The Languages of Medieval England

The French Journal of Medieval English Studies *Études Médiévales Anglaises* is seeking submissions for its 102nd issue focusing on "the Languages of Medieval England". The papers, written in French or English, should be submitted to Elise Louviot **by December 15th, 2022** (see more information below). Authors who wish to submit a paper are advised to get in touch and submit a title with a brief description of content as soon as convenient.

It is a well-known fact that Medieval England, like most places at any given time in human history, was multilingual. The languages of Medieval England are many: Brittonic, Latin, English, Old Norse and French, to name but the most important, and each item on that list can be further subdivided into several varieties (along geographical, but also sociological & stylistic lines).

Examining the languages of Medieval England requires us to think of how they interacted and related to each other, from a number of perspectives.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, it is worth investigating the respective statuses of these languages. Who used them? For what purposes? What was the meaning of using a certain language in this or that context? For instance, the broad lines of the interplay between English and Latin throughout the period are well-known: Old English gradually challenged the dominant status of Latin as the official written language; the Conquest re-instated Latin in its dominant position and that dominance gradually eroded in favour of English once again over time. However, a closer look shows that the evolution is neither universal nor straightforward. Ingrid Ivarsen's work on Anglo-Saxon legislation, for instance, reveals a much more complex evolution, from an initial multilingualism partly obscured by later transmission, through a mostly monolingual English phase under the reign of Alfred, to a newly multilingual period, where Wulfstan of York once again makes use of Latin (Ivarsen 2021).

Multilingualism can also be examined in terms of language contact. How much did the languages of medieval England influence each other? Which parts of the language were more readily influenced and to what extent is it possible to trace the paths taken by linguistic innovations spurred on by language contact? In many general descriptions of the History of the English language, French is assumed to be the language of the upper class and to have exerted an influence especially on areas connected to an aristocratic lifestyle. However, recent studies have demonstrated the influence of French vocabulary in various occupational domains, proving that "French evidently exerted influence not only on the language of social elite pursuits, but also on that of the technology relating to everyday occupations" (Ingham, Sylvester & Marcus, 2019).

The materiality of the languages of medieval England is also worth examining. To what extent does the language of coins and inscribed objects differ from language preserved on parchment? Why use runes on parchment? How different are scribal practices from one language to another? Which conventions of writing can be said to be language-independent (see for instance Laura Wright's work on abbreviations in business writings, 2011)?

For this issue of *Études Médiévales Anglaises*, we welcome papers on all aspects of linguistic diversity in Medieval England.

The papers, written in English or in French, must be sent before **December 15th, 2022** to Elise Louviot (elise.louviot@univ-reims.fr). *Études Médiévales Anglaises* uses double-blind peer review. The stylesheet to be used may be found on our website: https://amaes.jimdo.com/submit-a-paper/

Works Cited

Ingham, Richard P., Louise Sylvester and Imogen Marcus (2019). "Penetration of French-origin lexis in Middle English occupational domains", in Michela Cennamo and Claudia Fabrizio (eds.), *Historical Linguistics 2015: Selected papers from the 22nd International Conference on Historical Linguistics, Naples, 27-31 July 2015*, 460-478. Amsterdam: John Benjamins

Ivarsen, Ingrid (2021). "A vernacular genre? Latin and the early English laws", *Journal of Medieval History*, 47:4-5, 497-508, DOI: 10.1080/03044181.2021.1986661

Wright, Laura (2011). "On variation in medieval mixed-language business writing", in Herbert Schendl & Laura Wright (eds.), *Code-switching in early English*, 191-218. Göttingen: De Gruyter