

Lazamon's *Brut*: Gregory and Saint Augustine

14695 Ða wes inne Rome; a pape of Godes dome
Gregori wes ihate. Godd seolf hine lufede;
Ða wes hit in ane stunden; þat þe pape wolde wenden.
þat he wol((de)) [speden] an ane of his neoden.
Ða com he in are strete; þat strahte to Rome.
14700 þa isah he leden; of Englisce leoden.
þreo swiðe fæire men; faste ibunden.
heo scolden beon iseolde; and þa panezes. weoren i-talde.
Ða fræinede þa pape an-an; of feizere þan monnen.
whonnene heo weoren; & hu heo þare comen.
14705 and of wulche stronde; heo istroned weoren.
Ðæ andswarede þe an; þat wes a swiðe fair mon.
We beoð heðe((ne)) men; & hider beoð iladde.
and we weoren ut isalde; of Anglene londe.
and fulluht we to ((þe)) zeorneð. 3ef þu us wult ifreoizen.
14710 Ða[t] seiden men Anglisce; aðele iborene.
Ða reousede Gregori; Godd hine luuede.
and þas andsware saide; þe pape wes isele.
Iwis 3e beo[ð] Ænglisce. englen ilicchest.
of alle þan folke; þa wunieð uppen uolde.
14715 eouwer cun is fezerest of alle quike monnen.
Ðe pape heom freinede; of feole tidinde.
of lazen and of londen. and of þissere leodene kinge;
and heo him al seiden; soð þat heo wusten.
and he heom ureoizen lette; and fulluht on sette.
14720 and charde azein sone; eft into Rome.

Now there was once in Rome a Pope under God's laws,
Gregory he was called and God himself loved him.
Now on one occasion the pope wished to travel
In order to [further] some business of his;
He came to a street which stretched towards Rome
And he saw there being led in chains some of the English nation,
Three very fair men firmly secured;
They were about to be sold, and the coins had been counted.
Then the Pope at once questioned the comely young men,
As to where they were from, how they came to be there,
And on which distant shore they had been engendered.
The one of them answered, a man who was most handsome,
'We are heathen men and we have been brought here
After being sold off, away from Angle-land,
And we beg you to baptise us if you would only set us free.'
So spoke the English men; they were nobly born.
Then Gregory felt pity (God loved him much),
And this was the reply of the blessed Pope:
'Certainly you are Angles; in fact more like Angels!
Of all of the nations who dwell upon the earth,
Your race is the fairest of all mortal men.'
The Pope enquired of them much information
About their laws and their lands and about this people's king;
And they gave him true answers to everything they knew of,
And he had them set free and brought baptism to them,
And then turned straight back once again towards Rome,

Anne cardinal cleopede; i-coren of his uolke.
 Austin wes ihotæn; aþelest clærken.
 þe pape him seide; in his som-rune.
 Austin þu scalt wende; mid soð-fæste þonke.
 14725 in-to Engle-londe; to Æðelberte kinge.
 & beode þer Godes godd-spel; þe scal spede ful wel.
 And ich þe feouwertu bi-tæche wel gode clærkes.
 Nu to-marzen bið þe dæi; þa þu scalt do þe i þene wæi.
 Forð ferde Austin; and his clærkes mid him.
 14730 þat him wes ful iwil; at Tanette he com hider in.
 & swa he up is iwend; þat he com into Kent.
 Swa he uorð to Cantuare-buri; þer him þuhte swiðe muri.
 þer he funde Aðelbert þat king wes a þan ærd.
 Aðelberde he talde tidende; of þan heoueneliche kinge.
 14735 he seide him þat godd-spel; and þe king him luste swiðe wel.
 wel he þat lar-spel unde((r))-nom an-eouste he 3irnde Cristindom,
 Iuulzed iwar[ð] A[ð]elberd king; and al his duzeðe mid him,
 and anan he gon to wurche; ane swiðe feire chirche.
 a seinte ((Trinet))ðes nome; wel wes þan kinge þeruore.
 14740 Þa iwende seint Austin vorð; æst and west and suð and norð.
 and seoððe þurh-ut Englelond. & turnde hit to Godes hond.
 clærkes he larde; chirreches he arerde.
 seoke men he helde; þur Halindes mihte.
 And swa he droh suð-ward; þat he com to Dorchestre.
 14745 þer he funde þa wurste men; þa on londe wuneden.
 he talde heom Godes leore; and duden him to scare.
 he tahten heom Cristindom; ((and heo grenneden him hon))
 Þer stod seint Austin. and his clærkes mid him.
 and speken of Crist Godes sune; al swa wes ær heore iwune.
 14750 þer heo iwurðen to; to wraðere hele.

He summoned a cardinal, selected from his people,
 Augustine he was called, an admirable priest;
 The Pope instructed him, in private audience:
 'Augustine, you are to go, with pious intention,
 Into England, to King Ethelbert,
 And there preach God's gospel: you will succeed very well!
 And I shall supply you with forty very fine priests.
 Now tomorrow is the day when you must set off on your way!
 Off went Augustine and his clerics with him;
 He accepted willingly, and made landfall here at Thanet,
 And accordingly he went ashore and so entered Kent.
 On he went to Canterbury, which he found most satisfactory,
 Where he found King Ethelbert who was high king in that land.
 To Ethelbert he told the tidings of the heavenly king himself;
 He described to him the gospel and the king listened to him very well;
 Well did he receive the teaching and straightaway desired Christianity:
 So King Ethelbert was christened and all his household with him,
 And at once began constructing a very beautiful church,
 In the Holy Trinity's name: great grace he earned for this!
 Then Saint Augustine set forth, east and west and south and north,
 And then all through England, converting it to God's command.
 Clerics he trained, churches he raised,
 Sick men he healed, through the Saviour's power.
 And so he drew southwards till he came to Dorchester
 Where he found the most wicked men who lived in the whole land:
 He told them God's teaching and they treated him with scorn;
 He taught them Christianity [and they grimaced at him];
 There stood Saint Augustine and his priests alongside him
 Speaking of Christ the Son of God, as it had been their custom,
 And there men approached them to their disadvantage

and nomen tailen of rehzen;
 and hangede on his cape; an elchere halue;
 and bi-halues urnen. and wurpen hine mid banen;
 and seoððe zeiden him on. mid zeomerliche stanen.
 14755 & swa heo hine gunnen sende; an driuen hine ut of þan ende.
 Seint Austin heo weoren lað; and he iwrað swiðe wrað.
 and he fif milen iwende; from Dorchestre.
 and com to ane munte. þe muchel wes & hende.
 þer he lai on cneowe ibede; and cleopede auere touward Gode.
 14760 þat he hine awreke; a þan a-warriede uolke.
 þa hine isend hafden; mid heore scaðe deden.
 Vre Drihte hine iherde; in-to þere heoue((ne)).
 and his wreche sende; an wræstliche þan folke.
 þa þe rihzen tailen; hangede a þan clarkes.
 14765 Ða tailen heom comen on. þer-uoren heo mazen iteled beon.
 Iscend wes þat mon-cun. mug%gles heo hafden.
 and inne hirede ælches; men cleopeð heom muglinges.
 and euer-alc freo mon; ful telleð heom on.
 & Englisce freomen; in uncuðe londen.
 14770 for þan ilke dede; heo habbeoð neb rede.
 and monies godes monnes sune; in vncuðe londe.
 þe nauere ne com þer neh. is icleoped cued
 Austin him wunede; vnder ane munede.
 and his clarkes mid him eke. þeo comen of Rome;
 14775 cleopede to Drihtene; þe scop dazes lihte.
 særimod and sorhfulle; heom sceomeden wel sære.
 þat þat vni-wraste moncun; heom iscend hafden.
 Ða wolde he þer-after sone. wenden to Rome.
 and menen to Gregorie; þan holi appostolie.
 14780 hu Dorchestre-seten; hine gunnen greten.

By taking tails of sting-rays [to the dismay of many],
 And hanging them on his cope on either side,
 And then running away and pelting him with bones,
 And then they yelled at him horrifying taunts,
 And so they dispatched him and drove him from that district.
 Saint Augustine was annoyed with them and grew very angry;
 He walked for five miles away from Dorchester
 And came to a hilltop very high and beautiful,
 Where he fell on his knees in prayer calling continually upon God
 For Him to avenge him on the accursed people
 Who had dishonoured him with their harmful actions.
 Our Lord heard his voice reaching into heaven
 And sent down his vengeance on the [wretched] people
 Who had hung sting-rays on to the clerics:
 Those tails stuck on to them, and for this they can be derided;
 All that tribe were disgraced: they all had little muggles,
 And in every household people called them 'mugglings',
 And every gentleman says foul things about them,
 And English gentlefolk in foreign countries
 Because of that very deed go round with red faces,
 And many a good man's son when he is abroad,
 Who never went anywhere near that place, is called by everyone 'base'.
 Augustine remained at the foot of a mountain,
 And his priests with him too, who had come with him from Rome,
 Calling to the Lord who made the light of day,
 Penitent and saddened: they were bitterly ashamed
 That that evil group of men should have disgraced them.
 So because of that he wanted to return at once to Rome,
 And complain to Saint Gregory, the holy apostle,
 How the inhabitants of Dorchester thought fit to treat him.

Al swa he wes al 3a[r]eou; & wolde his wei uaren.
 a þere ilke nihte; þa at-eoden him ure Drihte.
 and nemnede him his. rihte nome; welle uain wes he þer-uore.
 Whæt þenchest þu Austin; what þenchest þu leof min.
 14785 Woldest þu þus sone; faren aȝein to Rome.
 No scalt þu noht ȝete; fusen of londe.
 þu ært swiðe leof me; and ich wulle wunien mid þe.
 and þu scalt iræd-liche; in-to hefne-riche.
 heofne is þe al ȝaru; þider scal þi saulen uaren.
 14790 Þus spac ure Drihten; wið Austin his cnihten.
 Þa þe Austin under-ȝæt. whæt ure Drihten hæden isæid.
 and he isah ure Drihte; þe þus him bihehte.
 and ure Drihten waht to heofene; and Austin a cneowe heolde.
 adun to þere uolde; þer he iseh ure Drihten stonde.
 14795 weopende he cleopede; to heuenliche kinge.
 ȝeorne he bad are; to þan almihtie Gode.
 ær he mid alle ueolle; adun to þere uolde.
 A þan ilke stude; þer stod ure Drihten.
 þer he pihte his stæf; him-seolf he cneouled e þer neh.
 14800 and his iueren he seide lar-spel; and hit likede him ful wel.
 Þa he isaid hauede; þa sæȝen of ure Drihten.
 his staf he nom an honde; & wolde to his inne ȝeonge.
 Up he læc þene staf; þat water þer-after leop.
 Þe ueȝereste welles stræm; þe irneð on uolden.
 14805 Ær nes þer na tun; no wunende na man.
 Sone uolc gadere[de] to Austin þan gode.
 and al bi his læuen; þider gunnen liðen.
 and bi-gunnen þer to bulden; bi þan watere þa was hende.
 Moni mon þer uætte hele; þene stude he cleopede Cernel.
 14810 cerno cernis; þat is Latin ful i-wis.

As soon as he was quite ready and about to go upon his way,
 In that same night Our Lord came there to him,
 Calling him by his own name—at that he greatly rejoiced:
 ‘What are you thinking of, Augustine, what think you, my friend?
 Do you want to go away so soon, back again to Rome?
 You are not yet to leave, to hasten from the land.
 You are very dear to me, and I intend to dwell with you,
 And very readily will you come to the kingdom of heaven:
 Heaven is all prepared for you; that way your soul is to travel!’
 So spoke Our Lord with Augustine his knight.
 When Augustine understood what Our Lord had been saying,
 And when he looked at Our Lord, who made him this promise,
 Our Lord rose to heaven and Augustine stayed on his knees,
 Down on the soil, where he’d seen Our Lord standing;
 Weeping, he called to the heavenly king,
 Earnestly he begged Almighty God for mercy,
 Before he fell completely prostrate upon the earth;
 On that same spot where Our Lord had been standing
 There he stuck his staff, he himself knelt beside it,
 And preached his fellows a sermon, which greatly satisfied them.
 When he had recounted the speech made by Our Lord,
 Taking his staff in his hand, he was about to go to his lodging;
 He pulled up the staff: water poured out behind it,
 The loveliest fountain which flows upon earth;
 Before that there was no town, no person living there.
 Soon folk were flocking, gathering round the good Augustine,
 And quite with his consent began arriving there
 And beginning some building-works beside the glorious stream.
 Many a man did the water heal; he called that place Cernel:
 ‘Cerno, cernis’: that’s Latin, I tell you this;

cerno an Englisc leoden; ich iseo swa hit is iqueðen.
 el is Ebreowisc; þat is Godd ful iwis.
 þene tun he c[l]eopede Cernel; ich iseo Drihten iwil-del.
 to þissere weorlde longe; þe nome þer scal stonde.
 14815 al-se hit is iqueðen; after Godes leoden.
 þene stude to iwurðien; þer stod ure Drihten.
 and his engles mid him; þa he spac wið Austin.
 Austin wende wide 3eond Englene londe.
 he fullehtede kingge; and heore here-dringes.
 14820 he fullehtede eorles; he fullehtede beornes.
 he fullehtede Englisce men; he fullehtede Sexisce men;
 and sette an Godes honde; al þat was on londe.
 Ða wes he ful bliðe-mod; þat folc he hafde iblissed.
 Norð in Engle-londe; Bruttes hæfden an honde.
 14825 muchel del of londe; and castles swiðe stronge.
 Ða Bruttes nalden; þan Enlisce bu3en.
 imong heom munekes weoren; muchelere weorede.
 Seint Austin funde; inne þisse londe.
 seouen biscopes to iwisse; singende masse.
 14830 and enne ærchebiscop; þe at Karliun at-sto[d].
 and at Bangor wes a muneclif; mid muneken uni-uo3e.
 Dionot hæhte heore abbeod; he wes of he3e monnen.
 he hæfden on seuen hepen; sixtene hundred muneken.
 and 3et ma þer-to; munekes swiðe balde.
 14835 and of Bruttisce streonen; stiðe imodede men;
 Writen sende Austin. to þan seouen biscopem;
 and hehte heom comen sone; and speken wið him-seolue.
 & don him hersumnesse; and þurh him singen masse.
 for he hauede an honde; þa hehnesse of þissen londe.
 14840 he was icleop%ped legat; of þissen londe he wæs primat.

'Cerno' in English speech is 'I see' as we pronounce it;
 'El' is a Hebrew word, and in fact it means 'God';
 So he called the town 'Cernel': 'I see God completely';
 As long as this world lasts, the name will remain there
 AS it is pronounced, after God's own discourse,
 To commemorate the spot on which Our Lord stood,
 And his angels with him, when he spoke to Augustine.
 Augustine travelled far across England's regions:
 He baptised her kings and their chief warriors,
 He baptised earls, he baptised barons,
 He baptised Englishmen, he baptised Saxon men,
 And placed in God's hands all who were in the land
 Then he was very satisfied that he had sanctified the people.
 In the north of England the Britons had their command
 A large tract of the land and some very strong forts;
 The British refused to submit to the English.
 Among them was included a large contingent of monks.
 Saint Augustine discovered within this same district
 Seven bishops, no less, and all singing mass,
 And a single archbishop, with his throne at Caerleon,
 And at Bangor was a monastery with huge numbers of monks:
 Their abbot was called Dionot, who came of a great family;
 He controlled, in seven daughter houses, sixteen hundred monks,
 And even more besides; very brave monks they were,
 And from true British stock; stern-minded men.
 Augustine sent letters to the seven bishops,
 Instructing them to come with speed and speak with him in person,
 And submit to him in obedience, and sing mass as his subordinates,
 Because he had been put in possession of the primacy of this land:
 He was entitled 'legate', and of this land he was the primate,

& þas þinges weoren idone; þurh þene pape of Rome.
 Þas biscopes reiþe weoren; and andswere aþeuen.
 Ne beo we na-wit under him; þe is ihaten Austin.
 ah we beo on londe; heþe men and stronge.
 14845 and habbeoð ure irihte; of ure arche-biscep.
 þe wuneð inne Karliun; godd clarc and wel idon;
 þa haueð his cantel-cape on. of Gregorie þan pape;
 and mid wurð-scipe mucle; haldeð his wike.
 For no scal hit nauere iwurðen; a þissere worlde-richen.
 14850 þat we auere buþen; Austine þan uncuðen.
 for he is ure fulle ifa; & his iferen al-swa.
 For Austin is iboþen hidere; in-to þissen londe.
 and haueð i-fulleþed þene king; Cantuaren aðeling.
 Aðelbert ihaten; heh inne Anglene.
 14855 and he hafueð ifunden here; hundes heðene.
 þa comen of Sexlonde; mid Gurm[u]nþe þan kinge.
 þeo he alle fullehteð; and to Gode fuseoð.
 þeo haldeoð ure kinelond; mid unrihte on heore hond.
 Cristine we beoð alle; and of Cristine cunne.
 14860 and ure elderne swa weoren; agan is þreo hundred þeren.
 & heo beoð neowene icumen; and Cristindom habbeoð under-
 numen.
 and Austin heom fullehteð; and to Gode fuseoð.
 For þan we hine hatizen uulleð; ((& heren h))[ine nulleð]
 14865 nauere to ure liue. no scullen we him wurðen liðe.
 Ðæs tiðende come; to Austine sone.
 hu þe biscopes hine scenden; & wulc andswore him senden.
 and hu Bruttisce clerekes; him seiden hokerses.
 Ða wes he sari-mod; and sorh-ful an heorten.
 14870 and fuse him gon sone; and ferde to þan kinge.

And these things had been done by the Pope in Rome.
 These bishops were resolute, and returned their response:
 ‘Under the man called Augustine we are in no way subjected,
 But in this land we are men superior in our power,
 And have our jurisdiction from our own archbishop
 Who is located in Caerleon: a fine cleric in his vocation,
 Who received the pallium himself from Gregory the Pope,
 And with great dignity demeans himself in office.
 Now it shall never come to pass at all within this wide world’s realm
 That we shall ever submit ourselves to Augustine the stranger,
 For we are fully at variance with him, and with his fellows as well,
 Since Augustine has travelled here, into this our land,
 And has baptised the so-called king, prince of the men of Kent,
 Known here as Ethelbert, high-born among the English,
 And has encountered here those hounds of heathens
 Who came out of Saxony with Gurmund the king:
 All those he is baptising and bringing those to God,
 Who are holding onto our kingdom, most unjustly, in their hands.
 We are all of us Christian and we come of Christian stock,
 And our ancestors were also, for the last three hundred years.
 And these have newly come here and have now adopted Christianity,

 And Augustine is baptising them and is bringing them to God,
 And therefore we intend to hate him, and [to obey him we refuse]:
 Never in all our lives will we bring ourselves to like him!’
 Very swiftly the news of this reached Saint Augustine,
 Of how the bishops were insulting him and what reply they sent him
 And how the British clerics spoke of him in derision.
 Then he was dispirited and most depressed in mood,
 And went off with haste and hurried to the king,

and mǣnde to [Aðel]berte; þan kinge of Æst-Angle.
hu Bruttisce biscopes; hine grætte mid huxes.
and hu heo uorhoʒeden; to halden hine for herre.
Ðe king hine iwraðede; wunder ane sweðe.
14875 and saide þat he wolde; aquellen heom a londe.
and swe ((he)) dude seoððe; þer-after ful sone.

Complaining to Ethelbert, King of the East Angles,
Of how the British bishops were treating him with mockery,
they scorned utterly to consider him their superior.
The king was exceedingly annoyed about this matter,
And said that he was going to kill them in their country,
And he did so subsequently, quite soon after this.

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.