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**PALATALIZATION AS A NON-UNIFORM PROCESS AFFECTING
GRAMMATICAL WORDS: A COMPARISON OF DATA FROM
DIALECTALLY IDENTIFIED AND UNIDENTIFIED LATE MIDDLE
ENGLISH TEXTS**

Abstract

The process of palatalization has exerted much influence on the forms of four high-frequency lemmas, EACH, MUCH, SUCH, WHICH, revealing significant heterogeneity in terms of palatalized and non-palatalized variants being used in the close vicinity of each other both in the Northern and Southern dialects as well as in the texts of unknown origin. Such unpredictability of the process, accounted for by the operation of lexical diffusion, raises questions concerning the manner of how palatalization, being one of the major phonological changes, affected the lexis and phonological system of Middle English, proving to be much less consistent than expected.

1. Problem

The previous studies (Kocel 2009, 2010) have presented palatalization [k] > [tʃ] as an inhomogeneous process resulting in the irregular distribution of palatalized and non-palatalized forms across the Northern and Southern regions. This situation becomes even more complex when considering data from unclassified texts (Kocel 2012), which show lack of any predictability with respect to affrication. The examination included four high-frequency lemmas, i.e. EACH, MUCH, SUCH, WHICH (Venezky – Butler 1980) with a wide variety of both palatalized and non-palatalized forms, proving the operation of lexical diffusion (Chambers – Trudgill 1980: 182–186) and defying the concept of linguistic boundaries which could dramatically affect

any linguistic process. When establishing the non-uniform character of palatalization, it is indispensable to specify the extent of this inhomogeneity in particular text groups via collating and comparing the results discussed in the previous analyses based on individual regions and dialects.

The aim of the current study, thus, will be to draw general conclusions as to the influence palatalization exerted on the four lemmas in various dialects, and to verify the linguistic discrepancies and the distribution of EACH, MUCH, SUCH, WHICH in the North, East Midland, including London, and in dialectally unidentified Late Middle English texts. The data come from the textual material of the *Innsbruck corpus of Middle English prose*, *The Middle English dictionary* and *A linguistic atlas of Late Mediaeval English*.

2. Textual material

The material for the analysis comprises four groups of three sample texts each, coming from the North, East Midland and London respectively as well as from the unclassified category of dialectally unidentified texts. The Northern group embraces Richard Rolle of Hampole's *An English Father of the Church* and *Alphabet of Tales* (Part One and Two), East Midland – *Agnus Castus*, *Viribus Herbarum*, *The Cely Letters*, London – *The Book of Foundation*, *Mediaeval Lapidaries*, *Blanchardyn and Eglantine*, and the unclassified group – *The Life of Saint Mary*, *Three Prose Versions of the Secreta Secretorum: Governance of Lordships* and *The Testament of Love*.

The above texts belong to various literary categories as presented in Table 1:

Table 1. Literary categories of the analysed texts

Title	Literary category
Alphabet of Tales (Part One)	religious narrative
Alphabet of Tales (Part Two)	religious fiction
An English Father of the Church	religious treatise
Agnus Castus	medical recipe
Cely Letters	private/official letters
Viribus Herbarum	handbook on medicine
Blanchardyn and Eglantine	romance
Mediaeval Lapidaries	handbook
The Book of Foundation	documents/wills/statutes

Governance of Lordships	courtesy book
The Life of Saint Mary	biography
The Testament of Love	romance

These texts will be first examined within their original groups in order to present some novel findings regarding each dialect and to compare the results from all the groups with the aim of drawing then some more general conclusions as to the whole process.

3. Northern texts

Although the sample texts collated in this group differ slightly with respect to the frequency of their particular forms, allowing for the quantitative balance depicted in the sequence of MUCH-EACH-SUCH-WHICH in the two parts of *Alphabet of Tales* and MUCH-WHICH-EACH-SUCH in *An English Father*, all three texts show the predominance of MUCH, the tokens of which appear to be impressively more numerous than of the other lemmas; see Figure 1:

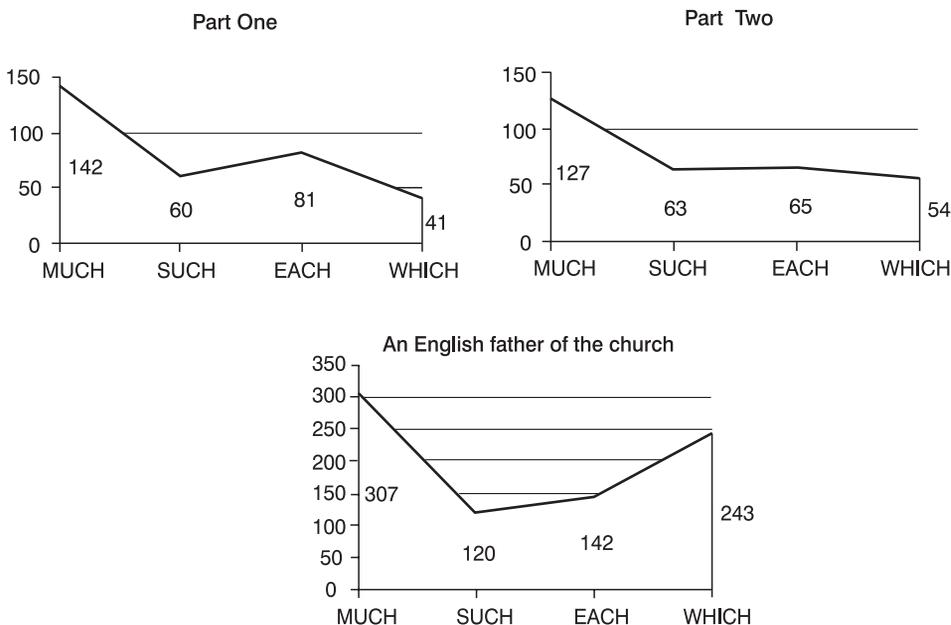


Fig. 1. The quantitative representation of MUCH, SUCH, EACH, WHICH in the Northern texts

The highest frequency of use of MUCH does not affect, however, the distribution of (non-)palatalized forms across all the lemmas, as can be observed in Figure 2:

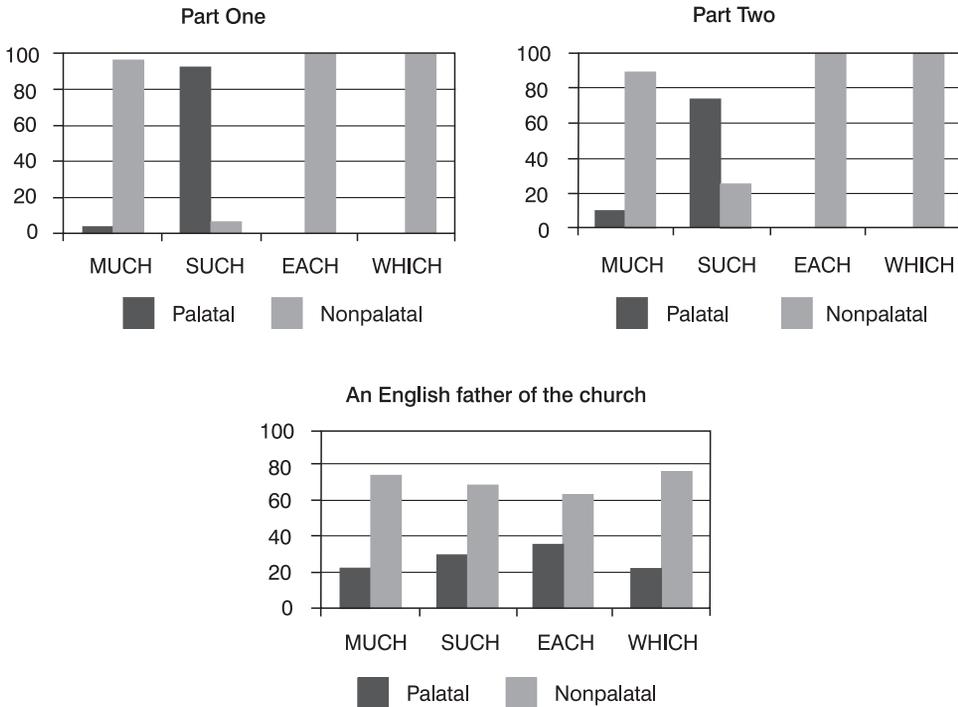


Fig. 2. The percentages of palatalized and non-palatalized forms in the Northern texts

According to the percentages in Figure 2, the palatalized : non-palatalized variation in Part One shows the ratio of 2.82% vs. 97.18% for MUCH, 93.33% vs. 6.67% for SUCH and 0.0% vs. 100% for both EACH and WHICH, in Part Two 10.24% vs. 89.76% for MUCH, 74.60% vs. 25.40% for SUCH, 1.54% vs. 98.46% for EACH and 0.0% vs. 100% for WHICH, and in *An English Father* of 22.80% vs. 77.20% for MUCH, 30.0% vs. 70.0% for SUCH, 35.21% vs. 64.79% for EACH and 22.63% vs. 77.37% for WHICH.

Interestingly, while in *An English Father* the palatalized forms tend to oscillate between 20%–30%, accounting for their minority in comparison to their non-palatalized counterparts, both parts of *Alphabet of Tales* exhibit a clear tendency of the palatalized variants of SUCH to predominate. A detailed visualization of the distribution and types of forms is presented in Tables 2–4 below, with the number of tokens and percentages in parentheses.

Table 2. The distribution of palatalized and non-palatalized forms in *Alphabet of Tales* (Part One)

<i>Alphabet of Tales</i> (Part One)							
Much		Such		Each		Which	
mekull	106 (74.65)	suche	31 (51.66)	euer-ilk	27 (33.34)	whilk	29 (70.73)
mekle	11 (7.75)	such	25 (41.67)	ilk	21 (25.93)	þe whilk	12 (29.27)
mekill	8 (5.64)	swilk	4 (6.67)	ilkone	12 (14.82)		
mekyll	4 (2.82)			evur-ilk	9 (11.11)		
muche	4 (2.82)			euerilk	8 (9.88)		
mykill	2 (1.41)			[evur]-ilk	1 (1.23)		
mekur	2 (1.41)			evurilk	1 (1.23)		
mekil	1 (0.70)			ilka	1 (1.23)		
mikell	1 (0.70)			ilk-one	1 (1.23)		
mykull	1 (0.70)						
mykell	1 (0.70)						
[m]ykill	1 (0.70)						
	142		60		81		41

Table 2 with data from *Alphabet of Tales* (Part One) shows very few instances of palatalized *muche* and the prevalence of palatalized *such(e)*:

Table 3. The distribution of palatalized and non-palatalized forms in *Alphabet of Tales* (Part Two)

<i>Alphabet of Tales</i> (Part Two)							
Much		Such		Each		Which	
mekull	92 (72.44)	suche	37 (58.73)	evur-ilk	13 (20.00)	whilk	41 (75.93)
muche	8 (6.30)	such	10 (15.87)	ilkone	13 (20.00)	þe whilk	12 (22.22)
mekyll	6 (4.72)	swilk	10 (15.87)	ilk	12 (18.46)	þe whilke	1 (1.85)
mekill	6 (4.72)	swylk	3 (4.76)	euer-ilk	9 (13.85)		
much	4 (3.15)	sike	2 (3.18)	euerilk	9 (13.85)		
mykyll	4 (3.15)	syke	1 (1.59)	evurilk	5 (7.69)		
mekle	2 (1.57)			ilka	3 (4.62)		
mek[ill]	1 (0.79)			ichone	1 (1.53)		
mych	1 (0.79)						
mykill	1 (0.79)						
mykell	1 (0.79)						
mykull	1 (0.79)						
	127		63		65		54

Table 3 with data from *Alphabet of Tales* (Part Two), on the other hand, demonstrates more frequent occurrences of palatalized *much(e)* and *mych*,

the predominance of palatalized *such(e)* and one token of palatalized *ichone*.

Table 4. The distribution of palatalized and non-palatalized forms in *An English Father of the Church*

<i>An English Father of the Church</i>							
Much		Such		Each		Which	
mykel	62 (20.20)	slike	26 (21.67)	ilk	42 (29.58)	þe whilk	38 (15.64)
mekill	61 (19.87)	swylke	22 (18.33)	ilke	19 (13.38)	þe whilke	32 (13.17)
mikil	27 (8.80)	swilk	21 (17.50)	ech	23 (16.20)	whilke	28 (11.52)
muche	27 (8.80)	such	14 (11.67)	ylke	9 (6.34)	þe wilk	26 (10.70)
mochel	18 (5.86)	swyche	10 (8.33)	eche	6 (4.23)	w3uch	14 (5.77)
mekyll	15 (4.89)	sich	6 (5.00)	vche	5 (3.53)	whilk	11 (4.53)
mikel	14 (4.56)	swylk	6 (5.00)	iche	5 (3.53)	þe w3uche	10 (4.12)
mykell	11 (3.58)	suche	3 (2.50)	euerichon	3 (2.12)	þe whiche	9 (3.71)
myche	10 (3.26)	sclyk	2 (1.67)	ylkone	3 (2.12)	whiche	8 (3.29)
mychel	5 (1.62)	siche	2 (1.67)	ylkane	2 (1.41)	qwilke	7 (2.89)
ouer-mykel	5 (1.62)	slik	2 (1.67)	eueryche	2 (1.41)	the whilke	7 (2.89)
ouer-mikil	5 (1.62)	slyke	2 (1.67)	ilkane	2 (1.41)	þe whylke	6 (2.47)
mikell	4 (1.30)	sclik	1 (0.83)	ilkan	2 (1.41)	þe whyche	5 (2.06)
ouer-muche	3 (0.97)	swilke	1 (0.83)	ylka	2 (1.41)	þe wilke	4 (1.65)
mykyl	3 (0.97)	swilkan	1 (0.83)	ylk	2 (1.41)	the wilke	4 (1.65)
mykele	3 (0.97)	swych	1 (0.83)	euer-ilk	2 (1.41)	þo qwilke	3 (1.23)
ouermekill	3 (0.97)			euerylkone	1 (0.70)	wilk	3 (1.23)
ouer-mekill	3 (0.97)			euerychone	1 (0.70)	whyche	3 (1.23)
mekil	2 (0.65)			eueriche	1 (0.70)	the whylke	3 (1.23)
miche	2 (0.65)			euerychon	1 (0.70)	wilke	2 (0.82)
moche	2 (0.65)			euerichone	1 (0.70)	þe whuche	2 (0.82)
ouur-muche	2 (0.65)			euerylke	1 (0.70)	qwilke	2 (0.82)
ouer-mykell	2 (0.65)			euer-ylke	1 (0.70)	wylke	2 (0.82)
oure-mykel	2 (0.65)			euer-ylk	1 (0.70)	þe wylke	2 (0.82)
oure-mikel	2 (0.65)			hilke	1 (0.70)	whuch	1 (0.41)
mekel	1 (0.33)			ilkone	1 (0.70)	þe qwilke	1 (0.41)
mekyl	1 (0.33)			vch	1 (0.70)	þe qwilke	1 (0.41)
mekell	1 (0.33)			yche	1 (0.70)	þe qwylke	1 (0.41)
ouere-mekill	1 (0.33)			ilke-day	1 (0.70)	qwylke	1 (0.41)
me_kill	1 (0.33)					þe wylk	1 (0.41)
ouer-mekyll	1 (0.33)					the wylke	1 (0.41)
oure-mikell	1 (0.33)					which	1 (0.41)
ouer-mikil	1 (0.33)					whylk	1 (0.41)
mychil	1 (0.33)					whylike	1 (0.41)
owre-mykel	1 (0.33)					w3uche	1 (0.41)
mykyll	1 (0.33)					þe w3uch	1 (0.41)
mekelnes	1 (0.33)						
mekillnes	1 (0.33)						
mekylnes	1 (0.33)						
307		120		142		243	

Table 4 with data from *An English Father of the Church* does not confirm the prevalence of any palatalized forms but it allows for their even distribution across all the lemmas, the most frequent of them being *muche*, *such*, *ech* and *w3uch*.

The data presented in the diagrams and tables prove that although the North is usually associated with lack of palatalization and palatalized forms, in fact it seems to be susceptible to some extent to the affrication process, resulting in the loss of its otherwise assumed homogeneity. The further analysis focusing on the Southern texts (East Midland and London) will be an attempt to confirm the above, investigating the opposite, namely the existence of non-palatalized forms in the dialects generally perceived as uniformly palatalized.

4. East Midland texts

The sample texts collated in this group differ slightly with respect to the frequency of their particular forms in comparison to the Northern group, allowing for the quantitative balance depicted in the sequence of MUCH-WHICH-EACH-SUCH in *Agnus Castus* and *Viribus Herbarum*, and WHICH-SUCH-MUCH-EACH in *The Cely Letters*; see Figure 3:

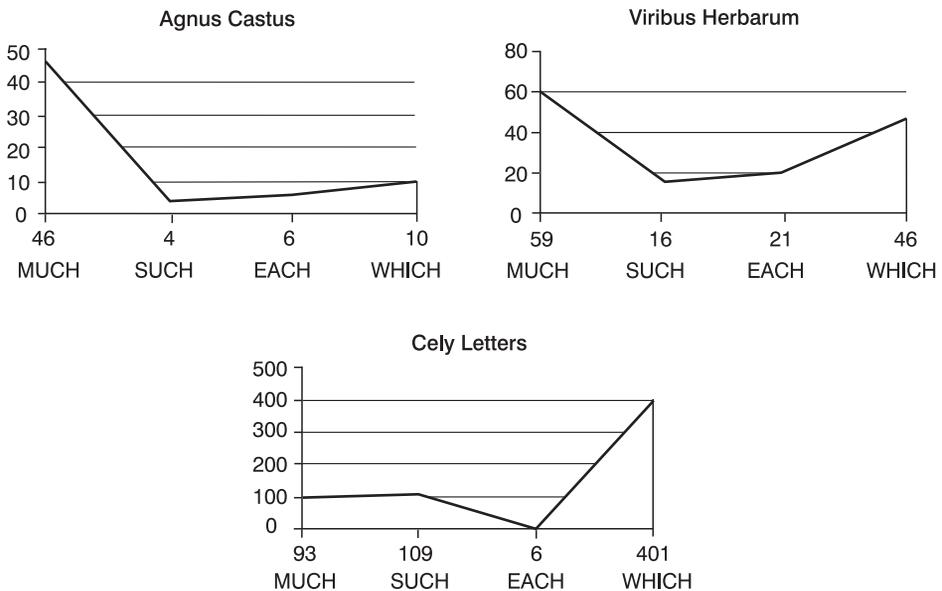


Fig. 3. The quantitative representation of MUCH, SUCH, EACH, WHICH in the East Midland texts

Although Figure 3 does not prove any regularity in terms of the lemma frequency, it seems that all the texts admit to the usage of non-palatalized forms of MUCH, as can be observed in Figure 4 below:

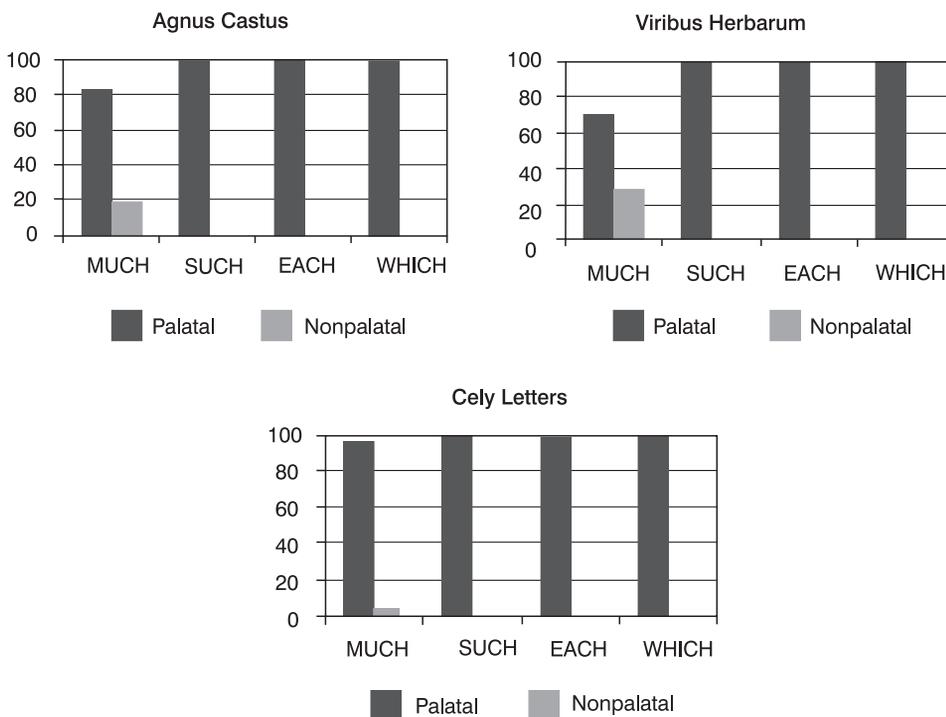


Fig. 4. The percentages of palatalized and non-palatalized forms in the East Midland texts

The above diagrams show the percentages of the palatalized : non-palatalized variation in MUCH indicating the ratio of 82.61% vs. 17.39% for *Agnus Castus*, 69.49% vs. 30.51% for *Viribus Herbarum* and 96.77% vs. 3.23% for *The Cely Letters*. Apparently, the degree of non-palatalization tends to be significantly lower in the last text. This, however, does not affect the variety of forms depicted in Tables 5–7 below, with the number of tokens and percentages in parentheses.

Table 5. The distribution of palatalized and non-palatalized forms in *Agnus Castus*

<i>Agnus Castus</i>							
Much		Such		Each		Which	
moche	35 (76.09)	such	2 (50.00)	iche	6 (100.00)	quyche	4 (40.00)
mekyl	7 (15.23)	sweche	1 (25.00)			qwyche	2 (20.00)
mekyll	1 (2.17)	swyche	1 (25.00)			whuch	3 (30.00)
moch	1 (2.17)					whyeh	1 (10.00)
muche	1 (2.17)						
myche	1 (2.17)						
	46		4		6		10

The data in Table 5 confirm the existence of a few non-palatalized variants of *mekyl(l)* in *Agnus Castus*, which are even more popular than some of their palatalized equivalents.

Table 6. The distribution of palatalized and non-palatalized forms in *Viribus Herbarum*

<i>Viribus Herbarum</i>							
Much		Such		Each		Which	
muche	12 (20.35)	suche	11 (68.75)	eche	18 (85.71)	þe whiche	40 (86.96)
mochel	9 (15.26)	such	5 (31.25)	ech	3 (14.29)	þe which	3 (6.52)
moche	7 (11.87)					whiche	3 (6.52)
mikel	4 (6.79)						
mekyl	3 (5.09)						
muchel	3 (5.09)						
ouer-muche	2 (3.40)						
mykyll	2 (3.40)						
mykel	2 (3.40)						
ouer-mechel	1 (1.69)						
mekel	1 (1.69)						
for-so-michel	1 (1.69)						
michel	1 (1.69)						
ouirmikil	1 (1.69)						
ouermochill	1 (1.69)						
ouer-moche	1 (1.69)						
ouer-mochel	1 (1.69)						
muchil	1 (1.69)						
mukel	1 (1.69)						
ouermychil	1 (1.69)						
mykill	1 (1.69)						

mykil 1 (1.69) over-mykell 1 (1.69) ouirmykil 1 (1.69)			
59	16	21	46

The same appears to be true of *Viribus Herbarum*, allowing for many variants of non-palatalized MUCH, for example *mikel* or *mekyl*, even despite the relatively low number of their tokens.

Table 7. The distribution of palatalized and non-palatalized forms in *The Cely Letters*

<i>Cely Letters</i>			
Much	Such	Each	Which
myche 46 (49.44)	syche 63 (57.80)	ych 2 (33.32)	the weche 141 (35.16)
meche 25 (26.86)	seche 14 (12.85)	euerychon 1 (16.67)	the whych 57 (14.21)
moche 11 (11.82)	suche 10 (9.17)	eueryche 1 (16.67)	whych 38 (9.47)
insomeche 1 (1.08)	such 8 (7.34)	iche 1 (16.67)	the wyche 30 (7.48)
mekull 1 (1.08)	soyche 6 (5.50)	yche 1 (16.67)	whyche 24 (5.98)
mekell 1 (1.08)	sych 3 (2.75)		the wiche 19 (4.74)
mekyll 1 (1.08)	soche 2 (1.83)		the whyche 14 (3.49)
moch 1 (1.08)	scheche 1 (0.92)		the which 12 (2.99)
moyche 1 (1.08)	siche 1 (0.92)		the wych 10 (2.49)
much 1 (1.08)	souche 1 (0.92)		weche 9 (2.24)
muche 1 (1.08)			the weche 8 (2.00)
mycche 1 (1.08)			the qweche 7 (1.75)
mych 1 (1.08)			the qwheche 5 (1.25)
mwche 1 (1.08)			which 5 (1.25)
			the qwych 3 (0.75)
			wyche 3 (0.75)
			weche 2 (0.50)
			the qwych 2 (0.50)
			the wech 2 (0.50)
			wych 2 (0.50)
			wiche 1 (0.25)
			þe wyche 1 (0.25)
			wech 1 (0.25)
			the whiche 1 (0.25)
			whyhch 1 (0.25)
			the qweych 1 (0.25)
			the qweyche 1 (0.25)
			the wyche 1 (0.25)
93	109	6	401

Less conspicuous in terms of their frequency are however the non-palatalized forms of MUCH in *The Cely Letters*, demonstrating only three tokens. Simultaneously, each token is a different variant of non-palatalized MUCH (*mekull, mekell, mekyll*), accounting for the lemma versatility.

All the above conclusions prove that, similarly to the North, the East Midland also allows some room for irregularity with respect to palatalization, resulting in the incorporation of a few Northern-like variants. To make further generalization as to the whole Southern region, however, the analysis also needs to scrutinize more data from the area, which will be provided by three London texts.

5. London texts

Interestingly, the texts from London demonstrate yet different frequency of use of particular lemmas in comparison to the previous two groups, depicted in the quantitative balance of WHICH-MUCH-SUCH-EACH in *The Book of Foundation* and *Blanchardyn and Englantine*, and MUCH-WHICH-SUCH-EACH in *Lapidaries*; see Figure 5:

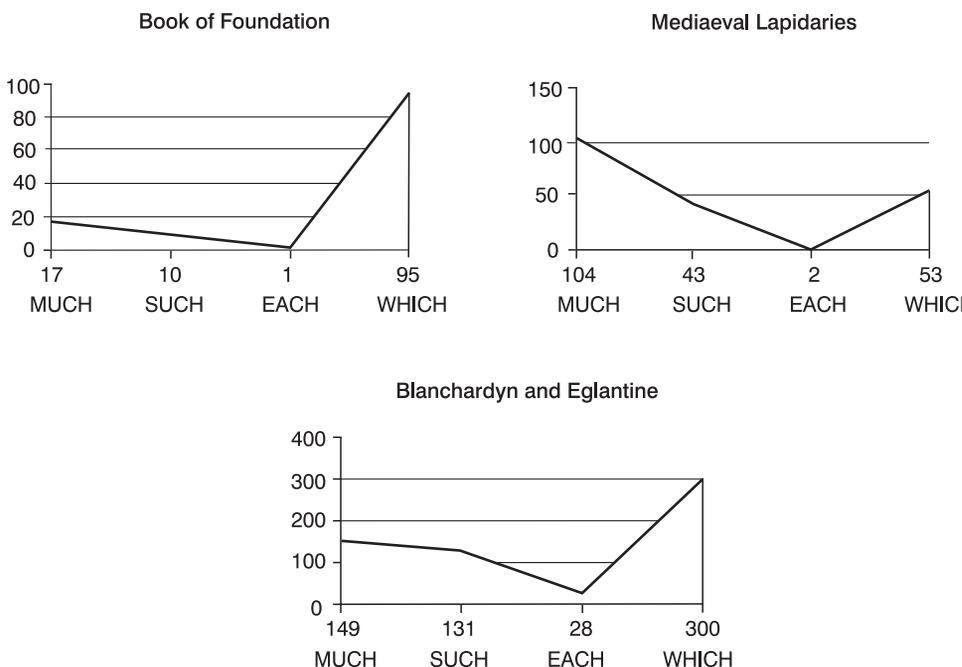


Fig. 5. The quantitative representation of MUCH, SUCH, EACH, WHICH in the London texts

Again, although Figure 5 does not prove any regularity in terms of lemma frequency, it seems that all the texts admit to the usage of non-palatalized forms of MUCH, as can be observed in Figure 6 below:

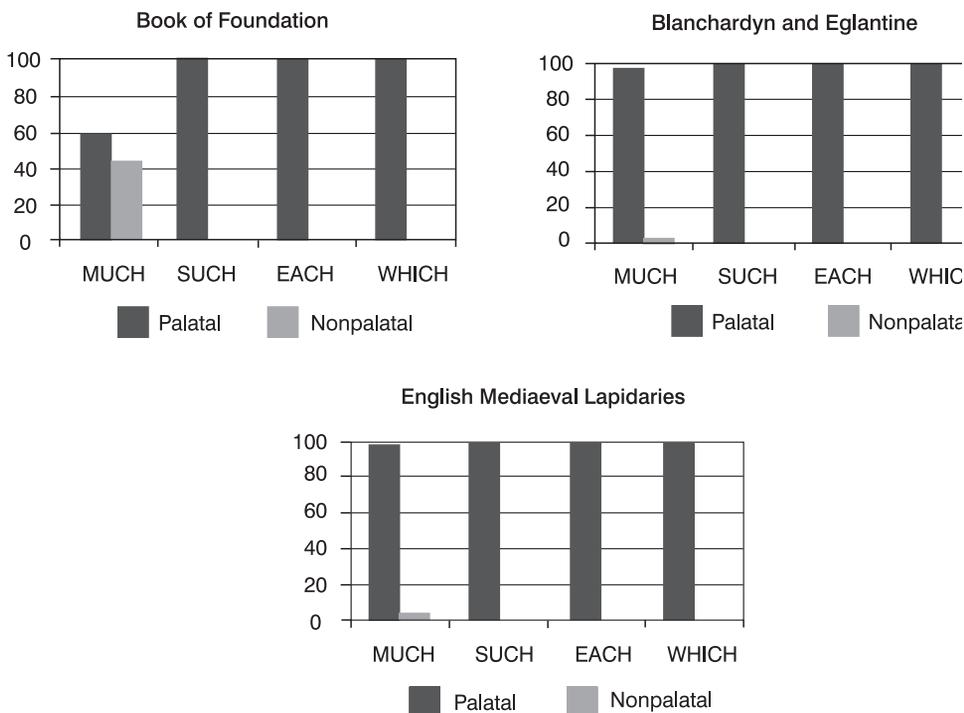


Fig. 6. The percentages of palatalized and non-palatalized forms in the London texts

According to the percentages in Figure 6, the palatalized : non-palatalized variation in MUCH shows the ratio of 97.32% vs. 2.68% for *Blanchardyn and Eglantine*, 98.08% vs. 1.92% for *Lapidaries*, and 58.82% : 41.18% for *The Book of Foundation*. Although against the background of the other Southern texts, the first two demonstrate comparatively low numbers of their non-palatalized forms, the last text substantially exceeds even the East Midland results. A more detailed picture is provided in Tables 8–10 below, with the number of tokens and percentages in parentheses.

Table 8. The distribution of palatalized and non-palatalized forms in *The Book of Foundation*

<i>Book of Foundation</i>			
Much	Such	Each	Which
mykil 4 (23.53)	suche 9 (90.00)	eche 1 (100.00)	the whiche 74 (77.89)
muche 4 (23.53)	such 1 (10.00)		whiche 12 (12.63)
moche 3 (17.65)			the whyche 4 (4.21)
mykill 3 (17.65)			which 2 (2.11)
mochyll 1 (5.88)			þe which 2 (2.11)
asmoche 1 (5.88)			the which 1 (1.05)
asmooche 1 (5.88)			
17	10	1	95

In contrast to the other both East Midland and London texts, *The Book of Foundation* clearly shows equal numbers of the most frequent non-palatalized and palatalized forms of *mykil(l)* and *muche/moche*.

Table 9. The distribution of palatalized and non-palatalized forms in *Blanchardyn and Eglantine*

<i>Blanchardyn and Eglantine</i>			
Much	Such	Each	Which
moche 132 (88.60)	suche 130 (99.24)	eche 27 (96.43)	whiche 233 (77.67)
somoche 5 (3.36)	seche 1 (0.76)	each 1 (3.57)	the whiche 54 (18.00)
asmoche 3 (2.01)			whyche 5 (1.67)
muche 3 (2.01)			þe whiche 4 (1.33)
mykel 3 (2.01)			wyche 2 (0.67)
mekell 1 (0.67)			the whyche 1 (0.33)
ouermoche 1 (0.67)			wiche 1 (0.33)
insomoche 1 (0.67)			
149	131	28	300

Although such equilibrium is not seen in any of the following texts, *Blanchardyn and Eglantine* shows a few instances of non-palatalized MUCH visible in two different forms of *mykel* and *mekell*.

Table 10. The distribution of palatalized and non-palatalized forms in *Mediaeval Lapidaries*

<i>Lapidaries</i>							
Much		Such		Each		Which	
myche	38 (36.54)	such	16 (37.20)	eueryche	1 (50.00)	which	19 (35.84)
mych	20 (19.24)	suche	15 (34.89)	iche	1 (50.00)	þe which	7 (13.20)
muche	14 (13.47)	swiche	8 (18.60)			whiche	6 (11.32)
moche	13 (12.50)	shuch	2 (4.65)			ye whyche	4 (7.54)
much	7 (6.73)	scuch	1 (2.33)			ye whiche	3 (5.66)
miche	2 (1.92)	sweche	1 (2.33)			þe wiche	2 (3.77)
mich	2 (1.92)					þe whech	2 (3.77)
mochel	2 (1.92)					the wiche	1 (1.89)
mekyll	1 (0.96)					the which	1 (1.89)
mekel	1 (0.96)					wiche	1 (1.89)
muchel	1 (0.96)					the wyche	1 (1.89)
ouermyche	1 (0.96)					þe wych	1 (1.89)
in-as-myche	1 (0.96)					þe whiche	1 (1.89)
mechelnys	1 (0.96)					wyhche	1 (1.89)
						ye whych	1 (1.89)
						ye wh[i]che	1 (1.89)
						ye which	1 (1.89)
	104		43		2		53

The least conspicuous in terms of frequency is *Lapidaries* since it contains only two non-palatalized forms *mekyll* and *mekel*, which is enough to question the blind uniformity of the palatalization process. The data above only seem to confirm the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the East Midland material, disproving the theory of the South as being completely deprived of non-palatalized forms. It seems that like the North which appeared to be susceptible to the effects of palatalization, the South is just as likely to assume or retain certain Northern-like forms, thus resisting the influence of the same process. Interestingly, while in the North all four lemmas seem probable to incorporate palatalized forms, with a slight predominance of such variants in SUCH and MUCH, in the South is it only MUCH which may reveal the likelihood of such linguistic irregularities. Yet in order to verify these observations as uniform tendencies, the analysis needs to take into account one more group of texts, namely those of unidentified origin, which due to lack of any dialectally anchoring features, could testify best to the character of the palatalization process.

6. Unclassified texts

As one could expect of unclassified texts being a mixture of various dialectal features, the sample texts in my study show various frequencies depicted in the quantitative balance of MUCH-EACH-SUCH-WHICH in *The Governance*, typical also of the two parts of Northern *Alphabet of Tales*, WHICH-SUCH-MUCH-EACH in *The Testament of Love*, typical also of East Midland *The Cely Letters*, and MUCH=WHICH in *The Life of Saint Mary*, representing a unique situation with the even number of tokens in the case of two lemmas, not encountered in any other text group; see Figure 7 below:

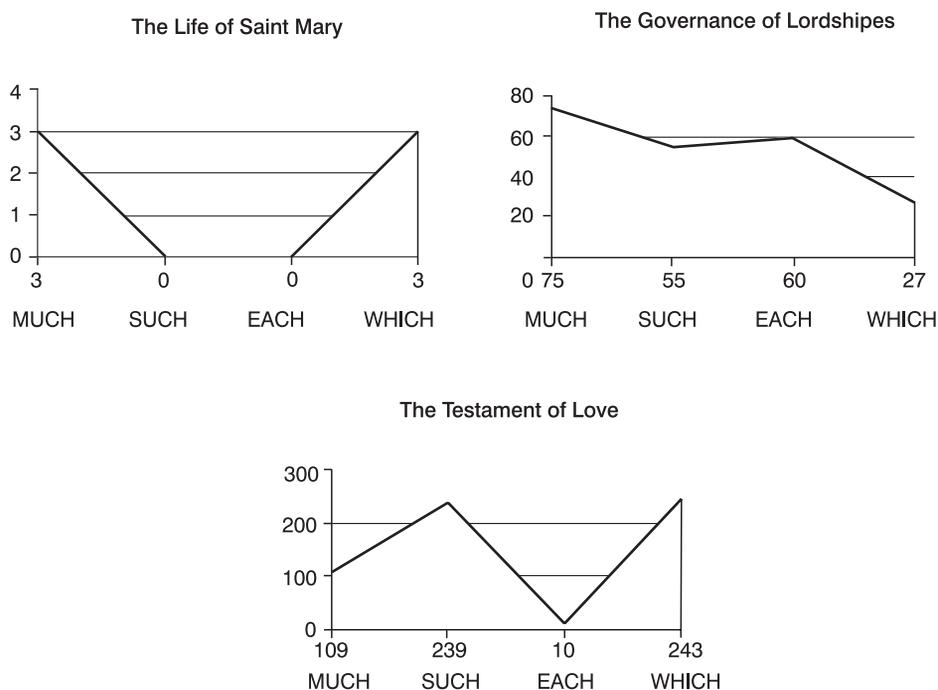


Fig. 7. The quantitative representation of MUCH, SUCH, EACH, WHICH in the unclassified texts

This irregularity in frequencies is also reflected in the irregularities in the distribution of palatalized and non-palatalized forms across all four lemmas, as is observed in Figure 8:

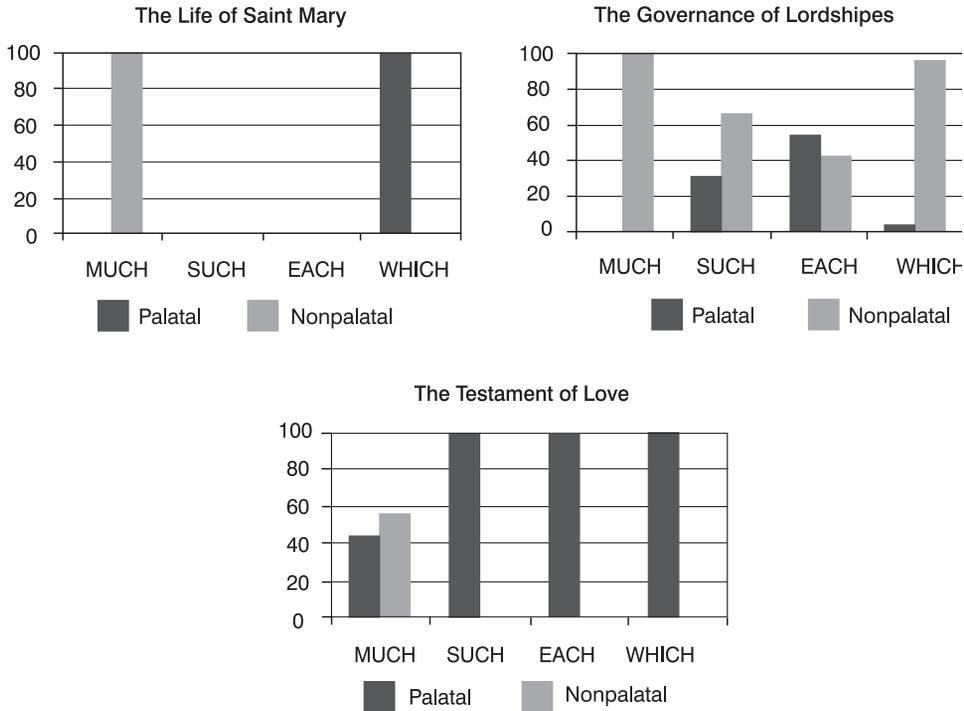


Fig. 8. The percentages of palatalized and non-palatalized forms in the unclassified texts

According to the percentages in Figure 8, the palatalized : non-palatalized variation in *The Life of Saint Mary* shows the ratio of 0.0% vs. 100.0% for MUCH and 100.0% vs. 0.0% for WHICH, in *The Governance of* 0.0% vs. 100.0% for MUCH, 32.73% vs. 67.27% for SUCH, 56.67% vs. 43.33% for EACH and 3.70% vs. 96.30% for WHICH, and in *The Testament of Love* of 44.04% vs. 55.96% for MUCH, 100.0% vs. 0.0% for SUCH, EACH and WHICH.

Considering the predominance of either palatalized or non-palatalized forms in the above texts, one might come to an intriguing conclusion that each of them shows completely different tendencies. While *The Governance* contains the majority of non-palatalized variants, *The Testament of Love* seems to favour more their palatalized equivalents, with *The Life of Saint Mary* demonstrating a radically reversed situation as it has an equal number of both types of forms. Even more interesting is the analysis of particular lemma tokens which have been collated in Tables 11–13 below, with the number of tokens and percentages in parentheses.

Table 11. The distribution of palatalized and non-palatalized forms in *The Life of Saint Mary*

Much	Such	Each	Which
<i>The Life of Saint Mary</i>			
mekill 1 (33.33) mykkell 1 (33.33) mykell 1 (33.33)	no data	no data	whicche 1 (33.33) the whiche 1 (33.33) the whicche 1 (33.33)
3	0	0	3

Being the most unusual of all the texts here, *The Life of Saint Mary* shows the same number of tokens of both wholly non-palatalized MUCH as of wholly palatalized WHICH. Due to lack of any data in SUCH or EACH, it is unfortunately impossible to assess the extent of dominance of either type of forms.

Table 12. The distribution of palatalized and non-palatalized forms in *The Governance of Lordships*

Much	Such	Each	Which
<i>The Governance of Lordships</i>			
mekyll 34 (45.33) mekyl 32 (42.67) mykyl 4 (5.33) mekel 1 (1.33) yn-so-mekyl 1 (1.33) ouermekyll 1 (1.33) mekil 1 (1.33) mikel 1 (1.33)	swylk 24 (43.63) sweche 12 (21.82) swilk 5 (9.09) swylke 5 (9.09) swyche 4 (7.27) swilke 3 (5.46) swych 2 (3.64)	vche 30 (50.00) ilke 11 (18.33) ilk 7 (11.66) ilk-a 3 (5.00) eueryche 3 (5.00) ylkon 2 (3.33) euerylke 1 (1.67) eueriche 1 (1.67) euerylk 1 (1.67) ylkoon 1 (1.67)	Ʒe whilk 9 (33.33) Ʒe whilke 5 (18.52) whilk 4 (14.82) whilke 2 (7.41) Ʒe whylk 2 (7.41) the whilke 2 (7.41) Ʒe wilke 1 (3.70) whiche 1 (3.70) whik 1 (3.70)
75	55	60	27

Although *The Governance* demonstrates an evident prevalence of non-palatalized variants, with MUCH not even allowing for any palatalized equivalents, it curiously presents palatalized *vche* as the most frequent variant in EACH, distorting a little the idyllic picture of the overwhelming dominance of non-palatalization.

Table 13. The distribution of palatalized and non-palatalized forms in *The Testament of Love*

Much		Such		Each		Which	
<i>The Testament of Love</i>							
mokel	47 (43.12)	suche	211 (88.28)	everich	6 (54.55)	whiche	199 (81.89)
moche	40 (36.70)	such	27 (11.30)	everiche	4 (36.36)	which	39 (16.05)
mikel	7 (6.42)	sucbi	1 (0.42)			the whiche	4 (1.65)
mokil	6 (5.50)					whicche	1 (0.41)
moch	3 (2.75)						
in-as-moche	2 (1.83)						
mikil	1 (0.92)						
moche-folde	1 (0.92)						
for-as-moch	1 (0.92)						
for-as-moche	1 (0.92)						
	109		239		10		243

A similar situation can be observed in *The Testament of Love* which, despite its generally favoured palatalized variants in all the lemmas and EACH, SUCH, WHICH being wholly palatalized, at the same time contains non-palatalized *mokel* as the most frequent variant in otherwise mostly palatalized MUCH.

The above observations confirm the findings from the previous sections even more clearly, emphasizing not only the irregular but also surprisingly unpredictable nature of the process which seems to operate irrespectively of any dialectal specifications, linguistic boundaries or area limitations. This lack of importance of any anchoring features with respect to palatalization has been yet again proved by the unclassified texts which, as a result of the process, tend to exhibit an equal footing of both palatalized and non-palatalized forms. To visualize the extent of this equality, one needs to examine the exemplary distribution of such forms in the texts themselves.

7. Distribution of (non-)palatalized forms within the texts

Almost all the texts investigated in this paper allow for a close vicinity of both palatalized and non-palatalized variants, which is shown in the examples (1)-(4) below, arranged according to their dialect group:

- (1) (a) (...) grow in his body and to wax. And so his bely began agayns natur to bolne, to so **mekull** att he trowid he was with childe; and þai made hym daylie to be dyett with **such** meatt as þai knew wolde nurissh a frosk. (*Alphabet of Tales*, Part One, p. 157)

- (b) So þe knyght axkid hym whare he had so **much**e connyng as he had, and he ansswerd agayn and said at þer was none ill done in all þis werld bod he knew itt. ‘And to so **mekull**,’ he said, ‘þou in **such** a town and in **suche** a howse loste þi maydenhede, and **swylk** synnys and **swilk** hase þou done.’ (*Alphabet of Tales*, Part Two, p. 376)
- (c) (...) why hadde I nou3t þenne bien by þe and herd þat þou herde, and sen þat ilke sy3t and of þi **mykel** sorewe hadde take my part, 3yf I my3te in cas han slekyd þi woo? – for men seyn **swyche** a word: Pat [it] is often solace to haue in peyne (...) (*An English Father of the Church*, p. 89)

The Northern excerpts collated here fail to show any restrictions as to the employment of palatalized or non-palatalized variants, sometimes using them interchangeably as in *Alphabet of Tales* Part Two, where *much*e and *mekull* and *such(e)* and *swilk/swylik* seem to exist freely alongside each other.

- (2) (a) Elebourrus is an herbe þat men clepe longwourt or pe lethre of spanye and þis herbe is **mekyl** lyk to pede lyoun. but þe lewys of þis herbe is no3t so **moche** slyt wytowtyn (...) (*Agnus Castus*, p. 154)
- (b) (...) somme men, whan þei ne mowe nat haue þe rounde, taken also **mykil** wey3te of þe long as þey wolde doo of þe rounde, if þei had it, and half so **moche**. þe decoccion of þe long dooþ good wonderlich (...) (*Viribus Herbarum*, p. 81)
- (c) (...) sophosed be lyklyhod yt schuld be ware; and yeff yt so be yt schuld be war, ther schuld be gret rydyng and **mekell** ado abowte Calles;...for in good faythe, sauynng my master [y]oure fadere and youere broder Recharde, in good faythe there [ys] no man in Iynglond Y would do so **meche** for, and that ye schuld know and ye had ned. (*Cely Letters*, p. 99)

This tendency can also be observed in the East Midland texts despite the fact that this refers only to MUCH as being the only lemma allowing for both palatalized and non-palatalized variants.

- (3) (a) (...) of the ire of God from aboue, that sendith to vs worthy paynys for oure demerites what or how **moche** yn withstandynge may oure besy purpos preuayle? as who seyth lityll. ...And whane this was broght to the howsholdfadir, beholde what he seid “howh **mykil** awayleth the feith and howh emynently apperith the vertu of the Apostle (...)” (*Book of Foundation*, p. 21)
- (b) (...) she of whom thou arte amoureuse soo **moche**, that thou arte a fole become therfore Olde vnfamous mys_chaunt how arte thou soo folyshe and so ouerwenynge as for to wene to haue her thou haste that berde of thyne ouer whyte therto thy face is to **mykel** wonne and that olde skynne of thyn ys ouer **mykel** shrouken to gyder (...) (*Blanchardyn and Eglantine*, p. 186)

- (c) (...) know well yt ye water yt berell has lyen in is **myche** worth for seke [e]len; & he yt drynkes of ye water yt ye berel has lyen in, he thar noght rak of euyll blod ne of rotyng ne of feuer; and he yt beres it is **mekyll** ye mor worschoped. (*Lapidaries*, p. 48)

MUCH appears to favour the vicinity of both its palatalized and non-palatalized variants in the London texts as well, where like in the East Midland it constitutes the only lemma group where such a variation is possible.

- (4) (a) And it ys foundyn yn **ilke** stede, and yn **ilke** tyme, and yn **ilke** man: and it may be turnyd to **eueryche** colour, and it holdys yn him alle þe elyment³, and it ys callyd þe lesse world (...) (*Governance of Lordships*, p. 88)
- (b) But yet is not free wil in gettinge of that 60 thing so **mokel** thank-worthy as is grace, ne in the kepinge therof so **moche** thank deserveth (...) (*Testament of Love*, p. 139)

The last group of unclassified texts, on the other hand, tends to accept all kinds of permutations with respect to the distribution of palatalized and non-palatalized forms. Curiously, *The Life of Saint Mary* proves to be exceptional in this case, keeping both types of variants wide apart within the body of the text, which might, however, be coincidental, bearing in mind that the text employs only two lemmas of non-palatalized MUCH and palatalized WHICH of just three tokens each.

Generally, however, the above clearly demonstrates that not only were the texts not resistant to the effects of palatalization but also that they did not limit the influx or free employment of such forms alongside each other in the texts, which only proves the equal status of both variants. Such a situation, in turn, shows that the process itself was not restricted by assumed and accepted linguistic boundaries, making palatalization more speaker-determined than area-specific and invoking the significance of another process, that of lexical diffusion.

8. Conclusions

1. Analyzing the quantitative balance of the lemmas, it seems that the most frequent prove the lemmas of MUCH and WHICH.
2. While the North allows for the palatalized forms of MUCH and even more so of SUCH, the non-Northern area (with the East Midland and London) exhibits non-palatalized variants of MUCH only. The unclassified texts do not show any such regularities, containing both types of forms in various lemmas.

3. All the texts show different preferences for particular palatalized and non-palatalized forms, making it difficult to draw more precise and reasonable conclusions as to the most frequent ones.
4. Almost all the dialectally identified and unidentified texts approve of the interchangeable employment of palatalized and non-palatalized forms, sometimes using both alongside each other and in close vicinity within the text.
5. The data presented in the paper testify to the unpredictable and inconsistent character of palatalization, disproving thus the concept of linguistic or dialectal boundaries delineating the extent of the process. This in turns shifts the responsibility for the sound change onto the speaker who becomes the main stimulus for palatalized and non-palatalized form diffusion.

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