

Introduction

I. Dirk Canter

The most important biographies of Dirk Canter can be found in C. Burmanus, Trajectum eruditum, Trajecti ad Rhenum 1738, pp. 70-75 (reissued under a new title in 1750), and in A. J. van der Aa, Biographisch woordenboek der Nederlanden, vol. III, Haarlem 1858, pp. 121-124⁽¹⁾. The information given in these works and in the sources they mention I shall only summarize, and here give mainly additions and corrections.

Dirk Canter (Theodorus Canterus), the younger brother of the much better known philologist Willem (1542-1575), was born at Utrecht in 1545. Here he was educated and later he probably studied at Louvain. Around 1565-1568 he made the usual grand tour, during which he studied in Paris, a.o. under Auratus and Lambinus. From letter 1565 05 03 it appears that he was in Paris in spring 1565 (and lodged with Auratus) and letters 1567 07 23 and 1567 08 00 show him to be (still?) there.

In his Variae lectiones, written about 1570⁽²⁾, lib. 1 cap. 1, we can read that he had attended the lectures of Lambinus two years before, so this proves him to be still in Paris in 1568, at least if this chapter was not written before 1570.

In the course of that year he departed for Louvain; he certainly was there in December 1568 (letter 1568 12 11) and February 1569 (letter 1569 02 12). In April 1569 Janus Dousa writes to Victor Giselinus that Canter had returned from Louvain shortly before (see C. Heesakkers, Praecedanea Dousana, thesis Leiden 1976, p. 55). In the summer of that year he married Catharina de Swart, a rich, beautiful and young widow⁽³⁾ (Dousa, *ibid.* p. 83). After his return to Utrecht he held a seat in the magistracy from 1575, as a member of the liberal regent class, with an intermission when the orthodox Calvinist party and Leicester were in power (ca. 1580-1588); in 1589, 1590, 1592 and 1593 he was one of the burgomasters. After 1595 he no longer held any office, which was probably more due to his character than to political reasons.

About his character the following may be said: A. van Buchell notes in his diary on 9th November 1593 that Canter had been sent as a representative of Utrecht to the States General at The Hague, but was soon obliged to return because of his unpleasant character⁽⁴⁾. And elsewhere he writes; 'Because he was of an obstinate and intractable nature, he was excluded from the magistracy when he no longer held the office of burgomaster'⁽⁵⁾.

In his letter of 2nd July 1595 to Floris Heermale, Gillis van Ledenberch writes about Canter's well-known harsh manner of speaking⁽⁶⁾.

Canter himself writes to Lipsius (letter 1596 10 15); 'My personal affairs fare reasonably well, except that I suffer from the spite of a number of people although through no fault of mine (I swear it); yet I must admit that I pointed out other people's faults without mincing my words when I was in such a position, and so invested with dignity and authority that, had I not done so, I should have given the impression of not doing the duty of a good patriot'⁽⁷⁾.

His religious conviction was probably not that of the strict calvinists, as appears from Scaliger's pronouncement quoted below about the infrequency of his attendance at the Communion-service, and his warm friendship for Lipsius (Canter's sons Lambertus and Johannes accompanied Lipsius on his departure from Leyden in 1591 as far as Mayence) and for people indifferent to religion as Vulcanius and for Remonstrant sympathizers as Meursius. Be this as it may, Canter later joined, whether or not from conviction, the calvinist party and as one of the leaders of the 'uprising of 1610' he became for a short time a burgomaster again⁽⁸⁾. After the former parties were restored to power he was put into prison, suspected of plotting a coup d'etat, and on 9th May 1611 he was exiled from Utrecht and the northern Netherlands and all his possessions confiscated⁽⁹⁾.

First he took refuge in Antwerp, returned to the Netherlands shortly afterwards, and in autumn 1612 he settled in Leeuwarden, whence his family originated. Friesland refused to hand him over in spite of an edict of the States General of 15th August 1612. He died 12th March 1616 and was buried at Hattem near Zwolle.

The chronology of Canter's last years, which is rather vague (the biographers write 'after that', 'a short time later', and have him die in 1615, 1616, or 1617), I took from the Utrechtsch kronijkjen of Cornelis Jonckghere⁽¹⁰⁾.

So much for Canter's political career. Apart from being a political man he was also a collector of books and a humanist. Many of his letters deal with his books, and the auction catalogue of his library, sold on 17th October 1617 by the Elseviers in Leyden⁽¹¹⁾, still testifies to its importance; of his philological works the following have been printed:

1. Variarum lectionum libri duo, Antverpiae, ex off. Christophori Plantini, 1574⁽¹²⁾;

2. Arnobius, Disputationum adversus gentes libri VII recogniti et aucti. E bibliotheca Theodori Canteri, cuius notae adjectae sunt, ibid. 1582⁽¹³⁾.

Not printed (but still existing in ms.) were:

1. Adnotationes ad Clementem Alexandrinum (ms. Leyden U.B., Periz. F.42, a copy by F.Goyerus);

2. Eleusinia, sive de Eleusinae Cereris sacris ac festis (ms. Paris B.N., Suppl. gr. 329);

3. Fragmenta poetarum graecarum (mss. Oxford Bodl. L., D'Orville 121-123, and Paris B.N., Suppl. gr. 1013)⁽¹⁴⁾.

For further data on his works see his biographers and correspondence; mentioned are a.o. a number of books Variae lectiones, a second edition of his Arnobius, and editions of and commentaries on Jamblichus and Ammianus Marcellinus.

To conclude I quote J. Scaliger on Canter (Scaligerana, ed. 1740 p. 254):
CANTERVS n'a fait qu'une fois la Cene. Il a une bibliotheque complete. J'ay donné à Canterus mes corrections sur fragmenta Poetarum. Il y a de bonnes choses dans ses Variae lectiones. J'y profite beaucoup. C'est un beau labeur quamvis non doctus. Il a leu tous les Auteurs Grecs pour recueillir cela.'

II. The Inventory

The Inventory includes all the letters from and to Dirk Canter known to the compiler. Among these are also fictitious letters (i.e. not written for correspondence) like dedications of books and letters in collections such as Lipsius' Epistolicae quaestiones; however, official missives sent by and to Canter the magistrate have not been included⁽¹⁵⁾.

The following rules have been observed in the description of the letters.

1. The date (at the same time reference number) is given as 1588 01 09. When year, month or day are unknown, these are replaced by 0000 or 00; when they are based on conjecture (i.e. do not occur explicitly in the subscription of the letter), this is indicated by []. If the date is based on conversion of a formula such as postridie paschatis, this is cited in an annotation and, when necessary, an alternative calculation for the old/new style is added; where the item old/new style occurs explicitly in the date of the letter, an indication o.s./n.s. is given. If different letters have the same date, they are differentiated by the addition -1, -2, etc.

A wrong date of a ms. copy or a printed edition is given between () after the citation of the ms. or the edition (as: d. 1588 02 19); the dating of undated letters by editors of printed editions is given in the same place (as: Lamius d. 1608).

2. The author and addressee of the letter are given as T.Canterus to I.Causaubonus; if the name is conjectured, this is indicated with [].

After the names of the author and the addressee their places of residence are given, between () if these places are derived from the subscription and the address of the letter, between [] if they are inferred from the contents of the letter.

3. The incipit of the letter (or the surviving part of it) is cited in a slightly standardized form: capitals, i/j, u/v, æ/œ/e are written according to modern usage. Headings like J.Lipsius T.Cantero S.D. do not count as incipit, openings like Vir clarissime do.

4. The sources of the letters are classified in the following groups:

1. The original, i.e. the letter as it was sent. Abbreviation: o.
2. The author's draft. Abbr.: m.
3. Ms. copies, i.e. those from the 17th and 18th century; the later ones are usually neglected. Abbr.: c.
4. Printed editions. In the case of frequently reprinted collections the oldest or otherwise most authoritative edition is referred to. Abbr.: i.
5. Extracts or summaries, if not derived from the inventoried correspondence. Abbr.: e.

All these sources are referred to as follows:

(a) mss.: library + shelf-mark + p. + no.

(b) printed editions: author or editor (sometimes with title) + p. + no.

See list of sources.

After every source, information like 'incomplete', 'fragment', etc., information about the date (see 2), or other details about the source may be given between ().

5. An annotation may conclude the description.

I will conclude with some annotations on the relation of the originals, the ms. copies and the printed editions of some of the larger collections.

Lipsius. The source (to be distinguished here and in the following from the direct printer's copy) of all Lipsius' letters to Canter (except the few Lipsius has had printed himself) is ms. Leeuwarden, Lap van Waveren; directly for the letters edited by Gabbema (Epistolarum [...] centuriae tres, 1664), via ms. Utrecht OB 7 or a closely related ms. for the letters edited by Pontanus (J.Lipsius, Epistolarum decades XIX, 1621).

Casaubonus. The source of Casaubonus' letters to Canter edited by Van Almeloveen (1709) is I.Casaubonus, Epistolae, 1656 (excepting letters 1609 11 25 and 1614 04 00, which the latter edited 'ex autographo'); J.G.Graevius, the editor of the 1656 edition, drew a small part of his edition from Casaubonus' Epistolae 1638, and the remainder from ms. Utrecht 987 except for letter 1609 11 25, the source of which is unknown to me. Of only two letters the original still exists.

Meursius. The originals of 21 of the 26 still existing letters of Canter to Meursius are in ms. Leipsic 0355, of which ms. Copenhagen, Thott 1059, fol. is a direct and exact copy.

Slightly different in composition from this group are two other groups of copies, also varying amongst themselves:

(a) ms. Copenhagen, Gl. klg. Saml. 3072,4°, and the ms. from which the letters in Meursius' Opera vol. XI (1742) were printed: 25 letters.

(b) ms. Copenhagen, Fabr. 101,4°, and ms. Hamburg, Sup. ep. 60: 22 letters.

Evidence of the above statements can largely be drawn from the descriptions in the Inventory; it would take too long to give it here or put forward further arguments.

Notes to the Introduction

(1) In the Nieuw nederlandsch biografisch woordenboek, vol. I, Leiden 1911, col. 558, G.A.Nauta gives only a summary from Van der Aa, while retaining most of his misprints in the dates.

(2) This appears from letter 1571 03 28 ('scies me brevi volente Deo, variorum Lectionum libros aliquot edituros[!]') and from the fact that the last mentioned book in the Var. lect. was published in 1570.

(3) 'Vidua, sed dote, sed forma, sed aetate florens'.

(4) 'Ad Ordines Generales legatus mittitur, unde paulo post propter morositatem rediit' (A. van Buchell, Diarium, Utrecht 1907, p. 356).

(5) 'Sed cum pertinaci et paene intractabili esset ingenio, post consulatus senatoris munus [=munere?] & republ. exclusus omnino fuit' (ms. Utrecht 1780.II p. 8v, a genealogy of the Canter family).

(6) 'Canter (die VE. weet een harde styl van spreeken te hebben)' (Kronijk van het Historisch genootschap, Utrecht, 1856, p. 356).

(7) 'Res nostrae privatae satis comode se habent, nisi quod quorundam invidia, nulla tamen nostra, teste Deo, culpa, premimur; fateor quidem me libere aliquando aliorum vitia redarguisse, cum essem eo loco constitutus, eaque dignitate & auctoritate praeditus, ut nisi hoc a me factum fuisset, boni viri Reipublicae amantis officium omnino deseruisse videri possem'.

(8) Canter's part in the uprising of 1610 is seen in greater perspective by E.J.Brill, Voorlezingen over de geschiedenis der Nederlanden, vol. I, no. 5, Leiden 1864, pp. 71-139. J.L.Motley, The life and death of John of Barneveld, The Hague 1874, pp. 184-191, tells the story with some bias against Canter.

(9) Copien van de sententien, ofte vonnissen binnen Wtrecht gewezen, Wtrecht, by Salomon de Roy, 1611.

(10) April 1612: 'In dese maent sijn Kanter en Helsdingen wt Antwerpen gedrocken, ende Kanter na Gelderland, ende Hendrik van Helsdingen [...] is tot Amsterdam gestorven.'

October 1612: 'Men seyt oock, dat Kanter tot Leeuwaerden woonachtich is ende sijn cost daer heeft gecocht.'

1616: 'Den 12. Meert Dirk Canter tot Leeuwaerden gestorven.'

'Den 26. Meert is Kanter tot Hattem begraven bij Swolle, daer sijn soon mede ter begravinge was.'

(11) The only known copy in Paris B.N. , Q.2140.

(12) Reprinted by Janus Gruterus in his Lampas, sive Fax artium liberarium, vol. II, Francofurti 1603, pp. 712-772.

(13) The commentary was reprinted in the Leyden Arnobius- edition of 1651.

(14) Mss. D'Orville 121-123 and Paris Suppl. gr. 1013 contain Euripides, the lesser tragic writers and the comic writers (in two volumes). Aeschylus, Sophocles and a volume 'further poets' are lost. See my thesis on the printed editions 1518-1664 of Aeschylus (Appendix), which will be published later on.

(15) I have followed the example of Gerlo and Vervliet's Inventory of Lipsius' correspondence, with some modifications (simplifications as well as elaborations and refinements) made possible by the much smaller number of Canter's transmitted letters.