

1-1-1996

## The use of the genitive in the Arthurian section of Layamon's "Brut"

Heather Fleming Grigg  
*University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/rtds>

---

### Repository Citation

Grigg, Heather Fleming, "The use of the genitive in the Arthurian section of Layamon's "Brut"" (1996). *UNLV Retrospective Theses & Dissertations*. 590.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.25669/0su9-s71l>

This Thesis is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Scholarship@UNLV with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Thesis in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Thesis has been accepted for inclusion in UNLV Retrospective Theses & Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact [digitalscholarship@unlv.edu](mailto:digitalscholarship@unlv.edu).

## INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

**The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.** Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

# UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company  
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA  
313/761-4700 800/521-0600



THE USE OF THE GENITIVE IN  
THE ARTHURIAN SECTION  
OF LA3MON'S *BRUT*

by

Heather Fleming Grigg

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

English

Department of English  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
May 1996

**UMI Number: 1380514**

---

**UMI Microform 1380514**  
**Copyright 1996, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.**

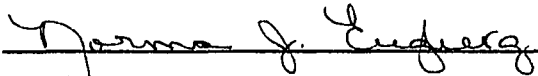
**This microform edition is protected against unauthorized  
copying under Title 17, United States Code.**

---

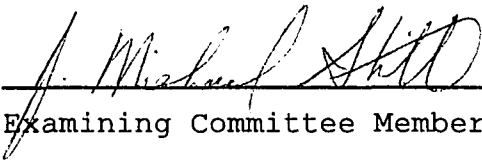
**UMI**  
**300 North Zeeb Road**  
**Ann Arbor, MI 48103**

1996 Heather F. Grigg  
All Rights Reserved

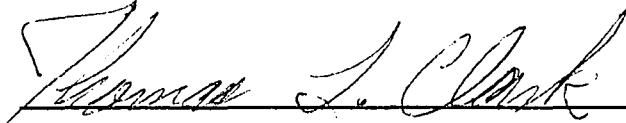
The Thesis of Heather F. Grigg for the degree of M.A. in English is approved.



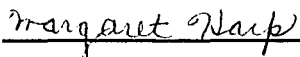
Chairperson, Norma J. Engberg, Ph.D.



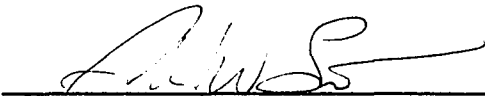
Examining Committee Member, J. Michael Stitt, Ph.D.



Examining Committee Member, Thomas L. Clark, Ph.D.



Examining Committee Member, Margaret Harp, Ph.D.



Dean of the Graduate College, Ronald W. Smith, Ph.D.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
May 1996

## ABSTRACT

New insights into the use of the genitive case in Early Middle English are possible because of the recent publication of Bruce Mitchell's *Old English Syntax* which updates previous exhaustive grammars. Using La<sub>3</sub>amon's *Brut* as a basis of study, it was found that La<sub>3</sub>amon employs a variety of case endings to indicate the genitive; alternatively, he uses *of*-periphrasis. He appears to be choosing among these grammatically acceptable possibilities in order to facilitate meter and rhyme.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER II USE OF THE GENITIVE.....	9
CHAPTER III CONCLUSION.....	39
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	42

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the encouragement, wisdom, and critical proofreading of my chairperson Dr. Norma J. Engberg. I would also like to thank my entire committee which included Dr. Thomas L. Clark, Dr. J. Michael Stitt, and Dr. Margaret Harp for their time and patience. Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my son Connor who went through the thesis experience with me.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

La<sub>3</sub>amon's *Brut*, the Middle English version of Wace's Anglo-Norman *Brut*, itself a version of the Latin *Legendary History of Britain* by Geoffrey of Monmouth, is perhaps the piece of literature as near to heroic tradition as Britain can claim. *Brut* relates the legendary history of Britain from Brutus, its founder, to 689, when under Cadwallader the Britons were pushed into Wales. This historical poem is extant in two manuscripts, the MS Cotton Caligula A. ix and the MS Cotton Otho C. xiii, both of which date from the second half of the thirteenth century. Both manuscripts are thought to derive from a common archetype; however, the Caligula manuscript is believed to be closer to that archetype. Thus, it is the Caligula manuscript I have chosen to study, utilizing the Brook and Leslie Early English Text Society 1963 edition.<sup>1</sup>

All that is known about the author is given in his introduction:

An preost wes on leoden.' La<sub>3</sub>amon wes ihoten.  
 He wonede at Ernle<sub>3</sub>e.' at aðelen are chirechen.  
 vppen Seuarne stape.' . . . on-fest Radestone.  
 (3-5, 'A priest was in the land. He was  
 called La<sub>3</sub>amon. He lived at Areley by a noble  
 church on the bank of the Severn. . .close to  
 Redstone.')

Areley refers to the village of Aureley Kings which is about ten miles upstream from Worcester at a point where the Severn runs between red sandstone cliffs (Barron and Weinberg x). This location is significant, as Worcester is located in the southwest of the Midlands dialect area. The language of the southwest Midlands, while not as stubborn as Kentish in giving up the old inflectional system, was not so quick as the east Midlands dialect of Chaucer to adapt to the new (Mossé 4). The archaic language of the Caligula manuscript is a reflection of this dialect, which Joseph Hall describes as, "descended from a Saxon patois which was substantially South-Western, but with an Anglian element derived from the neighboring Mercia" (463).

A factor as well in the language of the text is its date of composition, a subject of some debate among scholars. The generous time period, "1189 to sometime

not very early in the second half of the thirteenth century," presented by E.G. Stanley, is based on (a) a reference in the poem to *Ælienor þe wes Henriess quene* 'Eleanor who was Henry's queen' (22-23) which he claims could only have been written after Henry II's death in 1189, and (b) paleographical evidence<sup>2</sup> dating the Caligula manuscript to the second half of the thirteenth century (Stanley 88). Most scholars agree on the opening date 1189, but vary in their opinion of the closing date of composition. Hall writes that the work was completed before 1205 (466); J.S.P. Tatlock proposes 1199 (8); and H.B. Hinckley gives the period 1155-1173 (57).

It is the time period in which the *Brut* was written that makes a study of Laȝamon's use of the genitive so worthwhile. Because he was writing in the early part of the ME period in a dialect which was slow to evolve, the study of Laȝamon's syntax allows scholars to watch the language as it changes. Examples such as:

þe stiward com steppen.' þe wes Kæy ihaten.

hæxt cniht on londe.' vnder þan kinge

of alle þan hæpe.' of Arðures hirede.

(12269-71, 'the steward came walking who

was Kay named, the highest knight in the

land under the king of all the multitude  
of Arthur's retinue')

demonstrate the importance of studying the genitive case. The above example contains a pile-up of genitive constructions: (1) superlative + *of*-periphrasis (*hæxt of alle þan hæpe*), (2) noun of multitude + *of*-periphrasis (*hæpe of . . . hirede*), and (3) possessive noun with genitive inflection (*Arðures hirede*). Complex syntax such as this, with a combination of *of*-periphrasis and genitive inflection, reveals a language changing from the synthetic OE system of inflection to the analytic CE system which encourages *of*-periphrasis, although the inflected genitive still lives in the modern possessive *-s* ending.

Mark Amodio's pertinent article, "Some Notes on La<sub>3</sub>amon's use of the Synthetic Genitive" (1987), studies only those constructions with a genitive plural and a superlative adjective. He concludes that La<sub>3</sub>amon's use of this construction points to his connection with the Anglo-Saxon poetic tradition. My study expands upon Amodio's work to include those types of genitives discussed above, but does not attempt to retread Amodio's path. Rather, I will look at La<sub>3</sub>amon's use of the genitive inflection system as an indicator of the state of the language in its

progression towards CE, as well as an indicator of patterns in La<sub>3</sub>amon's style.

Haruo Iwasaki in "Case and Rhyme in La<sub>3</sub>amon's *Brut*" (1986), finds that the case form of some nouns, particularly *hond*, is sporadically conditioned by rhyme, although he makes little mention of the genitive. Building on this article, I suggest that La<sub>3</sub>amon intentionally chooses from the possible ME genitive inflections in order to meet the needs of rhyme.

The parameters of this study are necessarily restricted as *Brut* is a poem of 16,095 lines. I have chosen to concentrate on the Arthurian section of the poem which is 5,068 lines, approximately 1/3 of the entire poem. Out of this section I have taken a 500 line sample equally distributed throughout the text in ten 50-line sections, one every 500 lines.<sup>3</sup>

In my study of the genitive case in La<sub>3</sub>amon's *Brut* I have excluded any discussion of the possessive pronoun and pronominal adjective, such as *his* in *and ælc his Romain of-sloh* 'and each slew his Roman' (13265), as beyond the scope of this study. The types discussed are the partitive genitive, the definition/describing genitive, the group or split genitive, the possessive genitive, the genitive with

adjectives, and the adverbial genitive. The genitive with verbs, such as *domes abide* in *þu ne darst domes abide* 'you dare not [of] judgement await' (cited after Mustanoja 88 *The Owl and the Nightengale* 1695), is not discussed because I found no examples of it in this sampling.

The method I have followed in pursuing the genitive case began with consulting *Old English Syntax* Vols. I and II (1985) by Bruce Mitchell. After deciding upon a description of each genitive type and its use in OE, I referred to Tauno Mustanoja *A Middle English Syntax* Part I (1960), and Fernand Mossé *A Handbook of Middle English* (1966), for ME genitive types and descriptions. The fact that all exhaustive ME grammars predate Mitchell's extremely detailed *Old English Syntax* renders the former practically obsolete and justifies new investigations of case in ME. Supplemental materials which I consulted include Henry Sweet's *Student's Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon* (1897), Samuel Moore's *Historical Outlines of English Sounds and Inflections* (revised 1963), F.H. Stratmann's *Middle-English Dictionary* (revised 1963), and Greenbaum and Quirk's *A Student's Grammar of the English Language* (1990). Barron and Weinberg's *Laȝamon's Arthur* (1989)



provided assistance with modern punctuation of the text.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Brook, G.L. and R.F. Leslie. Eds. *Lagamon: Brut*. Vol. I and II. Early English Text Society. London: Oxford University Press, 1963, 1978. This edition has superceded the Sir Frederic Madden edition of 1847 as the diplomatic edition of *Lagamon's Brut*, and is used by Amodio, Iwasaki, Barron and Weinberg, and others.

<sup>2</sup>For this information, Stanley cites N.R. Ker *The Owl and the Nightingale*. E.E.T.S. v.251 (1963): ix ff.

<sup>3</sup>9229-9279, 9734-9785, 10220-10270, 10720-10770, 11225-11275, 11720-11770, 12221-12271, 12720-12770, 13220-13270, 13721-13771.

## CHAPTER II

### USE OF THE GENITIVE

#### Partitive Genitive

One category of genitive use with substantives is the partitive. The partitive genitive<sup>1</sup> is used to express the whole from which a part is taken. In the examples below:

pars hominum (a part [of] mankind)

duo milia peditum (two thousand [of]  
foot-soldiers)

gens maxima Germanorum (the largest tribe  
[of] the Germans<sup>2</sup>)

*hominum*, *peditum*, and *Germanorum* are the wholes or categories, inflected for the genitive, from which 'a part,' 'two thousand,' and 'the largest tribe' are taken.

The partitive genitive was used extensively in OE. It occurs (1) with nouns denoting partition, mass, measure, quantity, and extent, as well as nouns meaning multitude, crowd, people, and so on. The partitive is also used (2) with adjectives of quantity used

absolutely as nouns, (3) with demonstratives, (4) with indefinites (*sum*, *hwæt*), (5) with interrogative pronouns (*hwa*, *hwæt*, *hwylc*), and (6) with many superlative phrases, as well as (7) with both cardinal and ordinal numerals. Mitchell notes that when used with a noun the preference is toward independent (non-attributive) use of the cardinal after nineteen with the partitive genitive, although examples of partitive use with numbers under nineteen can be found, such as *þara consula twegen* (cited after Mitchell 217 from *Orosius* 190.9). The ordinal numbers may occur independently (non-attributively) or dependently (attributively), with or without a partitive.

Similarly, the partitive genitive construction in Middle English is used to express quantities and amounts of measure, especially parts of a whole. As such, this construction is used in ME: (1) with nouns of measure; (2) with adjectives; (3) with superlatives; and (4) with numerals which in OE governed the partitive.

The types of partitive genitive found in this sampling of *Brut* fall somewhere between these lists of OE and ME categories. *Laȝamon* uses the partitive genitive with (1) nouns of measure and mass, (2) indefinites, (3) superlatives, and (4) numerals.

(1) The first sub-category of the partitive genitive contains nouns of measure and mass, as well as nouns meaning crowd, multitude, people, etc., for example, *ungerime meniu hwittra manna* 'an innumerable multitude of clever men' (cited from Mitchell 546 *Ælfric Homilies* ii. 352. 10). 'Men' is the whole of which 'multitude' is a part. In the following example, *Laȝamon* describes the *hirede*, or whole, of which *hæpe* is a part:

. . . *pan hæpe.* of *Arðures hirede.* (12271,

' . . . the multitude of Arthur's retinue')

The inflection of *hæpe* is ambiguous, but probably dative and precedes the dative phrase *of. . . hirede*, creating the periphrastic genitive.

(2) Independent (non-attributive) indefinites are found with the partitive genitive (Mitchell 559). This study produced examples of the indefinites *nan*, *muchel*, and *all*. The only negative example of this type of genitive found in the sampling:

*heore nenne* (13270, 'none [of] them')

includes the negative indefinite *nenne* and follows the OE pattern closely as seen in Mitchell's example of independent negative indefinite use with a partitive genitive *nænig heora* quoted from *Bede* 64.23 (176).

The next example illustrates the generalizing of the inflection system:

. . . mid muclen his folke. (11735, 'with  
many [of] his people.')

La<sub>3</sub>amon uses *muclen*, an indefinite pronoun, after the preposition *mid*. If *his folke* is genitive, it is a partitive after the dative indefinite pronoun *muclen*. If *his folke* is dative it is in apposition to *muclen*. Since the endings do not indicate which case *folke* is, this is an example of the transition from the partitive genitive 'many [of] his people' to what in CE will become the construction indefinite pronoun > indefinite pronominal adjective, 'his many people.'

The second example is similar in construction, but is expressed periphrastically:

muchel of his cunne (10721, 'much of his  
kin')

In OE usage, as Mitchell observes, *micel* could be used independently with a partitive genitive or with *of* + dative (174). While the previous example represents the synthetic genitive, this example uses *muchel* in the nominative followed by *of* + *cunne* in the dative to complete the periphrastic expression. For La<sub>3</sub>amon, this same choice still existed, unlike CE which relies solely on the periphrastic construction.

The indefinite pronoun *alre* < OE *eallra* is seen with the genitive plural of a noun (which equals the 'whole' after an indefinite partitive). *All*, and *none* for that matter, are not strictly partitive, but Mustanoja and Mossé list them as such in their texts, and Mitchell goes so far as to explain, "But it seems pedantic to put them in a separate class from clearly partitive but otherwise parallel examples like *Ælfric Homilies* ii. 18. 15 *An þæra*" (545). *Alre* appears in both pre- and post-position:

*alre . . . gume* (12720, '[of] all . . . [of] men')

*alre kingen* (11257, '[of] all [of] kings')

*wederen alre* (1750, '[of] all [of] weathers')

*wefmone alre* (9250, '[of] all [of] women')

The final seven examples are neither synthetic nor periphrastic. They represent yet another encroachment upon the OE inflection system—the degeneration of the partitive to appositional constructions. Two of these examples are similar in which *kinelond* 'kingdom' stands in apposition to the indefinite pronoun *al* 'all':

He nom al his kinelond.' and sette hit  
Modræd an hond. (12723, 'He took all  
his kingdom and set it in the hand (of)  
Modred')

He sende his sonde.' 3eond al his kinelonde.  
(9232, 'He sent his messenger across all his  
kingdom.')

In the first example, *al* is the direct object of the first half line. Since no preposition links *al* to the noun phrase, *his kinelond*, which carries the zero ending of the accusative case, they stand in apposition to each other. In the second example, *al* is the object of the accusative preposition *geond* and similarly stands in apposition to *kinelonde*, which now carries an -e ending. At this point, it is instructive to observe that the final words of each half line rhyme in this as well as the prior example. It appears that while La<sub>3</sub>amon follows many of the rules of OE *accidence*, he also has the freedom to vary inflectional endings when needed.<sup>3</sup>

In similar fashion, the following two examples illustrate La<sub>3</sub>amon's use of *al* + partitive reduced to apposition:

*al pas londes folc* (10729, 'all the  
people [of] these lands')

*al Orcaneies lond* (11246, 'all Orkaney's  
land')

*Folc* and *lond* stand in apposition to *al* in these phrases (which also illustrate the genitive of possession to be discussed later).

In the fifth example, *all* is found within a periphrastic construction:

. . . of alle þan hæpe (12270, 'of all



the multitude')

As the object of the preposition *of*, *alle* is dative and, thus, stands in apposition to the dative *þan hæpe*.

The word order is varied in this next example:

Þere richchere monne wif alle (12230, 'all  
wives [of] the richer men')

In this case, indefinite *alle* follows the noun *wif* to which it stands in apposition.

The final example of apposition:

Þa þe king wes isete.' mid alle his du<sub>3</sub>ede.  
to his mete. (12267, 'When the king was  
set with all his nobility to his meal')

has *alle* as the object of the dative preposition *mid*. *His du<sub>3</sub>ede*, with the dative singular ending *-e*, stands in apposition to *alle*. It is noticeable that La<sub>3</sub>amon has again created a rhyme scheme, using *isete* and *mete*. The use of *all* followed by a personal pronoun occurs from OE to CE (Mustanoja 213).

Thus, La<sub>3</sub>amon's use of partitive indefinites represents a language in transition. He is able to use inflection, *of*-periphrasis, and apposition. While inflection is no longer a choice for the CE user, 'none' is used today independently (non-attributively) with *of*-periphrasis; 'all' and 'much' are used

independently (non-attributively) with *of*-periphrasis and in apposition.

(3) La<sub>3</sub>amon also uses the partitive genitive with the superlative seventeen times. In OE, this superlative construction followed several patterns. Those which include the genitive are: (a) a superlative followed by a partitive genitive, especially when used predicatively, (b) the combination partitive genitive + *of* prepositional phrase, and (c) the idea of the superlative expressed in other ways, such as, *ealra cyninga Cyning* 'king [of] all kings' (cited after Mitchell 83 from *Homilies of Ælfric* ii. 14. 28).

La<sub>3</sub>amon's use of the superlative does not appear to include such variety, yet his constructions do reflect OE syntax. La<sub>3</sub>amon's use of the superlative is mainly restricted to constructions of the types (a) superlative + noun inflected for the genitive; (b) superlative adjective + genitive of the indefinite pronoun *alre*; (c) superlative + two noun phrases, the genitive of the indefinite pronoun and the genitive plural of a noun (in any order); and (d) superlative + *of*-periphrasis.

The first type, superlative + noun inflected for the genitive, was found nine times in the sampling. Seven of these constructions are identical and consist

of the phrase, *aðelest kingen* (10228, 10249, 11234, 11274, 11725, 11747, and 12240). This construction is used throughout the *Brut* text in apposition to King Arthur, as in:

Ða cleopede Arthur. 'aðelest kingen.

(11725, 'Then shouted Arthur, noblest  
[of] kings')

*Kingen* is in the genitive plural; the southern dialects maintained and extended the *-en* plural to substantives which were not originally *-an* stems in OE (Mossé 50). There is no doubt that *kingen* is the genitive plural because taking *kingen* as nominative plural, 'noblest kings' does not make sense in apposition to the singular noun, *Arthur*. The final two constructions of the superlative + noun genitive type are:

wurðlukest wiuen 'worthiest [of] wives'  
(12724)

eorlene wraðest 'angriest [of] earls'  
(9273)

The first is constructed in the same manner as *aðelest kingen*, with a superlative adjective + plural in *-en*; however, the second appears in inverted noun + superlative word order. The *-ene* of the genitive plural was inherited by the Southern dialects from the *-ena* of the OE genitive plural (Mossé 52). It is worth noting that all nine of these appositive superlative

constructions appear at their lines' ends, and that the one example of a superlative adjective + noun in -ene inflection with inverted word order, when viewed in the context of the whole line, may represent a stylistic choice, dictated by meter and alliteration.

and he ánd-sware ǵaf.' éorlene wraðest (9273)

Similar is the predicative use of a superlative adjective followed by the genitive of the indefinite pronoun *alre*. The examples:

þat heom weore *alre l[eo]fest* (10245,  
'that which to them was dearest [of] all')

*alre swiðest ærne* (13231, 'one [who was]  
swiftest [of] all')

show the partitive genitive construction in *alre leofest* and *alre swiðest*. The genitive inflection of *alre*, ME -re < OE -ra, is unmistakable. In fact, Sweet in his *Student's Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon* defines *eallra* as 'of all,' and gives a superlative phrase as an example, *eallra maest*, 'most of all' (47).

The second superlative construction contains a superlative adjective with two noun phrases, the genitive of the indefinite pronoun *alre* + the genitive plural of a noun. Four examples of this construction, with varied word order, were found in the *Brut* text sampling.

*Alre* appears before the superlative adjective in three of these examples:

wederen *alre* selest (1750, calmest [of]  
all [of] weathers)

wefmone *alre* hendest (9250, handsomest  
[of] all [of] women)

*alre* treowest gume (12720, 'truest [of] all  
[of] men')

*Alre* appears after the superlative adjective once:

Leouest *alre* kingen (11257, dearest [of]  
all [of] kings)

but it is never found at the line's end. This alternate word order, superlative + *alre* + noun, is due to the demands of alliteration as seen in the full line:

for nu þu art mi lauer[d]. ' leouest  
*alre* kingen (11257, 'for now you are  
my lord, dearest [of] all [of] kings.')

In order to maintain the alliteration of the /l/ phoneme, *leouest* rather than *alre*, must come first in the second hemistich.

The final example of superlative use in this sample of the *Brut* is a departure from the OE standard. La<sub>3</sub>amon expresses the partitive genitive with the superlative periphrastically in two instances. The first:

þe hexste of þisse londe. (10232, 'the

highest of these lands.')

follows Mitchell's observation that in OE a superlative form of an 'adjective proper' can govern the partitive genitive when used alone. He cites the example, *welegast Mæcedonia rices Orosius* 114.10 (560).<sup>4</sup> In translation the two constructions follow the same pattern: 'the highest of these lands'/'the wealthiest [of] the kingdom [of] Macedonia.' La<sub>3</sub>amon has followed the OE pattern, but has substituted a periphrastic form for the genitive inflection.

The second periphrastic example follows a superlative used attributively:

[þe wes] hæxt cniht. . . of alle þan hæpe  
(12270, '[who was] the highest knight  
of all the multitude')

In this case, the superlative *hæxt* is followed by the dative phrase *of alle þan hæpe*.

Therefore, as Amodio's study<sup>5</sup> of La<sub>3</sub>amon's use of the synthetic genitive shows, La<sub>3</sub>amon is working within an active Anglo-Saxon poetic tradition, albeit one that reflects some changes in literary expression and taste. Similar to my study, he discovered a high repetition of the phrase, *aðelest kingen*, which with few exceptions, always appears in conjunction with *Arður* and seems to function as a tag. Therefore, discounting the seven

occurrences of this phrase as non-productive, I find that La<sub>3</sub>amon uses the pre-positioned genitive plural in six of my remaining eight examples, a word order which Amodio finds indicative of this active poetic tradition.<sup>6</sup> More striking than this is that out of the seventeen examples containing a superlative, fifteen are synthetic and only two are analytic (periphrastic).

Finally, (4) numerals are used with the partitive genitive in a similar manner both in OE and ME. Independent (non-attributive) use often takes the partitive genitive (Mitchell 217), and *hundred* and *þusend* are usually seen as nouns (Mustanoja 291). Within the partitive genitive, the elements could be ordered as numeral + genitive or genitive + numeral. The former was the most common, but as the ME period progressed this construction became the rule (Mitchell 217). All of the examples of partitive genitive use with a numeral found in this sampling follow the numeral + genitive noun construction.

In the first example, La<sub>3</sub>amon uses the *-en(e)* genitive plural inflection found in the southern dialects in the ME period.

Twa hundred scipene. (10231, 'Two hundred [of]  
ships')

where *Twa hundred* is in the nominative case.

The next set of examples :

*seoue þusen monnen* (10265, 'seven thousand  
[of] men')

*moni hundred monnen* (13761, 'many hundred  
[of] men,')

*mid sixti þusend monnen* (13764, 'with  
sixty thousand [of] men,')

show *monnen* in the genitive plural following a numerical expression. *Seoue þusend* is nominative, while in the second example, *moni* < OE *manig* can function as a numeral and, thus, acts as an adjective to *hundred* (Mitchell 69). In the third example, *sixti þusend* takes the dative case following *mid*.

In the next set of examples, the genitive plural *cnihten* is preceded by the genitive-causing number.

*mid þritti þusen cnihten* (10252, 'with  
thirty thousand [of] knights,')

*mid ten þusend cnihten* (13737, 'with ten  
thousand [of] knights,')

*mid twenti hundred cnihten* (13759, 'with  
twenty hundred [of] knights,')

*þritti þusend cnihten* (10260, 'thirty  
thousand [of] knights.')

In the first three lines the numeral is the object of the dative preposition *mid* and itself governs a genitive plural. The numeral in the final line, *þritti þusend*, is in the accusative case followed by *cnihten* with the -en(e) genitive plural ending.



The following set of numerical locutions is very similar. *Here-kempen* is the genitive plural accompanying the noun *pusend*.

sextene pusend./he<sub>3</sub>e here-kempen. (11262-3,  
'sixteen thousand [of] noble warriors,')

fifti pusende./hærde here-kempen. (11732-3,  
'fifty thousand [of] hardened warriors.')

These examples follow similar word order, number + 'thousand' + adjective + compound noun. *Pusend* is in the accusative in the first example and the nominative in the second. The compound noun is then modified by the adjectives *he<sub>3</sub>e* and *hærde* which agree with the second element of the compound noun. *Kemp* < OE *cemp* is a weak masculine noun with genitive plural in *-en(e)*, which makes these two lines clearly partitive. In the second example, *pusende* carries an *-e* ending although its case is the nominative. A look at the first half of line 11732 shows that it ends with the word *fuliende*. Thus, the *-e* on *pusende* appears to be intentional, creating the rhyme *fuliende/pusende*.

The next example also includes a synthetic genitive in the form of *rideren*:

. . . twenti pusend rideren. (13749,  
' . . . twenti thousand [of] horsemen.')

Once again a tantalizing rhyme jumps out at the end of each hemistich, particularly in the absence of alliteration:

he ladde to iueren.' twenti þusend rideren.

*Twenti þusend* is again in the accusative case, discounting the possibility that the *-en* ending of the masculine *rideren* is dative. Iwasaki in "A Survey of Noun Declensions," cites *þreo hundred ridearen* (78) in which *ridaeren* is an example of the weak form of the genitive plural (78). In light of other examples of the genitive plural in *-en* such as *kingen*, *cnihten* and *monnen*, it seems probable that La<sub>3</sub>amon intended the genitive plural in this instance also.

The next example:

seoue þusend punde' of seoluere and of golde  
(11229, 'seven thousand [of] pounds  
of silver and gold')

shows the inflected genitive plural of *punde* in combination with *of*-periphrasis, perhaps to distinguish the partitive genitive of the numerical expression from the periphrastic genitive of material.

The next example illustrates a departure from the expected inflection:

fiftene hundred.

baldere þeinen.' of Arðures þeoden

(13730-31, 'fifteen hundred [of] bold

thanes from Arthur's kingdom,')

*Fiftene hundred* is accusative; *þeinen* is a genitive plural masculine noun, and the choice of *-en* is possibly influenced by rhyme scheme, or by the analogy to *n*-stem nouns. *La<sub>3</sub>amon* seems to be consistent in using *-en* with the partitive genitive after numerals. The expected genitive plural would be *þeine*.

In his use of the partitive, *La<sub>3</sub>amon* seems to take advantage of the confusion in the inflection system and occasionally uses variable plural endings to suit the demands of rhyme. This creates a situation in which it is difficult to ascertain whether *La<sub>3</sub>amon* thought of a particular ending as the genitive plural, although the numeral with a genitive rule, as well as the previous examples, might deem it so.

The following example poses particular problems and exemplifies this situation:

. . . ouer ueldes.' fif þusend sceldes.

(10763, . . . over the fields ' five

thousand [of] shields.)

Following the rule of numeral use in both OE and ME *sceldes* should take the genitive plural, which is *-en(e)*; Stratmann lists *-es* as the general ME plural. Therefore, *La<sub>3</sub>amon* could have chosen the *-es* ending not

only because it is the accepted general plural ending, but also because it rhymes with *ueldes*.

I found only one periphrastic construction in this group.

clupien þusende. ' of þan þeod-folke.

(13223, 'calling thousands of the people.')

The noun, *þusende*, is in the accusative case followed by *of* + the dative *þan þeod-folke* resulting in the periphrastic genitive.

The appositional type of numeral construction, which is the CE method of expression, as in 'one hundred students,' appears in *Brut* once in my sampling:

twā and þritti aeit-lond (11247, 'thirty-two islands.').

In this instance, however, the entire line is in the accusative as *aeit-lond* carries no ending to indicate otherwise. While synthetic expression still dominates in Laȝamon's work, the preponderance of number + noun word order and the beginnings of plural inflection confusion, which include this example of apposition with zero ending, indicate that the CE method of treating the numeral as an adjective is well on its way to acceptance.

### Genitive of Definition/Description

The genitive of definition indicates a sense apposition between two nouns and was originally confined to use with place names, for example, the OE *Rome burh* (cited from Mustanoja 81 *The Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester*. 4161<sup>7</sup>). However, as the ME period progressed, this category expanded to include use with personal and inanimate nouns and for emphatic subjective description, in addition to place names. Therefore, to simplify this study I have combined what can be considered genitive of definition, description, origin, and material under this category, as all these types of genitive expression, at root, further define or describe the governing noun. In my sampling of *Brut*, La<sub>3</sub>amon chooses the synthetic construction nine times:

- (1) bliðe wes þe Lundenes tun (9231, 'happy was the town [of] London')
- (2) in-to Lundenes tun (9236, 'into the town [of] London')
- (3) icume Verolames tun (9768, 'came to the town [of] Verlom')
- (4) touward Mihhæles Munte (10224, 'toward the Mount [of] Michael')
- (1) and domes waldende (12760, 'ruler [of] decrees')
- (2) monnen froure (12761, 'comforter [of] men')
- (1) þat scop þæs dæies lihten (9750, 'who

created the light [of] day')

(2)    *pa iscop þas dages lihte* (9274, 'who  
         created the light [of] day')

(3)    *pa scop þas dæies lihten* (11769, 'who  
         created the light [of] the day')

The first four examples above define place names. *Mihhæles*, *Verolames*, and *Lundenes* all carry the genitive singular *-es* ending. The next two examples are appositives of Christ with *monnen* in the genitive plural and *domes* in the genitive singular. The final three examples are descriptions of the Lord in which the *-es* genitive singular ending is accompanied by the genitive article *þas/þæs*.

In the final synthetic example, *La<sub>3</sub>amon* uses the partitive genitive with the mass noun *londe*:

*Of monies cunnes londe . . .* (12243, 'from  
         lands [of] many kinds')

which follows OE usage. *Of* is used as a preposition in the OE sense 'out of, from,' rather than periphrastically as *monies* and *cunnes* are inflected for the genitive. Furthermore, *londe* could be the dative plural which matches the case governed by the preposition *of* in OE.

Eleven periphrastic examples were found in the sampling. Seven of these define the origin of a person as in:

*þe eorl of Cornwale* (9240, 'the earl of

Cornwall')

þe eorl of Cornwale (9247, 'the earl of  
Cornwall')

þe king of Orcaneie (11241, 'the king of  
Orkney')

þa cnihtes of Rome (13230, 'the knights of  
Rome')

þas kinges dohter of Rusie (11227, 'the king  
of Russia's daughter')

of Rome he wes legat (12227, 'he was the legate of  
Rome')

In the final example, the place of origin is not made specific:

. . . monnen.' sele of his londen.

('13764,. . . select men of his lands')

In this line, the plural *monnen* is defined by the dative *of his londen*.

The genitive of description is conveyed periphrastically with varying word order:

and of þan hirede prelat. (12227,

'and the chaplain of the court'

*Þan* is the singular masculine dative article in the Southwest Midland dialect (Mossé 60). As object of the preposition *of*, *hirede* is dative and the whole prepositional phrase precedes the governing noun *prelat*. The next example reverses the word order to noun + *of* + dative in:

. . . ferde.' of folken.- 'army of people.'  
(12737)

*Ferde* is the governing noun in the accusative case while *folken*, a dative plural, is the object of the preposition *of*.

The final two periphrastic constructions illustrate the genitive of material:

. . . enne beh of rede gold (12236,  
'a bar of red gold')

seoue þusend punde.' of seoluere and of  
golde. (11229, seven thousand pounds of  
silver and of gold)

The increasing use of *of*-periphrasis to express the genitive case is evident even at this early date. One-half of these genitive of definition constructions are expressed with periphrasis. Mustanoja, in his discussion of the interchangeability of prepositions, tells of the encroachment of *of* upon *on* and *at*, and how this shift may have promoted the use of periphrasis with place names citing *þa burg æt Tofeceastre* (OE *Chronicles* an. 921) and *se burh of Lincolne* (an. 1123) as examples of this change (Mustanoja 350). However, it is interesting to note that Laȝamon uses *of*-periphrasis only with place names in reference to a person, such as *þe eorl of Cornwale*; otherwise, he chooses inflection.

### The Group Genitive



The group or split genitive is a grammatical construction in which two genitive nouns in apposition are split by their governing noun, for example, *ðæs cyninges sweoster Ecgfrides* (cited from Mitchell 557 *Ælfric Homilies ii. 146. 10*). However, Mustanoja writes that in late OE the noun in apposition sometimes lost its genitive inflection, and by ME usually occurred in the common case, *þuruh Julianes heste þe amperur* (cited from Mustanoja 78 *Ancrene Wisse* 109). In the current study of La<sub>3</sub>amon, only one construction represents the group or split genitive:

*þas kinges dohter of Rusie. (11227, 'the king of  
Russia's daughter.')*

The governing noun *dohter* occurs between the possessive genitive *þas kinges* and the periphrastic genitive of definition *of Rusie*. While La<sub>3</sub>amon does not maintain full genitival inflection, neither has his phrasing fully degenerated to the extent that case indicators are lost completely. This construction follows that of *Malcolmes cynges dohter of Scotlande*, (cited from Mustanoja 78 as an example of the split genitive in OE, but he gives no source).

This split genitive does not occur in CE. Early occurrences of the modern construction of the group

genitive occur in poetry, for example: *the grete god of loves name* (Chaucer, *House of Fame* 1489).

### Genitive of Possession

The possessive function in OE is most often used with "nouns referring to animates human and non-human, to materials, and to abstract qualities" (Mitchell 539). The construction, genitive (has or possesses) + noun, was found 24 times:

Gorlois eorls wif (9250, 'Gorlois the eorl's wife')

gumene ældere (9263, 'leader [of] men')

gumenene lauerd (9272, 'lord [of] men')

Vðeres cnihtes (9763, 'Uther's knights')

Drihtenes wille (9783, 'God's will')

al þas londas folc (10729, 'all the people [of] these lands')

into þan scipen grunde (10732, 'into the bottoms [of] the ships')

Childriches heren (10736, 'Childric's soldiers')

Cheldriches cnihtes (10761, 'Childric's knights')

al Orcaneies lond (11246, 'all [of] Orkney's land')

kinges istreon (11276, 'the progeny [of] a

king')

Arðures mon (11761, 'Arthur's man')

Arðures ære (11770, 'Arthur's mercy')

þere richchre monne wif alle (12230, 'all  
wives of the men')

monnen dohtere (12231, 'men's daughters')

on þas kinges hafde (12260, 'on the king's  
head')

ælderne da<sub>3</sub>e (12262, 'ancestor's days')

Arðures hirede (12271, 'Arthur's retinue')

þas kinges folke (12740, 'the king's people')

midelarde mund (12761, 'earth's protector')

Scottene deorling (12764, 'darling [of]  
the Scots')

Arðures þeoden (13731, 'Arthur's country')

Arðures birle and his mæi (13734, 'Arthur's  
cup bearer and his kinsman')

and finally,

þere cnihte wifen (12238, 'the wives [of]

the knights')

in which La<sub>3</sub>amon uses the demonstrative pronoun *þere* < OE genitive plural *þæra* and *cnihte* with the -e < OE -a ending of the masculine genitive plural. In comparison, the Otho scribe rendered this phrase *þe kingene wiues* (12238, 'the wives [of] kings,') confirming La<sub>3</sub>amon's intention by utilizing the -ene genitive plural ending.

Inverted noun + genitive word order was found in three instances:

*Þis iherde þe king.' þræt þas kaiseres.*  
(11268, 'This heard the king the threat  
[of] the emperor')

*þurh þine að-mode wil.' walden ænglen.*  
(12762, 'through thy gracious will  
commander [of] angels')

*eorles and beornes.' at borde þas kinges.*  
(12268, 'earls and barons at the table [of]  
the king')

The inverted word order facilitates meter in the first example including the alliteration (although weak) of the /p/ and /k/ phonemes. Likewise, in the second example post position of the genitive is necessary for the alliteration of the /w/ phoneme. The third example coordinates both alliteration, /b/, and rhyme, *beornes/kinges*.

Of twenty-eight possessive genitive constructions, only one was a periphrastic construction:

*Arður þa liðe word iherde.' of þan leod-kinge.*  
(11237, 'Arthur heard the gentle word of the  
people's king')

This line would seem strikingly modern if not for the S-O-V word order of the first hemistich which splits the possessor, *þan leod-king*, from its noun, *word*.

### Genitive with Adjectives

Although Anglo-Saxon poetry is rich in adjectival expressions, by the ME period the genitive governed by an adjective becomes rare and usually gives way to *of*-periphrasis. My sampling of *Brut* produced few examples of a genitive with an adjective, but these were synthetically expressed and both involve comparison. In the first example,

Marcel hehte þe cniht. ' hegere monnen.

(13241, 'The knight named Marcel, higher  
of men.')

*Hegere*, from *heah*, takes the genitive, which in this case is the basis of comparison,<sup>8</sup> *monnen*. (Mitchell 88).

The next example is a comparison of equivalence:

þat no isah no mon.' nauer ær... .half

swa hahne ricche-dom. . . .swa mid

Arðure was.' aðeles cunnes. (12222-4,

'no man ever saw before half as high a

kingdom as with Arthur was [in] noble kinds

[of men]')

in which *hahne* is borrowed to function as the predicate adjective after *was* and takes the genitive phrase *aðeles cunnes*. The genitive-adjective relation becomes clear once the basis of comparison<sup>9</sup> is provided:

no man ever saw before a kingdom half as  
 high as (the kingdom) was (high) with  
 Arthur [in] noble kinds [of men].

This results in the CE translation, 'No man ever saw a kingdom half as high in noblemen as Arthur's was.'

This study produced only one example of the periphrastic genitive with a positive adjective:

. . . Ðat Childric of heom neore war  
 (10733, '. . . that Childric was not  
 wary of them.')

In this phrase, the periphrastic *of heom* is dependent of the adjective *war*.

### Adverbial Genitive

The adverbial genitive in OE is independent of any governing word and itself does not govern a genitive. It is used both in OE and ME similarly to indicate relations in time and space.

One example of an adverbial genitive of time occurs in three places in the sampling:

dæies and nihtes (10266, 10268, 10726)

and is translated by Barron as "on all occasions," "both night and day," and as "night and day." This expression is used by La<sub>3</sub>amon as it was in OE.

One example of an adverbial genitive of place was found in the sampling, *to-gaines* (10254), *to-gæines* (10255, 11245). Again, aside from normal changes in spelling OE *togeanes* > ME *to-gaines*, *to-gæines*, La<sub>3</sub>amon maintains the OE sense of this adverbial genitive, 'towards, opposite' (Mitchell 585), for example:

Gonwais him uerde to-<sub>3</sub>æines. (11245,

'Gonwais to him marched opposite')

The final and most interesting adverbial genitive is *forð-rihtes* 'straightaway' which occurs in six lines: 9259, 9262, 10252, 10258, 10262, and 10726. The following line is representative:

Be eorl and his cnihtes. ' arisen forð-rihtes.

(9259, 'the earl and his knights arose  
straightaway')

Although *rihtes* occurs in OE, *forð-rihtes* is specifically listed by Sweet<sup>10</sup> as a form that does not occur in OE (65). However, the term is listed and defined by Stratmann who provides an excerpt from La<sub>3</sub>amon as his example.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Sometimes referred to as the genitive of the whole.  
See Bennett, Charles E. *New Latin Grammar*.

<sup>2</sup>Examples cited from Bennett 135.

<sup>3</sup>Rhyme was determined according to Hall, Joseph.  
*Selections From Early Middle English 1130-1250. Part II Notes*. 464. Hall's method includes rhymes in which a final consonant is 'negligible' (sæte:hæaten) even a final syllable (scenden:lond); rhymes by assonance (lond:strong) although I have no examples; inflectional rhymes (þeohtes:londes); perfect rhymes (sohten:rohten); and imperfect rhymes (inne:cunne).

<sup>4</sup>Sweet, H. *King Alfred's Orosius* (EETS 1883).

<sup>5</sup>Amodio, Mark. "Some Notes on Laȝamon's Use of the Synthetic Genitive." *Studia Neophilologica* 59 (1987): 187-94.

<sup>6</sup>Lines 9250, 9273, 10245, 12720, 12750 and 13231

<sup>7</sup>Wright, W.A. Ed. *The Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester*. RBMAS 86, London 1887.

<sup>8</sup>The terminology is that of Greenbaum and Quirk.

<sup>9</sup>The terminology is that of Greenbaum and Quirk. The basis of comparison is enclosed in parenthesis.

<sup>10</sup>Neither can the form be found in Klæber or Mitchell.



### CHAPTER III

#### CONCLUSION

The figures produced as a result of this study are revealing. Synthetic constructions are used 4.2 times as much as constructions with *of*-periphrasis, in the amounts eighty to nineteen respectively. In other words, the inflectional ending is chosen in 77.6% of my sampling. Of the genitive types discussed in this study, the largest single group of these are the possessive genitives which are synthetic in twenty-seven of the twenty-eight examples; however, this is to be expected as the possessive ending -s is still in use today, although in modern usage the word order is much more restricted.

More interesting than this is that sixty-one of the half-lines rhyme. Eleven of these examples involve *of*-periphrasis, three involve apposition, four are a combination of inflectional endings and *of*-periphrasis, and one rhyme was not a result of the genitive construction in question, leaving forty-two instances

which involve inflectional endings and rhyme as in the example:

ouer þe ueldes.' fif þusend sceldes (10763).

La<sub>3</sub>amon appears to have purposely chosen the inflectional ending *-es* of *sceldes*. It is the only noun following a numeral which does not end in the genitive plural *-en(e)*. Convincing as well is *Twa hundred scipene.* ' þer weore wel biwitene, (10231), as *scip* appears variously in the *Brut* text in the genitive plural as *scipa*, and *scipen(e)*, as well as in the generalized form *scipes*. In fact, this last pattern can be seen in the inflection of *king* and *cniht* as well. Additional examples of rhyming half-lines include: *Drihten/lihten*, *Drihte/lihte*, *monnen/londen*, *forð-rihtes/nihtes*, *to-<sub>3</sub>æines/þeines*, *kinelond/hond*, *kinelonde/sonde*.

Furthermore, La<sub>3</sub>amon states in his introduction that he has travelled widely throughout the land (*La<sub>3</sub>amon gon liðen.* ' wide *Ʒond þas leode*, 14), which suggests that he was familiar with the other dialects of England. This, in addition to either his participation in a living Anglo-Saxon poetic tradition or his knowledge of the OE poetic past (or simply the advantage of his dialect), gave La<sub>3</sub>amon great flexibility in his choice of inflectional endings.

Therefore, it appears from the results of this study of the genitive inflection in *Brut* that Laȝamon was able to manipulate various genitive inflectional endings to maintain meter and rhyme and still be understandable to his audience.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Amodio, Mark. "Some Notes on La3amon's Use of the Synthetic Genitive." *Studia Neophilologica* 59.2 (1987): 187-94.
- Barron, W.R.J. and S.C. Weinberg. *La3amon's Arthur*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989.
- Bennet, Charles E. *New Latin Grammar*. 2nd ed.. Wauconda: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc., 1994.
- Brook G.L. and R.F. Leslie. *La3amon: Brut* v. 1. E.E.T.S. 250. London: Oxford University Press, 1963.
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. "House of Fame." *The Riverside Chaucer*. 3rd ed. Ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987. 348-373.
- Donoghue, Daniel. "La3amon's Ambivalence." *Speculum* 65 (1990): 537-63.
- Greenbaum, S. and Randolph Quirk. *A Student's Grammar of the English Language*. Essex: Longman Group UK Ltd., 1990.
- Hall, Joseph. *Selections from Early Middle English 1130-1250*. Part II Notes. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920. 450-79.
- Hinckley H.B. "The Date of La3amon's Brut." *Anglia* 56 (1932): 43-57.
- Iwasaki, H. "Case and Rhyme in La3amon's Brut." In Kastovsky, Dieter and Aleksander Szwedek. Eds. *Linguistics across Historical and Geographical Boundaries: In Honor of Jacek Fisiak on the Occasion of His Fiftieth Birthday*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1986. 387-95.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "A Survey of the Noun Declension in La<sub>3</sub>amon's Brut." *Poetica* (Tokyo) 12 (1981): 77-81
- Ker, N.R. *The Owl and the Nightengale*. E.E.T.S. 251. London: Oxford University Press, 1963. p. ix ff.
- Klæber, F. *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*. 1922. 3rd ed. Boston: D.C. Heath and Co., 1950.
- Mitchell, Bruce. *Old English Syntax*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.
- Moore, Samuel. *Historical Outlines of English Sounds and Inflections*. 1951. Rev. Albert H. Marckwardt. Ann Arbor: George Wahr Publishing Co., 1963.
- Mossé, Fernand. *Handbook of Middle English*. 1952. Trans. James S. Walker. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1952.
- Mustanoja, Tauno F. *A Middle English Syntax*. Part 1 Parts of Speech. Helsinki: Societe Neophilologique, 1960.
- Stanley, E.G. "The Date of La<sub>3</sub>amon's Brut." *Notes and Queries* 213 (1968): 85-88.
- Stratmann, F.H. *Stratmann's Middle-English Dictionary*. 1891. Rev. Henry Bradley. London: Oxford University Press, 1963.
- Sweet, Henry. *The Student's Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1897.
- Tatlock, J.S.P. "La<sub>3</sub>amon's Poetic Style and Its Relations." *Manly Anniversary Studies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923. 3-11.