De Buisonjé - Bemerkungen über Dr. Faustus

Zwar ragt das Werk Leverkühns über seinen Tod hinaus. Im Faustus werden über zwanzig Werke Leverkühns genannt. Dies die Ernte einer 24-jährigen Arbeitsfrist.


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DE LAET'S ANGLO-SAXON DICTIONARY.

Johannes de Laet (1582-1649) is better known as a geographer than as an Anglo-Saxon scholar. In the former capacity he enjoyed international fame, in the latter he was only well-known in the circle of Anglo-Saxonists of the first half of the 17th century in England. He was also a faithful and accurate helper of the great Saumaise or Salmasius of Leiden, who at de Laet’s death is said to have been in despair at the loss of his “right hand”. In the field of geography de Laet was involved in a rather protracted controversy with Hugo Grotius on the subject of the origin of the American people. Grotius, goaded into protest against de Laet in a not very dignified manner in his Dissertatio altera de origine gentis Anglorum, adversus obrectatorem. opaca quem bonum facit barba – an allusion to de Laet’s long beard – finally avenged himself on de Laet in 1644 by the following lines aimed at de Laet’s poor Latin:

Latius haud Latius satis est, nec scribere cessat
Latius. Ut sileas Latius, est satius.

But we are here concerned with de Laet’s interest in Anglo-Saxon, with the compiler of an Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, which is now lost. In the Introduction to my edition of the Later Genesis (1948; see pp. 5ff) I suggested that both de Laet and Sir Symonds D’Ewes, who also worked on an Anglo-Saxon Dictionary (now preserved in the British Museum, MSS Harley 8 and 9), may have been encouraged in their work by Sir William Boswell, Secretary of the English Ambassador to the States of the United Provinces in the Hague. De Laet knew Boswell well and they carried on a long correspondence, mainly political, preserved in the British Museum. It was known in England that de Laet was at work on an Anglo-Saxon Dictionary. Sir Henry Spelman, himself working on a similar project, wrote enthusiastically to de Laet about his Dictionary on 13 September 1638, but already on the 28th of the same month Spelman seems to have changed his mind, for in a letter to Abraham Wheelock he wrote that he was “not willing that it should be done by a stranger, and we here (to whome it more particularly belongeth) be pretermitted”. In 1640 Spelman compromisingly
suggested collaboration between himself, de Laet and D'Ewes, but nothing came of this.

Now the important fact about de Laet's Dictionary is that he must have used MS Junius 11 at some time, for the Danish scholar P. J. Resenius quotes some phrases from the MS in his edition of the *Edda* (1665) – a reference which I owe to the kindness of Dr. J. A. W. Bennett of Oxford – and he twice refers to de Laet's Dictionary, once as not having been published yet, and once in these words: Cuius exemplar MS possideo. In my Introduction to the *Later Genesis* I suggested (p. 8) that de Laet used the Caedmon MS during his stay in London in 1637, but I am now in a position to correct this statement, as also my suggestion (p. 9) that the MS may at one time have belonged to D'Ewes. In a collection of letters from and to the Danish scholar O. Worm, published in 1751, there is a letter from de Laet to Worm, written in 1642, in which he writes: "cepit me ab aliquot annis desiderium linguam Anglo-Saxoniam illustrandi, quam Angli fere hodie negligunt, paucis exceptis. Percurri anno superiore cum in Anglia essem, multos codices—", (p. 808). De Laet was therefore in England again in 1641, which is confirmed by de Laet's letter to Worm dated 8 September 1642: "... Spelmanno, superiore anno obiit, paulo post meum ex Anglia reditum". It is therefore impossible to say whether he used the MS then or earlier in 1637. Another letter, however, from de Laet to Worm shows that it was actually in 1643 that he was using the MS. In this letter, dated 4 March 1643, de Laet writes: "Accepi ab amplissimo Hiberniae Primate Codicem MS cujus dictio multum ab aliis MSS discidit; videturque metra quondam constare; quia judicium tuum de eo desidero, initium illius hic adungam". He then gives the opening lines of Genesis A from the Caedmon MS and then continues: "Sequuntur plura de Angelorum lapsu, & occurrunt multa nomina & verba, quae in alii MSS non inveni".

Certain conclusions can be drawn from this letter:

1. De Laet was actually at work on the MS, which he had received on loan from Ussher, in *Leiden*, in 1643, and not in England in 1637, when he may only have seen it.

2. As de Laet died in 1649 and as Junius left England with the MS in 1651, it must have come back to England some time between 1643 and 1649.

3. We know from a transcript made by Somner (now in the Library of Canterbury Cathedral) that Somner transcribed the MS in D'Ewes' Library. But Somner also states that the MS belonged to Ussher and that it is "penes eum", i.e. in Ussher's Library. It seems then that the MS was always, up to 1649/50, in Ussher's possession. If we now bear in mind that Junius stayed with D'Ewes in 1648 and again in 1649, and that D'Ewes died in 1650, we can reconstruct the history of the MS in this way: Ussher probably had no great interest in the MS,