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3. The Multilingual Dynamics of History in the Margins of MS Laud Misc. 636*

▼ **ABSTRACT** In the thirteenth century, the Anglo-Norman *Livere de reis de Brittanie* (*LRB*) was added to the margins in the twelfth-century Old English *Peterborough Chronicle* in Oxford, Bodl., MS Laud Misc. 636. While they are seldom discussed together, this contribution argues that these texts were deliberately combined to generate historical authority, and were meant to be read as complementary, rather than distinct, histories of England. The Laud manuscript itself thus became emblematic of England's multilingual history, giving its version of the *LRB* the authority to serve as an exemplar for a high-status manuscript in the fourteenth century. This demonstrates that medieval manuscripts should be seen as historical and linguistic contact zones within which the multilingual dynamics of history can be used to establish textual authority.

▼ **KEYWORDS** *Peterborough Chronicle*; *Livere de reis de Brittanie*; Old English; Anglo-Norman; multilingualism; contact zones; historical authority; historiography; palaeography; marginalia

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Medieval manuscripts offer a material space for what Orietta Da Rold and Mary Swan call 'linguistic contiguities'.[1] They represent linguistic and historical contact zones, whose materiality allows textual interactions to play out not only across languages, but also across time. While diachronic interactions can be easily overlooked, medieval manuscripts may reveal complex multilingual dynamics spanning centuries. A case in point, drawn from within the evolving multilingual culture of England after the Norman Conquest, is Oxford, Bodl., MS Laud Misc. 636, which is trilingual but rarely treated as such.[2] It is best known for containing the E-text of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (*ASC*), commonly known as the *Peterborough Chronicle* for the Benedictine abbey in which it was produced. The *Chronicle* is written in Old English shading into Middle English, including several Latin entries and continued up to 1154. Additionally, in the late thirteenth century, the Anglo-Norman *Livere de reis de Brittanie* (*LRB*) was copied into the margins of fols 86^{v}–90^{v}. This text is also marginalized in another sense: modern scholars of Old English rarely study Anglo-Norman and vice versa. Consequently, apart from two unpublished theses the texts are almost never discussed together.[3] Furthermore, while the *Peterborough Chronicle* has been recently re-edited, no edition of the Laud manuscript's Anglo-Norman text has yet been published.[4] A reassessment of the manuscript in its institutional Peterborough context, however, suggests that the LRB was deliberately combined with, and in one instance corrected against, the Old English chronicle, producing a demonstratively multilingual history.

As a transhistorical contact zone, MS Laud Misc. 636 illustrates how historical texts in different vernaculars can work together to both generate and preserve historical authority. Although the concept of the contact zone was originally devised by Mary Louise Pratt in the context of South America's colonization to define 'social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other',[5] it has since been productively applied to material artefacts, including medieval manuscripts. Notably, Jonathan Hsy uses it to read the multilingual miscellany as 'a textual space where languages meet, inform, and transform each other'.[6] This approach is particularly helpful in that it allows us to move past perceived language hierarchies, such as distinctions between

1 Da Rold and Swan, 'Linguistic Contiguities'.

2 A digital facsimile is available online via the Bodleian Library; see also *The Peterborough Chronicle*, ed. by Whitelock.

3 Goetz, 'Textual Portability and its Uses' and Schott, 'Intimate Reading'; cf. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, p. 215.

4 Editions include, e.g., *The Peterborough Chronicle*, ed. and trans. by Muir and Sparks; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. by Irvine; and *The Peterborough Chronicle*, ed. by Clark. An edition of the Laud version of the *LRB* is currently being prepared by Elisabetta Magnanti. For a slightly faulty transcription and translation, see Schott, 'Intimate Reading', pp. 255–85; for a partial transcription, see Roberts, *Guide to Scripts*, plate 23b, pp. 111–12.

5 Pratt, 'Arts of the Contact Zone', p. 34 and Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 6.

6 Hsy, *Trading Tongues*, p. 159.

referential, courtly, and local languages,[7] and instead embrace a more flexible view of multilingual interactions and transfers of authority. Indeed, as Da Rold and Swan have shown, in post-Conquest manuscripts 'language (as in Old English, Middle English, French) is not the dominant category criterion'.[8] Instead, as Ad Putter argues, the *type* of texts found in multilingual manuscripts is central to understanding how these work together across languages.[9]

As demonstrated below, this is especially true in the case of MS Laud Misc. 636, which forms an integral part of the multilingual historiographical tradition of Peterborough Abbey. Within its historical context, the carefully corrected Anglo-Norman *LRB* served as a complementary history to be read together with, though not actually alongside, the Old English text. More importantly, the joint presentation of these texts made the manuscript emblematic of England's multilingual history and allowed the *LRB* to draw on the historical authority of the *Chronicle*, so that it ultimately became an authoritative exemplar itself. It is through the creation of its multilingual nexus of Old English, Latin, and Anglo-Norman that the Laud manuscript gained new historical significance in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

The Anglo-Norman Marginal Addition to the Old English Text

From the beginning, the Old English and the Anglo-Norman text evolved within the same historiographical space. The E-text of the *ASC* can with some certainty be placed at Peterborough Abbey, where it was copied, amplified with Peterborough-specific interpolations, and continued in two hands between *c.* 1121 and *c.* 1155.[10] The second continuator's hand also appears in a composite Peterborough cartulary known as the Black Book.[11] The E-text introduces its annalistic records with a preface, based on Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, which begins (fol. 1^{r}):

> **B**rittene igland is ehta hund mila lang. 7 twa hund brad. 7 her sind on þis iglande fif geþeode. englisc. 7 brittisc. 7 wilsc. 7 scyttisc. 7 pyhtisc. 7 bocleden
>
> (The island of Britain is 800 miles long and 200 miles broad, and here on this island there are five languages: English, and British, and Welsh, and Scottish, and Pictish, and Latin.)

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7 See Grévin, *Le Parchemin des cieux*, pp. 44–69.

8 Da Rold and Swan, 'Linguistic Contiguities', p. 265.

9 Putter, 'The Organisation of Multilingual Miscellanies'.

10 *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. by Irvine, p. xiii; see particularly Home, *The Peterborough Version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and Stafford, *After Alfred*, pp. 297–320.

11 London, Soc. Antiq., MS 60, fols 6^{r}–73^{r}; see *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. by Irvine, p. xiii; *The Peterborough Chronicle*, ed. by Whitelock, pp. xvii–xviii; Martin, *The Cartularies and Registers of Peterborough Abbey*, item 1, pp. 1–7.

This lays out, as Renée R. Trilling notes, a remarkably broad vision of a multilingual and multi-ethnic English history.[12] In a sense, it primes its audience to understand English history itself as a multilingual contact zone. Furthermore, due to an error in its exemplar,[13] the *Peterborough Chronicle* announces five languages but lists six, enabling this expanding list to easily accommodate the later arrival of Anglo-Norman. It is within this multilingual history that the twelfth-century Peterborough additions grounded the abbey's historical rights and identity.[14] Numerous late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Latin marginalia attest to continuing interest: most frequently, some form of the word *Burch* highlights a Peterborough connection.[15] There is no reason to assume that the annotators did not understand most of the *Peterborough Chronicle*, even if it was difficult reading: as Elizabeth Solopova argues, Old English was read well into the fourteenth and even fifteenth centuries.[16] This Old English chronicle clearly retained some of its historical significance for Peterborough for centuries after its production.

Peterborough Abbey is also notable for a wider historiographical tradition, within which both the continuation of the *ASC* and the later addition of the *LRB* took place. An early twelfth-century Peterborough booklist records a largely patristic inventory, but also includes several historical texts, such as a 'historia anglorum' (history of the English), likely the eleventh-century copy of Bede's Latin *Historia ecclesiastica* now bound in the same volume as the booklist.[17] Subsequently, the abbey produced significant historiographical output besides the Old English chronicle, most importantly the twelfth-century Latin chronicle of Peterborough by the monk Hugh Candidus, and its thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century continuations attributed to Robert of Swaffham and Walter of Whittlesey.[18] Another thirteenth-century Latin house-history also features in the Black Book.[19] The addition of the Anglo-Norman *LRB* to MS Laud Misc. 636 was not only, as Christine Marie Schott has it, a continuation 'of the accumulative tradition of chronicle historiography that we have seen in the other annotators of the manuscript',[20] but was also

12 Trilling, 'The Writing of History in the Early Middle Ages', p. 250.

13 *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. by Irvine, p. xlii.

14 Home, *The Peterborough Version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 22.

15 Despite heavy trimming, these can still be seen on fols 14^{r}, 14^{v}, 17^{v}, 24^{r}, 29^{v}, 36^{v}, 46^{r}, 46^{v}, 56^{r}, 58^{v}, 78^{v}, 87^{v}, 88^{r}, 88^{v}, and 90^{r}; see *The Peterborough Chronicle*, ed. by Whitelock, pp. 21–22 and Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, item 346, p. 425.

16 Solopova, 'From Bede to Wyclif'; see also Rowley, *The Old English Version of Bede's 'Historia ecclesiastica'*, pp. 174–94.

17 Oxford, Bodl., MS Bodley 163, fol. 251^{r}; see Friis-Jensen and Willoughby, *Peterborough Abbey*, p. 8.

18 See Karn and King, 'The Peterborough Chronicles'; for extant historiographical manuscripts with a Peterborough provenance, see also Sharpe and Willoughby, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain*.

19 London, Soc. Antiq., MS 60, fols 75^{r}–80^{v}, 85^{r}–136^{v}; see Martin, *The Cartularies and Registers of Peterborough Abbey*, item 1, p. 4.

20 Schott, 'Intimate Reading', p. 55.

carried out within the context of a long-standing and varied engagement in history writing. Adding to the *Peterborough Chronicle* cemented its place 'at the centre of evolving historiography at the abbey'.[21] The manuscript's new multilingual design directly reflects the multilingual reading and writing of history at Peterborough.

The textual history of the *LRB* in MS Laud Misc. 636 presents some difficulty. It is a particularly fluid type of short historical text typical of thirteenth-century England,[22] and there is no edition including all known manuscripts.[23] Ruth Dean lists twenty-seven different manuscript copies, with a twenty-eighth identified by John Spence.[24] Of these, only one can be connected directly to the Laud manuscript: the early fourteenth-century Cambridge, CCC, MS 53, which Cecily Clark suggests may have been copied from the Laud text.[25] As far as the latter's exemplar is concerned, there may well have been multiple source texts. The initial *Brutus* section was probably a separately sourced addition to the main text: the *Brutus* prologue is textually closest to Oxford, Bodl., MS Selden Supra 74, whereas the main text starting with the early English kingdoms is closer to that in BL, Cotton MS Caligula A.ix.[26] Strikingly, the *Brutus* prologue in MS Laud Misc. 636 is the only part of the text to use the Tironian **7** to represent the Anglo-Norman conjunction *et* (fol. 86^{v}); thereafter it is consistently written as ***e***. The main text of the *LRB* seems to have circulated independently of the *Brutus* prologue, which is found in only twelve manuscripts.[27] It is therefore conceivable that the Anglo-Norman text was compiled from multiple exemplars to produce as complete a chronicle as possible for the Laud manuscript.

The addition of the *LRB* supplemented the Old English text with an Anglo-Norman account of British kings, carrying both a complementary and an emblematic significance. As noted, the *LRB* was written around the *Peterborough Chronicle* in the margins of fols 86^{v}–90^{v} in a late thirteenth-century

21 Home, *The Peterborough Version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 141.

22 Goetz, 'Textual Portability and its Uses', pp. 91–136.

23 The first, rather eclectic edition, of the text was *Le Livere de Reis de Brittanie e Le Livere de Reis de Engletere*, ed. by Glover in 1865. Ten manuscripts were consulted in 'Kritische Ausgabe der anglonormannischen Chroniken', ed. by Foltys, and an additional manuscript in 'An Early French Prose History of the Kings of England', ed. by Tyson.

24 Dean with Boulton, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, item 13, pp. 12–15; Spence, *Reimagining History*, p. 12.

25 Clark, 'Appendix', p. 43.

26 'Kritische Ausgabe der anglonormannischen Chroniken', ed. by Foltys, pp. 42–43; Goetz, 'Textual Portability and its Uses', p. 281.

27 Eight of these twelve manuscripts are included in 'Kritische Ausgabe der anglonormannischen Chroniken', ed. by Foltys, namely Cambridge, CCC, MS 53; Cambridge, TC, MS R.14.7; Cambridge MA, HLS, MS 1; Kew, TNA, MS E 164/24; BL, Royal MS 20.C.vi; and Oxford, Bodl., MSS Douce 115, Selden Supra 74, and Tanner 195. The *Brutus* prologue also appears in Cambridge, TC, MSS R.4.26 and R.7.23; BL, Cotton MS Vespasian E.iv; and Oxford, Bodl., MS Bodley 233.

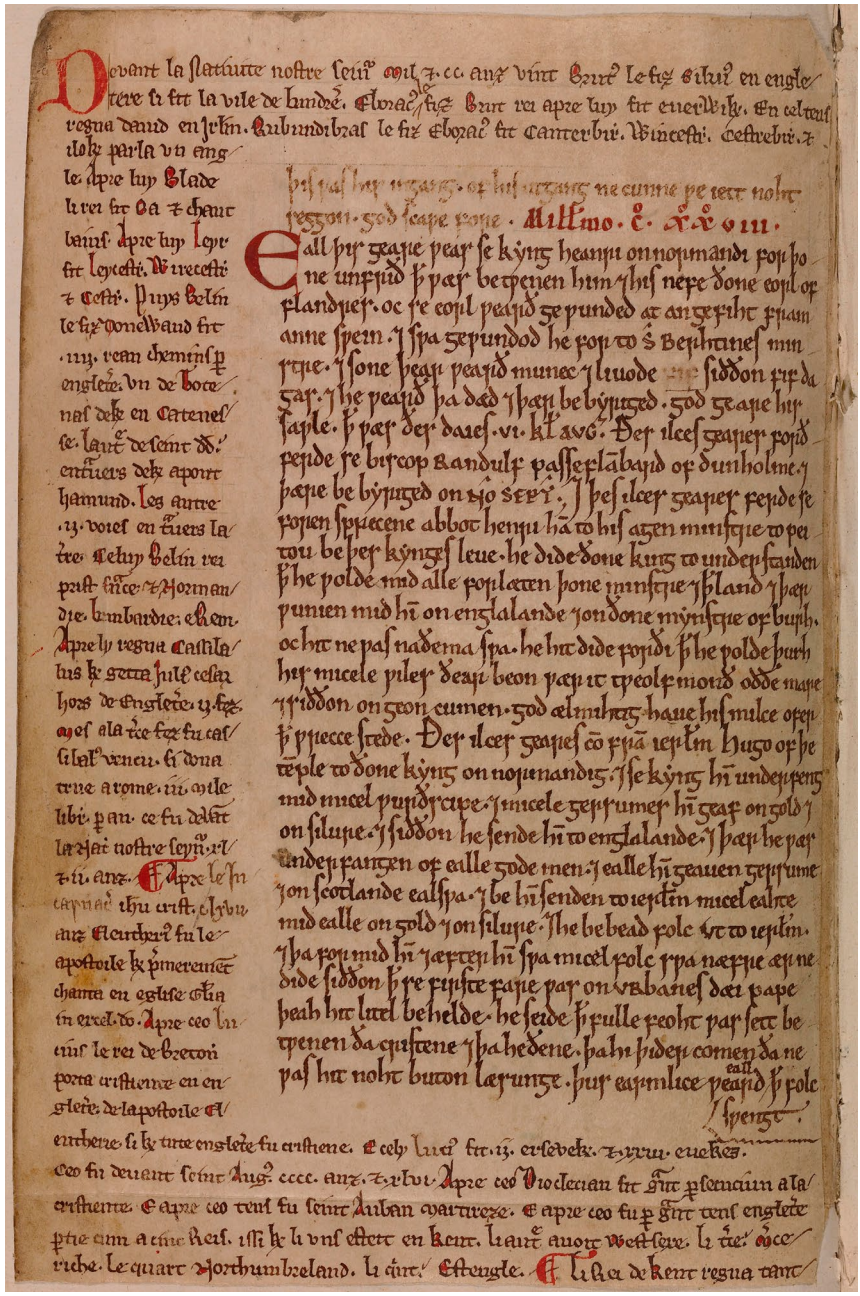


Figure 3.1. The incipit of the *Livere de reis de Brittanie* copied in the margins of the *Peterborough Chronicle*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 636, fol. 86ᵛ. Peterborough Abbey, England, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Image courtesy of the Bodleian Libraries, CC BY 4.0.

textualis rotunda script (Fig. 3.1). As Clark notes, this hand greatly resembles another that copied the Anglo-Norman Statute of Westminster of 1275 into the Black Book,[28] although Schott may be right in arguing that they are not identical.[29] However, the hand responsible for copying the *LRB* is probably identical to the late thirteenth-century hand that added a hitherto overlooked Latin list of English counties and bishoprics on an empty leaf at the end of the Black Book's twelfth-century part, which largely overlaps with the *LRB*'s description of early English kingdoms.[30] If so, this late thirteenth-century Peterborough scribe seems to have had a consistent interest in English history and geography, regardless of the language in which he wrote. To the Old English *Peterborough Chronicle*, a history of the multilingual island and Peterborough Abbey's place within it, he then added the Anglo-Norman *LRB*, a history of the island's rulers in the language of the aristocracy. It begins with Britain's first legendary king (fol. 86^{v}): '**D**evant la Natiuite nostre sein*ur* Mil 7 .cc. anz vint Brut*us* le fiz Silui*us* en Engletere' (1200 years before the birth of our Lord, Brutus son of Silvius came to England). There seems, however, to be no direct connection between the *LRB*'s placement and the Old English annals on the same folio.[31] It was probably added at the end of the *Peterborough Chronicle* while leaving the margins of the last leaf (fol. 91) blank for future additions. The text breaks off with the accession of Edward I in 1272 (fol. 90^{v}), presumably 'because it was brought up to date'.[32] The *LRB*'s marginal layout, however, suggests it was deliberately designed to complement the Old English text. The new layout created by the addition recalls the developing tradition of scholastic biblical glosses, where the combined texts constitute 'a form of hypertext'[33] with a clear hierarchical presentation, but which are nevertheless to be read together. The *LRB* thus asks to be read alongside the *Peterborough Chronicle*, making the manuscript itself emblematic of England's multifaceted and multilingual history.

The Complementary and Emblematic Functions of the Texts

What the complementary placement of the Old English and Anglo-Norman texts means for how they interacted within the manuscript as a contact zone becomes clearest in view of the careful corrections to the marginal *LRB*. Matthew Fisher notes that historical texts like the *LRB* positively invite scribal

28 London, Soc. Antiq., MS 60, fols 209–19; see Clark, 'Appendix', p. 39.

29 Schott, 'Intimate Reading', p. 69; see particularly the much more curved final stroke in the abbreviation for *ke* and the markedly hooked shape of **r**.

30 London, Soc. Antiq., MS 60, fol. 74^{v}; cf. MS Laud Misc. 636, fols 86^{v}–87^{r}.

31 A suggested connection with the Old English entry for 1122 on fols 86^{r}–86^{v}, recording the arrival of a French abbot, is tenuous; see Goetz, 'Textual Portability and its Uses', p. 100.

32 Clark, 'Appendix', p. 39.

33 Parkes, 'Layout and Presentation of the Text', p. 60.

interventions of the kind he terms 'scribal authorship'.[34] This accounts for the large degree of fluidity among these texts, including several manuscripts of the *LRB* which display later corrections and additions.[35] The treatment of the Anglo-Norman chronicle in MS Laud Misc. 636 similarly evinces a strong concern for accuracy and completeness on the part of both its scribe and later readers. Scribal corrections occurred in several stages throughout the copying process, reflecting an editorial practice that fits the posited use of multiple exemplars. First, the scribe meticulously corrected most of his copying errors through subpuncting: for example, after writing 'de dunk*e* esteit rei' (of then was king; fol. 87^{r}), he subpuncted 'de' (of) and replaced it by the interlinear addition of the more grammatical 'k*e*' (that).[36] Then, in the section on King Edgar, he seems to have added that 'Il gist a glestr*e*' (he lies in Gloucester; fol. 89^{v}) at the end of a line, squashed to fit the available space, after having already begun the next section with an initial in the line below. Finally, during rubrication he noticed that King Ethelbrith — i.e., Ecgberht of Wessex — was mistakenly said to have been 'nuriz en estsexe' (raised in Essex; fol. 87^{r}), so he crossed out the last word in red ink and wrote 'westsexe' above the line. Each of these corrections agrees with several other manuscripts and therefore probably does not originate with MS Laud Misc. 636.[37] There is no indication, however, that beyond his concern for accuracy and completeness within the *LRB*, the scribe otherwise adapted it to the *Peterborough Chronicle*. This leads Sharon K. Goetz to conclude that the Laud *LRB*, while seeming to offer updated historical commentary, was merely meant 'to *resemble* a gloss' as opposed to actually being one.[38]

There is, however, a further set of corrections to the *Brutus* prologue which suggest that the *LRB* was indeed subsequently read together with the *Peterborough Chronicle*. Parts of the text were erased and overwritten in the section concerning the introduction of Christianity to Britain under the legendary King Lucius (fol. 86^{v}; Fig. 3.1).[39] It now reads:

> ¶ Apre {le Incarnac*iun*} ih*e*su crist.{c}l{xvii.} anz Eleuther*ius* fu le apostoile k*e* p*re*merem*e*n*t* chanta en eglise Gl*or*ia in excel*sis* d*e*o. Apre ceo {lu}cius le rei de Breton*e* porta cristiente en englet*er*e. de lapostoile Eleutherie. si k*e* tute englet*er*e fu cristiene.
>
> (167 years after the incarnation of Jesus Christ, Eleutherius was the pope who first sang *Gloria in excelsis Deo* in church. After this, Lucius, king of Britain, brought Christianity to England from Pope Eleutherius, so that all England was Christian.)

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34 Fisher, *Scribal Authorship and the Writing of History*, p. 28.

35 See particularly BL, Cotton MS Vespasian E.iv and Oxford, Bodl., MS Bodley 233.

36 See also 'dun hure en[tre] autre' (fol. 88^{r}) and 'cheuaus couerz tut en seles e enfren[s]ez' (fol. 88^{v}).

37 See 'Kritische Ausgabe der anglonormannischen Chroniken', ed. by Foltys, pp. 64, 65, 82.

38 Goetz, 'Textual Portability and its Uses', p. 101.

39 This set of corrections is also discussed in Schott, 'Intimate Reading', p. 69.

All other known variants of the *Brutus* prologue, except the later Cambridge, CCC, MS 53, count the years from the Passion or, in one case, the Resurrection[40], to the introduction of Christianity to Britain. No other manuscript has the same date: only CCC MS 53 comes close with 'c.lxviii' (fol. 180^{v}), while other readings vary considerably and are often subject to corrections of their own.[41] Furthermore, the king's name is corrected in the Laud manuscript, with its first two letters erased and overwritten. Since the textually closest manuscript calls him *Bocius*, it seems reasonable to assume that this was the name originally given.[42] The corrector's hand imitates the aspect of the *LRB*'s *textualis* script but also displays the prominent forked ascenders and long **r** of early *anglicana*.[43] This is consistent with the *anglicana* hands of the late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century annotations of the *Peterborough Chronicle* although, *pace* Schott, none are visibly identical to the corrections.[44] Evidently, the same monks read both the Old English and the Anglo-Norman chronicle as part of Peterborough's culture of multilingual historiography, within which the source of the corrections might also be found.

The date associated with Lucius's Christianization of Britain varies considerably in historical writings.[45] One parallel for the Laud manuscript's corrections, however, can be identified in the Latin annals appended to Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*.[46] As discussed above, the abbey owned an eleventh-century copy of the *Historia ecclesiastica*, as indicated by its inclusion in a twelfth-century booklist; this volume, now Oxford, Bodl., MS Bodley 163, is still recorded there in a late fourteenth-century catalogue.[47] The coming of Christianity to Britain is described in its annal for 167 (fol. 205^{v}):

> Anno incarnationis d*omi*nice .c°.lx°.vii°. eleuther rome p*rae*sul factus; xv. annos aeccl*esi*am glorisissime rexit. cui litteras rex brettanniae lucius mittens. ut *christ*ian*us* efficeretur p*et*iit. *et* impetrauit
>
> (In the year of the incarnation of the Lord 167, Eleuther was made bishop of Rome and ruled the Church most gloriously for fifteen

40 Oxford, Bodl., MS Douce 115, fol. 67^{v}.

41 Other readings: 'dis e set' (Oxford, Bodl., MS Selden Supra 74, fol. 122^{v}); '.{lx.}e.xxii.' (Cambridge, TC, R.14.7, fol. 158^{v}); 'lx.e.xxii.' (Cambridge, MA, HLS, MS 1, fol. 11^{v}); 'lxxxii' (Oxford, Bodl., MS Tanner 195, fol. 132^{v}); 'xii' (Oxford, Bodl., MS Douce 115, fol. 67^{v}); 'xx. 7 .ii' (BL, Royal MS 20.C.vi, fol. 186^{v}); 'vint e deus' (Kew, TNA, E 164/24, fol. 37^{r}); 'xxij' (Cambridge, TC, R.4.26, fol. 159^{v}); 'cent 7 trente deus' (Cambridge, TC, R.7.23, fol. 13^{v}); '{¬.c.e¬}.xxii.' (BL, Cotton MS Vespasian E.iv, fol. 107^{v}); '{C¬l¬xxxvi}' (Oxford, Bodl., Bodley 233, fol. 105^{v}); see also 'Kritische Ausgabe der anglonormannischen Chroniken', p. 54.

42 Oxford, Bodl., MS Selden Supra 74, fol. 122^{v}; see also Oxford, Bodl., MS Douce 115, fol. 67^{v}.

43 See Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands*, p. xv; Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books*, p. 136.

44 Compare, e.g., '⟨*ab*⟩*bas* henric*us*' on fol. 85^{v}; 'burg' on fols 87^{v}, 88^{r}, 88^{v}, 90^{r}. Schott, 'Intimate Reading', p. 69.

45 Smith, 'Lucius of Britain', p. 29.

46 Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, p. 562.

47 Friis-Jensen and Willoughby, *Peterborough Abbey*, pp. 8, 77; Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, item 304, p. 358.

> years. Lucius, king of Britain, sent a letter to him asking to be made a Christian, and he obtained that.)[48]

This annal gives all the information necessary for the corrections. But it must be noted that unlike MS Laud Misc. 636, this copy of the *Historia ecclesiastica* contains no contemporaneous annotations: its chronologically closest marginalia are written in an *anglicana formata* script without forked ascenders, and seem to date from later in the fourteenth century.[49]

In fact, a more probable source is the Old English chronicle in MS Laud Misc. 636 itself, which gives the same information as Bede in its entry for the year 167 (fol. 3^{v}):

> Her eleutheri*us* on rome onfeng biscopdom. 7 þone wurþlice .xv. wint*er* geheold. To ðam luci*us* brytwalana cing sende men. 7 bead fulluhtes. 7 he him sona sende. 7 heo siððan wunodon on rihtan gelefan. oðð*e* dioclitianus rice.
>
> (In this year Eleutherius received the bishopric in Rome, and he held it worthily for fifteen years. To him Lucius, king of the Britons, sent men and asked for baptism, and he immediately sent to him, and they afterwards remained in the true faith until the reign of Diocletian.)

This specific entry is unannotated, but the surviving marginal annotations in MS Laud Misc. 636 display a marked interest in Church history, notably the establishment of the church at Canterbury (fol. 9^{v}) and the arrival of St Augustine (fol. 11^{r}).[50] Thus, a likely scenario emerges. A monk with some recollection of the Church history recorded in the *Peterborough Chronicle*, or even Bede's annals, noticed the discrepancy in the *LRB*, possibly prompted by its most obvious mistake in naming the king *Bocius*. He then leafed back through the manuscript until he found the corresponding Old English entry, which is intelligible even with rudimentary linguistic knowledge, and corrected the Anglo-Norman text accordingly. In the process, he overlooked that the earlier Latin entry for 134 credits Pope Telesphorus, rather than Eleutherius, with the introduction of the hymn *Gloria in excelsis Deo* (fol. 3^{r}).[51] The Old English and Anglo-Norman chronicles were not read in parallel, as the latter's marginal layout might suggest; but they were still considered together, as two constitutive elements within the historiographical continuity of the multilingual manuscript.

This would explain why there are no further corrections to the *LRB* in the same hand, despite other, less noticeable discrepancies. No other entries overlap so conveniently: Lucius's Christianization of Britain is the only event recorded in both chronicles that, in the *LRB*, is introduced by a date immediately

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48 Cf. Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, p. 562.

49 See especially fols 74^{r}, 98^{r}, 104^{r}, 113^{v}, 178^{r}; see Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands*, pp. xvi–xvii.

50 *The Peterborough Chronicle*, ed. by Whitelock, p. 21.

51 See Goetz, 'Textual Portability and its Uses', p. 101.

following the paraph marking the section's beginning. When content overlaps elsewhere, differences take the form of either relatively recognizable variations in the spelling of English names or hard-to-follow numeric discrepancies. For example, the Old English entry for 812 notes that Charlemagne 'rixade .xlv. wintra' (reigned for forty-five years; fol. 27^{r}), which contradicts the *LRB*'s statement that he '.xlvi. anz p*ar* tut regna' (reigned forty-six years in total; fol. 87^{v}). Another instance concerns King Ecgberht of Wessex, called Ecgbriht in the Old English chronicle and Ethelbrith in the *LRB*. The Old English entry for 836 states that he 'rixade .xxxvii. winter 7 .vii. monðas' (reigned for thirty-seven years and seven months; fol. 28^{v}), while the figures given for Ethelbrith's life in the *LRB* add up to only thirty-three years and six months (fol. 87^{v}). These are the types of details that are difficult enough to preserve in the transmission of texts like the *LRB*, in which, as Goetz notes, exact dates are rare and tend to vary considerably.[52] A reader of the two texts in MS Laud Misc. 636 could only have confirmed them by continually leafing back and forth, which would have been rather awkward. While the layout of the *LRB* as a marginal addition to the last folios makes clear its notional function as a supplement to the Old English text, it also makes continuous comparison practically impossible. In this sense, the design is more emblematic than practical.

The fact that only the most obvious contradiction between the texts was corrected suggests that the two chronicles were read complementarily, rather than side-by-side: different accounts of the same history fulfilling different functions, as indicated by their different formats and languages. It is in this way that 'the two texts work together dynamically', as Schott posits.[53] Each narrative notionally complements the other: the old localized chronicle of England in Old English, and the new royal history of Britain in Anglo-Norman. Their chronologies broadly align, with the *LRB* adding numerous anecdotes drawn from William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum* that are not mentioned in the *Peterborough Chronicle*.[54] The *LRB* supplements the Old English entry for 871 on the Battle of Ashdown (fols 30^{v}–31^{r}) with an account of King Æthelræd delaying battle in order to hear Mass (fol. 88^{r}). To the poetic entry for 975 recording the death of King Edgar (fols 38^{r}–38^{v}), it adds the story of his miraculously uncorrupted body (fol. 89^{v}). And, to the laconic entry for 1017 noting the death of the traitorous Earl Eadric (fol. 49^{r}), the *LRB* adds the manner of his execution at King Cnut's command (fol. 90^{r}). These additions, however, must not be understood as literal insertions. Even though the two texts are situated alongside each other in what Goetz terms 'a textual environment that invites parallel reading and cross-referencing',[55] parallel reading and cross-referencing were never *required*. Despite the *LRB*'s marginal layout, its placement at the

52 Goetz, 'Textual Portability and its Uses', p. 45.
53 Schott, 'Intimate Reading', p. 70.
54 See Clark, 'Appendix', p. 40 n. 11.
55 Goetz, 'Textual Portability and its Uses', p. 82.

manuscript's end makes this rather difficult. What it does allow is the *possibility* of cross-referencing within a transhistorical contact zone, within which the texts 'inform […] each other',[56] and the sense of historical authority and completeness this possibility implies. As the corrections on fol. 86^{v} suggest, when readers did make use of this possibility to cross-reference, it was the Old English chronicle that was accorded more authority. Yet the Anglo-Norman *LRB* could build on and complete this authority, so that both texts, each a facet of England's multilingual history, offer reciprocal authorization. Thus, in the late thirteenth century, this carefully designed manuscript made use of its multilingual possibilities to create an authoritative composite history.

This design was clearly effective. Julian Luxford argues that the layout of MS Laud Misc. 636 later inspired another Peterborough manuscript: BL, Additional MS 39758, a Latin chronicle commissioned by Walter of Whittlesey around 1330. In it, a Latin history of Peterborough is carefully framed by a Latin *Brut* chronicle written in the margins. The purpose, as Luxford has it, was probably 'to couch Peterborough's history in that of the nation at large'.[57] Walter of Whittlesey's chronicle thus seems to reproduce, in more elaborate fashion, the composite design the Laud manuscript acquired in the late thirteenth century. Its use of Latin throughout, however, obscures the linguistic dimension so prominent in MS Laud Misc. 636: its presentation of multilingual facets of history for a multilingual audience. In this respect, the Laud manuscript may even be compared to a twelfth-century Canterbury manuscript that ostentatiously combines Latin, Old English, and Anglo-Norman: Cambridge, TC, MS R.17.1, the trilingual Eadwine Psalter. In pointing towards a kind of supra-linguistic knowledge accessible only through multiple languages, 'its trilingual *mise-en-page* carried more weight than its practical potential as a scholarly reference work'.[58] Within Peterborough's multilingual historiographical milieu, the Anglo-Norman *LRB*'s addition to the margins of an Old English chronicle with some Latin entries carried a similar kind of symbolism. Rather than a practical volume for cross-referencing, MS Laud Misc. 636 became representative of English history. This multilingual history was only complete in all its multilingual facets, underscoring the manuscript's historical authority.

The Authority of the Anglo-Norman Text

The extent of the authority with which this multilingualism imbued the *LRB* text in MS Laud Misc. 636 can be seen in another Peterborough manuscript.

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56 Hsy, *Trading Tongues*, p. 159.

57 Luxford, 'Intelligent by Design', p. 12.

58 Gilbert and Harris, 'The Written Word: Literacy across Languages', p. 168; on the impracticality of the Eadwine Psalter's archaic English, see also Faulkner, *A New Literary History of the Long Twelfth Century*, pp. 48–50.

Between 1307 and 1321, MS Laud Misc. 636 served as the exemplar for the *LRB* in CCC MS 53, a lavishly illuminated manuscript known as the Peterborough Psalter and Bestiary. Between these two sections, the *LRB* text and a Latin chronicle of Peterborough Abbey are copied in the same hand.[59] This historiographical combination, an Anglo-Norman chronicle of kings followed by a Latin chronicle of abbots, once again indicates a complementary design. As Luxford notes, with a degree of simplification: 'French was appropriate to the national history because it was the language of kings and of such chronicles, while Latin was proper for anything to do with the monastery'.[60] The choice of language certainly emphasizes the different historical categories, and the ways in which they can be read together, without having to reproduce the marginal layout or the archaic Old English of MS Laud Misc. 636. This change of layout, however, is part of a wider aspect in which the design of the *LRB* in CCC MS 53 differs significantly from its exemplar. Here the text is laid out handsomely in two columns, with blue and golden initials, and written out in a significantly more formal *textualis* script, beginning in *textualis quadrata* before gradually shading into *semiquadrata*.[61] The *LRB*'s inclusion and presentation within this high-status manuscript indicates the level of authority that was then accorded to the Anglo-Norman text at Peterborough Abbey. The *LRB* text so carefully placed next to the *Peterborough Chronicle*, edited and corrected, was here equally carefully copied out as an authoritative account of Britain's history.

This impression is confirmed by a closer examination of the textual relationship between the two manuscripts. All of the Laud text's corrections are reproduced in CCC MS 53, except for the date of Lucius's Christianization of Britain, which due to a misread minim became 168 instead of 167 (fol. 180^{v}). That the text in CCC MS 53 was copied directly from MS Laud Misc. 636 is further demonstrated by certain scribal errors. Clark notes that the grammatically correct reading 'cheuaus couerz' (covered horses) in MS Laud Misc. 636 (fol. 88^{v}), which ends in a misshapen ***z*** easily mistaken for an ***e***, became the grammatically incorrect 'cheuaus couere', with a deliberate final ***e***, in CCC MS 53 (fol. 182^{v}).[62] Two further instances can be added. First, the name 'Brithrich' in the Laud manuscript (fol. 87^{r}) is consistently reproduced as 'brithrith' in its Cambridge copy (fol. 181^{r}), an easy misreading of *textualis* ***c*** for ***t***. More conclusively, the words 'home nul k*e*' (no man who) in MS Laud Misc. 636 (fol. 89^{r}), in which the ***n*** is misshapen and vaguely resembles a ***q***, were copied as the completely nonsensical 'homme qul k*e*' in CCC MS 53 (fol. 183^{r}). Despite these transfer errors, CCC MS 53's scribe did not generally

59 See James, *A Peterborough Psalter and Bestiary of the Fourteenth Century*, pp. 10–15. A digital facsimile of CCC MS 53 is available online.

60 Luxford, 'Intelligent by Design', p. 32.

61 The script is here classified per the conventions of Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books*, pp. 74–75.

62 Clark, 'Appendix', p. 43.

adopt a *literatim* approach of letter-for-letter copying[63], but frequently varied the spelling of his exemplar, especially of names. In this way, for instance, the Laud spelling of *Surrey* as 'Suree' (fol. 87^{r}) became the more conservative 'Suthrei' in CCC MS 53 (fol. 180^{v}). But these are, as Clark argues, 'only changes and corrections such as any intelligent scribe might make'.[64] Even then, the copyist never corrected the content, but only intervened in cases of evident textual errors (while also introducing his own, as shown above). Thus, he expanded the elliptical sentence 'Sun frere aluered au conte edelred' (her brother Alfred to Earl Æthelræd) in the Laud manuscript (fol. 88^{v}) into the more grammatical 'Sun frere alfred la dona au cunte adelred' (her brother Alfred gave her to Earl Æthelræd) in its Cambridge copy (fol. 182^{r}). Similarly, he corrected the dittography 'li li rei' (the the king) in MS Laud Misc. 636 (fol. 90^{r}) to 'le rei' (the king) in CCC MS 53 (fol. 183^{v}), as well as the dittography in 'conunte' in the former (fol. 90^{r}) to 'counte' (count) in the latter (fol. 183^{v}). The only instances of scribal authorship in the Cambridge manuscript's *LRB* are found in the continuation, by the primary hand, concerning King Edward's reign until his death in 1307, and a chronicle from Edward II (r. 1307–1327) to the coronation of Henry IV (r. 1399–1413) added by a later hand. Evidently, the Laud text, with few and minor corrections, was judged perfectly suitable for replication and continuation in a much more grandiose format.

The picture that emerges is rather different from that painted by Clark, who states that 'it would seem reasonable enough to have copied out in a fair large hand and with illumination a text written crabbedly round the margins of an unreadable old book'.[65] On the contrary, it is the Laud *LRB*'s placement next to an authoritative, if by then archaic, Old English chronicle, as well as the accuracy and completeness this implied, that made it suitable for inclusion in CCC MS 53. Despite the obvious change in layout, CCC MS 53 replicated other paratextual features of the Laud manuscript, in what Fisher calls 'duplicative copying', which is further evidence of the authority accorded to the Laud text's design.[66] Notably, CCC MS 53 precisely reproduced the division of the Laud text into sections marked by initials, including the decision to mark the reign of Edmund Ironside and Cnut with a paraph rather than an initial (MS Laud Misc. 636, fol. 89^{v} and CCC MS 53, fol. 183^{v}). In her study of the Anglo-Norman prose *Brut*, Julia Marvin remarks that such frequently changing textual divisions importantly reveal how scribes 'make sense of the narrative'.[67] The way in which CCC MS 53's scribe makes sense of the narrative deliberately mirrors that of the Laud text, probably because

63 See Benskin and Laing, 'Translations and *Mischsprachen* in Middle English Manuscripts', p. 56.

64 Clark, 'Appendix', p. 43.

65 Clark, 'Appendix', p. 43.

66 Fisher, *Scribal Authorship and the Writing of History*, p. 39.

67 Marvin, *The Construction of Vernacular History*, p. 177; see also Parkes, 'Layout and Presentation of the Text', pp. 68–70.

the latter's layout was intrinsic to the historical authority it carried. The Laud *LRB*'s integration into a multilingual historical manuscript alongside the Old English *Peterborough Chronicle* allowed it to draw on the latter's legitimacy and with it manufacture a greater combined authority. This in turn made MS Laud Misc. 636 an authoritative exemplar for a later project in multilingual historiography at Peterborough Abbey.

Conclusion

In short, a reading of MS Laud Misc. 636 as a linguistic and historical contact zone offers a fascinating glimpse into diachronic interactions between texts in different prestige vernaculars. Within the multilingual historiographical milieu of thirteenth-century Peterborough Abbey, the Anglo-Norman *LRB* was purposefully copied into the margins of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, leading one contemporaneous reader to correct the *LRB* based on the Old English entry. The lack of further corrections, however, also shows that the two texts were not consistently read in parallel. Instead, their juxtaposition through languages and formats more generally suggests their reception as complementary elements of England's multilingual history. Within this manuscript contact zone, the different languages do not primarily function according to an established hierarchy, but as different registers appropriate to different historical texts. This allowed the newer text to draw on the authority of the older one, while giving both texts the appearance of accuracy and completeness. It is probably its presence within this multilingual historical nexus that authorized the Laud *LRB*'s use as an exemplar for the high-status CCC MS 53 in the early fourteenth century.

All this suggests a new way to chart the generation of historical authority in multilingual compilations across time. In each case, it is imperative to consider the interactions and transfer of authority between texts and languages that are usually studied separately. This applies particularly to other manuscripts of the two texts in MS Laud Misc. 636, many of which are also multilingual. One such example is a late eleventh-century bilingual manuscript, now BL, Cotton MS Domitian A.viii, containing an Old English and Latin version of the *ASC* (known as the F-text), to which its scribe also added an untranslated short Latin *Brut* chronicle (fol. 30^{v}).[68] The *LRB*, on the other hand, is frequently paired with Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*,[69] also appears alongside Robert of Gloucester's Middle English *Metrical Chronicle*,[70] and in the late thirteenth-century BL, Cotton MS Caligula A.ix it is included

68 On this manuscript, see Summerfield, 'Filling the Gap'.

69 See, e.g., Oxford, Bodl. Lib., MSS Bodley 233, Douce 115, and Tanner 195, as well as BL, Cotton MS Vespasian E.iv.

70 See for instance Cambridge, TC, R.4.26.

alongside Laȝamon's Middle English *Brut*. To dismiss the latter pairing as 'fortuitous' is cavalier at best.[71] Within the manuscript contact zone, texts can — and do — make deliberate use of the multilingual dynamics of history to establish authority on the page.

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