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# A Note to the Lazamon Texts

Haruo Iwasaki

1. In my investigation of the language of Lazamon's *Brut*, which describes the accidence and syntax of the two texts, namely Cotton Caligula A IX and Cotton Otho C XIII, with the purpose of elucidating the relation between them, I have noticed a phenomenon which though apparently trivial, could bear some grave importance. The case in point is the word-order of a personal name linked with a title.

In present-day English the title normally precedes the personal name: *King George*, *Lord Reith*, etc. Old English, however, has it reversed: *Ælfred cyning*, *Ælfmær abbod*, etc., but with a determining modifier, titles are often found preceding the name: *pone arcebiscop Ælfeah*, *se cyning Æðelbriht*, *his aldorman Osric*, etc. (Cf. Quirk and Wrenn: *An Old English Grammar*, § 139; Mossé: *Manuel de l'anglais du moyen âge*, 1 Vieil-anglais, Tome 1, § 196.4; Einenkel: *Historische Syntax*, § 62 a). Einenkel adds that the word-order such as 'Hester seo cwen' is rare.

What word-order can be found in Lazamon's *Brut*, which, though it belongs to the Middle English period, still preserves the Old English linguistic features fairly well? In the following section the types of the word-order and its frequency will be shown, and in order to make the statistics meaningful the title under considera-

tion will be confined to 'king' alone, which is frequent enough to allow some definite conclusion. The modifier will also be confined to the definite article so that no more shade of meaning should be added than is needed. The text used is *Lazamon: Brut* edited by G. L. Brook and R. F. Leslie (EETS 250, 1963). *Lazamon's Brut* is preserved in two manuscripts, namely Cotton Caligula A IX and Cotton Otho C XIII. They will hereafter be referred to as the C-text and the O-text respectively. The portion of the C-text under investigation will be further divided into two parts: C<sup>1</sup> (lines 1-1441), written by the first scribe, and C<sup>2</sup> (lines 1487-2927), written by the second scribe. The corresponding portions of the O-text will be referred to as O<sup>1</sup> and O<sup>2</sup> respectively.

2. The types of the word-order and its frequency are as follows.

(1) Types

'King George' type

C<sup>1</sup>: nil

C<sup>2</sup>: In Scot-lond wes *king Stater*: i Logres wes *king Piner*  
(2024)

O<sup>1</sup>: *king Priames* his doh..r. (107)

O<sup>2</sup>: And *king Aganippus*. i-grette Leir þe king þus. (1571)

'George King' type

C<sup>1</sup>: for to habben al þa æhte: þe *Humber king* aute (1114)

C<sup>2</sup>: Heo iseizen *Belin king*: buzen ut of telde. (2686)

O<sup>1</sup>: þeos weren *Eubrac kinges* sones (1350)

O<sup>2</sup>: And *Leir king* wende to Scottene kinge. (1632)

'the King George' type

C<sup>1</sup>: þe *king Locrin* hine nom: his feir sune Madan. (1208)

C<sup>2</sup>: þe *king Aganippus* answerde him þus: (1836)

O<sup>1</sup>: Ðo hafde þe *king Siluius* his wille of Lombardie. (1372)

O<sup>2</sup>: Forþ wende þe king Leir: nadde he bote one sweine. (1750)

'George the King' type

C<sup>1</sup>: Ða Goffar þe king: þene castel kennede. (831)

C<sup>2</sup>: He sloh Piner þene king: his folc he al aqualde. (2039)

O<sup>1</sup>: Nou haueþ Goffare þe king igadered his ferde. (752)

O<sup>2</sup>: so long þat he bi-com to Alfing þan king. (2204)

(2) Frequency	C <sup>1</sup>	C <sup>2</sup>	O <sup>1</sup>	O <sup>2</sup>
'King George' type	0( 0%)	4( 6%)	1( 4%)	4( 8%)
'George King' type	7(26%)	39(61%)	5(19%)	23(43%)
'the King George' type	9(33%)	7(11%)	7(26%)	5( 9%)
'George the King' type	11(41%)	14(22%)	14(52%)	21(40%)

3. The observations that have been made from the foregoing results will be given below. It must be added here that no particular personal name can be found in any particular word-order, and that rhythm or grammatical function (subject, object, etc.) does not seem to play a part in the choice of the word-order; therefore these factors will be left out of consideration.

The first thing to notice is that there is a striking difference between C<sup>1</sup> and C<sup>2</sup>. The 'King George' type (i.e. Modern English type) cannot be found in C<sup>1</sup>. The 'George King' type and the 'the King George' type, which are characteristically Old English, appear with much the same frequency. The most frequent is the 'George the King' type, which Einkenel regarded as rare in Old English. C<sup>2</sup>, on the other hand, has a few examples of the 'King George' type and yet it has more than twice as many examples of the 'George King' type (i.e. Old English type) as C<sup>1</sup>. The 'George the King' type is much less frequent (numbering only half as many as C<sup>1</sup>) and the 'the George King' type is still less (numbering only a third as many as C<sup>1</sup>).

Secondly, O<sup>1</sup> shows noticeable similarity to C<sup>1</sup> in the distribution of the word-order in question: namely, frequency increases in the following order: 'King George' type, 'George King' type, 'the King George' type, 'George the King' type. It should be borne in mind that the percentage of the 'George the King' type is much higher than in C<sup>1</sup>. The 'King George' type does appear, but from a statistical point of view not much significance should be given to only one example.

Thirdly, O<sup>1</sup> and O<sup>2</sup> present a remarkable difference in spite of the fact that they are written by the same scribe. The 'George King' type in O<sup>2</sup> has a frequency twice as high as O<sup>1</sup>, whereas the 'the King George' type in O<sup>1</sup> has a frequency three times as high as O<sup>2</sup>. The 'George the King' type, which according to Einkenkel is rather rare in Old English, can be found fairly frequently in both texts, O<sup>1</sup> showing noticeably higher frequency.

Lastly, C<sup>2</sup> and O<sup>2</sup> have similarities in some respects and dissimilarities in others. They have the following characteristics in common: 1) a few examples of the 'King George' type can be found and 2) the 'the King George' type is rather infrequent. They differ in that O<sup>2</sup> has a lower frequency of the 'George King' type than C<sup>2</sup>, and to make up for it, as it were, the former has a higher frequency of the 'George the King' type than the latter.

4. How are we to interpret the foregoing facts? Perhaps it is more natural to consider the differences between C<sup>1</sup> and C<sup>2</sup> as resulting from the different speech habits of the C<sup>1</sup>-scribe and the C<sup>2</sup>-scribe rather than to consider them as already existing in the original text from which the C-text must have been copied. The differences between O<sup>1</sup> and O<sup>2</sup>, on the other hand, must have originated from the text from which the O-text was copied because

no such discrepancies should otherwise be expected since the O-text is written by the same hand. As a result of this reasoning it is rather hard to believe that, so far as this word-order is concerned, the two texts are descended from a common original text.

As has been mentioned above, C<sup>1</sup> and O<sup>1</sup> have common characteristics, but it should be noted that O<sup>1</sup> has a noticeably greater tendency to use the 'George the King' type.

Examples: C<sup>1</sup>: Ðat iherde *pe king Pandrasus* (297) > O<sup>1</sup>: Ðat iherde *Pandrasus pe king* (297)

C<sup>1</sup>: Nes hit buten lutel wile.ʹ *pat Goffar king* com him liðen (828) > O<sup>1</sup>: Nas hit... (a 1) utel wile.ʹ *pat Goffare pe king* come lipe (828)

C<sup>1</sup>: z mid seluere z mid golde.ʹ *pa wes Goffares kinges* (889) > O<sup>1</sup>: and mid seluer and golde.ʹ *Goffare pe kinges* (889)

What strikes us most is that O<sup>2</sup> has fairly much in common with C<sup>2</sup>, so that it presents great discrepancy from O<sup>1</sup> in its treatment of the word-order in question, when the text is written by the same scribe. The most reasonable explanation is that those differences had already existed in the original text from which the O-text was copied. Is it a far-fetched surmise if we regard the extant C-text as the very text that formed the basis of the O-text?

It might be argued against this possibility that O<sup>2</sup> does not present a tendency exactly parallel to C<sup>2</sup>, but again it might also be argued in favour of this possibility like this: the O-scribe happened to possess a linguistic behaviour similar to that of the C<sup>1</sup>-scribe, so far as this word-order is concerned; that is why C<sup>1</sup> and O<sup>1</sup> show a fairly close resemblance in the statistical survey, but, as has been mentioned above, the latter has a tendency to prefer the 'King the

George' type; the O-scribe, while copying C<sup>2</sup>, inevitably used the 'George King' type fairly often under the influence of the speech habit of the C<sup>2</sup>-scribe who greatly favoured this word-order, but, being influenced by his own speech habit, the frequency did not reach as high as that of C<sup>2</sup>. The following are the examples of the 'George King' type in C<sup>2</sup> replaced by the 'King the George' type in O<sup>2</sup>:

C<sup>2</sup>: *Ʒ pe king Aganippus. igrette Leir kin þus.* (1571) > O<sup>2</sup>: And King Aganippus. i-grette *Leir pe king þus.* (1571)

C<sup>2</sup>: *ne scal neuere Leir king. Ʒ pat mæiden me attlede* (1602) >

O<sup>2</sup>: *ne sa(1)....Leir pe king. Ʒ pa(t maide me at-le)de* (1602)

C<sup>2</sup>: *Ʒis iherde Leir king.* (1675) > O<sup>2</sup>: *Ʒis ihorde Leir pe king* (1675)

C<sup>2</sup>: *Ʒas wordes seide Aganippus. Ʒ Leir king dude þus* (1849)

> O<sup>2</sup>: *Ʒeos word seide Aganippus. and Leir pe....ude þus* (1849)

C<sup>2</sup>: *to Alfinge kinge. Ʒ þu bist him cume deore* (2182) > O<sup>2</sup>: *to Alfing þan king. his þin come deore* (2182)

C<sup>2</sup>: *swa longe þat he bi-com. to Ælfinge kinge* (2204) > O<sup>2</sup>: *so long þat he bi-com to Alfing þan king* (2204)

C<sup>2</sup>: *Brennes com to Norhweie. to Ælfinge kinge* (2320) > O<sup>2</sup>: *Brenne com to Nor(w)eye. to Alfin(g) þan king* (2320)

C<sup>2</sup>: *Forð ferde þas sonde. to Belin king* (2354) > O<sup>2</sup>: *Forþ verde þe sonde. to Belyn þan kinge* (2354)

C<sup>2</sup>: *to Alfinge kinge. Ʒ nome his dohter zeonge* (2517) > O<sup>2</sup>: *to Alfing þan kinge. and neme his dohter zenge* (2517)

C<sup>2</sup>: *Ʒ to heore dæie brohten. to Beline kinge* (2726) > O<sup>2</sup>: *and to hire dæze brohte to Bely[n] þan kinge* (2726)

It would of course be rash to draw a definite conclusion concerning the manuscript relationship from such a trivial fact as has been given above. Yet it could be one of the indicators that help to decide the relationship between the two Lazamon texts.