Towards a Multilingual Approach to the History of English.
A Critical Review of

Elise Louviot and Catherine Delesse, eds. 2017. *Studies in Language Variation and Change 2: Shifts and Turns in the History of English*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars. ix + 258 pp. ISBN: 978-1-5275-0030-3.

Päivi Pahta, Janne Skaffari and Laura Wright, eds. 2017. *Multilingual Practices in Language History: English and Beyond*. Berlin and New York: De Gruyter. v + 361 pp. ISBN: 978-1-5015-0494-5.

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The ever-increasing awareness of multilingualism as the norm rather than the exception in both historical and present-day societies has reshaped the monolingual emphasis that used to permeate the study of the history of the English language, among many other academic spheres. This paradigm shift is pertinently highlighted by the two volumes under review: *Multilingual Practices in Language History: English and Beyond* (2017), edited by Päivi Pahta, Janne Skaffari and Laura Wright, and *Studies in Language Variation and Change 2: Shifts and Turns in the History of English* (2017), edited by Elise Louviot and Catherine Delesse. The former book seems to follow up on an earlier monograph which was also edited by one of its coeditors, Herbert Schendl and Wright's *Code-Switching in Early English* (2011), which discusses many of the terminological contentions and empirical observations that are at the centre of the aforementioned volume under review: the widely debated boundaries between *one-word code-switches* and *lexical borrowings*—see the contributions in Pahta et al. (2017) by Schendl (39-59), Rita Queiroz de Barros (61-76) and Louise Sylvester (77-96)—and the thorny question of language boundaries in the Middle Ages—see, for instance, the contributions from Tom ter Horst and Nike Stam (223-42) and Sylvester (77-96). These topics are extensively covered in the two introductory chapters of the present book: Pahta, Skaffari and Wright's "From Historical Code-Switching to Multilingual Practices in the Past" (3-17) and Penelope Gardner-Chloros's "Historical and Modern Studies of Code-Switching: A Tale of Mutual Enrichment" (19-36).

By and large, Pahta et al. and Louviot and Delesse evidence how the study of historical multilingual texts has been significantly informed by research into contemporary multilingual practices. Two main overarching approaches have been followed to date: the sociolinguistic approach, which gives prominence to the social participants taking part in the communicative event and the factors involved in language use (see, e.g., Mary Catherine Davidson 2005 and Arja Nurmi and Pahta 2010), and the structural/grammatical approach, which endeavours to describe structural constraints and recurrent patterns (see, *inter alia*, Siegfried Wenzel 1994, Schendl 2000 and Wright 2010; for a more thorough illustration of both approaches, see Schendl and Wright (2011, 3)). Likewise, present-day theoretical frameworks (amongst others, those by Pieter Muysken 2000, Barbara E. Bullock and Almeida J. Toribio 2009, Gardner-Chloros 2009 and Carol Myers-Scotton and Janice Jake 2009) have nurtured the terminological basis employed by historical linguists in their conceptualisations of the status of multilingual material in relation to its donor/recipient language(s). In particular, Myers-Scotton's Matrix Language-Frame (MLF) model (1993; 1997; 2001) has played a major role in the description of medieval code-switching, as Mareike Keller's chapter, "Code-switched Adjectives in Macaronic Sermons" (Louviot and Delesse 2017, 197-216), clearly shows. I will, however, assess to what extent researchers considering medieval texts can rely on theoretical frameworks devised to analyse present-day data later on in this book review article.

A quick browse through the chapters makes it clear that Louviot and Delesse's and Pahta et al.'s edited collections share not only thematic trends, but also certain contributors, namely, Richard Ingham and Sylvester, scholars renowned for their extensive work on Anglo-French in relation to Middle English. In "Studying French-Origin Middle English Lexis Using the Bilingual Thesaurus of Medieval England" (Louviot and Delesse 2017, 217-28), Sylvester and Imogen Marcus report on the structure and functionality of their bilingual thesaurus, which they developed with Ingham, and select two of its occupational domains, "Manufacture" and "Travel by Water," to gauge the extent to which French-origin lexis entered Middle English. More broadly, their work forms part of a noteworthy body of research debunking the long-standing misbelief that tends to correlate Anglo-French with the elite of society alone. In his thorough analysis of French as a spoken language in later medieval England, Ingham (2009, 81) pointed out that the "uneducated classes constituting the vast majority of the population surely continued to be monolingual users of English." A counterpoint to this is represented by authors such as Maryanne Kowaleski, who suggests that a rather considerable number of English mariners knew basic French—despite being illiterate in most cases (2009, 117)—thereby challenging Ingham's statement (see Amanda Roig-Marín (2018, 180-81) for a succinct overview of the literature on the use of Anglo-Norman across social strata).

Complementarily, in "A Semantic Field and Text-Type Approach to Late-Medieval Multilingualism" (Pahta et al. 2017, 77-96), Sylvester examines lexical items belonging

to the "Dress and Textiles" semantic domain in a variety of text types, fleshing out the advantages of adopting a semantic and text-based approach. The two chapters by Ingham draw on a variety of texts in order to prove how vernacular bilingualism was a reality in late medieval England—though it can be only scantly apprehended given the number of textual witnesses available (see "Medieval Bilingualism in England: On the Rarity of Vernacular Code-Switching" in Pahta et al. (2017, 319-37))—and how Anglo-Norman was de facto an oral and written language well into the late fourteenth century ("English and French in Medieval England: Spoken Bilingualism or Code Diglossia?" in Louviot and Delesse (2017, 175-96)).[1]

The interplay between French and English throughout history is further addressed, to varying degrees, in the two volumes: "Code-Switching in the Long Twelfth Century" by Skaffari (Pahta et al. 2017, 121-42) touches upon French, coupled with English and Latin, as one of the languages encountered in English manuscripts from that century. In "The Social and Textual Embedding of Multilingual Practices in Late Modern English: A Corpus-Based Approach" (Pahta et al. 2017, 171-98), Nurmi, Jukka Tyrkkö, Anna Petäjäniemi and Pahta focus on the influence of French (among other languages) in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A narrower investigation of French borrowings into nineteenth-century English is carried out in Julia Schultz's "Nineteenth-Century French Cuisine Terms and their Semantic Integration into English" (Louviot and Delesse 2017, 229-56), which considers food and drink-related French borrowings and their treatment across lexicographical resources of the two languages. Lastly, within this French-related cluster, Marion Schulte's "Investigating Semantic Change in Derivational Morphology" (Louviot and Delesse 2017, 41-60) focuses on derivational morphemes in English, while bringing the French borrowings -*ment* and -*age* into the discussion (42-45). The relative prominence of Anglo-French in these volumes is in line with the increasing attention that this variety of French has garnered over the last decades—see, among the most recent monographs, Ingham (2010; 2012) and Thelma Fenster and Carolyn P. Collete (2017)—in the larger context of multilingualism in medieval England (on the linguistic make-up of late medieval England, see some of latest contributions in Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al. (2009), Judith Jefferson and Ad Putter (2013) and Tim W. Machan (2016)). This linguistic ecology is also covered by Wright's "A Multilingual Approach to the History of Standard English" (Pahta et al. 2017, 339-58), which revisits the topic of another volume she edited, *The Development of Standard English*, 1300–1800 (2000), and gives an overview of her main findings over the past twenty years on what she calls "mixed-language business writing" (e.g. Wright 1992; 1995; 1998; 2002; 2010; 2011; 2012; 2017).

Having traced some of the thematic commonalities between Pahta et al. and Louviot and Delesse, I shall now compare their structural organisations, one of the most divergent aspects. The former volume comprises four sections and a total of sixteen contributions:

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[1] Some authors prefer the politically neutral term *Anglo-French* to the traditional name employed here, *Anglo-Norman*. However, many lexicographers would use the labels interchangeably and the main dictionary of this variety of French is entitled *The Anglo-Norman Dictionary* (1977-92).

a two-chapter introduction section and three major themes, "Borderlands" (chapters three to seven), "Patterns" (chapters eight to twelve) and "Contexts" (chapters thirteen to sixteen).[2] "Borderlands" (39-142) reflects upon terminological conundrums and the blurring of spatial areas, such as the Welsh-English border in Simon Meecham-Jones's "Code-Switching and Contact Influence in Middle English Manuscripts from the Welsh Penumbra—Should we Re-interpret the Evidence from Sir Gawain and the Green Knight?" (97-119). The two other major sections, "Patterns" and "Contexts," seem to be partly inspired by the sociolinguistic and structural/grammatical approaches outlined above. The "Contexts" section (275-358) encompasses papers on early modern Poland—by Joanna Kopaczyk (275-98)—as well as medieval England (chapters thirteen to sixteen), and the contributions in the "Patterns" section (145-271) innovatively make use of large databases and corpora. Although no large corpora like the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts*, the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* or the *Corpus of Middle English Medical Texts* exist for multilingual historical sources, purpose-built databases and even monolingual corpora (see also Nurmi et al. 2017) can shed some light on the study of language interactions (Pahta et al. 2017, 10). New tools for processing multilingual data like *Multilingualiser* have proven to be particularly useful in quantitative-oriented research, as shown in "The Social and Textual Embedding of Multilingual Practices in Late Modern English: A Corpus-Based Analysis" by Nurmi et al. (Pahta et al. 2017, 171-98).

On the other hand, at first sight, there does not seem to be a clear unity in Louviot and Delesse's edited volume: six out of its eleven chapters focus on the study of the internal history of English, accounting for changes or variation in the language through its own internal developments and specifically relating to quantifiers (chapter one), metaphoric-metonymic interactions in zoosemy (chapter two), grammatical gender variation in Old English (chapter four), the treatment of titles in Old English proper names (chapter five) and diachronic vowel changes (chapters six and seven).[3] A degree of structural cohesiveness does, however, seem to emerge from chapter four onwards: chapters four and five concentrate on Old English, chapters six and seven on phonology and, finally, the last major group (chapters eight to eleven)—albeit invisible to the uninitiated reader—is concerned with the effects of language contact on English. The reason for such discrepancies and the absence of section headings in the table of contents is not clarified; a more explicit indication of the motivation behind this array of thematic strands would have been desirable, precisely because some of them tie in very well with ongoing work, such as that brought together in Pahta et al. Links between the two volumes surface once again in the penultimate chapter in Louviot and

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[2]   The aim of this book review article is not to offer a linear summary of the contents of each volume—which are very diverse in terms of topics and scopes—but rather to guide the reader through their common theoretical and methodological premises.

[3]   Given the length of some of the chapter titles, they are not included here in order to avoid the disruption of the reading. Others may be abbreviated for the same reason.

Delesse, Keller's "Code-Switched Adjectives in Macaronic Sermons" (197-216), and chapter eight in Pahta et al., Jukka Tuominen's "Trifling Shews of Learning? Patterns of Code-Switching in English Sermons 1640-1740" (145-69), both of which examine macaronic sermons across time.[4] Diachronic variation is particularly noticeable in Tuominen's chapter, which reveals a progressive decline in the number of code-switches to Latin from the first to the second half of the seventeenth century. His examination of ten sermons from the *Lampeter Corpus* also allows him to discuss a wider range of factors, such as education, which may have played a part in the use of code-switching.

I will take Keller's piece of research—which illustrates a very close application of the MLF model—as my point of departure from which to raise wider issues applicable to various chapters of the two volumes under consideration. Keller tested this model against an edited text, the English *Macaronic Sermons* (Horner 2006), extant in MS Bodley 649 and dated to c. 1400-1450. She extracted 192 mixed determinant phrases manually and classified them according to language. Overall, her thorough analysis showed that only two cases contradicted the predictions of the MLF model (211). Still, at the core of her study, as well as similar investigations, are a few pitfalls which are not tackled in the chapter, but may be worth noting here: the use of editions (or non-diplomatic transcriptions) may have prevented the author from encountering more instantiations of morphological ambiguity (i.e. bare forms); the suspension and abbreviation system was part and parcel of manuscript writing and further opened up the possibilities of interpreting a given root as belonging to several languages—a subject fully dealt with in ter Horst and Stam's "Visual Diamorphs: The Importance of Language Neutrality in Code-Switching from Medieval Ireland" (Pahta et al. 2017, 223-42). If the words extracted by Keller from the published edition have not been contrasted with the original manuscript sources, silently expanded abbreviations and suspensions may have gone unidentified. Likewise, attempting to compare present-day oral code-switching with medieval manuscript sermons seems rather problematic.

Generally speaking, code-switching involves the alternation between two (or more rarely, three) linguistic codes with no integration of the items involved, whereas borrowing usually presupposes an incorporation of the material from the donor language into the recipient language (e.g. Poplack and Meechan 1998; Poplack and Dion 2012). From this perspective, both morphology and phonology provide the most widely used indices to measure integration. In historical written texts, only the morphological criterion can be taken as a reliable indicator of integration. Yet, with regard to inflectional morphology, in manuscripts the line between (decorative)

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[4] The term "macaronic" (< Lat. *macaronicus*) was primarily used to refer to "a burlesque form of verse in which vernacular words are introduced into the context of another language (originally and chiefly Latin), often with corresponding inflections and constructions" (*OED* 2000). Its meaning then extended to encompass any form of mixed language with similar characteristics, which shows how the practice of alternating more than one language within the same communicative event has remained a constant throughout time (see Lazzerini (1982) for a fuller account of the earliest uses of the term).

flourishes and abbreviations indicating Latin-inflected marking is sometimes blurred, so that a given word could potentially be both an integrated and a non-integrated borrowing. In fact, the *OED* expressed plans to revise entries in the dictionary by reassessing the original manuscripts of the edited texts from which the quotations were taken in the past (Durkin and Harvey 2017). Following the *OED* policy, if what were thought to be flourishes are indeed Latin abbreviations, those quotations would be discarded as faithful attestations of English words (see Wright's (2013) observations about similar lexicographical policies).

Moreover, both code-switching and borrowing are rooted in the idea that elements of (usually) two respective monolingual linguistic varieties can be mixed, presupposing the existence of unmixed languages. Shana Poplack and Marjory Meechan emphasised that "it is important to have as explicit an idea as possible of the nature of these vernaculars before concluding that a codemixed element takes aspects from one or the other or both" (1998, 130). Attempts to identify the matrix language with a monolingual code have sometimes been unfruitful, which has resulted in the formulation of the "matrix language" as an abstract construct (Myers-Scotton 2002; Auer and Muhamedova 2005). If this discussion is extrapolated beyond present-day communities, what becomes particularly noticeable, especially after reading the contributions in the two volumes under review, is that our contemporary notions of languages as clearly delineated and distinguishable entities do not apply to the Middle Ages. The processes of standardisation were not underway, so it is not uncommon to find great variability and hybridity across languages in contact. In the case of late medieval England, the primary focus of a significant proportion of Pahta et al. and, to a lesser extent, Louviot and Delesse, the simultaneous coexistence of not two but at least three languages (i.e., Medieval Latin and the two vernaculars, Middle English and Anglo-French) with an asymmetrical sociolinguistic distribution, complicates the disentangling of the origin of the lexical material used.

Myers-Scotton (2002) postulated that frequency rather than integration could help to establish distinctions between code-switching and borrowing. Consequently, one imperative guiding code-switching research could be to obtain the largest possible data sample, something which now seems more feasible than a few decades ago, as can be gleaned from the contributions in Pahta et al. Nevertheless, attestations are still challenging: some lexical items may be *hapax legomena* or scribal *verbatim* copies from *exempla* (thereby not representing the actual language use of the individual); others may be so widely spread (internationalisms) that they cannot be easily traced. Faced with such taxonomical difficulties, each author in the present volumes proposes different methodological frameworks. For example, following Yaron Matras (2009, 110-14), Schendl puts forward five criteria for identifying one-word switches (Pahta et al. 2017, 49-50), and Queiroz de Barros identifies nine types of foreignisms applying graphemic, typological, phonological and grammatical criteria (Pahta et al. 2017, 70-72). The particulars of these classifications vary, but most of them—if not all—acknowledge the continuum on which code-switching and borrowing should be placed. Even relatively

straightforward loanwords may have different routes of transmission, depending on the specific context of production (the writer might have made use of sources and intermediate translations in other languages, etc.).

Finally, the language choice in these two volumes merits further attention. The subtitle of Pahta et al., "English and Beyond," hints at the broader range of languages considered (in addition to English, French, Irish, Latin, Polish, Portuguese, Scots, Spanish and Welsh). Apart from English, the majority of contributions include Latin: to name but a few of the language combinations, Šime Demo's "Mining Macaronics" (199-221) surveys sixty poems written in eleven language pairs (Neo-Latin and a vernacular), ter Horst and Stam's chapter on visual diamorphs (223-42) investigates Irish and Latin, and Kopaczyk's paper (275-98) examines Latin, Polish and Scots language-mixing among Scottish immigrants in early modern Poland/Lithuania. In contrast, Louviot and Delesse has a more limited language coverage (English, French and Latin) but nevertheless exemplifies a progressive—and long-awaited—move towards a multilingual approach to the history of English. Along these lines, the global turn that fields such as medieval studies are taking demands a reassessment of the geographical and epistemological limitations that have characterised traditional research. Connectedness and mobility beyond Europe were central to the premodern world in ways which are now being much more fully appreciated. Pahta et al. argue that "it is important to look beyond the borders and coasts of England and aim at a Europe-wide approach" (2017, 6), but, I would add, researchers working on multilingualism should not confine themselves just to Europe; even the minutely local can come to interact with ideas involving the global. Words and their etymologies can, in fact, lead us far beyond Europe, thus the potential of larger units—namely, multilingual texts—remains to be further explored in this light.

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