

MULTILINGUALISM IN MEDIEVAL MERCANTILE TEXTS.
EVIDENCE FROM THE CANTELOWE ACCOUNTS

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this article is on the multilingualism of a medieval mercantile text, the *Cantelowe Accounts* (1450-1451), which were written in Italy by a Londoner. This text is peculiar, since the writer used a particular mixture of Middle English (ME), Anglo-Norman (AN), Latin (Lt) with Italian (It). This is the reason why the *Accounts* show interesting analogies with the administrative-business texts produced in England in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in relation to the degree and type of language contact. Firstly the multilingual practices of the *Accounts* are investigated, particularly in relation to the insertion of foreign fixed forms and to the organisation and analysis of particular mixing forms; secondly in order to explain this peculiar multilingualism a writing modality is suggested.