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The Language of Lazamon's *Brut* (4)

— Verbs —⁽¹⁾

Haruo IWASAKI

Some Syntactical Notes

15. Among collective nouns, such as *leode(n)*, *ferde* and *folk*, the first is always accompanied by a verb in the plural in the C-text.

C¹: *nerē* 561, *beoð* 498, 624, *liððen* 894, *luueden* 1069, *weoren* 1264, *leiden* 1019, *clepiað* 1065.

C²: *tahten* 1752, *luueden* 1733, 2425, *weoren* 2554.

Owing to the frequent loss of the final *-n*, the O-text presents some ambiguous cases as in the last two examples below.

O¹: *weren* 1264, *lipede* 894.

O²: *luuede* 1733.

Ferde is more frequently followed by a verb in the singular than by a verb in the plural in both texts.

C¹: *lai* 708, *wes* 743.

C²: *wes* 2476, 2486, *com* 2882.

O¹: *lay* 708, *was* 743.

O²: *was* 2476, 2486, *com* 2882.

The unmistakable plural forms are as follows.

⁽¹⁾ Preserving the format of my previous articles, comparisons will be made between the text preserved in Cotton Caligula A IX and that preserved in Cotton Otho C XIII. They will be hereafter referred to as the C-text and the O-text respectively. The C-text will be further divided into two parts: C¹ (lines 1-1441), written by the first scribe, and C² (lines 1487-2927), written by the second scribe. The corresponding portions of the O-text will be referred to as O¹ and O² respectively.

- C¹: *fusden* 548.
 C²: *feudten* 2581.
 O¹: *weren* 282.

The plural form *feudten* (2581) in C² may be due to its subject implying more than one: *Ferde whit ferde feonliche: feudten*. Another plural form *weren* (282) in O¹ has been brought over from the corresponding C¹ line where the subject is *heo* (3 pl.); but, the sentence structure being altered, *ferde* is made to construe with *weren* in the O-text.

- C¹: *Iseih his broðer ferden: hu heo iuaren weren* (282)
 O¹: *H[e] seh ou his broper verde: alle iuaren weren* (282)

The following are ambiguous cases.

- C²: *ifusede* 2486, *makede* 2843, *stondet* 2592.
 O²: *stondep* 2592, *makede* 2843.

With *folk*, unmistakably plural forms in both texts are as follows.

- C¹: *nomen* 211, *makeden* 211, *iseohten* 1083, *fluzen* 1087, *weoren* 1224.
 C²: *liðe* 2769, *fehten* 2836, *riden* 2746.
 O¹: *weren* 167.
 O²: *reoden* 2746.

Clearly singular forms are by far more frequent in both texts.

- C¹: *com* 432, 933, *come* (subj.) 429, 1276, *flei* 805, *mai* 605, *ipaih* 999, *wole* 231, *was* 279, *wes* 582, 857, 916, 937, 989, 1000, 1326, 1371.
 C²: *is* 2166, *wes* 2343, 2618, 2619, 2628.
 O¹: *com* 432, *come* (subj.) 429, *flep* 805, 1087, *ipeh* 999, *wex* 999, *wole* 231, *was* 279, 857, 916, 933, 937, 1000-1, 1326, 1371.
 O²: *his* 2166, *was* 2423, 2343, 2615, 2618, 2619, 2628.

The ambiguous cases may be divided into two groups. The first group involves two examples, in which the final *-n* may have

been added through the peculiar habit of the C²-scribe.⁽¹⁾ The other group has many examples, of which those in C¹ may be regarded as singular forms because the C¹-scribe rarely drops the final *-n* of the third person plural⁽²⁾, while the examples in C² have a slightly greater possibility of being plural forms because the C²-scribe, when compared with the C¹-scribe, is more prone to drop the final *-n*. The examples in the O-text can be singular or plural with equal possibility for either.

It has been shown that, in spite of Madden's statement that nouns of multitude are used with a verb in the plural⁽³⁾, *ferde* and *folk* are much more frequently accompanied by a verb in the singular than by a verb in the plural. It cannot be denied, however, that the consciousness of plurality soon presents itself when the nouns are immediately followed by pronouns referring to them, as:

C¹: *pa ferde was isumned. ⁊ heo forð fusden* (743)

O¹: *was al þat folk so blipe. so hi neren neuere her on liue*
(916)

The following is an interesting example where both singular and plural forms are used in one sentence.

C¹: *þat folc þe on þan fehte atwond : fluzen of þan londe* (1087)

It may be argued that the second verb is more distant from the subject so that the consciousness of plurality has emerged, but this cannot be strictly maintained because the corresponding O¹ line has a verb in the singular: *þat folk þe scapie mihte. flep vt of þan fihte* (1087). Nevertheless it can be said that, as a general tendency,

⁽¹⁾ Cf. Iwasaki, Haruo: "The Language of *Layamon's Brut* (3) 7 (*The Geibun-Kenkyu*, No. 33, 1974).

⁽²⁾,⁽³⁾,⁽⁴⁾ *ibid*, 6(2).

⁽³⁾ Madden, Frederick: *Layamons Brut*, Vol. 1, p. lii.

when the plural form occurs it usually does not immediately follow the subject. When the verb precedes the subject, the singular form is almost the rule.

16. The C-text preserves the Old English preference of *beon* to *wesan* to express the future. But since *beon* is seldom used for the first person singular and *wesan* is seldom used for all persons plural, the comparison will inevitably be restricted to the second and third persons singular. Only a few examples will suffice to show the above-mentioned tendency in the C-text.

- C¹: Anactetus leofe freond, to niht þou scalt faren.
a þeon time *bið* best, þonne men gað to bedde. (356-357)
zif we sceoteð to heora mæðe, þat *bið* ure imone deað.
zif we heom ilefod, þat *bið* ure muchele lure. (491-492).
- C². z fæc forh nu to niht, into Norewaiþe forhriht.
to Alfinge kinge, þu *bist* him cume deore. (2181-2182)
and þis min aþe ræd is, for sone heræfter he *beð* dead
(1667)

Bist and *bið* are rarely used to express the present state and the following may be an only example: C¹ *Ah heo mot nede beien, þe mon þe ibunden bið* (528). It might be argued that *bið* is used here because it refers to a general or suppositional state rather than to a particular present state.

Is and *eart* are not usually used to express the future, but the following instances may well be suspected to be in this function.

- C²: Ich wille mi drihliche lond, a þroe al todalen.
Þin *is* þat beste deal, þu ært mi dohter <deore> (1495-6)
þe scullen drinken eowre blod, balu eow *is* þeueðe (2895)

Bist and *bið* are in most cases discarded in the O-text, and so is, naturally, the functional distinction between *beon* and *wesan*. As will be shown below *art* or *is* usually replaces the corresponding *bist*

or *bið* in the C-text, and at times some other expressions are used.

- O¹: Anacletus leoue freond.ʒ toniþt þou scalt faren.
in þan time wan hit *his* (C¹ *bið*) best.ʒ wane men gop to
bedde (356-7)
ʒif we ʒam ileueþ.ʒ þat *his* (C¹ *bið*) oure owene lure (492)
- O²: and wende nou toniht.ʒ into Norþwaie forþriht.
to Alfing þan king.ʒ him *his* þin cume deore. (2181-2)
And þis his min owene read.ʒ for sone herafter he *worþ*
(C² *beð*) dead (1667)

17. There cannot be found marked difference in the use of the infinitive between the two texts, but the following points may be noted. The usual form for the expression of purpose is the *to*-infinitive. C¹ has two instances of *for+to*-infinitive but C² has none; O¹ and O², on the other hand, have three instances of *for+bare* infinitive respectively, but *for+to*-infinitive is found only once, and that in a reduced form: O¹ *and Brutus hine lete witie wel mid þan beste. fort lete fondien of his main stronge* (929-30).

The *to*-infinitive is used in the C-text for the impersonal construction, but the bare infinitive is also used in the O-text.

- C¹: Leouere heom his *to libben.ʒ* bi þan wode roten (235)
O¹: Leuere ʒam his *to libbe.ʒ* bi þan wode rote (235)
C¹: weðer heom weore wnsunre.ʒ *to faren þe to wonien* (455)
O¹: waper him were betere þanne *fare.ʒ* oper þare *wonie* (455)
C²: for leouere us is here mid manscipe *to fallen* (2909)
O²: for leuere vs his here mide mansipe *falle* (2909)

As in Modern English, the *to*-infinitive can be preceded by a preparatory *hit*; but, curiously enough, it is found only in the more conservative C¹-text.

- C¹: For ʒif we *hit ʒeorneð.ʒ to wonien* her mid Gricken (483)
nulle ich *hit* bileuen | *to nimen* his heortes ⁊ his hindes
(725-6)

In the former example, the corresponding O¹-text omits the preparatory *hit* and replaces the *to*-infinitive by the bare infinitive, so that *ʒerneþ* is made to construe with the bare infinitive, as: *For ʒif we her ʒerneþ: wonie mid Grickes* (483). The O¹ line corresponding to the latter example is corrupted; therefore there might also have been an instance of preparatory *hit* in O¹.

Wenen is followed by the *to*-infinitive, and *pencen* by the bare infinitive, in C¹, but this state of things is a little confused in C², where *wenen* can be followed by the bare infinitive and *pencen* by the *to*-infinitive, as:

C²: *wende ʒe mid ginnen. Romen biwinnen* (2892)
Heo pošte heo to hebben (2278)
he pohte to hebben Delgan (2281)
ah al heo pohten oðer: to slæn Belin king ⁊ his broðer
 (2707)

The O-text also has two instances of *wenen* followed by the bare infinitive, but *pencen* is always followed by the bare infinitive.

O¹: *he wend. sceote an deor* (159)

O²: *ac ich wende bet habbe idon* (1713)

Incidentally, the last example is the only instance of the perfect infinitive in both texts.

18. It is rather difficult to show the tendency in the use of the present participle owing to its infrequent occurrences. All the examples will be shown below.

C¹: *þe ilke makeð þat water hot: ⁊ þan folk halwende* (1424)
Ne ganninde ne ridinde: ne du<r>ste him nan abiden (793)
 [O¹ *goinde, ridinge*]
⁊ al þat ligginde lond (198) [O¹ *ligginde*]
alle þe liðinde scipen (474) [O¹ *alle þe gode scipes*]

- þe wile þeo on þan eitlonde.ʹ wes folc *woniende* (582) [O¹ *libbende*]
 þat an lond he ferde *sechinde* (693) [O¹ *sechinge*]
- C²: al þat *liggende* lond (2668) [O² *liggende*]
 For haueden *liðende* men.ʹ ispeken of þan mæidene (1566)
 [O² soþe men]
 Nu þu æært londes *weldent* (2523) [O² þou hart louerd of
 londe]
 Al swa muchel þu bist woruh.ʹ swa þu *velden* ært (1525)
 [O² *weldende*]
 and ihc nas na wurdra. þenne ich nes *weldinde* (1731) [O²
 þon ich was god *habben*]
 ⁊ ic hem ʒeue al þa winne.ʹ þe ich æm *waldinge* ouer (1548)
 [O² þat ich ham ouer waldene]
 swa þat Romanisce folc.ʹ sohte to *flæinde* (2773) [O² sette
 to *fleonde*]
- O¹: Ne *goinde* ne *ridingge*.ʹ ne dorste him no man abide (793)
 [C¹ *ganninde*, *ridinge*]
 and al þat *liggende* lond (198) [C¹ *liggende*]
 (þ). wile þe in þan ylond.ʹ weren men *libbende* (582) [C¹
woniende]
 Ðat a lond a verde *sechinge* (693) [C¹ *sechinde*]
 þe kinge sette to *flende* (787) [C¹ to fleonne]
 i witen of þan þincge þat waren to *comende* (580) [C¹ to
 kumen]
- O²: and al þat *liggende* lond (2668) [C² *liggende*]
 Al so muchel þou hart worþ.ʹ (ase þou) hart *weldende* (1525)
 [C² swa þu *velden* ært]
 and ich nas no worþere.ʹ þon ich was god *habben*. (1731)
 [C² þenne ich nes *weldinde*]
 (al þat) Romanisse fo(lke sette to *fleonde*) (2773) [C² sohte
 to *flæinde*]
 wat him weore to *donde* (2381) [C² to donne]
 and Brennes gon to *fleonde* (2327) [C² to flenne]

The foregoing examples will not enable us to show a clearcut tendency as to the form and use of the present participle. Both texts have *ende/inde*-forms and *inge*-forms, and the use of the forms does not seem to be conditioned by any grammatical rules. It is safer to say that both texts present a transitional stage.

It must be noted that for the O-scribe there was not much to choose between the *ende/inde*-form and the infinitive (O¹ 580, 787; O² 2381, 2327). This practice, of which the C-scribe is innocent, began, according to Visser, in late Old English and towards the beginning of the Middle English period spread extensively,⁽¹⁾

19. The auxiliaries *scal* and *wille* are used to express the future, but they almost always retain their original meanings, obligation or necessity and volition or intention respectively. The following is a rare example of *wille* expressing the pure future.

C¹: me þunched þe alde mon.' *wole* dotie nou nan (1645)

The simple present is still often used, as in Old English, to express the future, as:

C²: ne *luueðe* he nowiht longe (1663) [O² *liueþ*]

of me *nafð* heo na more (1592) [O² *nafep*]

We þe *azeueþ* Rome (2690) [O² *azieuf*]

O¹: zif we tristep to hire meþe.' vs seolue we *bicheorrep* (491)

It is interesting to note that in some instances the simple present in the C-text is replaced by a periphrastic expression in the O-text and that the reverse process is rarely met with.

O²: þin *sal beo* þat beste deal (1496) [C² *is*]

Raper ich *wolle* þe *slean* mid mine spere (1496) [C² *slæp*]

Bi Appolines ore.' ich *nelle* zam *lifue* more (2059) [C² *ileue*]

⁽¹⁾ Visser, F. Th.: *An Historical Syntax of the English Language* II, § 1018.

Also sone so he þe siht, he *wole* þe hire *zifue* forþriht
(2186) [C² *zeueð*]

20. The simple preterite in the C-text is sometimes converted to the pluperfect in the O-text, but this, unlike the phenomenon in the foregoing section, by no means points to a tendency towards clearer time expressions in the latter text, because the reverse process is as frequent.

C¹: þat Brutus hefde þe men, þe he mid fihte *biwon* (304) [O¹ *hafde awonne*]

C²: an his broðer Belin, þe his lond *binom* him (2474) [O² *hadde binome*]

C¹: ferde æfter ane bache, alswa Brutus him *hefde itaiht* (381) [O¹ *lerede*]

C²: ⁊ þane kinge Gudlac, þe his gumen *hauede afalled* (2346) [O² *afulde*]

21. Some verbs in the C-text still occasionally require the genitive as in Old English, but the usage is unknown to the O-text.

C¹: ⁊ swa hit wes al west, ⁊ *wnnen biræued* (564)

⁊ scal þin mære kun, *wælden þ[a]s londes* (627) [O¹ *wel þat lond witie*]

þat heo heora *wil-dazes, wælden* weoren (901)

C²: ⁊ he mochel a þa wode<lo>ker, *wilnede peos mæidenes* (1599) [O² *wilnede...(t mayd)e*]

fainen mines lauertes ⁊ is fæirliche cume (1792)

Nu þu eært *londes weldent* (2523) [O² *Nou þou hart louerde of londe*]

Nu ich habben ibiden þat ich bare sitte,

wunnen biræue[d], wa is me on liue (1708-9) [O² *of gode bireued*]

Not all the verbs given above always take the genitive; *welden*, for example, takes the accusative more often. Line 1709, where C²

wunnen is replaced by O² *of gode*, seems to be an example of the O-text being closer to Modern English, which is often the case, but the C-text already has this analytic expression, too.

C¹: *þus wes þas kineriche: of heora kinge biræued* (1447)

22. The impersonal construction can frequently be found in both texts, but the following examples must be noted, where the O-text replaces the impersonal construction in the C-text by the personal construction. The reverse process cannot be found.

C ¹		O ¹
<i>zif hit eow bi-loueð</i>	(497)	<i>zif 3e hit redeþ</i>
<i>feirest þat heom pohte</i>	(655)	<i>fairest þat hii funde</i>
<i>þe scal beon þa wrse</i>	(243)	<i>þou salt beo þe worse</i>
<i>swa heom beoð iwrð</i>	(488)	<i>hii beoþ gladdere</i>
<i>eð him wes on heorten</i>	(1117)	<i>glad he was on heorte</i>
<i>an heorte hire wes þa bet</i>	(1204)	<i>þe gladdere 3e was</i>
<i>z eft him wes þe worsse</i>	(1631)	<i>and eft onlikede</i>
C ²		O ²
<i>þer-fore hire wes uneðe</i>	(2247)	<i>þar-fore 3eo was sori</i>