination of representative collections of these documents demonstrates a gradual move away from purely factual statements of close relationships in some cases. By the time of the late Middle Ages, the use of formal and stylised kinship terms had come to reflect political and pragmatic relationships instead of strict blood ties. This article asks when such statements can be relied on as fact and seeks to chart potential changes in royal attitudes towards expressing relationship as a function of diplomatic and administrative language.

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Being related to royalty has long been considered a desirable thing. Shakespeare[2] writes with a gently mocking tone of "*those that are akin to the king, for they never prick their finger but they say, 'There is some of the king's blood spilt'*", in the hope that this may elicit a question about the relationship from among their hearers. This interest remains a feature of modern genealogical research.

A wide range of royal letters and related documents addressed from or to the medieval kings of England has survived in the National Archives. Several collections of these, normally arranged by monarch, have been published, notably in the great Victorian run of publications effected under the aegis of the Master of the Rolls as keeper of the public records, called the Rolls Series (Knowles, 1963). These documents often include within the opening address some form of expression that seeks to state the relationship between the originator of the document and its intended recipient, or its subject. Additionally, many of the other major series of public records – such as the Patent Rolls – frequently also contain references to relationships. Given the royal nature of government at the time, many of these references relate to the king and indicate his relationship to an individual or individuals named in the document, again, either as an addressee or as one of subjects of the text.

Of course, medieval genealogists with an interest in Great Britain are very familiar with the various classes of official records from this time period, since they form a significant source for much of the information available about the inter-relationships of individuals. Royal letters and charters, however, stand in a class of their own. They are not like some of the other series, since their primary purpose does not generally include a genealogical focus. In this sense they differ from, for instance, the *Inquisitions Post Mortem*, which by their very nature often record pedigrees. And they are not like wills, or records of religious foundations, since we do not particularly expect to find references to relationships within them. Nevertheless, the genealogical

[1] *Contact details:* 3 Tylsworth Close, Amersham, Bucks HP6 5DF, UK

[2] Henry IV, part 2, Act II, scene 2. *The Complete Works.* Oxford University Press (1910) p.484.

information they contain, despite being secondary in purpose, represents a significant resource.

By examining these documents, and the relational references within them, it should be possible to formulate some views about their evidential value as tools for the medieval genealogist.

1. Methodology

In terms of published and thus relatively accessible material, there is almost an embarrassment of English royal documents from the medieval period. The *acta* of the Norman and early Angevin monarchs have been published, followed by many of the letters from the time of Henry III onwards. Leading on from this initial period are the many series of published rolls: Patent, Close, Charter, and the like.

To start with, we shall look at the general class of royal documents, before returning to the Patent Rolls series in particular detail. For the purposes of this review, I have extracted all relational terms used in the royal correspondence within the Rolls series, as well as most of those from the *Foedera* entries for 1357 to 1372 (Edward III), 1377 to 1383 (Richard II) and 1397 to 1413 (Richard II and Henry IV) (see Rymer, 1727 etc).

I have supplemented this with selected entries from the work of Chaplais (1982) on medieval diplomatic records, the Papal Letters & Petitions series, the Calendar of Close Rolls (1227-1272), and the Calendar of Patent Rolls [detailed in a separate section below]. I used these additional sources because they offer a range of further records that include similar genealogical references, and in making my further selection from them (Table I) I endeavoured to extract entries that offered new terms or new illustrations of terms or relationships previously encountered.

Table I. *Number of extracted relational references, 1216-1509*

Source	*Number of references*
Rolls Series (royal letters)	120
Rymer's *Foedera*	81
Chaplais	50
Papal Letters & Petitions	16
Calendar of Close Rolls (Henry III)	21
Calendar of Patent Rolls	353
Total	641

Although this list does not provide an exhaustive list of relational terms, it is intended that the period and range of sources should provide sufficient illustrative examples to enable conclusions to be drawn. Additionally, the sample size (641) should be large enough to ensure that these conclusions are reasonably reliable.

2. Language and phraseology

Before proceeding further, it is probably worth examining the question of terminology. The original texts relevant to this topic were written in a variety of languages, none of which was modern English. However, many of the published sources – which must be relied on for the purposes of an overview of the subject, since the alternative is to access the original documents in each case – present translations only.

In an attempt to make this review more meaningful, wherever possible the original word or phrase has been ascertained and reproduced [ignoring tense]. Publications that contain original texts have been preferred over those that offer translations only – for instance, the published volumes of the Close Rolls for Henry III, which are transcriptions of the Latin originals (expanded to take scribal contractions and the like into account), are more useful for this review than the later volumes, which are in English and rarely indicate the underlying word or phrase being translated.

In some cases this has not been possible for practical reasons - for example, the bulk of the published Patent Rolls are in English. Here, where possible, analogies have been drawn from similar transcripts of original texts.

While contemporary English was used in some cases by the Norman sovereigns, the majority of the early original texts are in Latin. The most important group of phrases, therefore, are probably those from the Latin. This is heightened by the fact that that language is the furthest removed from modern English of all those commonly found in medieval British documents of this kind.

In medieval Latin, the core relational terms are normally non-problematic. *Pater* = father, *mater* = mother, *soror* = sister, *frater* = brother. However, more extended terms can exhibit a range of meanings, many of which were unknown to the classical users of the language:

Affinis = one allied by blood or marriage (Latham, 1975).

Avunculus = maternal uncle [its classical sense]; paternal uncle; cousin; wife's uncle; courtesy title (Latham).

Cognatus = kinsman or relative by marriage; kinsman in the female line; kinswoman [*sic*; normally this is *cognata*] (Latham).

Consanguineus = related by blood; kinsman (Latham).

Consobrinus = cousin; nephew (Latham).[3]

Germanus = having the same parents; full brother; half-brother (son of the same father); agnatic, related on the father's side (Howlett, 1989).

Nepos = grandson; descendant; nephew (either sister's son or brother's son); cousin; kinsman (Howlett, 2002).

Neptis = granddaughter; niece; cousin; kinswoman; young girl [*sic*; *i.e.* a non-relational use] (Howlett, 2002).

By the time of Edward III (r 1327-1377) the use of French was becoming more common, particularly in diplomatic correspondence. Again, the common relational terms are non-problematic, and the overwhelming word used for extended genealogical connections is simply "*cousin*". As Chaplais (1982) shows, English was also being used by the early fifteenth century.

[3] For the second definition a 15th century example is cited (p 453)

3. Background: the Normans and early Angevins

It is probably true to say that the earlier the document, the simpler the type of relationship that is likely to be encountered as a reference. However, I have not carried out a detailed or exhaustive study of the use of relational terms during the period preceding the reign of Henry III; my observations in relation to that time frame are drawn solely from a narrow review of a few selected cases. Accordingly, what follows in relation to this early period should be treated as initial observations rather than conclusions.

In the years immediately following the Conquest, the majority of relational terms used in royal documents seem to be factual in nature and refer to close family members, for instance:

> "*Matildis Henrici Regis filia*" [Matilda, daughter of King Henry] (Cronne & Davis, 1968, p.261 #711).
>
> "*Jocelino fratri regine Adelicie*" [Joscelin the brother of Queen Adeliza] (Cronne & Davis, p.208 #568).
>
> "*Rex Stephanus pater meus et Matildis regina mater mea*" [King Stephen, my father, and Queen Matilda, my mother] (Cronne & Davis, p.312, #847).
>
> "*Avunculo meo Reginaldo comite Cornubie*" [my uncle Reginald, earl of Cornwall] (Cronne & Davis, p.260 #704)

This is in line with the tendency towards terseness that these early documents exhibit. Opening phrases, which in later years mostly became more elaborate, were short and factual:

> "*Stephanus rex Anglorum Waltero filio Roberto salutem*" [From Stephen, king of the English, to Walter son of Robert, greetings] (Cronne & Davis, p.85 #239c).

In many cases, any genealogical content appears incidental, or is introduced in order to assist in establishing identity. Given the fact that William I, Henry I and Stephen in succession had queens named Matilda, some sort of genealogical differentiation must frequently have been necessary; this was also the case in a period before hereditary surnames had become the norm. These genealogical glosses, however, sometimes seem to have acted as a method of claiming prestige. The Empress Matilda likely sought to enhance her status by referring to herself as the daughter - and thus heir - of King Henry.

Another good example of this genre, using a more distant relational term, is the regular reference by William I to his predecessor King Edward as his kinsman, *e.g.*: "*on Eadweardes kynges dæge mines mæges*" [in the time of King Edward, my kinsman] (Bates, 1998, p.305 #66). A corresponding Latin text, although now believed to be a later forgery, renders the relational phrase as "*cognati mei*" (Bates, p.875 #290). This same reference is used in a charter of Henry I, dating from between 1100 and 1119, which is interesting because it is bilingual. The Latin version refers to "*tempore regis Eadwardi cognati mei et tempore Willelmi patris mei*", and the English to "*on eadwordes kynges dæge mines mæges & on willelmes kynges dæge mines fæder*" [in the time of King Edward my kinsman, and in the time of King William my father] (Birch, 1873). The relationship between William I and Edward the Confessor was that of full first cousin once removed, while in relation to the latter king, Henry I was a full first cousin twice removed. Clearly, both subsequent monarchs were keen to emphasise this relationship, because of the sense of continuity and added legitimacy that it gave to their regimes.

At the same time, in this earlier period, we also see instances of the formulaic relational addresses that became standardised with the passage of time, for instance Henry II when Duke of Normandy addressed Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, as "*venerabili pater et amico karissimo*" [venerable father and dearest friend][4] (Cronne & Davis, p.260 #707). This formula soon began to acquire a genealogical element. In 1212, for instance, King John addressed the Emperor Otto IV, son of his sister Matilda, as "*karissimo nepoti suo*" [his dearest nephew] (Chaplais, p.49). When he wrote to the Count of Flanders the following year, however, the style used was "*amico suo*" [his friend] (Chaplais, p.143), thus failing to acknowledge the genealogical relationship between them (they were 2nd cousins once removed). As we shall see, this developed further under succeeding monarchs.

4. Royal expressions of relationship 1216-1509

The collected official correspondence of various English monarchs forms six volumes of the Rolls Series[5]. These cover the reigns of Henry III, Henry IV, Richard III and Henry VII, a non-continuous period spanning from 1216 to 1509. Together with sources such as the *Foedera*, these volumes provide a good overview of the relational terms used by the medieval English kings, and thus the relationships acknowledged by them in a diplomatic and official capacity. Importantly, all reproduce the texts in their original language.

(a) Henry III, 1216-1272

We shall begin by seeing, in Table II, how Henry III referred to his fellow rulers.

Table II. *Relational terms used by Henry III for foreign rulers*

Addressee	*Date*	*Term*	*Relationship*
Philip II of France	1220	*consanguineus*	1st cousin twice removed
Emperor Frederick II	1228	*Amicus*	5th cousin once removed
Louis IX of France	1229	*consanguineus*	1st cousin twice removed
Blanche, Queen of France	1233	*consanguinea*	1st cousin
Llywelyn, Prince of Wales	1234	*Frater*	brother-in-law
Peter I, Duke of Brittany	1234	*Fidelis*	2nd cousin twice removed
Emperor Frederick II	1235	*Frater*	brother-in-law
Joan, Countess of Flanders	1235	*consanguinea*	1st cousin once removed
Joan, Queen of Scots	1235	*soror*	full sister
Alfonso X of Castile	1255	*consanguineus*	1st cousin once removed
Margaret, Queen of France	1260	*soror*	sister-in-law
Charles, Count of Anjou	1264	*consanguineus*	1st cousin once removed

[4] Of course, in this case the phrase "*venerable father*" does not have a genealogical context.

[5] *Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland During the Middle Ages* (Gairdner, 1861, 1863; Hingeston 1860, 1965; Shirley, 1862, 1866).

From the examples given we see that relational terms used in Henry III's diplomatic correspondence were factual and essentially accurate. The emperor is initially addressed as "*excellentissimo principi et dilecto sibi in Christo amico*" [most excellent prince and his beloved friend in Christ] (Shirley, 1862, p.331 #CCLXXII); that is, Henry addresses his fellow-monarch as 'friend', notwithstanding any notional disparity in rank, but no terms of kinship are employed. This is despite the fact that there were various genealogical relationships between the two men, the closest probably being 5th cousins once removed, by virtue of a shared descent from Baldwin IV of Flanders; it is not possible to say whether this relationship was known to the author of the letter. In 1235 Frederick married Henry's sister Isabel, and consequently the address alters to "*serenissimo principi, amico et fratri suo carissimo*" [most serene prince, his dearest friend and brother] (Shirley, 1862, p.474 #CCCXCIII).

Similarly, we note that the Duke of Brittany is not addressed as a cousin, despite a shared descent from Louis VI of France (he was thus a 2nd cousin once removed to Henry). Instead, the king calls him "*dilecto et fideli suo*" [his beloved vassal] (Shirley, 1862, p.441 #CCCLXIX), thus emphasising the subservient role that Peter played in the feudal relationship. This contrasts with Henry's address to Philip II of France, whom he styles "*reverendo domino suo, consanguineus suus*" [his revered lord and his kinsman] (Shirley, 1862, p.107 #XC), acknowledging both his high status and their blood relationship.[6]

There are various other cases where no genealogical relationship is stated, although we know from alternative sources that one certainly existed. Sometimes this is because a shortened form of address is employed, reminiscent of that used during the earlier period. Many letters do not contain the longer version of the clause that usually states the relationship between the parties; the shorter form is far more succinct and without any relational assertions, e.g. "*Regi Franciae salutem*" [to the King of France, greetings], used by Henry III in a letter to Louis IX of France in 1228 (Shirley, 1862, p.336 #CCLXXVIII).

Missing genealogical statements, however, are also encountered in cases where the long formula is present. William de Warenne, Earl of Surrey, is styled "*dilecti et fidelis nostri*" [7] [our beloved vassal] although he was the king's 1st cousin once removed. John, Duke of Brittany, like his father, was called the same in 1269[8] by the king, who did not acknowledge his degree of cousinship (3rd). A third case from 1270 [9] refers to William de Chabanais in exactly the same terms; although the exact relationship between him and Henry is unknown, elsewhere he is styled '*king's kinsman*'.[10] It is less clear why these relationships should have been ignored.

It is also worth noting that the use of relational terms transcends both illegitimacy and the half-blood. For instance, Llywelyn of North Wales calls Henry III "*carissimo fratri et domino suo*" [his dearest brother and lord] (Shirley, 1862, p.59 #XLIX) and in return is styled by the king "*fratri et fideli suo*" [his brother and vassal] (Shirley, 1862, p.452 #CCCLXXVIII). Joan, consort of the Welsh prince, was a bastard daughter of Henry's father John. In this case, a further extension is also evident, since Llywelyn

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6 Chaplais notes that there was no feudal relationship between the English and French monarchs between 1202 and 1259, but the style of 'lord' was nevertheless used during this time; it may represent a *de jure* claim.

7 CCR, 1227-1231, p.18.

8 CCR, 1268-1272, p.159.

9 CCR, 1268-1272, p.191.

10 CPR, 1247-1258, p.174, entry dated 1253.

was not Henry's brother, but his brother-in-law. A similar case is that of Alexander III, King of Scots, who in 1262 styles Henry III "*patri praecordialissimo*" [most beloved father] (Shirley, 1866, p.211 #DLXXIV), having married that king's daughter, Margaret (*i.e.* Henry was his father-in-law).

On occasions, other relationships by marriage are also recognised, sometimes explicitly. Queen Berengaria, the widow of Richard I, styles Henry "*domino et carissimo nepoti suo*" [her lord and dearest nephew] (Shirley, 1862, p.273 #CCXXVI), even though biologically he was her late husband's nephew. Latham cites a reference by Henry III to Peter of Savoy as "*avunculo nostro*"[11] [our uncle]; he was, of course, the maternal uncle to Henry's queen, Eleanor of Provence. CPR contains at least two similar references, where Peter (1242), Thomas of Flanders (1241) and Amadeus of Savoy (1248) are all called "*king's uncle*" in the published translation. Instances such as these, though far from frequent, are not uncommon (Table III). When we come to review the relational phrases used in the Patent Rolls, we will consider the question of whether the term "*consanguineus*" could be extended to relationships by marriage.

Incidentally, Sayers (1999) notes that in the correspondence of the 13th century popes, the adjective "*carissimo* [dearest] *was reserved for crowned heads*". This restriction certainly was not observed by the English chancery, since Henry III so addresses a number of lesser potentates, such as Charles, Count of Anjou, in 1264 (Shirley, 1866, p.265 #DCXXI), while his successors use the term for various local relations.

Table III. *Examples of relationships through marriage: Henry III*[12]

Addressee	*Date*	*Phrase*	*Relationship*
Llywelyn, Prince of Wales	1234	*frater*	brother-in-law (husband of sister)
Emperor Frederick II	1235	*frater*	brother-in-law (husband of sister)
Philip of Savoy	1237	of the king's affinity	wife's maternal uncle
Hugh X de Lusignan, Count of la Marche	1241	king's father	step-father
Thomas of Savoy, Count of Flanders	1241	king's uncle	wife's maternal uncle
Beatrice, Countess of Provence	1243	king's mother	mother-in-law
Alfonso X, King of Castile	1255	*affinis*	brother of son's wife
Margaret, Queen of France	1260	*soror*	sister-in-law (wife's sister)
Peter of Savoy	1266	*avunculus*	wife's maternal uncle

Recognised relationships by the half-blood could be either agnatic - as for instance with Joan of Wales - or uterine. Furthermore, they were not restricted to that part of the king's lineage whence his title to the throne had come. Henry III frequently recognised his Lusignan half-brothers, and this acknowledgement continued for generations amongst their respective successors.

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[11] Another instance is provided by Chaplais (p.51), dated 1243 ("*avunculo suo*"), referring to Thomas of Savoy, Count of Flanders.

[12] These are drawn from a range of sources: CCR, CPR, Shirley (1862; 1866); Latham (1975).

There are also instances where a relatively close relationship through marriage and half-blood was not recognised (Table IV). For example, in 1268 Henry referred to Matilda Longespée *née* Clifford as "*dilecte*"[13] [beloved] but did not attempt a description of their genealogical ties – she was the widow of his 1st cousin once removed, of the half-blood.

Table IV. *Examples of half-blood relationships: Henry III*[14]

Addressee	*Date*	*Phrase*	*Relationship*
Henry, illegitimate son of King John	1228	*frater*	agnatic half-brother (illegitimate)
Ida de Beauchamp née Longespée	1234-7	*consanguinea regis*	agnatic half 1st cousin (illegitimate line)
Joan, Countess of Flanders	1235	*consanguinea*	agnatic half 1st cousin once removed
David of Wales	1237	*nepotis*	half-nephew (agnatic)
Richard de Dover	1244	king's kinsman	half-brother or half-nephew (agnatic)
Aymer of Lusignan	1249	king's brother	uterine half-brother
Mary of Lusignan	1249	king's niece	half-niece (uterine)
William de Valence	1263	*frater*	uterine half-brother
Guy of la Marche	1266	king's nephew	half-nephew (uterine)
Geoffrey of Lusignan	1270	*frater*	uterine half-brother
John de Valence	1271	king's nephew	half-nephew (uterine)

As well as those dual styles which recognised different elements of a relationship ('kinsman and friend'; 'mother and lady') Henry III used on occasion a compound address that asserted two genealogical relationships. In 1255, for instance, he called Alfonso X of Castile "*noster affinis et consanguineus*" [our relation by marriage and kinsman] (Shirley, 1866, p.107 #DII). The closest relationship by marriage seems to have been through Alfonso's half-sister Eleanor, who had married Henry's son Edward the previous year (ODNB, entry for Eleanor of Castile by John Carmi Parsons). By including, and emphasising, this marital link, perhaps Henry was seeking to build on the alliance that the marriage was intended to seal.

In other cases, Henry III corresponded with monarchs who did not share any [known] genealogical ties with him. In these cases, as one would expect, no relational terms are used in their correspondence. For instance, King Haakon of Norway (r 1217-1263) styles Henry "*serenissimo domino et amico carissimo*" [most serene lord and dearest friend] (Shirley, 1862, p.485 #CCCCI). Reflecting a less equal feudal relationship, the form of address used by Cathal O'Connor, King of Connaught in 1222, is "*carissimo domino*" [dearest lord] and he signs himself "*suus fidelis*" [his vassal] (Shirley (1862), p.183 #CLX).

[13] CCR, 1268-1272, p.2.

[14] Sources: CCR, CPR, Shirley (1862; 1866).

Thus we can conclude that, during the reign of Henry III:

- acknowledged relationships tended to be factual;
- the relationships tended to be accurate, although at times 'in-law' terms could be ignored;
- illegitimacy was not a bar to acknowledgement;
- acknowledgement was not restricted to agnatic relationships or those tied to the descent of the crown;
- the absence of an acknowledged relationship did not mean that no relationship existed.

(b) Edward I, 1272-1307

By now we note that the English king is corresponding both in Latin and in French, with the consequent introduction of genealogical terms from the latter language (*e.g.* '*cousin*' and '*cousine*').[15] A further composite address makes an appearance in 1304, when Charles, Count of Anjou is styled "*nostre treschier et tresame cousin et frere*" [our very dear and much loved cousin and brother] (Chaplais, p.14). He was Edward's first cousin once removed, and his brother-in-law. This dual style is rendered more unusual in that the document in which it occurs is one of a set, the others being addressed to Charles's brother, Philip IV of France, and the wives of the two men; in the letter to Philip, he is addressed as "*seignour et cousin*" [lord and cousin] (Chaplais, p.13), without any reference to his position as Edward's brother-in-law.

The composite address seems also to have caused some confusion for the chancery clerk responsible for drafting the letter, since at first he commenced the text proper with "*treschier frere*", and then crossed that out and substituted "*treschier cousin*" instead (Chaplais, p.14, n 80). Much of the correspondence, however, utilises simple relational phrases. The King of the Romans, the Count of Holland, and the Count of Flanders are all addressed as '*friend*' (Chaplais, pp.6, 15)[16], even though the latter two were Edward's 2nd cousins twice removed.[17]

In conclusion, Edward I:

- largely continued the conventions of his father's reign;
- tended not to recognise more distant genealogical relationships in his diplomatic correspondence;
- utilised a composite form of address in at least one case.

(c) Edward II, 1307-1327

No significant developments appear to have arisen during the reign of Edward II. He continued to address close relatives using relational terms, while failing to use such styles for more distant connections. The kings of Portugal and Aragon, for instance, 1st cousin twice removed and 3rd cousin respectively, were both called "*amico suo carissimo*" [his dearest friend] (Chaplais, pp.16, 83).

The conclusions offered in respect of Edward I, therefore, are also applicable to his son and successor.

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[15] The earliest French document I have seen dates from 1277 – see Chaplais, p.328.

[16] The original words are "*amicus*" and "*ami*".

[17] In the latter case, by the half-blood only. These were Floris V and Robert III respectively.

(d) Edward III, 1327-1377

It is under Edward III, more than a century into our review, that we start to note some further changes in the monarch's official use of relational terms. The most significant shift is in the development of artificial relationships. Here, inaccurate relational terms are used to enhance the actual relationships between the king and those whom he addresses. This is a diplomatic feature, designed both to flatter the individual so addressed, and to emphasise to the world at large the closeness of the relationship that the parties enjoyed.

In June 1338, Edward was in the midst of final arrangements for his proposed visit to Germany, where as part of recent international developments related to the European power struggle, he was to be appointed imperial Vicar, effectively the Holy Roman Emperor's lieutenant (Mortimer, 2007, pp.149-151). We find when he addresses the Emperor, he uses the style "*patri et fratri suo carissimo*" [his dearest father and brother] (Chaplais, p.73). Genealogically, they were 'brothers', since Louis IV had married the sister of Edward's wife. In adding the style of 'father' to this actual relationship, the king is claiming the role of symbolic son to the Emperor, and thus seeking to advance his own status by obtaining a share of the prestige enjoyed by the senior temporal ruler in Europe.

It is unsurprising that this feature should also appear in reference to the king's changing relationships with the French royal family, given the importance that the French wars had to Edward's reign. John II, king of France, who in 1360 was a captive in the Edward's hands, is styled "*fratre nostro Franciae*" [our brother of France]. In return, he calls Edward "*notre frere*" [our brother] (Rymer, VI, pp.215, 230). Additionally, the English king addresses Philip and Louis, the sons of John II, as "*nostre treschere neveu*" [our very dear nephew] and "*carissimi nepotis nostri*" [18] [our dearest nephew] (Rymer, VI, pp.285, 309). In fact, John was Edward's 2nd cousin, and the young princes his 2nd cousins once removed. Conversely, when John II's eldest son, the Dauphin Charles, wrote to Edward III, he called the king "*nostre oncle*" [our uncle] (Rymer, VI, p.230).

In according the fictitious style of 'brother' and 'nephews', Edward was drawing a diplomatic comparison with the new relationship that now prevailed with his French counterpart. The English king had agreed to surrender his claim to the throne of France in 1360 (Mortimer, p.342), and the new forms of address – though genealogically inaccurate – were expressions of the sense of fraternity that was supposed to be consistent with the signing of the peace treaty.

A decade later an even more curious style of relational address occurs: Charles II, King of Navarre, merely Edward's 1st cousin once removed, is called "*notre trescher et tresame frere et filz*" [our very dear and much-loved brother and son] (Chaplais, p.32). Perhaps this double-dose of fictional flattery was occasioned by the circumstances of the letter it contained: the Prince of Wales had vetoed a proposed treaty between the kings, and Edward was writing to pass on the bad news. Latham refers to this form of address as a "courtesy title", and cites (p.171) an instance referring to Henry VI from diplomatic correspondence of 1440. We have now seen that the concept dates from at least a century earlier than that. Additionally, we see the deliberate repression of actual relationships, again a political feature connected with the king's international activities.

[18] At the same time, Louis was also styled "*consanguineus noster carissimus*".

It is significant that in 1357 David II of Scotland is referred to by Edward as "*David de Bruys, prisonarii nostri*" [David de Brus, our prisoner] (Rymer, VI, p.34). This is despite the fact that he had been married for 30 years to Joan, Edward's full sister, and was thus the brother-in-law of the English monarch (ODNB biography by Bruce Webster). Joan herself was called "*soror nostra carissima*" [our dearest sister] (Rymer, VI, p.73). It is also worth noting that David is not accorded his style as King of Scots. The reason for the lack of acknowledged genealogical relationship appears to be found in David's status as a prisoner of state since 1346, first at the Tower of London, and then at Odiham, Hampshire (ONDB).

By denying him both his royal titles and his close family relationship to the king, David's low status was emphasised. It was his position as prisoner that now defined his relationship to Edward – at least in Edward's eyes. Meanwhile, his rival Edward Balliol is accorded both of the attributes stripped from David in his captivity: "*dilecto consanguineo et fideli nostro, Edward de Balliolo, nuper Regi Scotiae*" [our beloved kinsman and vassal, Edward de Balliol, late King of Scots] (Rymer, VI, p.1). By 1359, David had been restored to his throne. He writes to Edward as "*nostre treschier frere et tresexcellent seigneur*" [our very dear brother and very excellent lord] (Rymer, VI, p.117), reminding the English monarch of their fraternal ties at the same time as flattering him with a reference to the overlordship claimed over Scotland.

A similar case is that of Charles of Blois, who had also fallen into Edward's hands in 1347 after claiming the ducal throne of Brittany against the preferred choice of the English (Mortimer, p.249). He is called "*illustris Karolus de Bloys, prisonarius noster*" [the illustrious Charles of Blois, our prisoner] (Rymer, VI, p.23), but the fact that he was the king's 2nd cousin is ignored.

In these two developments we see the careful use of genealogical terminology as a mirror of the nation's political and diplomatic relationships. This adoption of genealogical phrasing as a political tool was to remain a feature of English diplomacy for centuries to come.

It is worth observing that terminological changes follow actual relational changes too: in 1358 John de Montfort, Duke of Brittany is addressed "*dilecto consanguineo et fideli nostro*" [our beloved kinsman and vassal] (Rymer, VI, p.95), reflecting his relationship as a 2nd cousin once removed to Edward III. By 1372 his style has changed to "*nostre treschere et tresame filz*" [our very dear and much loved son] (Rymer, VI, p.721). In 1361 John had married the king's daughter, Mary. Despite her death after only a few months of marriage (ODNB, biography by Michael Jones) his sometime status as son-in-law of the king was retained.[19] This probably mirrored Edward's continuing military support for John, who was seen by many on the continent as little more than an English puppet, as part of the ongoing French wars.

Where relationships are factual, it appears that kinship of a relatively broad degree was recognised. The Count of Flanders was called "*consanguineo suo carissimo"* [his dearest kinsman] in 1333 (Chaplais, p.70); this admitted a relationship of 4th cousins. Magnus of Norway was styled in the same way in 1361 (Rymer, VI, p.312), being Edward's 4th cousin twice removed.

[19] John enjoyed a similar address under Richard II, who called him 'brother' by virtue of a further marriage of short duration to Joan Holland, that king's half-sister (see Chaplais, p.36).

Table V. *Relational terms of address used by Edward III for foreign rulers and their families, 1357-1372* (Rymer, 1727, VI)

Addressee	*Date*	*Phrase*	*Relationship*
Edward Balliol, King of Scots	1357	*consanguineus*	half 2nd cousin once removed
Alfonso IV, King of Portugal	1357	*consanguineus*	2nd cousin once removed
William, Count of Holland	1357	*consanguineus*	2nd cousin once removed
David II, King of Scots	1357	*prisonarii nostri*	brother-in-law
Joan, Queen of Scots	1357	*soror*	Sister
Wenceslas, Duke of Luxembourg	1358	*cousin*	3rd cousin
Joan, Duchess of Luxembourg	1358	*cousine*	1st cousin once removed
Charles II, King of Navarre	1358	*consanguineus*	1st cousin once removed
James de Bourbon, Count of la Marche	1358	*consanguineus*	2nd cousin once removed
Peter, King of Castile	1359	*consanguineus*	2nd cousin twice removed
John II, King of France	1360	*frater*	2nd cousin
Philip, Duke of Tourraine	1360	*neveu*	2nd cousin once removed
Margaret, Countess of Flanders	1360	*cousine*	1st cousin once removed
Philip, Duke of Burgundy	1360	*cousin*	1st cousin twice removed
Louis, Duke of Anjou	1361	*nepotis*	2nd cousin once removed
Philip, Duke of Orleans	1361	*cousin*	2nd cousin
Magnus, King of Norway	1361	*consanguineus*	4th cousin twice removed
John, Duke of Berry	1361	*consanguineus*	2nd cousin once removed
Joan, Queen of Navarre	1361	*consanguinea*	2nd cousin once removed
John de Montfort, Duke of Brittany	1372	*filz*	former son-in-law

As with his great grandfather, Edward III also omitted acknowledgements of kinship at times when writing to his inferiors. In 1358 Richard, Earl of Arundel, for instance, was styled "*trescher et foial consailler*" [very dear and faithful counsellor] (Rymer, VI, p.83), but no genealogical relationship was stated. He and Edward were 3rd cousins, a fact that the king was prepared to acknowledge at other times: he was called 'king's kinsman' in (for example) 1337 and 1371.[20]

[20] CPR, 1334-1338, p.525; CPR, 1370-1374, p.150.

Accordingly, by the time of Edward III we see that:

- relationships acknowledged in royal correspondence began to fall into two classes: factual and fictional;
- fictional relational terms were developed as a tool in the king's diplomatic and political programme;
- the absence of an acknowledged relationship still did not mean that no relationship existed, since
- acknowledgement of real relationships could be omitted on occasion;
- alternatively, this acknowledgement could be suppressed for political reasons.

(e) Richard II, 1377-1399

Richard continued to develop his grandfather's notion of using relational terms as part of his diplomatic efforts. He addressed Robert II, King of Scots as "*nostre cher cosyn d'Escoce*" [our dear cousin of Scotland] (Rymer, IV, p.87) although there was scarcely any blood relationship between the two monarchs: the first of the Stewart kings had little immediate royal ancestry, and therefore almost no recent genealogy in common with his reigning counterparts. But this was clearly part of the contemporary language of international diplomacy, since the Scottish king was also called "*notre treschier et tresame cousin*" [our very dear and much loved cousin] by Charles VI of France (Rymer, IV, p.167), and those two had no particular blood relationship either.

More tellingly, in December 1380 we find Wenceslas, King of Bohemia, styled "*serenissimo fratre nostro domino*" [our most serene brother (and) lord] (Rymer, IV, p.104).[21] Again, there was no very close blood relationship between them: they were 4th cousins twice over, but no closer. At that time, Richard was seeking to marry Anne, the half-sister of the Bohemian king; calling him brother during the latter part of the negotiations was a diplomatic move, designed to underline the political relationship that now existed between him and Wenceslas. In January 1381/2 Anne and Richard were finally wed, and the kings became brothers in fact. (ODNB, biography by Nigel Saul).

We also note a further relationship by marriage: in 1381 Richard addresses Eleanor, consort of King Ferdinand of Portugal, as "*nostre treshonore cosine*" [our very honoured cousin] (Rymer, IV, p.119). While the two kings were 3rd cousins once removed, the Portuguese queen was not of royal birth, and had no known blood relationship to Richard.

During the reign of Richard II, the wars with France continued. This is reflected in the relational terms used in the king's correspondence. Richard had attained his majority in 1382, the year after the Peasants' Revolt – during which the rebel leader had dared to address the sovereign as "*frer*" [brother] to his face (ODNB biography by Anthony Tuck). When in 1382 Richard wrote to Charles VI of France, his 2nd cousin once removed, he called him "*nostre adversaire de France*" [our adversary of France] (Rymer, IV, p 143).

This relationship improved considerably as the reign progressed, and the changes in the way the two monarchs styled one another charts this, as well as reflecting the changes in actual genealogical relationships between them. By 1392, Richard is calling Charles "*nostre trescher et tresame cousin de France*" [our very dear and much-

[21] see also Chaplais, p.159, for a similar style of the same date.

loved cousin of France] (Chaplais, p.33). Three years later he has advanced to "*frere et cousin de France*" [brother and cousin of France] (Chaplais, p.34). Then, in 1396, in anticipation of a marriage between Richard and Charles's daughter, they are calling one another "*trescher pere*" and "*trescher et tresame filz*" [very dear father; very dear and much-loved son] (Chaplais, p.35), even though the wedding itself was several months away.

On the other hand, there are further instances where genealogical relationships are ignored by the king. In two separate documents from 1378, Richard refers to the Earl of Arundel, his 3rd cousin, as "*dilecto et fideli suo*" [his beloved vassal] and then as "*nostre chier et foial cosin*" [our dear and faithful cousin] (Rymer, IV, pp.31-32).

In summary, under Richard II:

- diplomatic relationships continued to be, at times, of a fictional nature, and
- the absence of an expressed relationship does not mean that the king did not acknowledge one.

(f) Henry IV, 1399-1413

Significant change in the official use of relational terms is often said to have occurred under Henry IV, of whom Blackstone said that "*being, either by his wife, or his mother, or his sisters, actually related or allied to every earl then in the kingdom, artfully and constantly acknowledged that connection in all his letters and public acts; from whence the usage has continued to his successors, though the reason has long ago failed*". This courteous fiction certainly persists to the current day: the custom still used by the present British sovereign is to address all peers above the rank of baron as '*cousin*', with further additions for each rank, for example dukes are styled "*Right Trusty and Right Entirely Beloved Cousin*", regardless of blood relationship (HMSO, 1996).

However, there appears to be little evidence to show that Henry altered the existing practice in any way. An examination of the various individual styles he used to address his peers will illustrate this (see Table VI). It is true that he used relational terms of address for a good number of his peerage, but these were men who had been similarly styled by Richard II, and in each case the style of address used was appropriate for the actual relationship between them and the king.

The Table lists 13 peers. I have not been able to locate a relational reference from the time of Henry IV to Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devon. However, his son and heir was styled '*king's kinsman*' in 1406,[22] apparently based on a paternal relationship: the Earl and the King were 3rd cousins. Two additional higher peerages were created by Henry in 1411: the dukedom of Clarence for his son Thomas, and the earldom of Dorset for his half-brother Thomas Beaufort (Leeson, 1984).

At least one further earldom – Buckingham – was apparently vested in Anne, Countess of Stafford, the king's 1st cousin (CP IV, p.215),[23] although she is normally referred to in the records by her husband's title; she was addressed as '*king's kinswoman*'.[24]

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[22] CPR, 1405-1408, p.213.

[23] She also claimed the earldoms of Hereford and Northampton, but it is unclear that these claims were recognised by the Crown.

[24] CPR, 1405-1408, p.343

Table VI. *Henry IV's forms of address to the higher peerage* [25]

Peer	*Date*	*Term*	*Relationship*
Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester	1399	king's kinsman	1st cousin once removed
Ralph Nevill, Earl of Westmorland	1400	brother	half-brother-in-law
Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland	1400	king's kinsman	1st cousin once removed
Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick	1400	king's kinsman	2nd cousin twice removed
Richard de Vere, Earl of Oxford	1401	king's kinsman	half 6th cousin once removed
Edmund Holland, Earl of Kent	1401	king's kinsman	2nd cousin
Edmund Stafford, Earl of Stafford	1402	king's kinsman	3rd cousin once removed
Thomas Mowbray, Earl of Norfolk & Nottingham	1404	king's kinsman	half 3rd cousin once removed
Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March	1405	king's kinsman	1st cousin twice removed
Thomas [Fitzalan], Earl of Arundel & Surrey	1405	king's kinsman	2nd cousin
John Beaufort, Earl of Somerset	1405	brother	half-brother
Edward, Duke of York	1410	king's kinsman	1st cousin
Thomas Montagu, Earl of Salisbury	1412	king's kinsman	3rd cousin once removed

This leaves only one extant English peerage of a grade higher than baron to be considered: the earldom of Suffolk. During Henry IV's reign this was held by Michael de la Pole, the second earl, who had been restored to the title very shortly after the king's seizure of the throne in 1399 (ODNB biography by Simon Walker). The earl apparently had no known blood relationship to Henry IV, and I know of no instances in which a genealogical relational term is applied to him by the king, despite there being at least 28 references to him in the CPR. His son, however, was styled '*king's kinsman*', for instance in 1437[26]; by virtue of his maternal descent, he and Henry VI were 5th cousins.

This suggests that Henry IV did not address all his higher peerage as cousin; rather he used terms that reflected their factual relationships. Perhaps the genesis of the present customary forms of address has a later date. In other aspects also, Henry's practices echoed those of his predecessors. He appears to have continued the use of fictional diplomatic terms of address in some cases, as Table VII shows.

This was a widespread international custom by then, as we can confirm from correspondence addressed to Henry IV. In 1401, for instance, Margaret, Queen of Denmark, no blood relation to the king, calls him "*fratri nostro carissimo*" [our dearest brother] (Hingeston, 1860, p.81 #XXXIV), while her protégé King Eric addresses

[25] CPR; Hingeston (1860), p.28 #XII

[26] CPR, 1436-1441, p.41.

Henry (his 5th cousin once removed) as "*fratri nostro praecarissimo*" [our most beloved brother] (Hingeston, 1860, p.77 #XXXI).

Three years later, in the midst of his negotiations to marry Henry's daughter (ODNB biography by A L Brown & Henry Summerson), the Scandinavian king ups the diplomatic *ante*, referring to his English counterpart as "*fratri nostro, immo patri carissimo*" [our brother, nay, our dearest father] (Hingeston, 1860, p.409 #CXLIII).

Table VII. *Henry IV's terms of address for foreign royalty* (Hingeston; Rymer, VIII)

Addressee	*Date*	*Term*	*Relationship*
Robert III, King of Scots	1399	*cousin*	4th cousin once removed
William, Duke of Julich	1399	*consanguineus*	2nd cousin
John I of Portugal	1399	*frater*	Brother-in-law
Philippa, Queen of Portugal	1399	*soror*	Sister
Charles VI,King of France	1399	*consanguineus*	Half 2nd cousin once removed
Albert, Count of Hainault	1400	*cousin*	1st cousin once removed
Henry III of Castile	1403	*frater*	Half-brother-in-law
Rupert, King of the Romans	1407	*frater*	4th cousin once removed
Catherine, Queen of Castile	1410	*soere*	half-sister
Ferdinand, Duke of Penafiel	1411	*consanguineus*	4th cousin
Janus, King of Cyprus	14--	*frater*	5th cousin once removed
Manuel II, Emperor of Byzantium	14--	*frater*	4th cousin once removed
Mirza Amirissa, son of Timur	14--	*amico in Deo*	'friend in God'
The Emperor of Abysinnia	14--	*amico in Christo*	'friend in Christ'

There is also the usual deprivation of relational phrases for those with whom the king was at odds. Within a year of his usurpation, Henry found himself facing one hostile monarch on his northern border, and another across the Channel (ODNB). Those hopefully addressed in 1399 as cousin and kinsman now found themselves reduced to "*adversario nostro Franciae*" and "*adversarii nostri Scotiae*" [our adversaries of France and Scotland] (Rymer, VIII, pp.108, 149).

The Scottish king in particular had given offence by refusing to recognise Henry's title. Although he replied to Henry's letter and styled him "*nostre treschier et tresame cousin*" [our very dear and much-loved cousin] (Hingeston, 1860, p.4 #II), it was addressed to him not as king but as Duke of Lancaster. By 1405 the Scots had been brought to heel (ODNB)[27] and Robert, Duke of Albany, governor of Scotland for his ailing brother, rather pathetically signed a letter to Henry as "*vester, si placet, consanguineus*" [your kinsman, if it pleases] (Hingeston, 1965, pp.59-60 #CLXXXI).

[27] Henry's campaign of 1400 and the defeat at Homildon Hill in 1402 were largely responsible.

The salient points from the documents of Henry IV's reign are:

- not all members of the higher peerage were accorded relational forms of address;
- fictionalised diplomatic forms were used in an extended way, but were not universal

[I have not reviewed sufficient documents from the following three reigns to be able to make any meaningful observations. We now move forward to the reign of Richard III.]

(g) Richard III, 1483-1485

Nearly 90 years later on, there is little evidence that Richard experienced international reluctance in recognising his usurpation of the English throne. Surviving letters from 1483 include those from Louis XI of France and James III of Scotland, and in the name of the Archduke Philip as Duke of Burgundy. Both French and English are used, and the form of address to and from the new English king is always "*cousin*" (Gairdner, 1861, pp.25-53 *passim*).

In 1484 Richard wrote to James Fitzgerald, Earl of Desmond, his 5th cousin once removed, styling him "*right trusty and right welbiloved cousin*" (Gairdner, 1861, p.73). It is interesting to note that this is the exact formula used today when the British monarch addresses one of her earls (HMSO, 1996).[28]

(h) Henry VII, 1485-1509

In his edition of that king's state correspondence, Gairdner writes of "*the respect entertained for* [Henry VII] *by foreign sovereigns*". This is borne out by the tone of the correspondence between them. Perhaps as a consequence of his own usurpation, and the tenuous nature of his hereditary right to the throne, we find that Henry took unusual pains to emphasise his lineage as part of his own use of relational forms of address. For instance, in 1499 he refers to Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain as "*consanguineis et germanis nostris carissimis*" [our dearest kinsfolk and paternal relations] (Gairdner, 1861, p.110 #X).

In addition, Henry's reign sees the regular use of fictional diplomatic forms of address, often combining real and imaginary relationships to create a greater impression of solidarity between monarchs. Thus in 1506 Louis XII of France writes to Henry, his second cousin once removed, and addresses him as "*nostre trescher et tresame frere et cousin*" [our very dear and much loved brother and cousin] (Gairdner, 1861, p.289). In the same year, Henry styles the Archduke Philip, whose closest blood relationship was half-3rd cousin once removed, as "*nostre trescher et tresame frere, cousin et bon filz*" [our very dear and much loved brother, cousin and good son] (Gairdner, 1861, p.294 #LVIII). It is possible that this latter style was intended to refer to Philip as brother-sovereign, blood relation, and son-in-law of Henry's ally, Ferdinand of Spain.

Henry also used what we now consider the standard form of address when writing to his earls: the Earl of Shrewsbury, his 3rd cousin, was called "*right trusty and right welbeloved cousin*" in 1495 (Gairdner, 1863, p.60 #VI).

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[28] NB HMSO (1996) erroneously omits the second 'right' in referring to earls; this omission relates to viscounts – see, for instance, the *London Gazette*, 13 October 1854, p.1, which contains an exemplary list by titular grade.

Accordingly, under Henry VII we see:

- the further use of diplomatic forms of address, combining courtesy and actual relationships.

(i) Reciprocation

In concluding our review of the royal correspondence, we are left with a significant question: did those to whom the king accorded acknowledgement of kinship reciprocate? Chaplais notes (p.14, n 86) that "*much importance was attached, in diplomatic correspondence, to the correct wording of the address and greeting. Particular attention was paid to the rank of the addressee and also to the way in which the latter himself had addressed the sender in previous correspondence.*"

Table VIII. *Reciprocal use of relational terms, 1224-1506* [29]

	From	*To*	*Date*	*Term*
a	Joan, Queen of Scots	Henry III	1224	brother
	Henry III	Joan, Queen of Scots	1235	sister
b	Raymond VII, Count of Toulouse	Henry III	1228	kinsman
	Henry III	Raymond VII, Count of Toulouse	1235	kinsman
c	Henry III	Louis IX of France	1229	kinsman
	Louis IX of France	Henry III	126-	kinsman
d	Henry III	Margaret, Queen of France	1260	sister
	Margaret, Queen of France	Henry III	1261	brother
e	Edward III	John II of France	1360	brother
	John II of France	Edward III	1360	brother
f	Richard II	John, Duke of Brittany	1377	brother
	John, Duke of Brittany	Richard II	1378	brother
g	Richard II	Wenceslas, King of the Romans	1380	brother
	Wenceslas, King of the Romans	Richard II	1381	brother
h	Henry IV	Robert III of Scotland	1399	cousin
	Robert III of Scotland	Henry IV	1399	cousin
i	Henry III of Castile	Henry IV	1402	brother
	Henry IV	Henry III of Castile	1403	brother
j	James III of Scotland	Richard III	1483	cousin
	Richard III	James III of Scotland	1483	cousin
k	Richard III	Louis XI of France	1483	cousin
	Louis XI of France	Richard III	1483	cousin
l	Henry VII	Ferdinand of Spain	1499	kinsman
	Ferdinand of Spain	Henry VII	1504	brother
n	Maximilian King of the Romans	Henry VII	1506	brother
	Henry VII	Maximilian, King of the Romans	1506	brother

[29] CPR; Shirley (1862) and (1866); Rymer, IV & VI; Hingeston (1860) and (1965); Gairdner (1861) and (1863); many further examples are available in Chaplais

In each of the 13 pairs of cases in Table VIII (offered as representative examples since many other pairings are available from the records) we see that the English king and his foreign counterparts corresponded on terms of absolute parity - with one exception. This is the correspondence between Henry VII and Ferdinand of Spain, where the former addressed the Spanish sovereign (and his wife) in 1499 as "*consanguineis et germanis nostris carissimis*" [our dearest kinsfolk and paternal relations] (Gairdner, 1861, p.110 #X), while in 1504 Ferdinand styled Henry "*fratri nostro dilectissimo*" [our most beloved brother] (Gairdner, 1861, p.241). It will be noted that a five-year gap exists in this particular case.

Rather than indicating a disparity in attitudes between the two kings, the differing style here reflects the growth of the relationship between England and Spain during that period (ODNB biography by S J Gunn). Gairdner notes that "*of all Henry's foreign alliances the most important was with Spain*".

5. General observations

From our overview of the use of relational terms by medieval royalty, we see that originally the relationships stated were factual, but gradually came to include fictional elements in some cases. So why use relational terms at all?

Originally, the factual terms used tended to be functional, serving to identify individuals or to emphasise claims, such as inheritance. By an early date, expanded and formulaic phrases started to be used. This allowed the monarch to flatter would-be allies, both internal and external. The use – or non-use – of genealogical acknowledgements became part of these formulae, highlighting and bolstering the state of the personal or national relationship in question. This culminated in the creation of courtesy terms which did not reflect genealogical reality, but served as a diplomatic and political device in the king's hands. At the same time, the acknowledgment of factual relationships allowed the king to rely on the concept of kinship, with the mutual ties that were bound up in it. We shall explore this further by looking at the domestic records.

6. The Patent Rolls

A second useful corpus of material which contains numerous relational statements is the published Calendars of the Patent Rolls. Many of the entries contain the kind of formal salutation that includes standard relational references; this is to be expected, since they are in essence "*contemporary enrolments of royal letters patent*".[30] Their editor has noted that "*the great majority of letters patent were worded according to certain precedents, which were so familiar to the clerk who wrote the rolls.*" [31]

The extent to which the clerks were familiar with the relationships they recorded, or their role in determining which of those relationships should be so recorded, is less clear. Crucially for the purposes of a general review, the texts extending from those of Henry III to part of those of Henry VI (1216-1452) have been digitised; these are searchable by means of an online engine. Thus, searches may be made using terms likely to be of genealogical interest. The search results in Table IX may be noted in particular.[32]

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[30] CPR, 1327-1330, Preface, p.v.

[31] CPR, 1327-1330, Preface, p.vii.

[32] This necessarily includes a number of duplicated references from the indexes to volumes, and excludes instances where the phrase is used more than once on the same page of the printed text. It also excludes the first two volumes, covering 1216 to 1232, since these are in Latin.

Table IX. *Number of references to broad genealogical relationships in the online Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1232-1452*

Search phrase	*Number of results*
King's kinsman	1042
King's cousin	49
King's kinswoman	264
TOTAL	1355

Some caution needs to be taken in approaching these records. Firstly, the nature of digitisation means that not all entries will have been picked up, so the above list is not exhaustive. More importantly, although the published Calendars have greatly enhanced their accessibility, they are mostly translations. Reliance on the Calendars alone therefore means that in the vast majority of cases it is not possible to be certain of the underlying original Latin or French word for a relational term. (There are some rare exceptions, where the editor has replicated the original along with his preferred translation.)

Hence I have not normally been in a position to determine whether the authors of the Patent Rolls entries wrote, for instance '*consanguineus*' or '*cognatus*' [kinsman], '*affinis*' [relation by marriage], '*nepos*' [nephew/grandson/cousin] etc. This is to be contrasted with the provision of the original texts in the royal documents discussed above. As will be noted below, however, there are other sources that provide details of similar original texts.

Related to this is the use of the term 'king's cousin' (rather than 'king's kinsman'), which according to the search engine seems to be drawn almost exclusively from volumes 3 to 6 of the reign of Richard II. It is unclear whether this represents a different use of language (or perhaps a different language – e.g. the French '*cousin*') in the original text, or merely a preference by the individual editors or translators of that section of the Rolls. Nevertheless, a review of the entries, relying on the English translations, still offers to be useful, since it sheds some further light on the connections that the monarch recognised and the circumstances under which this recognition was advanced.

(a) King's kinsman

The commonest relational phrase used in the published CPR is 'king's kinsman'. I have reviewed each of the 1042 references identified by the online search. These cover 191 individuals so described.

(i) What relationships did the term cover?

An analysis of its use shows it covered a wide range of genealogical relationships, including uncle, nephew and various degrees of cousinhood. It also included relationships of the half-blood. From Table X we see that the relationship of 4th cousin was apparently acknowledged as early as 1275. While it is true that most extended relationships (such as 5th and 6th cousins) are acknowledged in or after the late 14th/early 15th centuries, it must be remembered that there is also a pool of unidentified relationships. There are 23 individuals described as 'king's kinsman' whose relationship is unclear (Table XI), and the preponderance of these (17) date from before 1318. Since the relationships in these cases are unknown [at least to me] we cannot exclude the possibility that they represent more extended degrees of cousinhood.

Table X. *Individuals styled 'king's kinsman' in CPR 1232-1452 graded by known relationship to the monarch*

Relationship	*Instances*	*Date range*
Uncle	1	1403
Half nephew	3	1244-1397
Great nephew	2	1265-1300
1st cousin	17	1235-1443
Half 1st cousin	4	1275-1349
1st cousin once removed	16	1237-1430
Half 1st cousin once removed	5	1256-1442
1st cousin twice removed	7	1235-1405
Half 1st cousin twice removed	1	1304
2nd cousin	15	1243-1452
Half 2nd cousin	5	1299-1386
2nd cousin once removed	14	1237-1441
Half 2nd cousin once removed	7	1255-1391
2nd cousin twice removed	4	1317-1400
Half 2nd cousin twice removed	2	1388-1393
3rd cousin	14	1338-1445
Half 3rd cousin	7	1316-1348
3rd cousin once removed	12	1327-1413
Half 3rd cousin once removed	4	1327-1407
3rd cousin twice removed	1	1416
Half 3rd cousin twice removed	2	1255-1393
4th cousin	7	1275-1441
Half 4th cousin	1	1415
4th cousin once removed	3	1408-1443
Half 4th cousin once removed	2	1327-1407
Half 4th cousin twice removed	3	1381-1383
5th cousin	2	1407-1437
Half 5th cousin	3	1383-1405
5th cousin once removed	2	1401-1437
Half 5th cousin once removed	1	1384
Half 6th cousin	1	1401
Unknown	23	1244-1410
TOTAL	191	1235-1452

Accordingly, any apparent absence of extended relationships represented in the earliest years under review may be compensated for by the larger number of unknown relationships from this period. The broadest relationship I have identified within those individuals styled 'king's kinsman' seems to be that of 6th cousin by the half blood [Robert Braybrooke, in 1401], although it is almost impossible to be certain that no other, closer relationship existed in this and various other cases.

This degree of relational acknowledgement seems to offer a contrast to the lack of broader relationships often seen in the diplomatic correspondence. Perhaps the early kings found it expedient to focus on the 'friendship' that existed between them and their more distant kin amongst fellow rulers.

Table XI. *Individuals named as 'king's kinsman' whose identity or relationship to the monarch is unclear*

Individual	*Date*	*Comments*
Fulk de Castro Novo[33]	1244	aka Chateauneuf
Peter de Abuzun[34]	1252, 1255	Rector of Neketon and monk of Durham
Segur de Castro Novo	1253	
Robert, son of the Count of Burgundy	1253	
William de Chabbeneis[35]	1253	
Geoffrey Martel[36]	1256	
Henry de Castell'	1257	?Châtillon
Bernard de Bovis Villa[37] (Bouville/Beauville)	1263	
Raymond de Bovis Villa	1263	Prebendary of Salisbury
Bertram de Bovis Villa	1267	
Roger de Meulan	1277	Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield
Boniface de Saluciis (Saluzzo)	1292	Presumably a Savoy relation
Luke de Flisco (Fieschi)[38]	1301	Cardinal-deacon of St Mary's in via Latia
Master James de Ispania	1313	Related to Eleanor of Castile[39]
Charles de Flisco (Fieschi)	1313	
Simon de Montacute	1317	Afterwards Bishop of Worcester and of Ely
Adrian de Flisco (Fieschi)	1317	Archdeacon of Cleveland
James Butler	1328	1st Earl of Ormond
Robert Braybrooke[40]	1383	Bishop of London
William Montacute[41]	1385	2nd Earl of Salisbury
Master Eudo la Zouche	1387	Prebendary of Langtoft
Sir Richard de Grey	1403	of Codnor; KG
Edmund Stafford	1410	Bishop of Exeter

[33] See speculation by Douglas Richardson, posting to soc.genealogy.medieval, 22 December 2002

[34] Tentatively identified as a member of the d'Aubusson family by Bert Camp, posting to soc.genealogy.medieval, 21 December 2002

[35] See discussion on soc.genealogy.medieval, 18 December 2002

[36] See post by Douglas Richardson on soc.genealogy.medieval, 6 October 2003

[37] Bernard de Bouville was father of Raymond and Bertram (CPR, 1258-1266, p 86); they came from Angouleme and thus were probably relations of Henry III's mother.

[38] For some discussion about the links between the Fieschi family and the English kings, see Mortimer, pp 497-498, especially n 11

[39] Smith states that he was an illegitimate son of her brother, King Alfonso X, but cites no source.

[40] It is Braybrooke's relationship to Richard II that remains problematic. ODNB (article by R G Davies) states that the bishop's [paternal] grandmother was Lora Wake, a great-aunt of Joan, Princess of Wales. Rosie Bevan, however, has communicated to me (correspondence, 12 January 2009) the unpublished work of Robert O'Connor and drawn my attention to CP XII p.300; together these indicate that Lora was a Picot, and that her mother was Joan Wake, the Princess's great aunt; this would make Robert Braybrooke and Richard II third cousins.

[41] His sister Philippa, Countess of March, was likewise styled 'king's kinswoman' in 1381

It will be noted from this table that the various relationships covered by the term 'king's kinsman' in most cases cover a wide chronological spread and do not readily indicate any notions of development in their usage. For this reason – unlike the diplomatic correspondence - I did not consider it useful to treat this subject by means of a break-down by reign. Of course, it is possible that closer relationships existed than those I have been able to identify. I would be grateful for any assistance in establishing any of these putative relationships.

(ii) Expanding relationships: when did it stop?

If successive kings recognised successive generations of their kin, should we not expect to see relationships becoming more and more distantly removed, or is there a terminal point beyond which those relationships ceased to be recognised? This is not an easy question to answer.

Partly this is due to the continual changes in the genetic pool that formed the basis of calculating the relationships – that is to say, each new king had a rather different set of ancestors from his predecessor. With each new reign, therefore, we must recalculate the relationships. Rather than being further removed than the earlier monarchs, the new king might in fact be more closely related. The same applied to each successive generation of the families related to the king.

For instance, one of the longer genealogies that can be traced through the pool of 'king's kinsmen' is that of the descendants of the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Edward I, who married Humphrey de Bohun. In the first generation of descent, we see her sons John, Humphrey, Edward and William all styled '*king's kinsman*' by their 1st cousin, Edward III, between 1332 and 1342. The generation after that, her grandsons Humphrey de Bohun, and Philip, Peter and William Courtenay are similarly styled, the former by Edward III, and the latter three by Richard II. Yet while they stood as 1st cousins once removed to Edward III, they had a closer relationship to Edward's grandson and successor than 2nd cousins once removed, through his father, Edward the Black Prince, since through his mother they were his 2nd cousins of the half-blood.

This constant inter-breeding - a particular feature of the 14th and 15th century nobility, despite the Church's technical ban – also contributed to the regular reassessment of genealogical relationships. When Richard II's cousin usurped him as Henry IV, we go back to computing the relationships through Edward III. When he referred to Richard Courtenay, a great grandson of Princess Elizabeth, as his kinsman, he was speaking of his 3rd cousin.

But the succession of Henry's son in 1414 brought another recalculation: not just a simple transfer down by one generation, but a closer relationship to the Courtenays and their cousins since the new king, Henry V, was himself descended maternally from Princess Elizabeth and the Bohuns. Thus, writing to Hugh Courtenay in 1421 as his kinsman, the relationship was one of 3rd cousins, whereas their fathers had also been 3rd cousins.

If we follow the descendants of Edward I's daughter down to the end of the period under review, we do find a great-great-great-great grandson who apparently had not had any closer infusion of blood shared with the ruling line. This was Gerald, Earl of Kildare, whom Henry VII addressed as '*cousin*' in about 1486 (Gairdner, 1861, p.92 #1). They were indeed 6th cousins.

(iii) Relationships by marriage

Was the phrase 'king's kinsman' applied to those related to the king by marriage? As we have seen (Table III) various close relationships by marriage were referred to by the standard terms: father, mother, brother, sister, uncle. We shall also see that from the time of Edward II, this included 'nephew'. It is less clear that 'king's kinsman' was so used. Each of the 167 individuals styled 'king's kinsman' whose relationship to the king can be clearly identified, is a blood relation, varying from uncle to 6th cousin. In no single case does it appear that the relationship was via marriage.

There remain, of course, 23 cases where the relationship remains unknown (Table XI). However, the likely route of these relationships is known in many instances. Some of Henry III's French kinsmen were doubtless related through Isabel of Angoulême, and others through Eleanor of Aquitaine. The Fieschi family seems to have been related via the Savoy links of Eleanor of Provence. Others, such as the Montacutes, are more difficult to pin down, but since several members of that family are named consistently, it seems there was apparently a blood, rather than a marital connection.

At least one instance gives pause for thought. This is the reference in 1328 to James Butler, 1st Earl of Ormonde, as *'king's kinsman'*. The published text (in translation) reads: "*James, Earl of Ormonde, the king's kinsman, who married Eleanor de Bohoun, the king's kinswoman*".[42] While Edward III's relationship to Eleanor can be readily determined – they were 1st cousins – a review over seven generations of ascent from both Edward and James fails to identify a single common ancestor, although it must be admitted that there are many gaps, predominantly in the latter's pedigree. Nevertheless, given that James is identified as a kinsman independently of his wife, it seems likely that some sort of blood relationship with the king was intended here too.

Significantly, *'consanguineus'* also appears only to have been used for those who shared a blood relationship with the king - as one would expect. Looking at 68 instances where that word was used to describe an individual between 1220 and 1509, not one relevant relationship via marriage can be identified.

Again, one case involving an English addressee merits individual notice. This is from the Patent Rolls of Richard III, in which the king refers to William Herbert, Earl of Huntingdon as "*carissimo consanguineo suo*" [43] [his dearest kinsman]. The two men were 6th cousins once removed, via a shared descent from Sir Edmund Mortimer of Wigmore. Moreover, in 1484 – the same year as the reference – William was married to Richard's illegitimate daughter Catherine (Beauclerk-Dewar & Powell, 2008). Given the apparent prior recognition of blood relationships at least as distant as this [Table X], it seems more likely that the cousinhood rather than the marriage accounts for the reference.

(iv) Why was the phrase 'king's kinsman' used?

Primarily, it seems to have been a distinction or a mark of favour. It is often encountered in relation to a grant or gift, such as land or wardship, or pardons to retainers. This both showed favour, and strengthened the notion of family ties and allegiances, something that the king himself could find valuable in return. The Rolls are full of entries such as the following:

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[42] CPR, 1327-1330, p.340.

[43] Patent Rolls, 1 Richard I, p.1 m 23d no.18, cited by Skinner, p.72.

"*Safe-conduct for 15 days at the request of John, Earl of Athol, king's kinsman, for Gilbert son of William son of Gilbert and Adam Lyder, burgesses of the town of Aberdeen, lately taken at Fyvele near Scardeburgh, and committed to York gaol…*" [44]

"*Pardon at the request of the king's kinswoman, Eleanor late the wife of John de Bello Monte, and a fine of £12, to Nicholas de la Forth for all oppressions committed by him in the county of Derby…*" [45]

Henry IV included his Scottish kindred amongst those he styled 'kinsman', such as George Dunbar, Earl of March, who had adopted an English allegiance after falling out with the King of Scots (ODNB biography by Alastair Macdonald). Henry and George were 3rd cousins, through the former's great grandmother, Alice Comyn. Then there was Archibald, 4th Earl of Douglas, whose prominence in fighting against the English led to his capture in 1402. Five years later Douglas agreed to become a supporter of his erstwhile captor, in exchange for his freedom (ODNB biography by M H Brown). It can hardly be a coincidence that it is at this time we find him styled 'king's kinsman'. He was Henry IV's 4th cousin.

Conversely, those usually styled 'king's kinsman' are not given this style when out of favour. For instance, Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, who is frequently called 'kinsman' through the reigns of Edward III, Richard II and Henry IV, is referred to as "*Henry Percy, late Earl of Northumberland, traitor*" [46] after his rebellion and downfall (ODNB biography by J M W Bean).

Another angle to the issue of royal favour can be detected in cases where it is a private individual who draws attention to the relationship with the monarch. One such was Brumisan Fieschi, who wrote to Edward I about an arrears in her son's pension; she took the opportunity to mention that she was related to the king, in the clear expectation that this would assist her cause.[47] Sometimes, royal kinship could be a disadvantage, however. The marriage of a minor heir was granted in 1379 to Sir Peter Courtenay when he was a prisoner in Spain, since "*too great a ransom* [was] *demanded from him as the king's kinsman*".[48]

Before moving on to consideration of other related phrases, it is worth noting that there are instances where the CPR does not mention the status of 'king's kinsman' despite it being accorded elsewhere. For example, 'John de Lancastria' (John of Gaunt) appears without any relational description in 1349[49], yet he was called '*kinsman*' of King Edward III in the Papal records the following year (Bliss, 1896, p.193). [50]

(b) King's cousin

Of the 49 results for the phrase 'king's cousin', 46 relate to the period of Richard II's reign between 1382 and 1399; one of these is a duplicated index entry. The remaining 45 references from this period are to six individuals (Table XII).

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44 CPR, 1304-1307, p.216, dated 6 April 1304.

45 CPR, 1343-1345, p.45, dated 28 May 1345.

46 CPR, 1405-1408, p.462, dated 16 July 1408.

47 Mortimer (p.498, n 11) states that Brumisan and Edward were 3rd cousins.

48 CPR, 1377-1381, p.392.

49 CPR, 1348-1350, p.416.

50 A variety of phrases is used in this volume: "*his kinsman*" (p.193), "*kinsman of the king*" (p.8), and "*king's kinsman*" (p.32).

Table XII. *References to 'king's cousin' in the Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1382-1399*

Person	*Date*	*Details*	*Instances*
Henry de Lancaster (later Henry IV)	From 1382	1st cousin	20
Henry de Percy le fils	1390	3rd cousin once removed	1
Edward, Earl of Rutland (later Duke of York)	From 1392	1st cousin	21
Richard of York	1393	1st cousin	1
Henry Beaufort	1397	1st cousin	1
John Beaufort, Marquess of Dorset	1399	1st cousin	1

It is clear that the individuals so referred to were indeed cousins of the King. In five of these cases, the relationship was quite close: 1st cousins, all five being (like Richard II) male-line grandsons of Edward III. It is not clear why the younger Henry Percy (known to history as 'Hotspur') should also have been referred to in this unusual way.

There are a number of other instances from the same period where the phrase used is the more frequent 'king's kinsman' [Table X]. Since it is used within the same published volumes of the translated rolls, we should ask whether 'king's cousin' is not used as an alternative for 'king's kinsman', but represents something different in the original texts. In one of the 45 instances of the phrase 'king's cousin', however, the original word has also been published: *'consanguineus'*.[51] Unfortunately, this single case does not allow for meaningful extrapolation.

The remaining three instances of the phrase 'king's cousin' come from the published Patent Rolls for the period 1278-1290. The individuals so described are Edmund, Earl of Cornwall; Amadeus V, Count of Savoy; and King Philip IV of France. Each of these was a 1st cousin of the King (the latter two actually 1st cousins once removed). Again, in one instance – the last – we know what the original term was, since it too is printed in the Calendar. In this case it was *'germani'*. According to a note at the end of the CPR entry, the document referring to Amadeus was in French, so we may guess that it read *"cousin"*.

Given the small sub-sets in this category, it would be unwise to attempt to draw any significant conclusions from it.

(c) King's kinswoman

According to the online search facility, some 64 individuals are called "king's kinswoman" in the Calendar of Patent Rolls, across 264 separate references. As with the instances of 'king's kinsman', the 'kinswoman' references apply to a range of relationships. These include three kings' nieces (1279, 1316 and 1405), and a great

[51] CPR, 1396-1399, p 203

niece (1317). A 4th cousin appears as early as 1267, seven years earlier than amongst 'king's kinsmen'.[52]

The most distant relationship I have identified is 5th cousin once removed, when Henry IV refers in 1402 to Anne of Bohemia, first queen of Richard II. He also styled Richard's second wife as '*kinswoman*' in 1401; they were 3rd cousins. It would be consistent with what we have seen for the terms 'king's kinsman' and *'consanguineus'* to conclude that they were so styled because of the respective blood relationships, rather than because of their position as consorts of Henry's predecessor.

This mixture of relationships by blood and by marriage is not unusual. In 1360 Edward III refers to his daughter-in-law Elizabeth, Countess of Ulster, as his kinswoman – which she was, since they were 2nd cousins once removed by virtue of a shared descent from Henry III. Why the king did not refer to her as his 'daughter' is unclear.

There is a higher proportion of 'king's kinswomen' whose relationship to the monarch remains unknown (Table XIII) than amongst their male counterparts (12 out of 64, or 18.75%, compared to 12%). This is possibly due to the lower prominence that women tended to have in medieval society and their consequent lower prominence in its surviving records. That women were often recorded by reference to their husband, rather than in connection with their parentage or original surname, is also a factor in making it harder to trace them.

Table XIII. *Individuals named as 'king's kinswoman' whose identity or relationship to the monarch is unclear*

Individual	*Date*	*Comments*
Gwydona, wife of Hugh de Chacepork	1247	Called "cognata"
Elisenta, wife of Matthew de Louvaine	1269	
Margaret, wife of Henry Huse	1280	
Isabella, Lady Fiennes	1291	
Eleanor, wife of Robert de Stuteville	1298	A member of the comital family of Gevena
Isabel [Stewart], Countess of Mar	1337	
Philippa [Montacute], Countess of March	1381	
Lady de Poynings[53]	1388	
Blanche, wife of Sir Andrew Hage	1392	Previously wife of Edmund de Bradeston
Margaret, Lady de Molyns[54]	1392	
Isabel [Russell], wife of William le Scrope	1399	Countess of Wiltshire
Lucy [Visconti], Countess of Kent	1408-1412	

[52] Margaret, Countess of Devon, CPR, 1266-1272, pp.177-178; she was also a 1st cousin to the Queen.

[53] This was probably Blanche Mowbray, the widow of Thomas, Lord Poynings and great-great granddaughter of Henry III.

[54] Douglas Richardson speculated about this relationship in a post to soc.genealogy.medieval, 29 October 2004.

One case in particular stands out here too. On various occasions Henry IV referred to Lucy, Countess of Kent as his kinswoman. The earliest of these dates from 4 May 1408.[55] As it happens, this is also cross-referenced to *Foedera*, and we see from the original text reproduced there that she was called "*carissimae consanguineae nostrae*" [our dearest kinswoman] (Rymer, VIII, p 256). Thus we would expect it to refer to an actual blood relationship. Lucy's ancestry is reasonably well-known - she was a Visconti, the daughter of Bernabo, lord of Milan - and although no link to Henry IV is immediately apparent, she did have a Fieschi descent which might yield a blood-tie to the Savoyard dynasty. If this does represent a blood relationship, it is likely to be a distant one.

(d) Other relationships: selected cases

There are a number of problematic or unusual expressions of relationship in the published Patent Rolls (Table XIV). How do we account for these?

Table XIV. *Unusual expressions of relationship from the CPR*

Individual	*Date*	*Term*	*Relationship*
Alice de Montferrat, Duchess of Brunswick	1266	niece of Queen Eleanor	1st cousin once removed
Aymer de Valence	1303	king's nephew	half first cousin
Joan of Bar	1305	king's niece	granddaughter
Hugh le Despenser The younger	1326	king's nephew	niece's husband
Louis, Duke of Anjou	1361	king's nephew	2nd cousin once removed
John II of France	1361	brother	2nd cousin
Edward, Earl of Rutland	1397	king's brother	1st cousin
Sigismund, King of the Romans	1416	king's brother	4th cousin once removed

It is likely that the first three instances relate to a mis-translation of the word *"nepos/neptis"* in the original text. If this is the case, the translator has rendered the word as 'nephew' or 'niece' in English, without considering whether an alternative translation was more appropriate to the case in question. As we can see, the actual relationships are two 1st cousins once removed, and a granddaughter respectively. This suggests that care should be taken when approaching the published translations, because of the danger that such errors pose.

There is at least one further case from 1257 where an individual (Roger de Mutlent aka Meuland) is called "*king's nephew*", but no such relationship is known. It may be that *"nepos"* was used in its wider sense of a younger cousin. In any case, in considering what the exact nature of this relationship was, the English phrase used in CPR should not be given particular weight.

We have already seen that close relationships by marriage are often referred to by the standard relational term, for instance "brother" includes "brother-in-law". It is therefore not unusual that Hugh le Despenser should have been referred to as '*king's nephew*', since he was married to Eleanor de Clare, daughter of the king's sister

[55] CPR, 1405-1408, p.462.

(ODNB biography by J S Hamilton). However, it is worth noting that this constructed familial relationship – exactly the same as the one that Piers Gaveston had enjoyed previously (ODNB biography by J S Hamilton) - gave cover to the personal relationship that apparently existed between Edward II and his favourite.

Three of the final four cases, of course, are further cases of the diplomatic fictions that arose in the reign of Edward III, and do not indicate factual genealogical ties. It is interesting, however, to see them used in English domestic records.

The remaining case, that of Edward, Earl of Rutland, styled "*brother*" by Richard II, is less easy to explain. It is not an isolated instance, since it occurs at least 12 times in the published Patent Rolls[56], in 1397 and 1398. We know it was not a translator's error either, since the first time it appears it is marked "*(sic)*". Rather, as Rosemary Horrox notes in her biography of Edward, 2nd Duke of York (ODNB), it seems to have been a reference to the projected marriage between Edward and Joan of Valois, the sister of Richard's second queen. Had it gone ahead, Richard and Edward would indeed have been brothers-in-law.

(e) Language

As mentioned above, it is difficult to be exact about the original terminology represented by the English translations in the published CPR. There are a couple of instances where the underlying word has been replicated in the translated text. We have seen that Henry Beaufort was referred to as "*consanguineus*" of Richard II in 1396, and that the translators of the Patent Rolls rendered this "*king's cousin*".[57] In 1290 Philip IV of France is styled "*germani*"; this too was translated as "*king's cousin*".[58] In other instances drawn from the earlier volumes of the Calendar (which are in Latin), we see alternative words used for the same relationship. Louis VIII of France is referred to by Henry III as "*cognatum*" [59] in 1217 and as "*consanguineo*" [60] in 1229. Similarly, in the Close Rolls, Eleanor of Brittany is variously called "*cognata regis*" [61] and "*consanguinea regis*".[62]

This use of variable terms makes it more problematic to hypothesize about analogies in cases where we have both original references, and English translations, since we cannot assume that the same Latin word was used each time. For instance, in the Latin rolls of 1225, we see Raymond, Count of Toulouse styled "*karissimo consanguineo*" [63], while in the English version of 1242 he is called "*king's kinsman*".[64]

An alternative approach is to note those instances where entries in the published Patent Rolls have been referenced to Rymer's *Foedera*, since it is then possible to check the original text in the latter. Unfortunately, these instances are few, and the number that also contains the phrase 'king's kinsman' is smaller still: eight. In five of these cases, I have been able to identify the original text in *Foedera* (Table XV).

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56 CPR, 1396-1399, pp.92, 118, 150, 171, 191, 201, 205, 281, 290, 291, 415 and 460.

57 CPR, 1396-1399, p.203.

58 CPR, 1281-1292, p.382.

59 CPR, 1216-1225, p.91.

60 CPR, 1225-1232, p.244.

61 CCR, 1227-1231, p.3.

62 CCR, 1227-1231, p.533.

63 CPR, 1225-1232, p.9.

64 CPR, 1232-1247, p.310.

Table XV. *Comparing CPR with original texts*

Individual	*Date*	*Foedera*	*CPR*
Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford	1366	*consanguineo suo*	king's kinsman
Edmund, Duke of York	1412	*consanguinei nostri*	king's kinsman
Thomas Montagu, Earl of Salisbury	1415	*consanguineo*	king's kinsman
Thomas [Fitzalan], Earl of Arundel	1415	*consanguineo nostro*	king's kinsman
John Holland, Earl of Huntingdon *and* Edward Courtenay	1416	*consanguineorum nostrorum*	king's kinsman *(x 2)*

We can see that in every instance, the phrase "king's kinsman" in the English translation of the Patent Rolls is a construct for the original text, which includes the base term *"consanguineus"* (but not the adjective *"regis"*). A sixth case involving Lucy, Countess of Kent, is detailed above.

We have not yet encountered an equivalent phrase to 'king's kinsman' in any of the original documents we have examined. This leads to a further question: is the phrase 'king's kinsman' a construct of the 19th century translators and editors who produced the English version of the Patent Rolls and similar texts? Apparently not. To start with, we note that there are earlier English references to the phrase. For instance, Henry Beaufort ("Cardinal of Saint Eusebius") is called '*king's kinsman*' in the English translation of the Exchequer rolls published in 1837 (Devon, p.207), whereas the first volume of the Calendar of Patent Rolls was not produced until 1891.[65]

In fact, the phrase has a medieval equivalent in Latin: "*consanguineus regis"*. In addition to the similar references to Eleanor of Brittany from the Close Rolls, cited above, one instance of this occurs in the Patent Rolls themselves, extracted and published in a Victorian compendium of licences to crenellate. Here we find a reference from 14 Edward II to "*Henricus de Bello Monte, consanguineus regis*" (Parker, 1859, p.408).

Curiously, when checked against the corresponding English translation from the Calendar [66] we find that it reads simply "*Licence for Henry de Bello Monte to crenellate*…", *i.e.* without any reference to a relational phrase.

From a review of the comparative examples in Table XV, it will be noted that the published English version of the Patent Rolls is often a rendering of the original text into a third-party summary as part of the translation process. So while *Foedera* has *"suo"* and "*nostri"*, and the earlier published rolls in Latin are written in the first person using the majestic plural (*"curia nostra"*) or in the third person (*"fidelibus suis"*), these distinctions disappear in the English translation. Thus, while in some instances the use of the phrase 'king's kinsman' may be a literal translation of *"consanguineus regis"*, in other cases it is likely a construct to convey the meaning of "our kinsman" or "his kinsman" from the original text. As a consequence of the direct comparison in the Beaumont case, we may also posit that in some instances the published English translations might actually omit relational references from the original texts.

[65] Covering the period 1327-1330; it includes references to 'king's kinsman'

[66] CPR, 1317-1321, p 571

7. Conclusions

Can the relational references found in royal documents assist today's genealogist? The answer to this lies in resolving a further question: how trustworthy are these references?

- The earliest relational statements tended to apply to closer family members. They were used to identify individuals, and to underline links that were considered important for issues such as the transfer of property and power.
- By the reign of Henry III, more extended genealogical relationships were being acknowledged, and the use of relational phrases was moving beyond the functional to fulfil specific pragmatic purposes.
- Then, no later than the time of Edward III, we see the introduction of a fictional aspect, building upon those earlier purposes, *viz* to emphasise ties of kinship in an effort to guarantee support and alliance.
- Addressing parliament on the occasion of his usurpation of the throne in 1399, Henry IV himself referred to the importance of genealogical ties, declaring that: "*I am descended by right line of the blood coming from the good lord King Henry the Third, and through that right that God of his grace hath sent me with help of kin*…"(Green, 1905).
- At the same time, domestic references to kinship ties suited those related to the king, since they often sought to benefit materially from the relationship.
- In assessing the reliability of these relational statements, the usual care needs to be applied to words that can import wider meanings: 'brother' embracing 'brother-in-law', 'nephew' including those married to nieces, and so forth. None of this is new to experienced genealogists familiar with this time period. However '*consanguineus*', and by extension 'kinsman', likely indicate a blood tie.
- Such references do not appear to extend beyond the degree of 6th cousins. This is in part due to the nature of contemporary society: given the constant inter-breeding that characterises medieval royalty and nobility, regardless of the ecclesiastical injunctions against it, the off-spring of distant relatives of the monarch were often more closely, rather than more distantly, related to the king.
- However, the existence of a number of individuals referred to as kinsman but whose relationship has not been established makes it impossible to offer a definitive statement on the degree of relationship acknowledged.
- Especial attention is called for in dealing with those fictional relationships that occur both in the diplomatic and domestic records. These tend to be easy to identify, since they appear to affect royalty or other high-status individuals only, whose pedigrees will normally be well-recorded and thus available for checking. Confusion in these cases is therefore unlikely – provided that the statements are not taken at face value.
- Furthermore, in some cases translations from the original text into English may obscure or distort the relationship, where '*neptis*' is translated as niece instead of granddaughter, for instance.

- It must also be borne in mind that the absence of a relational reference does not necessarily mean the absence of a relationship. Genealogical ties were not always acknowledged for a range of reasons, including the type of document in question, and in circumstances where the individual referred to was out of favour.
- Despite these various qualifications, in general terms it would appear that, on the basis of statistical probability, the relational references found in medieval royal documents are accurate and reliable indicators of actual blood relationships.

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[67] Hingeston's original edition (1864) was so unreliable that it was pulped rather than issued (Knowles)