

# Pastor H. G. Weland's Latin Elegy for Engelbert Kaempfer

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# Pastor H. G. Weland's Latin Elegy for Engelbert Kaempfer

Robert W. Carrubba

## SUMMARY

*This article discusses the life and accomplishments of Engelbert Kaempfer (1651–1716), the German scholar, traveler, and physician, and his relationship to Pastor H. G. Weland of Lemgo. It presents the manuscript of Pastor H. G. Weland's Latin Elegy for Engelbert Kaempfer. The manuscript's form and readings are compared with the printed version of Haccius, and a first translation into a modern language (English) is published. A final section provides a brief commentary on the elegy, by addressing structure, meaning, and literary style.*

## I. Kaempfer and Weland

Engelbert Kaempfer, a German scholar, traveler, and physician, devoted more than a decade to explorations of a scientific, cultural, and historical nature. Having left Sweden in March of 1683 for travels through Russia, Persia, Arabia, India, Ceylon, the East Indies, Siam, and Japan, Kaempfer returned from the Orient by sea around the Cape of Good Hope and arrived in Holland in October 1693. The extent of his travels as well as the scope and depth of his publications mark Kaempfer as one of the most learned men of his era and as its most widely-traveled scholar. No less a person than Linnaeus credited Kaempfer with the greatest contribution to Japan that had been made by any Westerner.<sup>1</sup> Engelbert Kaempfer can justly be termed «the Humboldt of the Seventeenth Century».

Kaempfer was born in Lemgo, Westphalia, in 1651. He was the son of Johannes Kaempfer and Christine Drepper. Interestingly, Kaempfer's father was minister of Nikolaikirche<sup>2</sup> and his mother's father had also served as minister of the same Lutheran church. This splendid church is located only a short walk from Marienkirche,<sup>3</sup> another Lutheran house of worship of which the Reverend Weland was pastor at the time of Kaempfer's death.

Born in Lemgo in 1681, Hermann Gerhard Weland served as *adjunctus* to his clergyman father and published a variety of poetry and scholarly works. He died in Lemgo in 1718 just two years after the death of Kaempfer. It was this clerical colleague of Kaempfer's father who composed the Latin elegy in honor of Engelbert Kaempfer. After his early years at the parsonage of Saint Nicholas Church, a structure which still stands but has undergone considerable renovation, Kaempfer studied at a number of institutions in Germany and Poland. His first publication was his Latin study in the area of history at Danzig in 1673: *Exercitatio Politica de Majestatis Divisione*. Kaempfer continued his education at Cracow where he earned a master's degree, and at Königsberg (1676–1681) where his broad preparation in language, history, science, and medicine foreshadowed the many and varied reports and discoveries to emerge from his travels. Eventually, Kaempfer crossed the Baltic Sea to study at Uppsala, where he attracted the attention of King Charles XI of Sweden. Kaempfer rejected an offer by the monarch to serve as court scholar and chose instead to join, as its secretary, the Swedish embassy to the Shah of Persia. While in Persia, Kaempfer made a second critical decision, this time to accept employment as a physician with the Dutch East India Company. This service was to take Kaempfer on an extraordinary journey from the Persian Gulf to Japan.

Shortly after his return to Holland, Kaempfer was awarded the degree of Doctor of Medicine by the University of Leiden in 1694.<sup>4</sup> His Latin doctoral dissertation presented ten fascinating reports ranging from acupuncture in Japan and mummy in Persia to a debunking of the mythical plant-animal, the Scythian Lamb. By August of 1694, Kaempfer had returned to Lemgo, the place of his birth, and undertook an active medical practice which delayed the polishing and publication of the materials he had compiled during his travels. On December 18, 1700, he married Maria Sophia Wilstack who bore him three children, all of whom died in their infancy.

It was nineteen years after his return to Europe that Kaempfer saw the publication at Lemgo in 1712 of his first major work: *Amoenitatum exoticarum politico-physico medicarum fasciculi V, quibus continentur variae relationes, observationes & descriptiones rerum Persicarum & Ulterioris Asiae*. The topics of the five fascicles are: (1) the present state of the Persian Court; (2) historical and scientific reports and observations on various things; (3) curious scientific and medical observations; (4) botanical and historical reports concerning the date palm growing in Persia; and (5) Japanese plants. The *Amoenitates Exoticae* was the last work published during Kaempfer's

lifetime, for after several attacks of colic he died at Lemgo in 1716 at the age of sixty five.

Shortly before his death Kaempfer completed *The History of Japan*. Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1752), president of the Royal College of Physicians (1719–1735), who was an avid collector of specimens of natural history, books, and manuscripts, learned from the introduction to the *Amoenitates Exoticae* that Kaempfer's manuscripts and collections were in Germany and arranged for their purchase. The manuscripts included *The History of Japan* which was translated from the High German into English by Sir Hans' Swiss librarian, Johannes Casparus Scheuchzer, and published in 1727.<sup>5</sup>

The British Library now houses the Sloane Collection of Kaempfer manuscripts which includes a manuscript in the hand of the Lutheran minister, Reverend Weland (3323). This manuscript of four pages contains three short pieces composed in Latin: *Aquarum incolis* (40 r),<sup>6</sup> *Athleta felix* (40 v),<sup>7</sup> and *Elogium Kaempferi* (41 r and v). Of these, the elegy is by far the best and most important work. It was published at Lemgo in 1716 by Johann Berthold Haccius, a minister at Lemgo, along with the funeral oration which he delivered for Kaempfer.<sup>8</sup> Haccius' publication is not available in the United States, nor indeed in the British Library nor in the Bibliothèque Nationale. For this reason, I have included the Latin text of Haccius along with illustrations of the manuscript. My own transcription of the manuscript generally, but not always, agrees with the version of Haccius. My English translation (as far as I am aware, the first translation ever made) also accompanies the Latin text.

The major differences between the printed version of Haccius and that of the manuscript are as follows:

(1) Punctuation in the ms. is irregular, e.g., periods at the end of sentences are sometimes omitted. The punctuation of the printed version is regular and complete.

(2) The spelling in the ms. uses a v and a u to differentiate the consonant and the vowel; the printed version does not. Capitalization in the ms. is irregular, e.g., *Medicus* (5) but *miles* (7), but that of the printed text is consistent.

(3) Emphasis:

line 1: *viator* is not underlined in the manuscript but is italicized in Haccius.

line 15: The same comment applies to *Galenus* and *Angelus*.

Elogium  
Ingelbachi Kaempfer,  
patriam; celeberrimae viri.

Nauta<sup>10</sup> Kaempferus terra manique vator  
pensant idem, quicquid in orbe fuit.  
Kaempferus Varo pendente volumina<sup>11</sup> scripsit  
Ingenij studij, dans documenta hui.  
Kaempferus Medicus caude moderate Minerva  
plures agros conciliant opem.  
Kaempferus miles pugnam non nate ad arte  
astu aptissima clara brabea hilit.  
Niles est, pugator erat, certamine sacro  
Inferus utique protitatis anax.  
Multa fides qui Christi castra sequendo  
Virtutum constanti aspecta semper erat  
Denique ac lector mirare, quod Angelus ipse  
exhibuit comas nomen & onca habens  
Engelbestenium Galenus & Angelus ales  
Nauta Kaempferum condidit hunc virum.  
Nauta nunc postquam felix est metesque vator  
Enumerat miles premia sacra poli.  
In varrone nihil, relictet sapientia quaedam  
Divae, pie prudens iam super astra sapit.

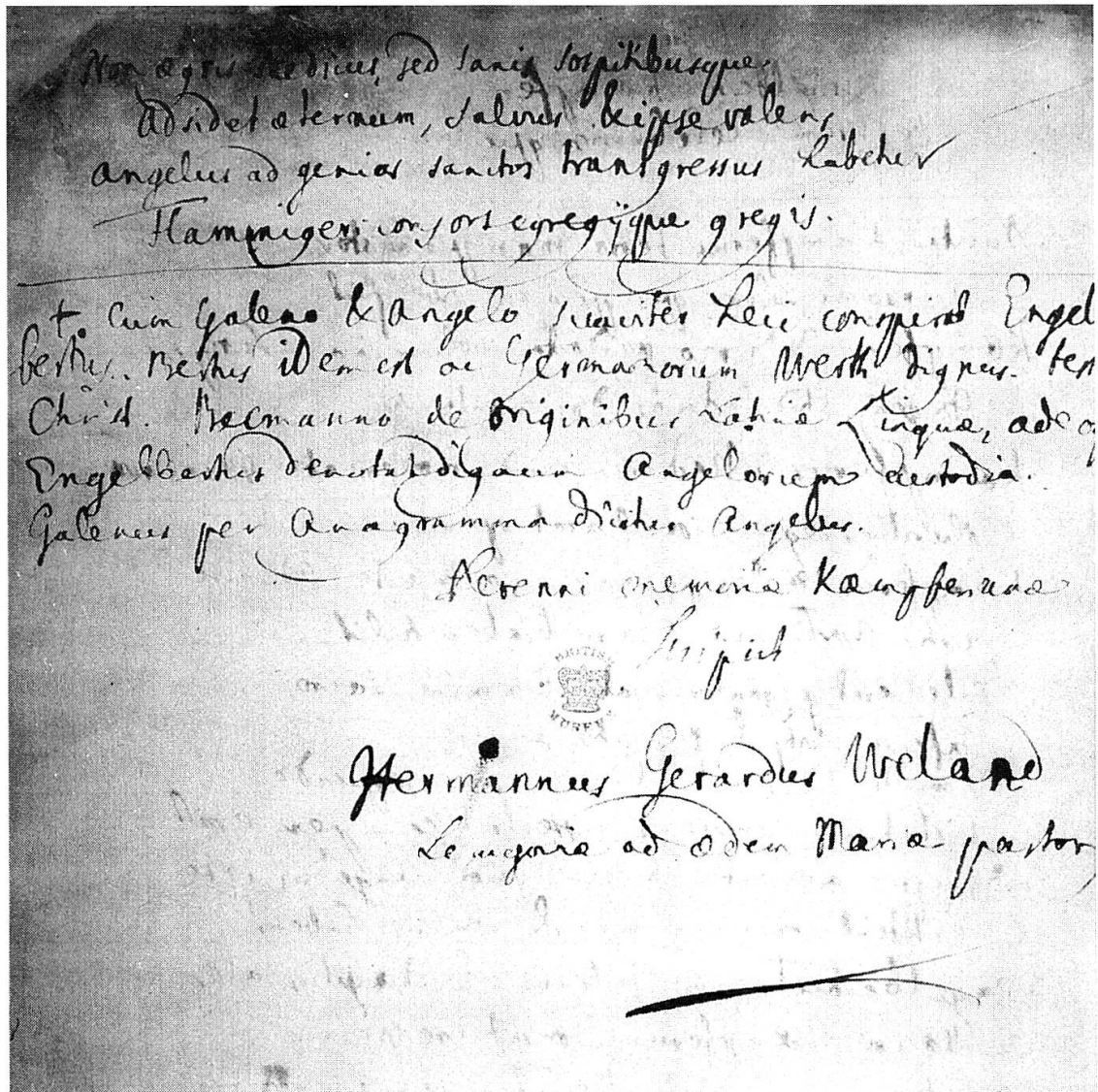
The regularity of Haccius is preferable.

(4) Readings:

line 1: the ms. *terra*, which does not scan, is corrected in Haccius to *terraque*.

line 2: *quicquid* in the ms. is spelled *quidquid* in Haccius, the *quicquid* of the ms. should have been printed.

line 5: The ms. reads *caude*, clearly an error by Weland which is corrected in the printed version's *caute*.



Sloane Collection 3323, 41v. The last four lines of the Elegy for Kaempfer, the note to line 15, and Pastor Weland's signature.

line 11 : the first word of the line is difficult to read because of an ink blot, although it looks more like *fuit* than the printed version's *illi*, but *fuit* is metrically impossible. Haccius' *quia* appears to be *qui* in the ms., and *qui*, referring back to *illi*, is good Latin.

Overall, these differences can be judged as minor : the version of Haccius and that of the manuscript are essentially the same; and when they differ, the printed text of Haccius is usually but not always superior.

## II. The elegy

### A. Text and Translation

ELOGIVM

ENGELBERTI KAEMPFERI

PERITISSIMI CELEBERRIMIQUE VIRI

*Nauita* Kaempferus, terraque marique viator,  
 Pensavit solers quidquid in orbe fuit.  
 Kaempferus *Varro* perdocta volumina scripsit  
 Ingenii, studii dans documenta sui.  
 Kaempferus *medicus*, caute moderante *Minerua*, 5  
 Pluribus aegrotis conciliauit opem.  
 Kaempferus *miles*, pugnax non *Marte* sed arte,  
 Artis *Apollineae* clara brabea tulit.  
 Miles erat, pugnator erat certamine sacro,  
 Infensus vitiis & probitatis amans. 10  
 Illi multa fides, quia *Christi* castra sequendo  
 Virtutum constans assecla semper erat.  
 Denique, ne, lector, mirare, quod *angelus* ipse  
 Exstiterit, concors nomen et omen habens.  
 Engelbertus † enim, *Galenus & Angelus* ales 15  
 Vnum Kaempferum constituere virum.  
 Nauita nunc portum tetigit metamque viator,  
 Enumerat miles praemia sacra poli.  
 In *Varrone* nitet, renitet sapientia quaedam  
 Diua: pie prudens iam super astra sapit. 20  
 Non aegris *medicus*, sed sanis sospitibusque  
 Adsidet aeternum, saluus & ipse valens.  
 Angelus ad genios sanctos transgressus, habetur  
 Flammigeri consors egregiique gregis.

† Cum Galeno et Angelo suauiter heic conspirat Engelbertus.  
*Bertus* idem est ac Germanorum *Werth, dignus*; teste  
 Christiano Becmanno de Origin. latinae linguae; adeoque  
*Engelbertus* denotat *dignum angelorum custodia*. Galenus  
 per anagramma dicitur *Angelus*.

Perenni memoriae Kaempferianae  
 Scripsit  
 Hermannus Gerardus Weland,  
 Lemgoviae ad aedem Mariae Pastor.

ELEGY  
 FOR ENGELBERT KAEMPFER,  
 A MOST LEARNED AND MOST CELEBRATED MAN

The *sailor* Kaempfer, a *voyager* on land and sea,  
 Wisely pondered whatever there was on the globe.  
 Kaempfer, a *Varro*, wrote learned volumes,  
 Giving examples of his own genius and learning.  
 Kaempfer, a *doctor*, with the careful guidance of Minerva, 5  
 Brought help to many sick people.  
 Kaempfer, a *soldier*, fighting not in war but by art,  
 Won the brilliant prizes of the art of Apollo.  
 He was a soldier, he was a fighter in a holy struggle, 10  
 Hostile to vices and loving of goodness.  
 He had great faith, since by following the camp of Christ  
 He was always a constant attendant of virtues.  
 Reader, do not wonder that in the end he himself an *angel*  
 Became having his name and omen in harmony.  
 Engelbert †, indeed, a *Galen* and a winged *Angel* 15  
 Constituted one Kaempfer, a man.  
 Now the sailor has reached harbor, and the voyager his goal.  
 The soldier reckons the sacred rewards of heaven.  
 In Varro there shines, there is resplendent a certain wisdom  
 Divine: now piously wise, he has knowledge beyond the stars. 20  
 Not the sick but the healthy and sound does the doctor  
 Attend eternally, saved and vigorous himself.  
 The angel, having crossed over to the holy spirits, is reckoned  
 A comrade of the flame-bearing and illustrious flock.

† With Galen and Angel here pleasantly harmonizes Engelbert.  
*Bert* is the same as the German *Werth, worthy*; witness  
 Christian Beckmann, *On the Origins of the Latin Language*. And thus



*Engelbert* means *worthy of the protection of the angels*.  
Galen by anagram is spoken as *Angel*.

To the everlasting memory of Kaempfer  
Written by  
Hermann Gerhard Weland  
Pastor, Saint Mary Church in Lemgo

### *B. Structure and Meaning*

Pastor Weland has elegantly structured this poem of twenty-four lines. The elegy divides into two equal blocks of twelve lines: its first twelve lines (1–12) depict Kaempfer as a man in this world (*Kaempferus terraque marique*, 1) while the last twelve lines (13–24) view Kaempfer as an angel in heaven (*angelus*, 13). Lines 1–8 begin by presenting Kaempfer as a secular person whose achievements are illuminated through references to classical antiquity and its mythology. In lines 1–2 Kaempfer is a sailor (*nauita*) and a traveler (*viator*) who reflected thoughtfully on whatever there was to observe on earth. Lines 3 and 4 then liken Kaempfer to the great and prolific classical scholar Varro.<sup>9</sup> The comparison is a fair one for both Kaempfer and Varro had encyclopedic interests and wrote extensively. If Kaempfer's substantial *History of Japan* and *Amoenitates Exoticae* do not quite match the encyclopedic volumes of Varro, it is also true that Varro did not see firsthand the extent of the globe from Europe to Asia that Kaempfer did. In any event, both wrote in Latin, were learned, prolific and of boundless curiosity. Thus lines 1–4 derive their unity from the portrait of Kaempfer as a traveler who reflected and wrote voluminously in the tradition of the Roman Varro.

The portrait of Kaempfer's earthly achievements, set against a classical background (1–4), continues in the poem's next four lines (5–8). Kaempfer brought aid to many sick people and earned praise with the help of the pagan goddess Minerva<sup>10</sup> (5–6). In fact, he can be compared to a soldier who wages war not with arms but with the art of Apollo<sup>11</sup> (7–8). While lines 1–4 introduced the historical classical writer Varro, lines 5–8 sustain the classical ambiance with the mythological figures of Minerva and Apollo. And the phrase *pugnam non Marte . . . tulit* presents a third divinity in *Marte*, by the metonymy of the god Mars for war.<sup>12</sup> To recapitulate, lines 1–8 depict Kaempfer's secular accomplishments as a voyager, investigator, writer, and

doctor. The structure is guaranteed by the deliberate anaphora and parallelism of the first two words of each of the first four couplets:

*Nauita* Kaempferus (1)  
Kaempferus *Varro* (3)  
Kaempferus *medicus* (5)  
Kaempferus *miles* (7)

The repetition of *Kaempferus* reinforces the identity of the person; the accompanying nouns serve to point out his various achievements: voyager, scholar, doctor, and warrior against illness. Notice that in the manuscript each of these descriptors is underlined by Weland himself. Of course, the repetition every second line of the name Kaempfer can also mimic the solemn and measured sound a bell tolling death.

Once having introduced the metaphor of *miles*, Pastor Weland continues it in the last four lines (9–12) of the first half of the poem (1–12), in which Kaempfer the warrior-doctor fighting against sickness (7–8) becomes Kaempfer the warrior-Christian hostile to vice and wickedness and a lover of righteousness (9–10). It is worth observing that in lines 7–9 the *miles* theme is interwoven with a play on the name Kaempfer (7) and the words *pugnax* (7) and *pugnator* (9). Kaempfer (Kämpfer) in German and *pugnator* (adjective, *pugnax*) in Latin have the same meaning: fighter. The balanced order of words and meaning (*Kaempferus miles, pugnax ... Miles ... pugnator*) serves to create an artful and smooth transition between lines 1–8 and 9–12. In the final couplet (11–12), the military metaphor proceeds with Kaempfer portrayed as a man of faith who by following the camp of Christ (*Christi castra sequendo*) was a constant supporter of virtue. With lines 9–12, the list of earthly achievements of the man Kaempfer reaches its conclusion: voyager, investigator, writer, doctor-soldier (1–8), and last, but not of least importance, Christian-soldier (9–12).

At line 13, the poem takes a sudden turn from the third person narrative of the first half of the elegy. With the initial word *denique* Pastor Weland presents the final achievements of Kaempfer in the form of a deponent imperative (*mirare*) by which the reader (*lector*) is ordered not to be astonished that Kaempfer's first name has special significance (13–14): Engelbert, Galen,<sup>13</sup> and a winged angel constituted one Kaempfer, a man, explains the second couplet (15–16). In case the reader has missed the linguistic conceit, a prose footnote explains that Engelbert means «worthy of the protection of the angels»<sup>14</sup> and that Galen is an anagram for angel.

Thus this four line unit (13–16) establishes the theme of the last half of the poem as the angel Kaempfer, and this division is confirmed by the marker word *angelus* in the first line (13) of the first couplet and in the first line of the last couplet (23).

After the abrupt shift from the third person narrative (1–12) to the second person imperative, the poem returns to the third person narrative spoken by the poet (17–24). In these last eight lines, the motifs employed in the elegy's first half are revisited in new forms suited not to earth but to heaven. Line 17 begins with the word *nauita* and concludes with the word *viator* just as was done in line 1. But the parallelism is even greater. Consider that the first couplet of the poem tells us that Kaempfer was a sailor and traveler on land and sea (1) and that he wisely pondered everything on earth (2). In a parallel manner, the first couplet (17–18) of the poem's last block of lines tells us that the sailor and traveler has reached his port (17) and that the soldier (*miles*) enumerates the holy rewards of heaven (18). The two couplets are complementary: Kaempfer journeys and he ponders what he sees, in the first instance on earth and in the second instance in heaven. There is, however, one major difference which causes us to place a stop between lines 17 and 18: *miles*. The soldier motif is borrowed not from the poem's first two lines but from lines 7–12 where Kaempfer was portrayed as a doctor-soldier and a Christian-soldier on earth. In line 18, Kaempfer becomes the Christian-soldier who surveys the rewards of heaven as his soldierly due. In two of the three remaining couplets of the poem (19–20, 21–22) individual motifs from the first half of the poem are also repeated and recast. Lines 19–20 resume the comparison of Kaempfer to Varro initiated in lines 3–4 but now in heaven he shines with a new wisdom and, sharing in God's knowledge, knows things beyond the stars. While in lines 5–6 Doctor Kaempfer (*Kaempferus medicus*) brought help to the sick (*aegrotis*) with the aid of Minerva, in lines 21–22, saved and vigorous himself, the doctor (*medicus*) attends not the sick (*non aegris*) but the healthy and the sound of heaven. The elegy's last couplet (23–24) has two functions: first, by the repetition of the word *Angelus* it restates and brings closure to the theme of its own eight line unit (17–24); second, this final couplet completes the travels and achievements of Kaempfer as it pictures his transference as an angel to heaven among the saints and in the last line locates him forever in heaven as a member of the flame-bearing and illustrious flock. Kaempfer's life journey from earth to heaven is accomplished and his quest for knowledge now ends fittingly in the divine wisdom.

## Notes

- 1 Hort, Sir Arthur, *The "Critica Botanica" of Linnaeus*, London, 1938, p.94.
- 2 Construction of Saint Nicholas Church began early in the thirteenth century and the church was enlarged over time in the Gothic style.
- 3 Saint Mary Church (built between 1270 and 1320) on Stiftstrasse is a center for organ music.
- 4 Bowers, John Z., and Carrubba, Robert W., "The Doctoral Thesis of Engelbert Kaempfer on Tropical Diseases, Oriental Medicine, and Exotic Natural Phenomena", *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* XXV, 1970, pp.270–310.
- 5 The most accessible edition of *The History of Japan* is that of 1906, Glasgow and New York, 3 vols. Pp. XXXV–XLVI contain a life of Kaempfer by Scheuchzer which draws up the funeral sermon of Pastor Haccius (see footnote 8 below).
- 6 *Aquarum incolis* (the inhabitants of the waters) celebrates Kaempfer as a Christian doctor who served well both foreigners and his countrymen.
- 7 *Athleta felix* (the happy athlete) is a twelve line piece which describes Kaempfer as a beloved individual who has gone to heaven and whose passing is lamented on earth.
- 8 Haccius, Johann Berthold, *Die beste Reise Eines Christlichen Kämpfers nach dem himmlischen Orient*, Lemgo, 1716.
- 9 Marcus Terentius Varro (116–27 B. C.) was credited with already editing 490 books when he was 78 years old. We know the titles of 55 of his works.
- 10 Minerva was the Roman goddess of medicine who is identified with the Greek goddess Athena.
- 11 Apollo is the Greek god of medicine who is also associated with the promotion of civilization, moral principles, and intellectual enlightenment.
- 12 *Marte*: Mars was the god of war among the Romans and the equivalent of Ares among the Greeks.
- 13 Galen of Pergamum (129–?199 A. D.), the celebrated medical writer and court-physician of the emperor Marcus Aurelius.
- 14 Weland refers the reader to Christian Beckmann (1580–1648), *De originibus Latinae linguae*, Wittenberg, 1609. S. v. *Sigismundus*, Beckmann equates *Bertus* with *Werd*.

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