

Lazamon's *Brut*

Linguistic Evidence for English Identity in Multilingual Medieval England

Following the great scribal tradition in the literary centres of the monastic scriptoria in Anglo-Saxon England, Lazamon's *Brut* represents the two primary Middle English manuscripts since the Norman invasion, now kept in the British Library. It is a captivating 13th century pseudo-history of England, and the first English text presenting the legendary story of King Arthur.

With the transition from the OE literary tradition to ME we can observe significant linguistic and sociolinguistic changes from a systematic synthetic language to the analytic language in Present Day English. These changes appertaining every aspect of the language can be observed in the compilation of the anthroponyms and toponyms of the two manuscripts in the texts at hand, and include orthographic variation, and observable change in case, number, and gender inflection. They thus provide us with a first glimpse of the significant language change manifested a multilingual community.

Given the multilingual influence, including Celtic, French and Latin sources, I would present by way of example the variation between the texts at hand and evaluate the same. Regarding orthography this includes the distribution and frequency of the grapheme inventory in use, the number of variants of the most frequent and generic anthroponyms and toponyms with their respective frequency. Eventually these instances will illustrate the substantial progress in change of the grapheme inventory and orthographic convention from West Saxon to Early ME and their represented phonetic change as attested in both the Caligula and Otho manuscript a significant step in the development of the English language as we know it today.

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