

## Lazamon's *Brut*: The End of British Rule

15900 Wa wæs Cadwalader; þe king wes on londe.  
for scome he ne mihte fleon; no for hærme her beon.  
Neoðeles he hine biþohte; hu he faren mahte.  
he nom his maðmes alle; and his m[e]n deore.  
& bah suð ouer sæ. into Brutaine.  
15905 and nom þe[r] wickinge; mid Alaine þan kinge.  
þe wæs sune Salemonnes. þas sele kinges.  
þe swiðe lufede Cadwaðlan; þe while his daiȝes ilaste.  
Ðær Alæin þe king; Cadwalader under-ueng.  
& funde him in þan londe; al þat he wolde.  
15910 þurh elleouen ȝere; þe king wunede þere.  
& elleouen ȝere; þe sorhȝe wunede here.  
þat wes hunger & hette; nefede þat folc nenne mete.  
& þe qualm muchele; þe wes on moncunne.  
Ðat folc flah in-to wuden; & wuneden in þe cluden.  
15915 leien in þa stan-graffen; & liueden bi deoren.  
heo l[i]ueden bi wuden; heo l[i]feden bi wurten.  
bi moren and bi rote; nas þer nan oðer boten.  
Ða elleue ȝer weoren; on fast aȝeongen  
þa sunne gon to scine; þe rein bi-gon to rine.  
15920 þe qualm gon to stunte; men gunnen to sturien.  
ut of wude heo droȝen; and wuneden in tunen.  
Heo speken to-somne; & spileden bi-tweonen.  
and nomen heore sonde; and sende in-to Sex-londe.  
and cudden heore cunne; of heore quale-siðe.  
15925 & hu heo ifaren hafden; elleue ȝeren.

The king of the country, Cadwalader, was distraught:  
He could not flee, for the disgrace of it; for the danger, could not stay.  
All the same, he thought carefully how he might proceed:  
He amassed all his treasures and his favourite men  
And crossed south over the sea into Brittany,  
And there took up lodging with Alain the king,  
Who was the son of Solomon, that saintly king  
Who had so loved Cadwathlan as long as his days lasted.  
There Alain the king received King Cadwalader,  
Providing for him in the land all that he wanted.  
For eleven years the king remained there,  
And for eleven years the sorrows remained here,  
Namely hunger and hardship (the people simply had no food),  
And the virulent disease which the human race endured,  
So that people fled into the woods and were living in caves,  
They slept out in stone-quarries and lived [like] wild creatures:  
They lived off bark and wood, they lived off bulbs and weeds,  
Off berries and roots: there was nothing else to help them.  
When eleven years had almost elapsed  
The sun began to shine and the rain began to rain,  
The disease began to abate and men began emerging:  
From the woods they came and were living in villages;  
They were speaking to each other and conversing together,  
And they took up their messengers and sent them to Saxony,  
Declaring to their kin how they had died from a disease  
And what they had experienced for eleven years,

& hu þat ufel wes at-stunt; & hu þa tunes ibuld.  
 and hu þer wes fæizer lond; i-noh seoluer and gold.  
 & beden heom cumen swiðe; hider to heore icunde.  
 for þa Bruttes þa ær weoren here; æuere heo weren fleme.  
 15930 no durste heo næuere mængen; imong Englisce monnen.  
 no nawhit heo nusten; of heore uare-costen;  
 þat weoren heore sonden. isend to Sex-londen.  
 Ða heze Sexisce men; iherden þas sonden.  
 þa fusden touward sæ; fifti þusende.  
 15935 baldere beornen; mid scelden and mid burnen.  
 mid wifen and mid children; to þissen londe wenden.  
 Mid þan formeste swipen; her comen þreo hundred scipen;  
 sizzen after seoððe; sixti to-somne.  
 bi sixe bi seouene; bi tene bi eolleue.  
 15940 bi twelue bi twenti; bi þritti bi feowerti.  
 Mid heom com Æðelstan; þe æ[ð]ele ut of Sexen.  
 inne Lundene hine cruneden; & houen hine to kingen.  
 Edward þe king þesne bizat on are chiuese.  
 þis wes þe formeste Englisce mon; þe al Ængle-lond biwon.  
 15945 he wes icruned and ieled. þis lond wes al his azen.  
 and seoððen he wuneden here; sixtene zere.  
 Hit ilomp inne frimdæzen; feor her bi-æften.  
 þat her wes an heh mon; Inne wes ihaten.  
 Ðe king wende to Rome; to þan heze dome.  
 15950 and he Peteres weofed þere; wunliche isohte.  
 brohte þer to lake; his maðmes leofe.  
 Ða zet he dude mare; to Peteres are.  
 of æuer-elche huse; þat hus-bonde wunede.  
 & his biweddede wif weore; on þere ilke wike.  
 15955 þe king enne peni zette; to Peteres huse.

And how that illness had abated and how they were building villages,  
 And how they had productive land, plenty of gold and silver,  
 And asking them to come with speed, here right to their rightful country,  
 For the Britons who used to be here were still living in exile  
 And dared not mingle at all among English men,  
 And anyway they'd no idea of the affairs of the English.  
 These were the messages they sent out to Saxon lands.  
 The Saxon nobility listened to these messengers  
 And then fast towards the sea fifty thousand made off  
 Of men brave in battle, with shields and with byrnies,  
 With women and children; to this country they went.  
 In the first onrush came three hundred ships;  
 Then after that sailed here sixty in convoy:  
 In sixes and sevens, in tens and elevens,  
 In twelves and in twenties, in thirties and forties.  
 With them came out of Saxony Athelstan the aristocrat;  
 In London they crowned him, and appointed him as king.  
 On a concubine this man was begotten by King Edward;  
 This was the first English man who acquired the whole of England:  
 He was crowned and anointed: this entire land was his own,  
 And afterwards he lived here for the length of sixteen years.  
 It happened in [former days] long [before] this time,  
 That there was a noble man here who was known as Ine.  
 The king went to Rome, to the supreme pontiff,  
 And there he visited with pleasure the altar of Saint Peter,  
 Taking there as a gift his own precious treasures.  
 He did still more then in respect for Saint Peter:  
 From every single house in which a householder was living  
 (If the wife he had wedded were in the same dwelling)  
 The King granted one penny to the House of St Peter;

Inne wes þe uormeste mon; þe Peteres peni bigon.  
 Ða Inne king wes him ded. and his lazen weoren aleid.  
 þa a-feol þat feoh here; fif and sixti zere.  
 a þet Aðelstan com liðen; in-to þissen londen.  
 15960 & hafden iwuned here; fulle fiftene zere.  
 Ðe king his fet custe; and faire hine igrette.  
 & eft þat ilke feoh zete. þat Inne king dude ære.  
 & swa hit hafeð ist onde; æuer seoððe a þisse londe.  
 Drihten wat hu longe; þeo lazen scullen ilæste.  
 15965 þa tiden comen sone; to Cadwaðlader kinge.  
 into Brutaine; þer þar he wunede.  
 mid Alaine kinge; þe wes of his cunne.  
 me dude him to unde((r))-stonde; of al þisse londe.  
 hu Aðelstan her com liðen; ut of Sex-londen.  
 15970 and hu he al Angle-lond; sette on his azere hond.  
 and hu he sette moting; & hu he sette husting.  
 and hu he sette sciren; and makede frið of deoren.  
 & hu he sette halimot; & hu he sette hundred.  
 and þa nomen of þan tunen; on Sexisce runen.  
 15975 & zilden he gon rere; mucle & swiðe mære.  
 & þa chirchen he gon dihten; after Sexisce irihten.  
 and Sexis he gan kennen; þa nomen of þan monnen.  
 and al me him talde; þe tiden of þisse londe.  
 Wa wes Cadwaledere; þat he wes on liue.  
 15980 leofere him weore on deðe; þeone quic on life.  
 særi wes his heorte; and sorhful wes his duzgeðe.  
 Wið his freond he spac ofte;  
 hu he faren mihte. and iw[i]nnen his rihte.  
 and wulchere wise he mihte; wið Aðelstane fihte.  
 15985 & i-winnen his cunde; æft to his honde.

Ine was the first man who initiated Peter's pence.  
 When King Ine was dead and his laws had been put aside,  
 Then that silver tribute ceased for sixty-five years,  
 Until Athelstan arrived here in this land,  
 And had been living here for a full fifteen years.  
 The king kissed [the Pope's] feet and saluted him respectfully  
 And granted once again that tribute which King Ine had made before,  
 And so things have [stood] ever since in this land:  
 The Lord knows how long these customs will continue.  
 These tidings came soon to Cadwalader the king,  
 Into Brittany where he was residing  
 With Alain the king, who came from the same clan:  
 He was given information about all of this nation:  
 How Athelstan had come travelling here out of Saxon lands  
 And how he had taken all Engle-land into his own hands,  
 And how he appointed the law courts, and how he appointed his council,  
 And how he established the shires, and created forests for deer,  
 And how he set up manor courts and divided shires into hundreds,  
 And the names of the villages in the Saxon language,  
 And how he was creating guilds, great ones and glorious,  
 And churches he was founding in the style of the Saxons,  
 And in Saxon he identified the names of the people;  
 And he as told about all the events of this land.  
 Cadwalader was distressed that he was still alive:  
 He would have liked to be dead rather than to be alive;  
 His emotions were sorrowful, his followers were sombre;  
 With his friends he would frequently discuss  
 How he might voyage, and regain his birthright,  
 And in what manner he might against Athelstan fight,  
 And win back his inheritance into his own possession

þa Aðestan and his cnihtes; eke heolde mid unrihte.  
 Sume him radde to uehten; summe wrið to wurchen.  
 þat he mosten of Aðelstan. halden his lond and beon his mon.  
 Vnder þissen uare-coste; he sumnede ferde.  
 15990 of alle þane monne; þat he bi-ȝeten mihte.  
 & somnede alle þa scipen; þa bi þare sæ fluten.  
 and þohte mid strengðe; steppen to londe.  
 Ða þe ȝaru wes þa uerde; & þas scipen ibone.  
 com þe win[d] suðerne. þa sæt an heore wille.  
 15995 Ða sæide þe king; Nu to scipe an hizing.  
 And þe king in-to chirche gon wenden; Godes werk to worchen.  
 and masse þer iherden; of mære ane preoste.  
 Ðe king læi on cneouwen; and cleopede to Crist[e].  
 & bed ure Drihten; þe walt alle deden.  
 16000 þat he from him-selue; taken him sende.  
 ȝif hit weore iqueme; þan heouenliche Deme.  
 wheðer he scolde liðen; þe he scolde bi-lauen.  
 Ðe while þe he spac touward Goden; þa gon he to slepen.  
 þa gon he to slumme selehðe him wes ȝiueðe;  
 16005 of seoluen ure Drihten; þe scop þis dæȝes lihte.  
 Ðenne þe king imætte. a cneouwen he slepte.  
 þat him com bi-foren gon; a wunder ane fair mon.  
 & þas word kende; to Brutte((ne)) kinge.  
 A-wake Cadwalader; Crist þe haueð deore.  
 16010 and ȝarke þine uore; and far swi[ð]e to Rome.  
 þu uindest ænne pape; preost mid þan bezste.  
 he þe ((scal)) scriuen; of þine weorld-lifen.  
 þat hine sunen alle; scullen þe from falle.  
 and þu scalt wurðe clene; al þurh Godes dome.  
 16015 of alle þine misdede; þurh mihte of ure Drihte.

Which Athelstan, and his knights were holding unjustly.  
 Some advised him to fight, some to make truce  
 By which he could from Athelstan hold his lands, and be his vassal.  
 Under these circumstances he summoned an army  
 From all of the men whom he could procure,  
 And assembled all the ships which were floating along the sea,  
 Intending with a show of strength to step upon this shore.  
 When the army was ready and the ships all equipped,  
 A wind came from the south, the direction which suited them.  
 Then the king announced: 'Now aboard, and hurry!'  
 And the king went into church to perform his Christian duties  
 And there he heard mass sung by a celebrated priest.  
 They king remained on his knees, calling out to Christ,  
 And he prayed to Our Lord who governs our deeds  
 That from himself directly he would send him a sign,  
 If this were agreeable to the Heavenly Judge,  
 As to whether he should advance or abandon the attempt.  
 As he was addressing God he fell into a trance,  
 And then he slept deeply, and gladness was granted him  
 From Our Lord himself who made this light of day.  
 Then the king dreamed, as he slept on his knees  
 That there came in front of him a wondrously fair man  
 Who addressed these words to the King of the Britons:  
 'Awake now, Cadwalader; you are precious to Christ,  
 And prepare for your voyage and pass swiftly to Rome;  
 You will find there a pope, a priest among the very best,  
 Who will give you absolution for all your worldly actions  
 So that all your sins will drop away from you,  
 And you will become pure entirely by God's provision  
 From all your misdeeds, through the might of Our Lord,

And seo[ð]ðen þu scalt i-witen; and faren to heofne-richen.  
 for no most þu nauere-mære; Ængle-lond aze.  
 ah Alemainisce men; Ænglen scullen azen.  
 and næuermære Bruttisce men; bruken hit ne moten.  
 16020 ær cume þe time; þe iqueðen wes while.  
 þat Merlin þe witeze; bodede mid worde.  
 Þenne sculle Bruttis sone; buzen to Rome;  
 and drazen ut þine banes alle; of þene marme-stane.  
 and mid blissen heom uerien; uorð mid heom-seoluen.  
 16025 in seoluere and in golde; in-to Brutlonde.  
 Þenne sculle Bruttis anan; balde iwurðen.  
 al þat heo bi-ginneð to done; iwurðeð after heore wille.  
 þenne scullen i Bruttene; blissen wurðen riue.  
 wastmes and wederes sele; after heore i-wille.  
 16030 Þa awoc Cadwalader; wu[n]der him þuhte.  
 strongliche he wes auæred; ladliche of-furhte.  
 to wulche þinge hit iteon wolde; þat him wes itacned þere;  
 Ofte he lette runen; ofte he lette ræde.  
 and seowede hit þan kinge; þe wunede in þan londe.  
 16035 þe inemned wes Alain; Cadwalader nexte mæi.  
 Þe king sende his sonde; zeond al his londe.  
 and lette beoden alle. þa bocares wise.  
 and talden heom þa tacni[n]ge; of Cadwalader kinge.  
 Þær heo gunnen ræde; þer heo gunnen rune.  
 16040 & radden him to taken on; al swa Godd him hafde itakned to don.  
 Þer he bi-lafde; his scipen and his leode.  
 his wæi and his iwille; He cleopede heom to stille.  
 Yuni and Iuore; beizen heo weoren him deore.  
 Yuor wes his step-sune; and Yuni his suster sune.  
 16045 beien heo weoren him leofe; beine heo weoren him deore.

And then you will depart and go to the heavenly kingdom,  
 For never more may you own the Angles' land  
 But instead the men of Almaine will be owners of England,  
 And never more may British men be its possessors  
 Until the time arrives, which was announced long ago,  
 Which Merlin the prophet pronounced in his words.  
 Then the British shall soon turn towards Rome  
 And draw out all your bones from their marble tomb  
 And carry them rejoicing away with them again,  
 Enshrined in silver and gold, into Britain's land.  
 Then at once the British will become emboldened:  
 Everything they begin to do will happen as they wish:  
 Then within Britain bliss will be abundant,  
 With fruits and fine weather, exactly as men want.'  
 When Cadwalder awoke this seemed to him miraculous:  
 He was deeply over-awed, horribly afraid  
 And to what sort of thing would occur as it was betokened to him there.  
 Frequently he had consultation, frequently he took counsel,  
 And revealed this to the king who resided in that land  
 Who was known as Alain, Cadwalader's nearest kinsman.  
 The king sent his messengers through all his territory  
 And issued a summons for all the wise book-scholars  
 Relating to them the revelation of Cadwalader the king.  
 There they proceeded to counsel, there they proceeded to commune,  
 And advised him to proceed as God had revealed to him to act;  
 So there he abandoned his ships and his supporters,  
 His way and his wishes; secretly he call upon  
 Yuni and Ivor: he held them both most dear;  
 Ivor was his step-son, and Yuni was his sister's son;  
 Both of them he loved, both of them he cherished;

heo weoren cnihtes beien; and swiðe wel idihte.  
 Þus spac Cadwalader; þe king wes of Bruttene.  
 Yuor and Yuni beiene; 3et senden of mine leode.  
 hercnieð mine lare. no scal hit eou reouwe nauere;  
 16050 Of heouene me beoð icume; h((i))3e Godes tacne.  
 þat ich scal faren to Rome; to þan pape wel idone.  
 Þe pape hatte Sergius; he weteð Peteres. hus.  
 me and mine wiue; he scal bletseizen & scriue.  
 & þer we scullen ure dazes ba; driuen to þan ende.  
 16055 longe bið auer; no iseo 3e me æft næuere.  
 Ah here ich bi-tache; inc Walisc lond; þat 3et stond a mire hond.  
 and nimeð þas muchele uerde; and fareð to þan londe.  
 and haldeð hit ((on)) wunne; þa wile 3e mazen hit werie.  
 and ich inc halsi beien; þurh þan heouen kinge.  
 16060 þat unker æiðer oðer; luuie swa his broðer.  
 and habbeoð þat lond auer-mære. tou æure liues ende;  
 & brukeð hit on wunne; & eouwer bernen alle.  
 Yuni hit wes itacned me; alse 3e scullen nu i-seo.  
 for Merlin þe wise; hit seide mid worde;  
 16065 al of mine for[ð]-fare; & of mire unimete care.  
 and Sibillie þa wise; a bocken hit isette.  
 þat ich scal iuullen; mines Drihtes wille.  
 Alc faren nu his wæi; and habbeoð alle godne dæi.  
 Cadwalader fusde; þat he com to Rome.  
 16070 þer he Sergius funde; þene iselie pape.  
 he scraf Cadwalader; þe king wes of Bruttenne.  
 Ne wunede þe king þer; bute uifte half 3ere.  
 þa com him ufel on; swa Godd hit wolde habben idon.  
 elleoue dazes biforen Maize; he ferde of þisse liue.  
 16075 and his saule sende to þan heouen-lic%che kinge.

They were both of them knights and very well equipped.  
 Like this spoke Cadwalader, who was the King of Britain:  
 ‘Both Yuni and Ivor, you two are of my people:  
 Listen to my instruction; you shall not regret it ever!  
 From heaven there have come to me signs from most high God  
 That I must journey to Rome, to the illustrious Pope.  
 The pope is called Sergius, who has charge of Peter’s Hourse;  
 Me and my wife he is to bless and to shrive,  
 And there we shall both live out the last of our days.  
 As long as is for ever, me again you shall see never;  
 But here to you two I am handing what I still hold of Welsh lands,  
 So take this great army and travel to the land,  
 And rule it in delight as long as you can defend it,  
 And I entreat both the two of you, by the King of Heaven,  
 That each of you two must love the other as if he were his brother,  
 Then have that land for ever more, to your own lives’ end,  
 And possess it in joy, and all your progeny.  
 Yuni, it has all been revealed to me, as you will now perceive  
 (For Merlin the wise declared this in words)  
 Concerning my departing and of my excessive grieving,  
 And Sibyl the sagacious set it down in book-form  
 That I am to fulfil all my Lord’s will.  
 Let each now go his way; I bid all farewell and good day!’  
 Cadwalder hastened until he reached Rome,  
 Where he found Sergius, the saintly man who was Pope:  
 He absolved Cadwalader who had been the King of Britain.  
 The king had not lived there above four-and-a-half years  
 When a sickness came upon him, as God wished things to happen;  
 Eleven days before May he passed away from this life  
 And sent his soul forth to the heavenly King.

His ban beoð iloken faste; i guldene ceste.  
 and þer heo scullen wunie; þat þa dazes beon icume((ne)).  
 þa Merlin ine iuurn dazen; vastnede mid worden.  
 Ga we nu to Yuni a-3an; & to Iuore his wedde-broðere.  
 16080 Heo somneden ferde; wide 3eond þan ærde.  
 forð heo gunnen fusen; mid fif hundred scipenen.  
 nes hit nawit longe; þat heo ne comen to Walisce londe.  
 Al þas Bruttes weoren to-driuen; 3eond cludes & 3eond cliuenen.  
 3eond chirchen & 3eond muneccliuen. 3eond wudes & 3eond liðen;  
 16085 Sone me heom saiden. þat isi3en weoren to londe.  
 mid Iuore & Yuni; ten siðen fifti.  
 scipen brade-fulle; of Brutten swiðe balde.  
 Þæs Bruttes on ælc ende; foren to Walisce londe.  
 and heore la3en leofeden; & heore leodene þæuwen.  
 16090 and 3et wunie[ð] þære; swa heo doð auere-mære.  
 & Ænglisce kinges; walden þas londes.  
 & Bruttes hit loseden; þis lond and þas ((leoden))  
 þat næuere seoððen mære; kinges neoren here.  
 Þa 3et ne com þæs ilke dæi; beo heonne-uorð also hit mæi.  
 16095 i-wurðe þet iwurðe; i-wurðe Godes wille.  
 Amen.

His bones are securely encased in a golden coffin,  
 And there they shall still remain until the days have arrived  
 Which Merlin in days of yore determined with his words.  
 Let us now go again to Yuni, and to Ivor his sworn-brother:  
 They assembled an army far and wide throughout the country;  
 Forwards they journeyed fast, with five hundred ships:  
 It was not at all long before they came to the Welsh lands:  
 All the British had been scattered across crags and across cliffs,  
 Around churches and monasteries, around woods and across mountains.  
 As soon as they were told that there had sailed into their land  
 With Ivor and Yuni ten times fifty  
 Ships which were brimful with very bold Britons,  
 From every region these Britons travelled to the Welsh lands,  
 And they loved their own laws and the customs of their nation,  
 And so they still live there, and they will do for ever more.  
 And the English kings hold sway in this land,  
 And the British having lost this land and those who live here,  
 Since then have never more been the kings here;  
 So far it hasn't come, that actual day, let future things be as they may.  
 Let come what must come: let God's will be done!  
 Amen

Source of translation: *Lawman, Brut*, ed. and trans. by Rosamund Allen (New York: J.M. Dent, 1992). Lines 14784 and 14866 have been slightly shortened.