Original Paper

Lawman's Brut - Old English Reconstructed

Ed Conduit, Sally Dickinson, Patricia Warren and the class of 25/26

Abstract

Brut is a discourse written in the 1200s in the prestigious English of King Alfred (848-886). It tells the story of a long line of English kings legitimised by God including an 'Anglo-Norman' King Arthur. This article explores the identity, the language and the motivation of the author (who we call 'Lawman'). It argues that Brut offers ESL teachers a valuable window into how English developed its irregular grammar and unpredictable spellings. By examining a text written during a period of intense linguistic change, teachers can help learners understand that modern English is the product of multiple layers. Lawman did a good, but not quite perfect, job. He seems to make morphological errors and he is not able to alliterate consistently. If Lawman was a scriptorium team, the team-members would have had to compile an Old English (OE) dictionary and a translation from French. The main writer would probably have spoken the Ancrene-Bodleian (AB) dialect of Middle English (ME) but be able to deploy an archaic grammar with the skill level of a modern degree student undergraduate approaching finals. He would have needed a patron, possibly Bishop Walter de Gray or a local knight. If Lawman was the 'The Tremulous Hand of Worcester' he might have possessed all the necessary skills, if a patron supplied him with vellum, ink and library space. In the introduction to the work, Lawman's motivation for writing appears almost whimsical, but it may have had a political purpose, to support the monarchy. The political context shows how ideas about language, identity, and authority were expressed in medieval England, offering another point of interest for ESL teachers by placing the poem's linguistic features within their cultural moment.

Keywords

Lawman / Layamon / Laȝamon, Brut, Old English (OE), Middle English (ME), English language development, Morphology, Alliterative verse

Introduction

The university of the third age (u3a) hosts interest groups online, one of which is 'English: the first 4,000 years'. This group studied Laghamon's Brut, written in the 1200s, as part of the course. Brut has always been treated as Middle English (ME), but its style is something of a puzzle, so we chose to apply to it our cognitive skills as retired professionals, and to use AI as a research tool. Its interest to ESL teachers is that it recreates an extinct Old English (OE) by inserting morphology that had been discarded in ME. It may help teachers understand why modern English still has older or irregular plurals (e.g. *men, geese*),

strong verbs (e.g. *take-took-taken*), and fossilised endings (e.g. -ren in *children*). Some estimates of study time and resources in the long process of learning a second language should also be useful. The historical interest is that Brut strengthens the hand of the monarchy by asserting the legitimate king line of England which includes King Arthur.

The poem survives in two manuscripts, Caligula and Otho. These names refer to the Roman emperor busts above their shelves in the Cotton collection which suffered a fire in 1731. The manuscripts are now in the British Library. The manuscripts diverge considerably, for example about the name of the author's father. For no reason we can discover, the Caligula manuscript gives *Leovenath*, while the Otho manuscript gives *Leucais*.

CALIGULA	OTHO
An preost wes on leoden; Laȝamon wes ihoten.	*A prest was in londe. Laweman. was hote.*
he wes Leouenaðes sone; liðe him beo Drihten.	*he was Leucais sone. lef him beo Driste.*
He wonede at Ernleȝe; at æðelen are chirechen.	*He wonede at Ernleie wid þan gode cniþte.*
vppen Seuarne staþe; sel þar him þuhte.	*uppen Seuarne. merie þer him þohte.*
on-fest Radestone; þer he bock radde.	*faste bi Radistone þer heo bokes radde.*

CALIGULA	OTHO
There was a priest among the people; he was called Layamon. He was the son of Leovenath; may the Lord be gracious to him. He dwelt at Ernley, at a noble church, upon the banks of the Severn; it seemed good to him there, near Radistone; where he read [his] books.	There was a priest in the land, who was called Laweman [Layamon]. He was Leuca's son; may the Lord be dear to him. He dwelt at Ernley with the good knight, upon the Severn; it seemed merry to him there, fast by Radistone, where he read books.

The author's introduction of himself challenges us in several ways. The first challenge is his name, which resembles both the OE common noun *laueman* ('lawman, magistrate') and the Scandinavian personal name *Lagman*, found in former Danelaw regions of eastern England. The modern spelling is usually *Layamon*, but the thirteenth-century form *Laȝamon*, with the letter yogh (ȝ), indicates a fricative sound similar to the /x/ in Scots *loch*. Since this sound no longer exists in Received Pronunciation, the digraph *gh* is sometimes used to represent it. A few scholars, such as Brook (1962) and the early Skeat (1875–1878), have treated *Laȝamon/Layamon/laueman* as a genuine but unusual surname. For the purposes of this article we will henceforth refer to the author as 'Lawman'.

N.B. The unfamiliar letters in OE are: *þ, ð,* both now written 'th'; and *æ* which is between 'a' and 'e'.

The version of English is the next challenge. The text implies that Lawman was writing in the local speech, although the spelling *londe* for *lande* suggests a Mercian-derived phonology/West Midlands

dialect. The persistence of a pocket of OE speakers around sparsely-populated Areley (the modern name for Ernley) is implausible. Contemporary scripts in the southwest Midlands such as Piers Plowman and Ancrene Wisse use the AB dialect of ME, which has many loanwords from French and Latin. Brut uses almost entirely Anglo Saxon words and OE morphology.

The *gode cniþte* is the next puzzle. The Caligula manuscript refers to Lawman living at a 'noble church' (*æðelen are chirechen*), so *bokes radde* is interpreted as 'reading the lessons'. The Otho manuscript does not say 'church' but prefers 'good knight'. The OE root *cniht* originally meant 'boy' or 'servant,' but by the early 13th century it had evolved toward its modern meaning of 'knight or man-at-arms'. So we have three possibilities: living near the church; having a boy servant; and having a local patron or lord. Ernleie had been a fishery which had been granted to Bordesley Abbey in 1136 by Matilda, a contender for the English throne. Radistone caves are implausible as a manuscript site, because they are flood-prone. The Norman St Bartholomew's Church on higher ground still exists, and tradition says this was where Lawman was the permanent preacher. An alternative interpretation is that a patron was providing a house and a supply of vellum to Lawman, who was, in modern terms on sabbatical to pursue his OE reading interest.

This leads us to logistics. Vellum, made by stretching calf skin was used. A bound volume of 146 vellum leaves might would have cost £1 14s 6d, equivalent to roughly a year's wages for a skilled labourer. The other resource was the cognitive skills of the author. Lawman implies he is writing in the common speech of North Worcestershire, but he is actually trying to recreate lost OE. We consider that the skills required to write Brut include: a translation of Wace (the main source material), the compilation of an OE dictionary, and a well-drilled OE grammar. His own AB had lost most of its OE morphology and would conjugate more like ours, with only a weak -ed conjugation, 270 or so strong past tenses, and five inflectional morphology endings. Lawman's drills in OE would include conjugation of strong verbs I-VII, weak verbs 1-3 and anomalous verbs such beon, the dual pronoun, the second preterit, declension of nouns stems a-, ō-, i-, u- and n-, and adjectival agreement on grammatical gender, case, number and strength. He would have had to deploy them well enough to write 16,000 lines of OE. Ideally, he would be able to speak his verse with the lifts and dips appropriate to OE left-headed stress. Google AI estimates the learning time for these skills as equivalent to 1.5 years of a modern degree course.

In the next extract below, Lawman says that he wants to tell the story of the people of England, and challenges us further with claims about his sources. Lawman rarely mentions Bede and St. Alban and their names do not appear again. It becomes apparent that his main source is Wace, who wrote a similar king line and story of Arthur in Norman French.

The University of Michigan provides online the whole text of Caligula, which we used for online word counts. We initially used online poetryintranslation by Kline, but it favours Otho, so we used Google AI for translation.

Hit com him on mode. & on his þonke. *þat he wolde. of Engelond þe ristnesse telle.* *wat þe men hi-hote weren. and hi comen.* *Loweman gan wende. so wide so was þat londe.* *and nom þe Englisse boc. þat makede Seint Bede.* *Anoþer he nom of Latin. þat makede Seint Albin.* *þat makede Austin. þat follost brote hider in.* *Boc he nom þan þridde. an leide þar amidde.* *þa makede a Frenchis clerc; Wace wes ihoten; þe* *wel couþe writen.*	It came into his mind, and into his thought, that he would tell of England's righteousness, what the men were called, and whence they came. Layamon began to journey as wide as the land was, and took the English book that Saint Bede made. He took another in Latin, that Saint Albin made, and that Saint Augustine, who brought baptism here, made. The third book he took, and laid in the middle, was that a French clerk made; he was called Wace; he well knew how to write.

We decided to explore these challenges by two methods: philology and history. The entire second half of Brut tells the story of King Arthur, though this is not true 'history', by comparison with that of the political and literary context.

Philology

The 112,000 words (according to Allen (1992)) of Brut use a lexicon which is overwhelmingly 99% West Saxon OE. Danish loanwords number only 140, 50% of which are repetitions of just five: *eorl* ('count/ earl'); *kaisere* ('emperor'); *grið* ('peace'); *tiðende* ('tidings'); and *laʒe* ('law', same as Danish *lagu*). Normans opted to use OE *eorl*, similar to OD *jarl*, perhaps to avoid the French *count/cunte.* French loanwords are similar in number, around 150, according to Monroe (1907) mostly place names such as Alemannie. There are few Latin phrases and probably no Welsh loanwords. The purity of Lawman's lexicon and consistency with King Alfred's English strongly suggests that it has been curated.

A rather sudden change occurred in the English of the Peterborough Anglo Saxon Chronicle around the year 1100. Grammatical gender, dative and accusative cases and adjectival agreement disappeared. This change occurred in a former Danish area, perhaps as Danes moved towards speaking English in a kind of pidgin. The transition away from inflected to isolating syntax is the main marker of the transition from OE to ME. It was slower elsewhere, so noun cases continue to inflect in places in the nearly contemporaneous Ancrene Wisse. North Worcestershire speech would be expected to show traces of OE Mercian (Mer) accent on their standard West Saxon (WS), mainly in the vowel sounds: Mer *ic (e)am* vs WS *eom* for 'I am; *mon* vs *man; all* vs *eall; liht* vs *leoht; sald* ('sold') vs *sold; wall* vs *weall*. We doubt that we could detect a Mercian accent, but will try not to accuse Lawman of an error which might only be a different accent.

We tested for some morphological features in Brut by comparison with standard OE. In the list below **M?** means possible morphology error. Cases below are written with Latin conventions: nom – nominative/ subject; acc – accusative/ direct object; gen- genitive/ possessive; dat – dative/ indirect object.

Personal pronouns

In OE the pronouns were, singular, nom: 1. *ic* 'I',   2. *þu* 'thou',   3. *he/hit/heo* 'he/it/she'

dual *ġit* 'we two'; plural, nom   1. *we* 'we'   2. *ġe*   'ye/ you'   3. *hīe, hī, hy* 'they'

Those amenable to counting (i.e. not substrings) were counted in UMich Caligula:

ge, ġe, ye   *0*   **M?**   (ʒe unlikely to be present)

eow   *52*   **M?**   – the acc form is being used where nom would be appropriate;

Black Country dialect still uses 'yow' as subject and object pronoun

eower   *21*   This would the correct dative in OE

unc   *2*   This rare dual seems to be correctly declined

hie, hīe   *0*   in OE plural nom and acc all persons, plus fem sing acc.   **M?**

heo   often as 'they' in Brut but would be 'she' (3rd. sing Nom) in OE   **M?**

heom   often as 'to them' in Brut; this would have been *him* in OE; note WS vs Mercian

heore   often as 'their' in Brut, but would have been *hira* in OE

In summary, the Brut pronoun *heo* is inconsistent with OE; *hie* is missing; *eow* seems to replace *ye* in nom*;* all 3rd plural forms are different.

Demonstrative adjectives/ determiners

þissen   (before 'in this life') Brut; in OE fem. s dat would be *þisse*

þene   (before 'brother') in Brut would be *þæm* in OE; this *e* is unlikely

þone   this would be m acc. in OE. Some scholars have said *þone* is used differently in Brut; entries at lines 344, 1026, 1359, 2016, 3193, 3937 do not clearly show a morphology error

e,   *a*,   *eos*,   *as*,   *an*   are reported as random occurrences by California State Uni Northridge

We did not find unambiguous instances of **M?** in demonstratives.

Verbs 'to be'

Beon is the 'habitual truth' verb, like Spanish *ser.* The be form is now used in subjunctives, and is still the indicative in some counties such as Shropshire; it may have been used in Worcestershire until recently.

beon 220   this infinitive form seems to be used with pronouns **M?**; (a few *beonede* occur)*.*

beo   95

bist   6   (+ some bistz)

biþ   0   (except in *biþothe*)

beoð   316   (+*beoþ* 1)

Wesan is the 'immediate truth' like Sp. *estar.* It is now suppletive - am/is/are come from separate roots

wesan   *0*   the infinitive does not occur at all **M?**

eom 0   eam 6   Mer Accent?

eart   5   'thou art'

is   *502*

sind   0   the common 3ʳᵈ person plural in OE before Danish influence is missing **M?**

The OE verb *wesan* is missing in infinitive and 3ʳᵈ plural **M?**

Adjectival disagreement with feminine grammatical gender

We wanted to test the hypothesis that Lawman was well trained in reading OE, but to write it he was obliged to reconstruct morphology. We think his task is similar to that of a modern English speaker trying to learn modern German, who must struggle with inflectional morphology that English has abandoned. In German a girl (das Mädchen, the 'maid-let') is an 'it' and her ovary (der Eierstock) is masculine. These are deeply counter-intuitive and without a fluent speaker present Lawman would be likely to reject them. We found one biologically feminine noun *Moder* 'mother' with an adjective quite frequently: *ðire moder* (2005); *Þeo uniseli moder* (2001 'unfortunate, wretched'); *enne moder* (2159); *incker moder* (2544) 'you twain', gen. (correct for OE dual); *Claudius ladde þes childes moder* (4807) 'Claudis led the child's mother', but should be *þas.* These *moder* morphology instances seem broadly correct. A search for more biologically feminine nouns produced very few hits: *gyrle, eue, sowe, miere/ mȳre* were absent. *Rom* is F, and occurs frequently, but only in compound nouns.

Thereafter we searched for an adjective that could be placed in agreement with a feminine gendered noun. This produced very few hits: *cym* 'fair' 0; *gifol* 'kind' 0; *ġeolu* 'yellow' 0; *sweart* 'black' 0, *grene* 'green' 1. The main exception was *gode* 'good' 263. Adjectives that might also be nouns (e.g. *whit/hwit*) were excluded. After several hours of searching, the only F. nouns found were *æc* and *buri*. Google AI was invited to judge correctness of OE in the following examples.

Sum hafde whit sum hafden ræd sum hafde god grene æc. Line 12303

The AI corrects *hafden* to *hæfde, whit* to *hwīt.* and *ræd* to *rēad*. It wants *āc* (oak, F, nom) to stay in that form in acc., not decline to *ǣc* (dat), accepts *grēne* for the acc. case, but wants 'good' to decline to *gōde*. Conclusion: **M?**

þat ich him   . . aʒeue me mine burʒes; & mine buri gode   Line 2351

The AI declares that the plural of *burg* ('fort') was typically *byrig,* a mutation of the root vowel, so *buri* is acceptable but the -es plural is doubtful; it does not object to *gode*. Conclusion: not an M?

So there may be morphological errors here, but more remarkable is that only two sentences were found in several hours of searching. Was Lawman aware of the agreement difficulty simply avoided this structure? **M?**

In conclusion, Lawman may have made these morphological errors. *Hie* 'they' is missing and is replaced by *heo* and its derivatives, which would be 'she' in OE. *Eow* replaces *ye/ge,* but the accusative is being used. One 'to be' verb is missing in its infinitive *wesan* and especially its third person plural *sind.* Lawman may not have noticed that *hie sind* had been replaced by Danish 'they are'. Adjectival agreement with a feminine noun is surprisingly rare, but one of the two instances discovered does not decline correctly. This paragraph was submitted to an AI and all claims were found defensible.

Alliterative verse

Old Germanic languages are described as having 'left-headed' stress, in which 'lifts' are strongly stressed. The following syllable was of little importance, often a schwa (ə). Alliterative verse evolved to allow story tellers to memorise hundreds of lines by focussing on the lift that recurs, usually three times. The OE requirement for alliteration is: two lifts in the a-verse must alliterate; one lift in the b-verse must alliterate; the final lift in the b-verse must not; there is a 'caesura' which separates two 'hemistichs'.

We prepared text and Kline's translation for lines 6101-6200 and 8801- 8900, chosen at random, to search for alliteration. Peter Baker provides ever-helpful 'aerobic workouts' to help the learner identify lifts. In the following examples, both from Battle of Maldon, there are two onset phonemes that repeat, but only the pair in bold are lifts:

*Be þām man mihte on**cnā**wan   þæt se **cni**ht nolde*

*Ne sceole ġē swā **sō**fte   **sinc** ġegangan*

There may be only a few dozen people – at Oxford or Virginia - who can speak OE well enough to pronounce alliterative verse with confidence. The impression that a syllable is stressed comes from some uncertain combination of length, loudness and pitch, so it has proved difficult to operationalise stress for machine recognition. This may give a short-term advantage for ESL teachers who have to cope with plagiarism via AI. Students can be asked to speak their coursework aloud, rather than submitting text. Lawman started out trying to write alliterative verse, but many of his lines rhyme. Donoghue (1990) says three lines in ten lack alliteration. French is a syllable-timed language with emphasis often falling 'right-headed' on the final syllable. Such rhyming of finals competes with left-headed alliteration. We find as modern English speakers it is difficult to speak these lines aloud with the implied lifts and dips. It seems that Lawman, with his AB ME and no fluent speaker to consult, had the same problem.

History

We sought the context of writing in 12th and 13th century in the southwest Midlands. There are virtually no confirmatory written records that a person called Laghamon existed; a stone fragment at the church bears the name, but may be later. Lawman's implication that he is writing in the common speech of the west bank of the Severn, north Worcestershire and Shropshire is very implausible. The AB dialect of ME is probable. A scriptorium, rather than a cave or small church, would have been the usual context for a project of this scale. Wigmore Abbey in neighbouring Herefordshire is one possibility, but Worcester Cathedral priory, 13 miles south of Areley, is much the strongest candidate.

Worcester has particular significance in terms of English culture. Wulfstan had been one of the very few Saxon bishops who stayed in post after 1066. King John stipulated that he be buried at Worcester to be close to the tomb of Wulfstan, and also St Oswald. Although in fact Westminster was blocked from him by enemy forces. He ruled from 1166 -1216 but was unpopular. He had inherited national debt from Richard and had lost Normandy and Anjou to France in 1204. He was excommunicated 1209-13. A revolt in 1215 by about two dozen barons, who preferred rule from France, recurred in 1225. John declared

devotion to Edward the Confessor, last of the House of Wessex. His son Henry III ruled from the age of nine, from 1216 to 1272. His interest in the English language may be a reorientation away from the French of the Angevin dynasty. We therefore considered this hypothesis: sympathisers of John, and perhaps his heir, wished to create a discourse about the legitimate king of England in the prestigious form of English created by King Alfred.

Possible patrons of the Brut project are few: most bishops and priors at Worcester were against King John. Bishops and barons might both be viewed as rank three in feudal terms, below the royal family and the earls. The main exception is Walter de Gray, appointed bishop in 1214, then archbishop of York in 1216, serving as King John's Lord Chancellor and benefiting greatly from John's patronage. De Gray was a significant patron of the arts and architecture, known for funding major projects at York Minster, Southwell Minster, and Beverley Minster. He was also known to have commissioned high-quality books, such as a Bible for Edmund Rich while at Worcester. He might have had reason to covertly support, or indeed manufacture, a team or a solitary writer. If written around 1215/16 then this would reflect the dangerous situation in England on John's death and the need to support William Marshal as Regent to Henry III. Gray's successor as bishop was William de Blois (1218 -36) who had been John's chancellor and was nominated by the papal legate Guala, against the wishes of the local monks.

The scribe referred to as 'The Tremulous Hand of Worcester' is one of the few scribes we can trace in history, though only because of an affliction, an essential tremor which caused his vertical lines to be slightly saw-toothed. He is presumed to have been at Worcester Priory in the first half of the 13th century He glossed 50,000 documents or more, translated Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* and wrote a copy of Aelfric's Grammar and Glossary, which survives in fragmentary form (F174 at Worcester). He seems trilingual in English, Latin and French. His own language seems to be AB ME. His later glosses suggest he was compiling an OE dictionary. The Tremulous Hand seems to have the right skills and been in the right time and place for the writing of Brut. The 'good knight' could be one of the Le Despenser family, descended from a probable squire of William in 1066, and a possible patron. Geoffrey Le Despenser was granted the Manor of Martley, which included Areley, in 1234 by Henry III.

Lawman's statement about sources names Wace, and this is clearly true. Wace relied on Geoffrey of Monmouth. Later Langtoft would produce a Chronicle of kings (Cadwalader to Edward 1) and Malory would concentrate on King Arthur.

Table 1. Authors Compared

Author	Social context
Geoffrey 1136: Strong agenda Christian bishop, Norman, Welsh sympathiser, anti-Saxon. Careless about dates and geography, trusts puns too much but correct about major battles.	House of Normandy: William → William II 1087 → Henry I. House of Blois 1135-54, disputed throne Stephen vs Matilda. Normans still vulnerable to Saxons. Normans David and de Brus in Scotland.

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Wace 1155 Roman de Brut, translates Geoffrey. 15,000 lines, omits Merlin, adds round table and survival of Arthur in Avalon	House of Angevin (Plantagenet) replaces Blois, by treaty, but centre is Anjou. Wace is storyteller in French for royal court, born in Jersey. Henry II 1154-1189 was patron of Wace and Roman de Brut was dedicated to Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1159
Lawman 1205+; writes Brut in English, who for? OE	Embattled John, then weak Henry III. Barons hostile, war. Financial strain.
Prose Brut 1272. First in Anglo Norman by Peter Langtoft, then 184 surviving English manuscripts.	It was widely circulated in the English aristocracy and gentry before 1400. Unlike Lawman, it includes Anglo Saxon kings, but treats Harold as 'oath-breaker'.

A later publication Morte d'Arthur was made by Thomas Malory in 1470 and was widely sold, though he was in prison for theft, attempted murder and two rapes.

Wace was from Jersey and earned a living as a storyteller in the French court. He apparently admired Eleanor of Aquitaine and would have been influenced by the stories of her 'court of courtly love'. He introduced the story of the round table. He removed references to Merlin, but otherwise relied on Geoffrey. The key source of the King Arthur story and the monarchy of England is Geoffrey of Monmouth, and warrants most attention.

Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote *Historia Regum Britanniae* in 1155 in Latin. As a bishop his role was to convey God's will to priests. His themes of sin and disputed inheritance, such as Cain and Abel are timeless, so he was casual about dates and geography. He was over-confident about language, starting with the pun of Brutus = Britain = Brittany and progressing through Troia Nova = Trinovantes. He had some weak sources for Arthur in the Mabinogion and Gildas' 'ruin of Britain'. Geoffrey has Culhwch ac Olwen as the Welsh source for Arthur, though this is a hunting story. He mentions an 'old book in Welsh from Bishop of Oxford', but gives no title or author!

Miles Russell (2018), Bournemouth archaeologist disputes the view that Geoffrey was writing fiction and argues that Geoffrey merged many people and events, but based on solid facts. The *Historia* contains Welsh oral history, accepted by Welsh but not English historians. He had Welsh informants, principally in the Catuvellani and Trinovantes and wrote down their oral history of king lines. Geoffrey locates Brutus in the 10th C BCE as the first king and his three sons as kings of Lloegr, Kambria and Alba. Further oral histories concern Locrinus, Leir, Dunvallo Molmutius, Martia (♀) and Heli. Leir is familiar from Shakespeare's use of him (as Lear), but any others are almost certainly unknown to English speakers. This oral history may be valid, but there are no written sources. The library of Wales cannot find us any book in Welsh before *Brut y Brenhinedd*, the Welsh translation of Geoffrey, but that survives in 60 volumes! Geoffrey's king line, particularly after the sortie by Julius Caesar in 54 BCE is supported by coins and Roman writing. Julius Caesar withdrew but instated Mandubracius as king of Trinovantes.

Emperor Claudius in 43 CE came to conquer and stay.

Geoffrey inserts King Arthur in the king line around 460 BCE. He then develops Arthur to be a major conquering hero. Russell contends that Geoffrey has merged the conquests of five well-attested historical leaders into Arthur, who is a back projection. This is a psychological process of projective identification, in which positive features are enhanced, and negative features removed. The reader is enhanced by association with the icon. The five figures are these:

- **Cassivellaunus** 12% a historical British military leader who led the defence against Julius Caesar's second expedition to Britain in 54 BC.

- **Arviragus** 24%, contemporary of the emperor Claudius (41–54); the Orkneys in the 1st century CE; married Ganhumara (Guinevere), poorly documented.

- **Constantine the Great,** 8% emperor 306-337 AD, first Roman emperor to convert to Christianity

- **Magnus Maximus** 39% (?) Macsen Wledig, Hispania born, but admired by Britons, served as an officer in Britain, was proclaimed emperor in Britannia in 383, usurped Gratian, Maxentius

- **Ambrosius Aurelianus** 16%, Emrys Wledig, victory at *Gweith Vadon* (Badon) against Anglo-Saxons at c 496 AD, also York. Provenance in *Annales Cambriae, Historia Brittonum*, Welsh authors in Latin.

1% are invasions of Iceland and Norway, which seem to be Geoffrey's own fantasy.

There are many errors of date, place and person in the *Historia*, but a core of actual history. A discourse was created around a fierce swordsman who was also chivalrous and an effective leader. The king is selected by his ability to pull a long sword pinned between rocks. Romans and Vikings had both been very effective with shield and short sword, with a longer thin sword for individual combat. A 3.6kg broadsword carried by Penny Mordaunt MP at the coronation of King Charles recalls a crusade battle strategy. The broadsword needs two very strong arms for horizontal sweeps, enough to unbalance several enemies over several minutes, and very ductile steel.

The tenuous claim of William and his successors to the English throne becomes part of a great historical plan in which God punishes the sinful Saxons and replaces them with Norman kings. The Anglo Saxons accepted the sin narrative and there were no serious revolts after Hereward the Wake. This narrative for the legitimacy of the aristocracy of England has proved enduring. The line of the duke of Normandy was interrupted but then the Plantagenet line was accepted. A very similar king line was created in Scotland and Scots found their own back projection 'Scotia' from Egypt. Normans became influential in Scotland in 1155. Their scion Robert de Brus, Comte de Carrick, promoted himself to king in one jump by Norman military excellence in 1315.

Let us now return to Lawman and summarise. Brut is a discourse in the prestigious English of King Alfred about a long line of English kings legitimised by God including an 'Anglo-Norman' King Arthur. Lawman repeats the discourses of Wace and Geoffrey of Monmouth about God's plan for England from 1100 BCE to their own time. Lawman's 112,000 words were spun together using an archaic and unfamiliar syntax and morphology. He did a good, but not quite perfect, job. There seem to be

morphological errors such as the absence of *hie sind* and he is not able to alliterate consistently. If Lawman was a scriptorium team, the team members would have had to compile an OE dictionary and grammar and deploy them at about C1 level. If Lawman was the very experienced 'Tremulous Hand of Worcester', he might have had by himself all the necessary skills, if someone supplied him with vellum and ink. Lawman would have needed a patron, and Bishop Walter de Gray or a knight in Areley are candidates for this role. Although Lawman's given reasons for his story are whimsical, there is a probable beneficiary in the person of an unpopular monarchy. The coronation in 1215 of Henry III at the age of nine and the need to support William Marshal as Regent are a possible focus. The royal line did survive. Lawman's Brut led to the Prose Brut which has been an essential discourse for the English aristocracy.

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