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**Ulrich von Hutten:
Knight, Humanist and Reformer
1519-1520**



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Abstract

This thesis examines the thought of the knight, humanist and patriotic reformer Ulrich von Hutten in 1519 and 1520. It focuses on four of his Latin dialogues: Arminius, Bulla vel Bullicida, Monitor Primus and Monitor Secundus. Only the first has previously been studied in any detail, and its treatment in this thesis differs from earlier work in using it to illustrate Hutten's thought and priorities rather than the development of German patriotism and the 'Arminius cult'. Original translations of all four dialogues are included in the appendices.

The years 1519 and 1520 are examined here as they were a crucial turning-point in Hutten's career. Until then, he was well known as a colourful and brilliant humanist and as a friend of Erasmus. However, these two years saw dramatic changes in Hutten's life. He became far more extreme in his German patriotism, adopted Martin Luther's cause, became disillusioned with the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, wrote such biting polemic against the Church that it condemned him along with Luther, and sowed the seeds of his involvement in the Knights' Revolt of 1522-1523. These changes would make him a political outcast, and lead to his death in exile at the age of thirty-five.

Together with selections from Hutten's Latin and German correspondence and poetry, the dialogues reveal much about Hutten's thought on important themes such as liberty, religion and patriotism during this crucial time. They dispel the traditional, caricatured images of Hutten (patriotic hero or violent xenophobe). The thesis also examines the complex influences at work in his childhood and early career, which brought him from a privileged background to the impossible position that he occupied at the end of 1520.

Declarations

I, Christine Hilary Milford Linton, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 100,000 words in length (together with appendices of approximately 30,000 words, for which special permission has been obtained), has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

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Introduction

'*Iacta est alea,*' wrote Ulrich von Hutten at the end of 1520: 'the die is cast'. He expressed the same sentiment in German: 'Ich hab's gewagt'.¹ The motto is a famous one, but its encapsulation of Hutten's circumstances at the time of writing has not been fully appreciated. 1519 and 1520 had been momentous years for the famous knight and humanist, and their significance is examined in this thesis.

Prior to these years, Hutten, born into a prominent family of Franconian knights in 1488, had been dedicated to the Church as a child, but had left his monastery at the age of seventeen in order to attend a succession of German universities. He succeeded in his youthful goal of becoming a renowned Latin poet (he was crowned poet laureate by the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I in 1517) and a friend of leading humanists, including Erasmus. Later, however, influenced not only by prevailing themes in German humanism but also by his visits to Italy and his loyalty to Maximilian I, his priorities changed. He became a fierce opponent of the Roman Church and the most famous representative of the German patriotism that was popular among his fellow humanists. So extreme was he in both these respects that he eventually became alienated from the leading authority figures who had once praised him, and even from many of his friends. Erasmus, in particular, repudiated their

¹ See the frontispiece to the collection of dialogues published in January 1521 (illustrated), and Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Clag und vormanung gegen dem übermassigen unchristlichen gewalt des Bapsts zu Rom, und der ungeistlichen geistlichen, durch herzen Ulrich von Hutten, Poeten und Orator der ganzen Christenheit' (1520), in *Opera* III, pp.475-526. Hutten originally used the phrase in his dialogue *Phalarismus* in 1517, but in 1520 it became his constantly repeated motto. Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ulrichi Hutteni Equitis Germani Phalarismus Dialogus' (1517), in *Opera* IV, pp.4-25

friendship in the harshest and most public terms.² Far from enjoying a long career as an admired scholar and influential political figure, as he hoped, Hutten – in desperation – became embroiled in the disastrous Knights’ Revolt of 1522-23 and died in exile in Switzerland in 1523, aged just thirty-five. During his short life, he saw the irrevocable decline of the knights as an influential social class, the struggle between humanism and scholasticism in the universities (in which he played a central role), and the beginning of Martin Luther’s Reformation (of which he was an outspoken supporter).

D I A L O G I

HUTTENICI

NOVI PERQVAM FESTIVI.

BVLLA VEL BVLLICIDA.

MONITOR PRIMVS.

MONITOR SECVNDVS.

PRÆDONES.

V E R. A B



I A C T A E S T A L E A.

The frontispiece to four dialogues by Hutten published in January 1521, with his motto '*Iacta est alea*', reproduced in Böcking, *Opera IV*, p.309. The first three of these dialogues are examined in this thesis.

² See, for example, Erasmus, Desiderius, 'Spongia Erasmi adversus Aspergines Hutteni' (1523), in *Opera II*, pp.265-324. A translation and commentary are available in Klawiter, Randolph J., *The Polemics of Erasmus of Rotterdam and Ulrich von Hutten* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1977).

It is well known that in 1521 Hutten attended the Diet of Worms, where he provided outspoken support for Martin Luther and was anxiously watched by representatives of the Church, who knew him to be one of the most successful polemicists of the early Reformation. However, Hutten's origins and early career development bore no hint of this, nor of his eventual fate. The thesis will show that 1519 and 1520 were the decisive years in shaping Hutten's unique destiny, the period during which he took the irreversible steps from lauded poet to dangerous outlaw. At this point, different decisions would have changed his future completely. His developing thought during that time on important issues, including the idea of liberty, the role of the Church and the Pope, and German patriotism, will be examined in chapters three, four and five.

As Hutten arrived at the extraordinary and dangerous position which he occupied in the months preceding the Diet of Worms from a background full of conventional elements, the thesis seeks to explain how and why this came about. This is the subject of chapters one and two, in which the emphasis is on the *interdependence* of influences on his youth and early career, which has never been fully appreciated. Influences such as the knighthood and humanism have generally been treated independently by previous historians of Hutten, leaving his volatile character as the obvious explanation for his eventual extremism and isolation. He was, said his leading biographer Hajo Holborn, 'one who could turn the molehills of his life into mountains and charge up and down them with foaming steed'.³ It is an attractive image, but insufficient to explain Hutten's unique situation in 1519 and 1520. The same quotation could be applied to many of Hutten's contemporaries, especially to some of the German humanists who are discussed below in chapter two. Hutten was certainly

³ Holborn, Hajo, Ulrich von Hutten and the German Reformation (Leipzig, 1929, trans. Roland H. Bainton, Yale, 1937), p.37

given to exaggeration and self-importance, but it was the combination of this with the conflicting interests affecting him that explains his fate. These conflicts, and their consequences, are examined in chapters one and two of this thesis, tracing Hutten's development from his childhood to his employment at the court of the Archbishop of Mainz and his early involvement with Luther in 1519.

In this thesis, Hutten's changing ideas during these important years are examined primarily through four Latin dialogues, one of which (Arminius) was published some years after his death, and the remainder (Bulla vel Bullicida, Monitor Primus and Monitor Secundus) in January 1521. Original translations into English are provided in the appendices to this thesis.⁴ Although Hutten is well-known as a pioneer of the dialogue form in German patriotic and Reformation literature, the last three of these dialogues have received almost no attention from scholars of the period. Until their publication in Eduard Böcking's Opera (see below), I have found evidence of only one reprinting since their first appearance.⁵ A short paragraph, at most, has been devoted to them in biographies, and no articles have been written on them. The brief accounts that exist do no more than outline their contents. For example, Martin Treu gives very short descriptions in his Die Schule des Tyrannen.⁶ Most attention has been paid to those dialogues which Hutten himself translated into German – naturally enough, perhaps, as they have been available to more readers over a longer period. These are the generally long dialogues Febris Prima, Febris Secunda, Vadiscus Dialogus qui et Trias Romanas Inscibitur, and Inspicientes, which became,

⁴ These are the first translations to be made into English, although my translation of Arminius appears to have been made more or less simultaneously with the translation published by Ronald Mellor in his Tacitus: The Classical Heritage (New York, 1995), pp.13-23.

⁵ E. Münch (hg.), Hutteni opera quae extant omnia, 6 Bde. (Berlin, 1821-1827), Bd. 4, pp.67ff

⁶ Treu, Martin, Ulrich von Hutten. Die Schule des Tyrannen. Lateinische Schriften (Leipzig, 1991), pp.311-312

respectively, Feber das Erst, Feber das Ander, Vadiscus oder die Romische dreyfaltigkeit, and Die Anschawenden.⁷ In English secondary literature they are usually referred to as Fever the First, Fever the Second, Vadiscus and The Onlookers. Their common ground with another often-cited dialogue, Praedones (The Robbers), is that they list the evils of the Roman Church, with increasing vehemence as the years pass. The problem with a tendency to refer to the more obvious dialogues is that they encourage a view of Hutten as a man with only one concern and one message. Hutten's decision to translate four of these together is evidence that they presented his main message at one particular time, but they still represent only one aspect of his very complex character.

The three comparatively neglected dialogues considered in this thesis also centre on the Church's influence in Germany, but allow a broader understanding of Hutten's thinking and abilities, as they are written in contrasting styles and purport to give the viewpoint of leading characters in the dramatic events of 1520: Martin Luther, the Emperor Charles V, the knight Franz von Sickingen, Hutten himself, and even a personification of the Bull Exsurge Domine. The extent to which Hutten truly portrayed the motives and opinions of any of these characters is questionable, but the great value of the dialogues lies in demonstrating Hutten's understanding of them, his relationships with them, his priorities and his hopes for Germany's future.

⁷ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ulrichi de Hutten Equitis Febris Prima Dialogus' (1518) in Opera IV, pp.29-41, 'Febris Secunda' (1519) in Opera IV, pp.103-144, 'Hulderichi Hutteni Equitis Germani Vadiscus Dialogus qui et Trias Romana Inscibitur' (1520) in Opera IV, pp.149-259 and 'Dialogus qui inscribitur Inspicientes' (1520), in Opera IV, pp.277-308. The German translations were published together under the title Gespräch Büchlin in January 1521, and are shown in Opera as parallel translations with the Latin texts.

In contrast to the three dialogues above, the fourth, Arminius, has been reprinted on a number of occasions. Latin editions include those published in Wittenberg in 1538, 1551 and 1557, Lübeck in 1629, and several later printings. The first German translation, by Friedrich Fröhlich, was published in Vienna in 1815.⁸ Arminius has been subject to more extensive study than the other three dialogues, in several books and articles over the last thirty years, most notably by Jacques Ridé, whose work is cited in chapter three of this thesis. However, studies have tended to view Arminius as part of the general interest in German patriotism and the works of the ancient Roman historian Tacitus that arose in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, or as part of the development of the 'Arminius cult' that continued in Germany into the twentieth century. German patriotism, in its various forms, accounts for the heavy emphasis given by twentieth-century scholars to Arminius, as they sought to illuminate the source from which that patriotism sprang. Here, however, the dialogue is used to illustrate Hutten's understanding of liberty, patriotism and the role of the Holy Roman Emperor, and, especially, his gradual progress towards the extremism that by 1520 had separated him from many other German patriots.

Historiography

A very full account of the historiography of Hutten has been given by Wilhelm Kreutz in his Die Deutschen und Ulrich von Hutten. Rezeption von Autor und Werk seit dem 16. Jahrhundert and 'Ulrich von Hutten in der französischen und angloamerikanischen Literatur'.⁹ No attempt is made here to reproduce his comprehensive survey, but I

⁸ A complete list is given in Opera I, pp.89*-90*.

⁹ Kreutz, Wilhelm, Die Deutschen und Ulrich von Hutten. Rezeption von Autor und Werk seit dem 16. Jahrhundert (München, 1984), and 'Ulrich von Hutten in der französischen und

comment below on aspects of Hutten scholarship that are relevant to the aims of this thesis. A theme that will recur throughout this thesis is the extraordinarily broad scope of Hutten's interests. He had priorities, which changed from time to time before becoming fixed on German patriotism and liberty from the oppression of the Church, but he never had only one concern. His many interests often conflicted, and the thesis will show that this fact was central to his problems and to his eventual separation from more conventional knights and humanists. His wide-ranging (if not always profound) thinking meant that Hutten could be understood, and indeed misunderstood, in many different ways. Both his friends and his enemies could gather ammunition from his writing, to prove him a hero or a villain. The same is true of the historians who have written about him in the five hundred years since his death. Chapter three of this thesis discusses the influence on Hutten of the Roman historian Tacitus, of whom one commentator wrote that his versatility and complexity provided slogans for all political opinions. Readers could see him as propounding any idea that suited them.¹⁰ This applied equally well to Hutten, as the following review demonstrates.

Scholars' interest in Hutten reaches back to the late eighteenth century. The philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder frequently mentioned Hutten in his works, beginning in 1776 with an account of his life and brief comments on his writings.¹¹ This account is the first of several 'lives' which include those of Nicholas Copernicus and Johann Reuchlin, and portrays someone who, in Herder's eyes, was a great and

angloamerikanischen Literatur. Ein Beitrag zur Rezeptionsgeschichte des deutschen Humanismus und der lutherischen Reformation' in *Francia. Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte*, Bd.11 (Ostfildern, 1983), pp.614-639

¹⁰ Michael Grant, in Tacitus, *The Annals of Imperial Rome* (trans. and ed. Michael Grant, London, 1956, 1971, 1989) p.23

¹¹ Herder, Johann Gottfried von, *Herders Sammtliche Werke*, hg. Bernhard Suphan (Berlin, 1893), pp.476-497

heroic German. Herder also wrote an anonymous article about Hutten, again recounting the events of his life in the most glowing terms. Hutten is praised for his nobility, energy and purity of purpose, and his example is recommended to Herder's German readers:

'When the Gazette announced that the portrait and life of Ulric of Hutten were about to appear in the [Deutsche Merkur], I blushed at my negligence, and at the interval which had elapsed since I had first conceived the design of placing something upon the tomb of this honourable man of Germany ... Make a pilgrimage unto his grave, ye youth, and let his life be ever, unto ye, as a mirror! And thou, parent Germany, thou to whom this man was not indeed unknown, but who didst coldly reject him, in like manner as even now thou dost coldly praise him, and neither hast nor knowest his writings, by which however he accomplished everything – Learn! ... What is the matter with Hutten's writings, that ye have not gathered them together, revived and preserved them? ... Here is a reformer himself – who began his career before Luther, and who afterwards so faithfully assisted him, performed so much for him, suffered so much for him! ... Come forward, men and youth, ye who are worthy to awaken the remains of Hutten. More than one bookseller of taste and sentiment would stretch out his hand, and every good youth would daily spare his mite towards the purchase, or subscription; and thus in two or three small volumes should we obtain our Hutten.'¹²

¹² The article was wrongly attributed by the translator to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. See Holborn, Hutten, p.205 for comments on its correct provenance. A copy of the translation is held in Cambridge University Library, shelf mark N.25.39: A Tribute to the Memory of Ulric of Hutten Contemporary with Erasmus and Luther; one of the most zealous Antagonists, as well of the Papal Power as of all

Many reasons could be suggested for Herder's insistence on Hutten's importance, as Herder's own very broad range of interests still give rise to debate. On one level, as one of his modern editors has pointed out, Herder was a leader among 'those who believed in cultural riches for their own sake'.¹³ The same editor points out the problems, however:

'Did [Herder's] work advocate cultural nationalism for all peoples or was it merely a nativist reaction against contemporary frenchifiers of the German spirit? Was he a primitivist worshipper of folk culture or the ideological bearer of the values of the German bourgeoisie in its formative stage? ... Was he the father of a virulent form of aggressive nationalism in central and eastern Europe? A militant exponent of Germandom who can be attached to that long line culminating in the Nazis? ... [Herder is] at his worst dilettantish and at his best a great interpreter of states of feeling in other historical epochs'.¹⁴

Some of these remarks could equally well be applied to Hutten himself, again indicating the problems caused for historians by his wide and constantly changing interests. Certainly, Herder and his translator were both inclined to romanticise Hutten's life. The same article's description of his father as 'a country gentleman'

Despotic Government, and one of the most elegant Latin Authors of his Time; Translated from the German of Goethe, The celebrated Author of the Sorrows of Werther: By Anthony Aufrere, Esq. Illustrated with Remarks by the Translator With an Appendix Containing Extracts from some of Hutten's Performances, a List of his Works, and other explanatory and interesting Papers (London, 1789).

¹³ Frank E. Manuel, in Herder, Johann Gottfried von, Reflections on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind, ed. Frank E. Manuel (Chicago, 1968), p.xi

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.x-xi

glosses over, or fails to appreciate, the harsher reality described in chapter one of this thesis, and the account of Hutten's life contains no reference to the pettiness and violence of which he was capable. In this, however, they did no worse than many later authors. They also portrayed Hutten in exactly the way that he would have wished. Reference is made later in this thesis to Hutten's wish to appear as a chivalrous knight out of medieval literature, and here he appears exactly in this role. His scholarship and his selfless suffering for his country and for Luther are emphasised, and his faults are suppressed. Herder's praise of Hutten reflects not only the kind of German which Herder thought modern Germans needed as an example, but also the success of Hutten's self-publicity.

Goethe, a contemporary of Herder, also saw great value in Hutten's work, speaking of his wonder at reading it for the first time and of the parallels that could be drawn with his own generation. Quoting from Hutten's famous letter to Willibald Pirckheimer (see chapter one of this thesis), he refers to the men of his own time who strove to educate and improve others in Germany and in the world generally.¹⁵ Like Herder, he fails to draw attention to Hutten's exaggeration and the circumstances of his writing. His portrayal of Hutten is sanitised and romanticised, as is that of Hutten's associate Franz von Sickingen, who appears in Goethe's drama Götz von Berlichingen.¹⁶ In this play, Goethe presents a heroic picture of the German knights in the time of Hutten and Sickingen, upholding freedom and justice contrary to claims that they rob the poor. Chapter five of this thesis considers the career of Sickingen, and chapter one examines the knights' role in society, feuding and their image as *Raubritter*, all of

¹⁵ Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, Aus meinem Leben. Dichtung und Wahrheit, hg. Klaus-Detlef Müller (Frankfurt am Main, 1986)

¹⁶ Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, Götz von Berlichingen (Cornelsen, 2003)

which are glamorised by Goethe and even more so by the translator of Götz von Berlichingen at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Sir Walter Scott.¹⁷

The heroic image of Hutten that was presented by these hugely influential authors had a significant effect throughout the nineteenth century. Herder and Goethe had drawn attention back to Hutten, who had been almost forgotten, and had dictated the approach which historians would be inclined to take in their treatment of him. The modern commentator Wilhelm Kreutz attributes this to a resurgence of patriotism, suggesting that the historians who followed Herder ‘raised Hutten to the status of symbolic representative of the remaining unfulfilled “dream” of German unity, and demanded payment in his name’.¹⁸ It was in the mid-nineteenth century that Herder’s wish was at last fulfilled. E. Münch attempted to collect and publish Hutten’s known works between 1821 and 1827, but his efforts would soon be surpassed. Eduard Böcking’s monumental seven-volume work Ulrichi Hutteni Equitis Germani Opera quae reperiri potuerunt omnia (Leipzig, 1859) remains by far the most important source for students of Hutten. An edited collection of Hutten’s writings, the Opera contains very little analysis or comment. However, the influence of earlier historians and of the popular patriotic German vision of the time is evident from Böcking’s Latin preface to the Opera, in which he echoes Herder by expressing his disgust that greater attention has not been paid to Hutten. Without the literary struggles of Hutten and Luther, he claims, none of his readers would be able to call themselves Germans. He sees his task of collection and editing as an obligation. Clearly, he had great sympathy with Hutten, going on to speak vehemently against oppression by the

¹⁷ Scott, Walter, Götz of Berlichingen, with the Iron Hand. Translated from the German of Goethe (New York, 1814)

¹⁸ Kreutz, ‘Der “Huttenkult”’, p.347

Roman Church and in favour of German virtues.¹⁹ He ends his preface with the words, 'Farewell, reader, and love Hutten!'²⁰ Fortunately for the modern historian of Hutten, Böcking's partisanship did not prevent him from being meticulous about detail, and he also devotes much of the preface to explaining his painstaking method of editing the Latin texts. The curious exception to that lies in some errors in identifying Hutten's Biblical references. Those errors that affect the dialogues examined in this thesis are corrected in the translations included in the appendices.

The great German historian Leopold von Ranke attempted a detached analysis of Hutten's character and role in the Reformation. However, in his Deutsche Geschichte im Zeitalter der Reformation he was writing a work of great scope, in which Hutten was one character among hundreds.²¹ Ranke's view of the composition and purpose of history – as neither more nor less than an expression of God's Creation, a series of tendencies in world development – necessarily affected his approach to Hutten. He could not hope to do him full justice, nor did he claim to do so.²²

The nineteenth century's chief commentator on Hutten was undoubtedly David Friedrich Strauss, who had access to Böcking's entire collection of original manuscripts when he wrote his biography Ulrich von Hutten in 1871.²³ He took to heart Herder's and Goethe's heroic version of Hutten, portraying a 'champion of

¹⁹ Böcking, Eduard, in Opera I, pp.xi-xvi

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.xvi

²¹ Ranke, Leopold von, Deutsche Geschichte im Zeitalter der Reformation, 5 Bde. (Berlin, 1839-1852)

²² Ranke's piety and respect for God's design have been widely examined. See, for example, Iggers, Georg C., The German Conception of History. The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present (Middletown, Connecticut, 1968), p.71.

²³ Strauss, David Friedrich, Ulrich von Hutten (Leipzig, 1871)

intellectual freedom and ... victim of clerical bigotry'.²⁴ Strauss's long and detailed study makes extensive use of Hutten's writings, and dwells particularly on the importance of Franz von Sickingen, casting him, like earlier authors, in a heroic mould.²⁵ Hutten's best-known biographer, Hajo Holborn, has criticised Strauss for his superficial knowledge of the sixteenth century and, in particular, for the fact that 'Luther's theology was a closed book to him'.²⁶ He further implies that this picture of Hutten has been distorted where necessary to fit with the theme of other biographies by Strauss: the opposition to clerical and political oppression that he perceived in leaders of the Enlightenment.²⁷ There may be some truth in Holborn's accusations. Strauss's biography is certainly more descriptive and enthusiastic than analytical. Nevertheless, it must rank as one of the earliest and grandest retellings of Hutten's story. It was certainly popular, being frequently reprinted, and gave further impetus to the image of Hutten presented by Herder and Goethe. Several biographies at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century drew heavily on Strauss's work, notably the account of Hutten's life by O. Harnack in Julius von Pflugk-Harttung's Im Morgenrot der Reformation.²⁸ The romanticised, heroic version presented there is reinforced by the reproduction of a painting of Hutten being crowned poet laureate by the Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian I.

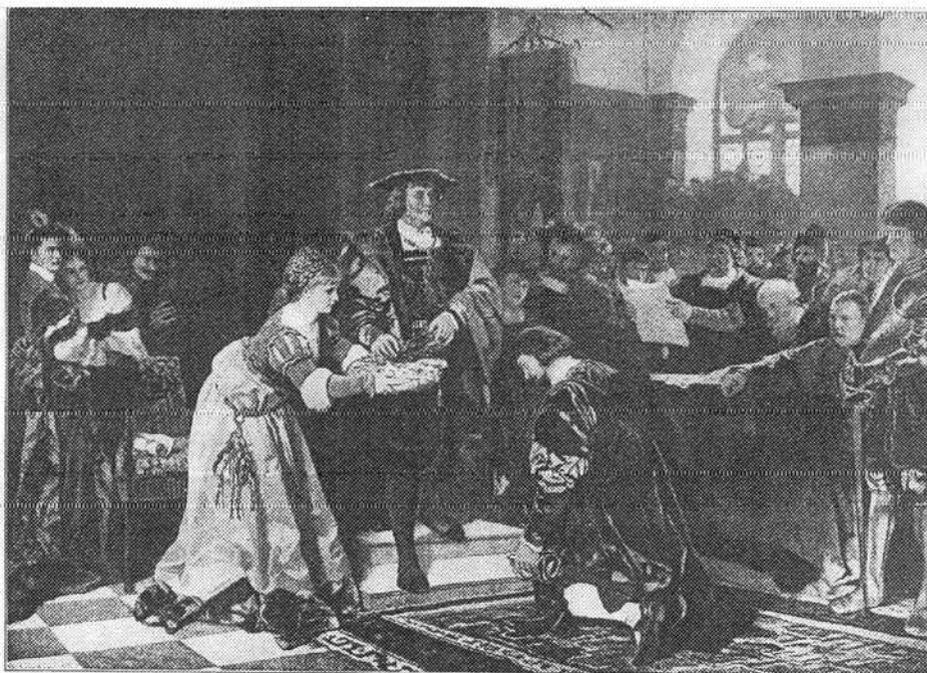
²⁴ Fife, Robert Herndon, 'Ulrich von Hutten as a Literary Problem' in Germanic Review 23 (1948), pp.18-29, p.19

²⁵ Strauss, Hutten, pp.344-369, 398-423

²⁶ Holborn, Hutten, p.206

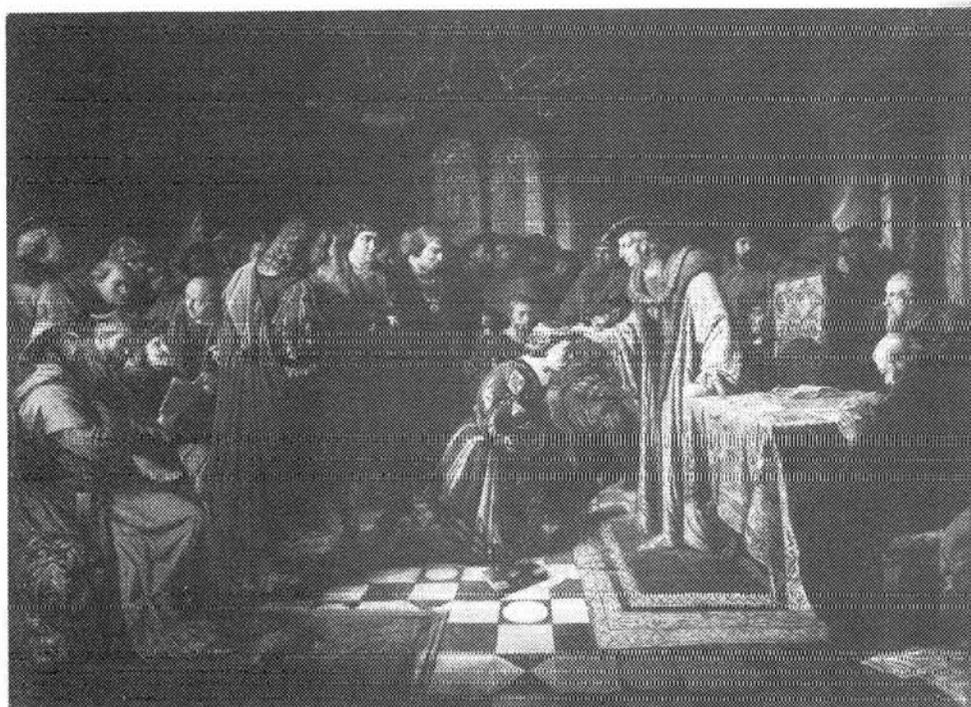
²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.206

²⁸ Harnack, Otto, 'Ulrich von Hutten' in Julius Pflugk-Harttung (hg.), Im Morgenrot der Reformation (St Louis and Alsace, 1924), pp.450-554



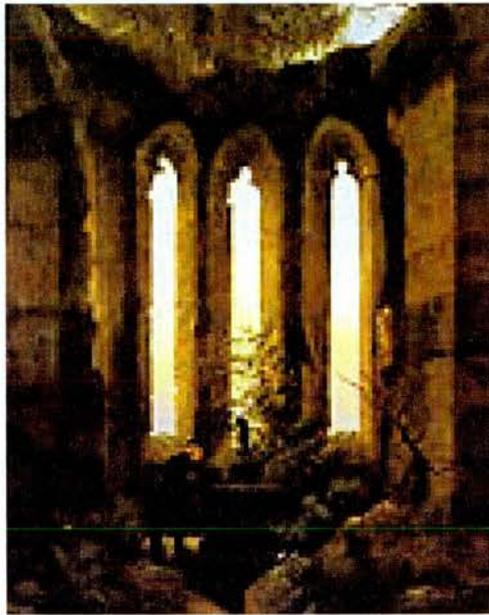
Ulrich von Hutten is crowned poet laureate by Emperor Maximilian I
 F.W. Martersteig, 1860
 Reproduced in O. Harnack, 'Ulrich von Hutten' in Julius Pflugk-Harttung (hg.), Im Morgenrot der Reformation (St Louis and Alsace, 1924), p.497

It was a romantic and popular image that the artist repeated at least once:



As above, 1868
 Reproduced in Wilhelm Kreutz, 'Der "Huttenkult" im 19. Jahrhundert' in Peter Laub, Ulrich von Hutten. Ritter, Humanist, Publizist 1488-1523 (Kassel, 1988), p.346

Similar visual images are found throughout the nineteenth century. Caspar David Friedrich's famous painting of Hutten's grave dates from 1823, and in 1869 Wilhelm von Lindenschmidt even portrayed Hutten's fight with several Frenchmen at Viterbo (not, in fact, a glorious event, but a tavern brawl in which Hutten killed one of the Frenchmen with the assistance of his friends).²⁹



'Ulrich von Hutten's Grave'
by Caspar David Friedrich,
1823

²⁹ The event is recounted, with differing interpretations of Hutten's provocation and of the exact sequence of events, in Bauch, Gustav, 'Hutteniana' in *Vierteljahrsschrift für Kultur und Literatur der Renaissance*, I (Berlin, 1885), pp.491ff, Kalkoff, Paul, *Huttens Vagantzeit und Untergang* (Weimar, 1925), p.277, and Holborn, *Hutten*, pp.81-82. Lindenschmidt's painting was actually reproduced on a German cigarette card in 1936 (see below for Hutten's popularity in Germany in the 1930s).



Hutten at Viterbo in 1516
 This image appeared on a cigarette card in 1936, and
 was copied from a painting by Wilhelm von
 Lindenschmidt, 1869

The ‘cult’ of Ulrich von Hutten was a significant element of German consciousness in the nineteenth century, a fact of which Kreutz has taken a dim view:

‘No one in the early modern period was so overrated in their historical significance and, in that overrating, so popular, as the Franconian knight Ulrich von Hutten’.³⁰

It cannot be denied that Hutten was popular, but this thesis will show that his significance was greater than Kreutz admits.

³⁰ Kreutz, ‘Der “Huttenkult”’, p.347

The popular clichés associated with the nineteenth-century Hutten are nowhere demonstrated so well as in the 1859 play Franz von Sickingen. A Tragedy in Five Acts by Ferdinand Lassalle.³¹ The play is particularly interesting for the parallels which may be drawn between Lassalle and Hutten, their reasons for writing and the methods they use. There is much in Franz von Sickingen that echoes the dialogues examined later in this thesis. A philosopher and socialist politician, Lassalle made no pretence of writing history, or indeed drama, for its own sake. His purpose in writing Franz von Sickingen was to make some political and personal points, as was the case with all of Hutten's later works (in particular, the dialogues examined here).³² Both Sickingen and Lassalle are portrayed as great heroes, in keeping with nineteenth-century perceptions, but interestingly it is Hutten, the secondary character, who can be most closely identified with Lassalle himself. Lassalle wrote to his acquaintance Sophie von Solutzew:

‘Read my tragedy. Everything I could say to you here, I have made Hutten say. He too had to bear all kinds of calumny, every form of hatred, every species of malevolence. I have made him the mirror of my soul, and I was able to do this as his fate and my own are absolutely identical, and of astounding similarity’.³³

In this work of fiction, then, we find Hutten being used much as he used others in his own dialogues: as a mouthpiece for the author's own ideas and ambitions. This is an

³¹ Lassalle, Ferdinand, Franz von Sickingen. A Tragedy in five Acts (Berlin, 1859, trans. Daniel de Leon, New York, 1904)

³² Accounts of Lassalle's career and work may be found in Footman, David J., The Primrose Path: A Life of Ferdinand Lassalle (London, 1946) and Andréas, Bert F.L., Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiterverein. Bibliographie ihrer Schriften und der Literatur über sie, 1840 bis 1975 (Bonn, 1981)

³³ Bernstein, Eduard, Ferdinand Lassalles Gesammelte Reden und Schriften, Vol. I, chapter 2 (Berlin, 1893)

important theme in chapters four and five of this thesis, especially with regard to the speeches which Hutten assigns to Luther in Monitor Primus. Lassalle understood the effectiveness of the technique. Here he adopts for his own purposes not the main character, but the one widely admired and regarded as a hero in the Germany of the nineteenth century.

However, Lassalle did not appreciate the one respect in which he and Hutten were truly alike. Eduard Bernstein comments on Lassalle's inability to see himself as inessential to whatever action was to be taken:

'So interwoven was his party with himself in his own imagination, that he could only regard it from the point of view of his own personality, and treated it accordingly ... Lassalle was a convinced Socialist. Of this there can be no doubt. But he would have been incapable of sinking himself in the Socialist movement, of sacrificing his personality – note that we do not say his life – to it'.³⁴

While Lassalle's political ideals would have been a mystery to Hutten, he identified his cause with his own person in the same way. Many of the works examined later in this thesis attest both to Hutten's view of himself as the indispensable shaper of events, and to his willingness to sacrifice everything but his personality in the process. His commitment to Luther's cause at the risk of his life, while insisting on being at the centre of events, is proof of this, and is examined in chapter five. Thus, Lassalle's romantic and exaggerated view of himself, and Hutten's idea of his own importance,

³⁴ Ibid., chapter 2

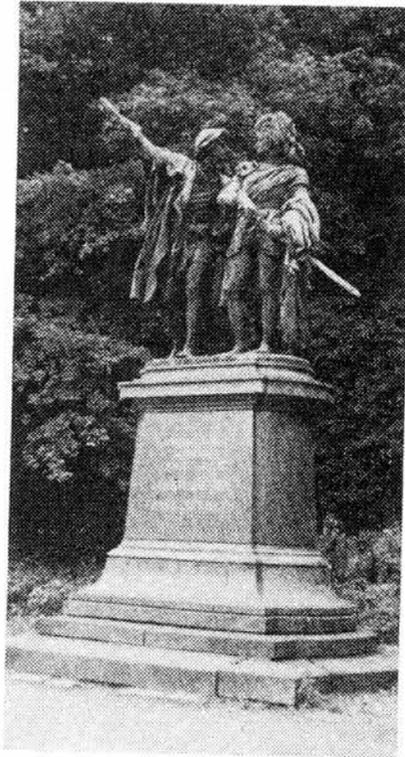
are equally well reflected in Franz von Sickingen, when Hutten tells Sickingen's daughter that the gods require the sacrifice of the best and most stalwart of men, and that he is doomed to be such a man.³⁵

In 1904, Franz von Sickingen was translated into English by Daniel de Leon. Even the translation, we find, was motivated at the turn of the nineteenth century not by scholarly interest but by politics. De Leon (1852-1914) was brought up in Germany but later became a leader of America's Socialist Labor Party. In his introduction to his translation, he claims that Sickingen and Hutten together undertook the Knights' Revolt as a great enterprise which – if it had succeeded – 'would have saved Germany the devastating Thirty Years' War, unified the nation along a direct and less thorny path than it was forced to travel, and materially changed the history of Europe for the better of mankind'. They were, he says, prevented from achieving this only by their failure to make their purpose known to the common people, who therefore failed to come to their aid. For Lassalle's translator, the partnership of Sickingen and Hutten had a significant message for society at the end of the nineteenth century: that intellectuals should be free to work towards the future good and freedom of mankind, advertising their purpose to ordinary folk, who would then support them in their struggle.

For Germans generally, Hutten's 'cult' reached its high point, and took a new direction, from 1871 onwards. On 18th January 1871, the Kaiser stood in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles and proclaimed the new German Empire. Now Hutten was no longer a reflection of lost aspirations, but a 'prophetic harbinger'. The awakening of

³⁵ Lassalle, Franz von Sickingen, p.80

the German nation, which he had tried to achieve with his tract Clag und Vormanung had at last been accomplished.³⁶ As a result, nineteenth-century admiration for Hutten not only increased, but fundamentally changed in nature. Celebrations for the 400th anniversary of his birth in 1888 were widespread and exuberant. The placing of a statue of Hutten and Franz von Sickingen near the Ebernberg, Sickingen's fortress, was one expression of that exuberance.



The memorial to Hutten and Sickingen at the foot
of the Ebernberg
Photograph: Prof. Cauer, 1986, reproduced in
Peter Laub, Ulrich von Hutten, p.355

³⁶ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Clag und vormanung gegen dem übermassigen unchristlichen gewalt des Bapsts zu Rom, und der ungeistlichen geistlichen, durch herzen Ulrich von Hutten, Poeten und Orator der ganzen Christenheit' (1520), in Opera III, pp.475-526. In 1632 the tract was republished under the title An Awakener of the German Nation. Holborn, Hutten, p.159

This statue is a reminder of another change that took place in public perceptions of Hutten's age. Whereas in the 1860s religious aspects of the study of Martin Luther were paramount, in the 1890s – probably as a result of patriotic enthusiasm for the Kaiser's proclamation – it is noticeable that admiration for nationalist elements of the Reformation came to the fore.³⁷ Hutten and Sickingen were therefore more openly celebrated as part of the Reformation than they had once been. See, for example, the positions of prominence that they are given in the Luther memorial in Berlin (Sickingen at front left, and Hutten at front right). The knights, in full armour, are depicted as the defenders of the Reformation.



The Luther Memorial in Berlin, 1893-1895
 Reproduced in Peter Laub, *Ulrich von Hutten*, p.356

³⁷ See Kreutz, 'Deutsche Verwirklichungen' in H.-E. Mittag und V. Plagemann (hg.), *Denkmäler im 19. Jahrhundert. Deutung und Kritik* (München, 1972), pp.183-215

Whether the authors, painters and sculptors were motivated by the search for truth, by patriotism or by politics, the general nineteenth-century view of Hutten was that of a great German patriot who struggled, against overwhelming odds, for the good of his country. The publication of newly-discovered documents as Ulrichs von Hutten Deutsche Schriften (Strasbourg, 1891) was enthusiastically received, with one reviewer claiming:

‘[Of all the figures in German history] there is none – even Luther not excepted – more attractive than that of the scholar-knight with the laurel of the poet, the valiant champion of Humanism and the Reformation, Ulrich von Hutten’.³⁸

It is easy to identify flaws in these portrayals, but, distorted or romanticised though they may be, they all contain a fundamental truth about Hutten: his genuine, lifelong obsession with justice (as he perceived it) and liberty. These central themes recur throughout this thesis, and nobody has understood their importance better than the nineteenth century authors, who simply failed to acknowledge any other side to Hutten’s character and interests. These themes’ importance to the nineteenth century was acknowledged in 1891 when David Starr Jordan, the first president of Stanford

³⁸ Szamatólski, S. (hg.), Ulrichs von Hutten Deutsche Schriften (Strasbourg, 1891). Blau, Max, Modern Language Notes, vol.7, no.6 (1891), pp.176-179, p.176

University, chose Hutten's words as the new university's motto: 'Die Luft der Freiheit weht'.³⁹

The twentieth century saw far more work on Hutten than any earlier period, and his treatment was correspondingly more complex. Here, especially in the later part of the century, we see the first attempts to examine specific aspects of his work, to set them in their proper context, and to gain a better understanding of the man without purposely attaching his name to a political or religious agenda. Even so, the huge political and social changes of the twentieth century have also meant that more people than ever before have seized on Hutten's work, frequently out of context, and used it for their own ends. Their work ranges from German biographies at the beginning of the century, in which nineteenth-century attitudes persist, to Hutten's adoption by the Nazi movement, his deliberate abandonment by German historians in the aftermath of the Second World War, his gradual re-emergence (prompted especially by the 500th anniversary of his birth in 1988), and, finally, his re-adoption by the neo-Nazi movement in present-day Germany.

The idealised Hutten represented by Strauss was to outlast the nineteenth century – but only just. The 400th anniversary of Luther's Ninety-five Theses in 1917 prompted a great deal of research into Luther and those associated with him. Two major works by Paul Kalkoff of the University of Breslau resulted from this: Hutten und die Reformation (Leipzig, 1920) and Huttens Vagantenzeit und Untergang (Weimar, 1925), and they are of interest because they mark a great change in historical views of Hutten. Perhaps strangely for someone who did so much detailed work on Hutten,

³⁹ Originally rendered by Hutten in Latin: 'Videtis illam spirare libertatis auram', in his 'Invectiva in Lutheromastigas Sacerdotes' (1521) in Opera II, pp.21-34, p.34.

Kalkoff loathed his subject. While his admiration for Luther knew no bounds, Hutten was, as Robert Herndon Fife points out, 'his pet abomination'.⁴⁰ While historians might very reasonably write biographies of people they despise, on the grounds of those figures' undeniable historical significance, Kalkoff set himself apart by going to such trouble for someone whom he regarded as quite unimportant. For him, Hutten had no significance beyond his ability as a Latin author. Fife notes that:

'For Kalkoff, Hutten was without political knowledge or consistency, insincere in character, a moral weakling and a shallow egotist. In his search for misdemeanors, trifles light as air are confirmations strong as Truth from Holy Writ.'⁴¹

One such example is Kalkoff's accusation of theft, following Hutten's failure to return three documents that he had borrowed from the library at the monastery of Fulda. Simple forgetfulness and lack of opportunity are impossible in Kalkoff's view of Hutten. For this author, Hutten's services to humanism were small, and his only motive in joining the Knights' Revolt was greed. All of Kalkoff's work on Hutten was painstaking, but it gave a false picture of him because he failed to understand the complexities of Hutten's personality and the entwined influences of his youth, which are central to this thesis. Preserved Smith expressed something of this when reviewing Huttens Vagantenzeit:

⁴⁰ Fife, Robert Herndon, 'Ulrich von Hutten as a Literary Problem' in Germanic Review 23 (1948), pp.18-29, p.19. For Kalkoff's approach to Luther, see the enthusiastic account in his Luther und die Entscheidungsjahre der Reformation (München und Leipzig, 1917).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.19

‘If Kalkoff is unfair to Hutten, it is not because he fails to prove that he practised many vices and committed many crimes, but that he fails to see that even this blackmailer and highway robber must have had some strange and inconsistent dash of nobility in his turgid soul, or he could [not] have felt the compulsion of a something greater than himself in the character of Erasmus and in the cause of Luther’.⁴²

Immediately, debate began to rage over Hutten’s true historical significance. Of the works that emerged in his defence in the late 1920s, Fritz Walser’s detailed political study Die politische Entwicklung Ulrichs von Hutten während der Entscheidungsjahre der Reformation and Hajo Holborn’s Ulrich von Hutten and the German Reformation are outstanding.⁴³ The latter concentrates on Hutten’s spiritual and cultural aspects, and some of its limitations are made clear in the title: Hutten is seen less on his own terms than as a player in the Reformation, which occupied only the last few years of his life. Despite this, it remains the best overall account of Hutten’s life, and is frequently used for reference in the following chapters. Most attempts to defend Hutten in the face of Kalkoff’s attack, although containing diligent accounts, make less effort to interpret him. These include Paul Held’s book Ulrich von Hutten. Seine religiös-geistige Auseinandersetzung mit Katholicismus, Humanismus und Reformation (Leipzig, 1928) and Otto Flake’s Ulrich von Hutten (Berlin, 1929). Flake’s biography is a general work intended for the general reader. It has the merit of being a balanced account, but the author, who was better known for his novels and popular writing, was not a specialist in sixteenth century history.

⁴² Smith, Preserved, ‘Paul Kalkoff: Huttens Vagantenzeit und Untergang: der Geschichtliche Ulrich von Hutten und seine Umwelt’ in American Historical Review 31, no.1 (1925), pp.123-124, p.123

⁴³ Walser, Fritz, Die politische Entwicklung Ulrichs von Hutten während der Entscheidungsjahre der Reformation (Munchen, Oldenburg, 1928)

For later historians of Hutten, the significance of the 1920s was that they saw the destruction of the myth of the idealistic, heroic Hutten, so enthusiastically propagated by Strauss – and which, Fife points out, was ‘almost as partisan in interpretation as the “saintly” tradition so long current in Lutheran circles’.⁴⁴ It also replaced that myth with something new: the first attempts to draw a fair and balanced picture of Hutten and his conflicting actions and ideas.

During the Third Reich, the image of Hutten as a great patriot was resurrected and encouraged. His polemic on behalf of German liberty and superiority was, unsurprisingly, much admired but not studied on its own terms. Once again, Hutten’s work was being used as he and his contemporaries used the works of classical authors: to advertise a political view and to convert as many people to it as possible. Therefore, Hutten no longer inspired serious biographies and essays, but poems, novels and plays.⁴⁵ His appearance on a cigarette card, cast in the role of defender of his country’s honour, has been mentioned above. For three years, from 1937 to 1939, a festival was held to commemorate Hutten each summer in the ruins of his family’s castle, the Steckelberg.⁴⁶ Hutten presented, or at any rate could be made to present, the perfect image for the propagandists of the Third Reich, and they made the most of it, as the photograph below shows.

⁴⁴ See the more extensive comments in Fife, ‘Ulrich von Hutten’, p.20.

⁴⁵ Bernstein, Eckhard, ‘Ulrich von Hutten im Dritten Reich’, in Laub, Peter (hg.), Ulrich von Hutten. Ritter, Humanist, Publizist 1488-1523 (Kassel, 1988), pp.383-394, p.385

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.383



Alfred Rosenberg, the holder of several important posts in the Nazi party, gives a speech at the last festival in the ruins of the Steckelberg. Reproduced in Laub, Ulrich von Hutten, p.382

Following the Second World War, little work was done on Hutten, largely, it seems, because of a wish by German historians to distance themselves from the values of the Third Reich.⁴⁷ However, from the 1950s onwards, journal articles about individual aspects of Hutten's work, many of which are cited in this thesis, began to appear by American, French and British historians, most frequently examining aspects of Hutten's patriotism. The work of John D'Amico on Italian and German humanism, and Lewis Spitz on Conrad Celtis are notable examples.

It was in 1988 that German interest in Hutten resurged, coinciding with the 500th anniversary of his birth. Whereas the Nazis had put Hutten's image on a cigarette

⁴⁷ I thank Martin Treu for his interesting observations to me on the avoidance of Hutten as a subject of research by German historians.

card, fifty years later the DDR circulated a picture even more widely, this time putting it on a postage stamp. In an indication of changing perceptions, he was represented once again as a warrior-poet, and his motto 'Ich hab's gewagt' reappeared.



Hutten's appearance on a postage stamp to mark the 500th anniversary of his birth

A rash of studies, of varying quality, appeared in Germany in the same year. Some, including those by Franz Rueb and Carlheinz Gräter, are useful reference works but contribute little to a new understanding of Hutten, being concerned mainly with retelling the basic facts of his life.⁴⁸ Others are valuable additions to the secondary literature, especially the extensive and excellent collection of articles edited by Peter Laub, which has been useful in providing raw material for this thesis in the attempt to draw together the strands of Hutten's early life.⁴⁹ The literature produced in the last twenty years assists in understanding Hutten's development and ever-changing priorities. Nevertheless, Hutten is still seen chiefly in terms of his aggressive patriotism and his links to the Reformation, and the temptation to portray and perceive

⁴⁸ Rueb, Franz, *Der hinkende Schmiedgott Vulkan. Ulrich von Hutten, 1488-1523* (Zurich, 1988), and Gräter, Carlheinz, *Ulrich von Hutten. Ein Lebensbild* (Stuttgart, 1988)

⁴⁹ Peter Laub (ed.), *Ulrich von Hutten, Ritter, Humanist, Publizist 1488-1523. Katalog zur Ausstellung des Landes Hessen anlässlich des 1500. Geburtstages* (Kassel, 1988)

him in caricature is very strong, perhaps because it is so easy. The centuries-old tendency to represent Hutten in terms of one's own agenda is still evident today in the neo-Nazi organisations whose websites claim affinity with him. In fact, Hutten was no straightforward caricature. He suffered under many conflicting ideals, and the years 1519 and 1520 were a time during which he had to make difficult choices. This thesis uses many Latin documents not previously analysed, and reconsiders existing literature, to show the significance of the crucial years 1519 and 1520 and to explain the overlapping influences that drove him to that point.

Chapter One

The Knighthood, Family and the Monastery: Early Influences on Hutten, 1488-1505

For someone who would be in such a desperate and extraordinary situation in 1519 and 1520, Ulrich von Hutten had, in many ways, led a very conventional life. His origins and upbringing were certainly shared by other humanists, and his education and circle of friends had much in common with many scholars of the time.¹ Hutten's eventual alienation from those friends, his extreme views, and his condemnation by the Church have no apparent reason other than the 'recklessness' and 'obstinacy' noted by his most successful biographer, Hajo Holborn.² Recklessness and obstinacy were certainly important features of Hutten's character, and they did contribute to his fall from imperial and popular favour late in his career. Yet, he was hardly unique in displaying these characteristics. In themselves, they cannot explain the course which ultimately led to personal disaster and to his uniquely famous place in German history. Rather, Hutten was partly led and partly driven to his position in 1519, not only by a personality which was given to extremes, but by a combination of social and political circumstances, by the events he witnessed and by the people he met. This is the first of two chapters which show how these circumstances combined uniquely in Hutten to produce the complex character revealed in the dialogues of 1519 and 1520. Chapter one addresses the influences at work on Hutten during the first seventeen

¹ Hutten was unusual in being a knight as well as a humanist, but by no means unique. Several humanist knights will be mentioned in later chapters, the most notable being his friend Hermann von dem Busche (see chapter two). The conventional nature of Hutten's humanist education, and the friends who shared it with him, are also addressed in chapter two.

² Holborn, Hajo, Ulrich von Hutten and the German Reformation trans. Roland H. Bainton, (New York, 1937), pp.120 and 187

years of his life, demonstrating their importance in shaping his character and in raising expectations of himself and others which were never to leave him. The influences of the knighthood, the Hutten family and the monastery of Fulda on Hutten have received little attention from historians in comparison with his famous exploits as poet laureate and would-be reformer. They are also usually treated in isolation from one another. In truth, they were *interdependent* influences which produced contradictory effects – a fact which is crucial in understanding Hutten’s political and religious stance in later years – and this is their first proper examination in that context.

Hutten was not alone in being a member of the social class of imperial knights, nor in spending his youth in a monastery, nor in having a humanist education, nor in meeting and corresponding with the leading thinkers of his age. But he was unique in the way in which these elements came together in him, joining at significant times to suggest new ideas and new courses of action. This chapter, and the next, will examine Hutten’s origins and background, not with the intention of providing a general biography, but of demonstrating the combination and timing of forces at work from a time long before his birth which – perhaps inevitably – brought about his downfall.

The German knighthood

Hutten’s place in German society, from which all his later actions stemmed, is the necessary starting point. Born into a prominent family of German knights, he could not avoid social and political conflict as he grew older, for the knights themselves were experiencing significant changes in their power, wealth and status. Hutten’s letters and dialogues reveal the deep impression which these changes made upon

him.³ He was personally so affected by them that they contributed to his fatal involvement in the Knights' Revolt of 1522-23. The extent and nature of those changes have been much debated, but – as we shall see below - it is clear that by the time of Hutten's birth in 1488, the knights in general were politically weaker and financially poorer than they had been, and were sinking low in public opinion.

Political problems

In political terms, the origins and subsequent development of the knights as a section of the nobility set them firmly among the 'lesser' rather than 'greater' nobles. Making up the majority of these *niederer Adel*, they greatly outnumbered the higher German nobility (princes, counts and barons), but their position was always a difficult one, as they searched for status and security.⁴ Originating as servants of the Holy Roman Emperor in the civil wars of the eleventh century, the knights banded together for mutual help and protection.⁵ The first aristocratic league appeared in Germany in 1331, and more followed. In Hutten's own area, Franconia, four societies were established in the late fourteenth century: the Society of the Griffin (1379), the Society of St George (1381), the Society of Counts, Barons, Knights and Valets (1387) and the Society of the Clasp (1392). The members offered one another aid during feuds, and organised tournaments.⁶

³ See, for example, the letter to Willibald Pirckheimer and the dialogue *Praedones*, both quoted later in this chapter.

⁴ Friedrichs, Christopher R., 'German Social Structure 1300-1600' in Bob Scribner (ed.), *Germany. A New Social and Economic History 1450-1630*, Vol. I (London, New York, 1996), p.235

⁵ Chrisman, Miriam Usher, *Conflicting Visions of Reform. German Lay Propaganda Pamphlets, 1519-1530* (New Jersey, 1996), p.28

⁶ Zmora, Hillyay, *State and Nobility in Early Modern Germany. The knightly feud in Franconia, 1440-1567* (Cambridge, 1997), p.123

Hilary Zmora has commented extensively on the value of these organisations in providing protection. As Hutten showed in a letter to the Nuremberg humanist Willibald Pirckheimer (see below), protection was a matter of great concern to him as a knight. But the leagues served a purpose beyond mere military aid. The frequent formation of new leagues in times of crisis strengthened the lesser nobility's 'collective consciousness'.⁷ This was essential because, as an individual, a knight could not be certain of maintaining the power and prestige implied by his position. As a mere lesser noble, his lands might be too small and his connections too few for him to survive. For this, the knights needed widespread recognition *as a class*. It was partly through the leagues, from about 1400, that the politically and socially dominant families in Franconia (including Hutten's own) began to forge a common identity which would distinguish them from the rest of society, marking the subtle change in their group status from 'aristocratic' (an identity based on political leadership) to 'noble' (an identity based on certain constitutional rights, which are discussed below). Indeed, it is only from this point that the words *Ritterschaft* and *Adel* came to designate specific social groups.⁸ Even so, the problem of recognition was far from solved by the time of Hutten's birth. In the hundred years since the formation of the four original Franconian leagues, many more alliances had been made, but it will be seen that, for various reasons, the knights still lacked legitimacy and respect.⁹

⁷ Zmora, *State and Nobility*, p.126

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.88-89. As time passed, the lesser nobility would work to define itself ever more tightly as it searched for legitimacy, e.g. in Westphalia, by the mid-17th century, one could only be recognised as a knight through the approval of all other knights and proof of sixteen noble ancestors. Many Imperial Knights, who had previously been very prestigious (see below), failed to qualify. During Hutten's lifetime, however, the knighthood had a much wider composition. See Midelfort, H.C. Erik, 'Curious Georgics: The German Nobility and Their Crisis of Legitimacy in the Late Sixteenth Century' in Andrew C. Fix and Susan C. Karant-Nunn (eds.), *Germania Illustrata. Essays on Early Modern Germany Presented to Gerald Strauss* (Ann Arbor, 1992), p.240.

⁹ Alliances are also discussed in Moraw, Peter, *Von offener Verfassung zu gestalteter Verdichtung. Das Reich im späten Mittelalter 1250 bis 1490* (Frankfurt am Main, 1989), p.77, including some comments on the knights' prominent membership of the powerful Swabian League founded in 1488, the year of Hutten's birth.

By Hutten's time, some security did exist in the form of undisputed legal recognition. The imperial diet faced the task of maintaining public order, for which authority needed to be clearly designated. Those exercising that authority needed to be clearly identified. As a result, from the late fifteenth century and on through the sixteenth century, the diet distinguished ever more sharply between the upper ranks in society, and the ranks were pushed further apart.¹⁰ Thus a table of ranks specified in sumptuary legislation for the German Empire shows:

1. The common farmer and working people in the city or on the land
2. Guildsmen and apprentices
3. Burghers who are not noble
4. Nobles who are not knights
5. Nobles who are knights
6. Princes
7. Archbishops, bishops and other clergy¹¹

The practical consequences of such 'recognition' varied from place to place and from rank to rank. In the cities, wealth and occupation defined those who were eligible to be part of the governing elite. This was of little consequence to most knights, with their rural lifestyle. For them, legal recognition carried some element of prestige, and confirmed them as freemen with all associated rights. The drawback was that they were legally inferior to, and under the authority of, the greater nobles.¹² Furthermore,

¹⁰ Chrisman, *Conflicting Visions*, p.23

¹¹ Johannes Phillipus Datt, *Rerum Germanicarum Novum, Libri V* (Ulm: Georg Kühen, 1698), pp.894-895, quoted in *ibid.*, p.24

¹² Chrisman, *Conflicting Visions*, pp.25-28

even a definition as narrow as that in section 5 had many subdivisions, for although the knights might have certain aspirations and obligations in common, they were not all equal. They had tried to solve the problem of gaining recognition and safety by establishing themselves as an important social class, but within that class they maintained a distinct hierarchy. The knights judged themselves and one another according to a range of criteria, including the holding of high office in princely administration (see below), financial transactions with princes as creditor or guarantor, the quality of matrimonial alliances, wealth, and the age of one's claim to nobility. The wealth of the nobility varied greatly, even within a single territory, and new noble families, who had acquired their status through recent service to the Emperor or simply through purchase, were less respected than older ones.¹³ Additionally, even one family, having many branches, could have varying degrees of success. Not all Huttens were necessarily equal, although this particular family does seem to have enjoyed widespread success and prominence.¹⁴ The Huttens were helped by the fact that they were among the Imperial knights, or *Reichsritter*, of Franconia, Swabia and the Rhineland. Like other knights, they held much of their land as fiefs from the princes, but were recognised as having no personal lord other than the Emperor. This gave them a particularly high status among the knights.¹⁵

Hutten, therefore, grew up in a society in which his place was both what he and others perceived it to be, shaped by tradition, and also a matter of clear legislation. Those above him were, specifically, the princes, the clergy and, of course, the Emperor, which must be appreciated if we are to understand Hutten's view of himself and of his relationship with these classes, whose members he frequently admonished or tried to

¹³ Friedrichs, 'German Social Structure', pp.235-236, and Zmora, *State and Nobility*, p.38

gain as allies.¹⁶ The legal definition of the knights' standing may have confirmed their social legitimacy during Hutten's youth, as well as assisting the delineation of authority, but it also brought him problems.

This was because, for all knights, their legally clear position was psychologically confusing. They were free men who never quite lost their 'servant' status: a fact which meant that the knights were always conscious of the need to assert their dignity and importance. The main reason for this was the tradition (and for most knights, with their small land holdings, the financial necessity) of serving a prince or archbishop, usually as military commanders or administrators. Personal service to a powerful lord was an important part of the knights' ethic, resulting in Chrisman's apparently contradictory – but entirely appropriate – description of them as a 'service nobility'.¹⁷ Hutten was well accustomed to this ethic. Although the Huttens, like the Sickingens and the Cronbergs (all of whom would join together to support the Reformation and to lead the Knights' Revolt) had acquired much greater estates and wealth than most knights, Hutten and his friends followed in the tradition of their fathers and remoter forebears in serving a greater noble – often one to whom the family had been loyal for generations.¹⁸ The Huttens had long served as officers and advisers to the abbot of Fulda and the Archbishop of Würzburg.¹⁹ After Hutten's birth in 1488, Ulrich's father (also named Ulrich) entered the service of the Landgrave of Hesse, and in 1490 joined

¹⁴ Zmora, *State and Nobility*, p.37

¹⁵ Friedrichs, 'German Social Structure', p.235

¹⁶ See in later chapters, for example, his praise of and work for Albrecht of Brandenburg, contrasted with his stern criticism of other German clergy, and his involvement in the Knights' Revolt against the princes.

¹⁷ Chrisman, *Conflicting Visions*, p.28

¹⁸ For example, Harthmuth von Cronberg's father served both the Elector Palatine (the family's extensive lands and marriage alliances being in the Palatinate) and, later, the Archbishop of Mainz. Harthmuth followed in his father's footsteps. Franz von Sickingen served the Elector Palatine, as his family had done for generations. See Chrisman, *Conflicting Visions*, pp.28-29.

¹⁹ Gräter, *Ulrich von Hutten*, pp.22, and Bernstein, Eckhard, *Ulrich von Hutten* (Hamburg, 1988), p.14

him in assisting the Emperor Maximilian I against the Turks. He remained active in princely service, appearing in the records in 1514 as commissioner for the Archbishop of Mainz in Erfurt.²⁰ He also travelled extensively on imperial business, and, as a result of his own efforts and those of his ancestors, his lands grew until a man would need a whole day to ride around them: not vast, but significant.²¹

The princes benefited greatly from service rendered by knights, whose lordships – entailing power over both land and people – acted as building blocks for the enlargement and consolidation of princely territories.²² Consequently, it was important for an individual prince to gain the loyalty of as many knights and other nobles as possible.²³ Their need for the knights' loyalty was such that they frequently failed to impose necessary discipline on feuding nobles, for as Philippe de Commines observed:

‘these people (the knights) are hardly ever punished by the German princes, for the latter want to employ their services in time of need’.²⁴

This state of affairs, apparently beneficial to greater and lesser nobles alike, in fact had always caused severe tensions. These were already evident almost a century before Hutten's birth. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, as the politics of the prince-bishop of Würzburg leaned more towards territorial relations than personal bonds with the knights in his service, the Franconian nobles felt obliged to take

²⁰ Gräter, *Ulrich von Hutten*, p.26

²¹ Bernstein, *Ulrich von Hutten*, p.14

²² Zmora, *State and Nobility*, p.112

²³ See the discussion in Peter Moraw, ‘Landesgeschichte und Reichsgeschichte im 14. Jahrhundert’ in *Jahrbuch für westdeutsche Landesgeschichte* 3 (1977), pp.175-191, and especially p.180.

collective action. In 1402 a union of 113 nobles, mostly knights, took over the military and judicial responsibilities of the lesser nobles, and worked to define their position in the face of the bishop's actions. By 1408 they had reached an agreement with him, limiting his territorial ambitions but admitting his personal authority over any of them. They were content to have him as their personal lord, but nothing else, their *personal* relations with a prince being the very basis of their 'liberties', or privileges in the original sense of *priva lex*.²⁵

Even so, the balance of power among the German nobility tipped more and more in favour of the princes during the remainder of the fifteenth century.²⁶ Just as the lesser nobles offered protection to peasants as a means of binding them to their service, so the princes protected those lesser nobles in return for their loyalty. This is specifically referred to in the extract from Hutten's letter to Pirckheimer, quoted below. The growing imbalance of power and status led to several points of crisis during Hutten's lifetime. During his childhood, the Franconian knights refused to accede to Maximilian I's demand for common taxation: the 'Common Penny' of 1495. Maintaining a theme that would be dear to Hutten's own heart – that they had served emperors and princes loyally and had shed their own blood for them – they claimed exemption from taxes. Nobles across Franconia banded together to make military preparations in case of an attempt to force them to pay. Princes were supposed to prepare lists of ratable knights within their territories, but this was difficult as some knights held fiefs from more than one prince. In organising themselves into six cantons, which cut across three principalities, the knights deliberately compounded

²⁴ Kinser, Samuel (ed.), *The Memoirs of Philippe de Commynes*, trans. Isabelle Cazeaux, vol.I (Columbia, South Carolina, 1969), p.355

²⁵ Zmora, *State and Nobility*, p.125

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.126

the difficulties of administering the Common Penny. The breadth of this union was new, and significant: the knights were ready to abandon the principalities as their frame of reference in order to deal with this threat to their liberties.

Soon, the inevitable crisis with higher authority loomed: in 1507, two years after the abandonment of the Common Penny, the knights and other nobles compiled a list of political, economic and legal grievances against the princes. They declared that, unless their proposed treaty was signed, they would not be held responsible for renewed conflict in Franconia. The princes condemned this as intolerable, and ill feeling grew. While most knights might have submitted, their leaders would not agree and risk becoming mere puppets of the princes.²⁷ Most knights, in fact, seem to have participated in the movement only with reluctance. The crisis of the knighthood in Hutten's youth was therefore not only between the knights and the princes, but between the majority of knights and their leaders.²⁸ A single union of lesser nobles had its advantages for mutual protection and esteem, as the knights had realised more than a century earlier, but, as political pressure grew, most of them also began to notice the drawbacks.

The knighthood as a single organisation rather than a collection of individuals was increasing in significance, whether the members were wholly willing participants or not. From the 1490s, some knights inserted clauses in their contracts of service with the princes, exempting them from acting against fellow members of the Franconian knighthood. In 1508 and 1510, some knights tried to persuade others to withdraw

²⁷ The conflict is described in *ibid.*, pp.130-136.

²⁸ LeGates, Marlene Jahss, 'The Knights and the Problem of Political Organizing in Sixteenth-Century Germany' in *Central European History* 7 (1974), pp.99-136, p.119

from princely service.²⁹ The organised knighthood was starting to outweigh not only personal obligations to princes but also the knights' individual interests.

It was in this atmosphere that Hutten grew to adulthood. He strongly supported the idea of the knights as a significant united force in German – and indeed Imperial – politics. He was also acutely aware of the princes' need for the knights, and was neither flattered nor reassured by it. He saw it as selfish exploitation by the princes, interpreting the situation more strongly than Commynes:

‘The princes need them (the greater and lesser nobles) in order to protect their own affairs; indeed, the princes' entire strength rests on them. So when the princes anger one another, they use [the nobles] as weapons of war’.³⁰

The knights' position as inferior to other members of the aristocracy, together with their use as servants and as pawns in territorial struggles, demonstrates their political weakness during Hutten's lifetime, and his writings reflect his resentment of it and his support of the efforts made by some to recover an honourable standing for the class as a whole. The particular importance of the knights in his later career is reflected in chapters three, four and five of this thesis.

Financial problems

The knights' changing financial position in the decades before Hutten's birth has been the subject of much debate among historians. The idea of a financial crisis in the

²⁹ Fellner, Robert, *Die Fränkische Ritterschaft von 1495-1524* (Berlin, 1905), p.163

German nobility is widespread but not universally accepted. An explanation of the constant feuds among the knights was provided by a Carthusian author as early as 1474, attributing their violence to a lack of money:

‘They (the knights) are of great bodily power, of active disposition, and naturally benevolent ... It is only in times of need that they are violent ... Unfortunately poverty teaches them many evils ... You cannot look at these handsome squires without shedding a tear, struggling daily for little food and clothing, risking the gallows in order to overcome hunger’.³¹

The implication was that the knights had taken to banditry, disguised as feuds, to improve their finances – a move that gave rise to the term *Raubritter* (robber knights). Werner Rösener has offered evidence in support of this, emphasising the decline in the knights’ revenues since the late 13th century, and competition from townsmen which enhanced the knights’ need to appear to live in luxurious style.³² He is joined by other historians in his view of the knights’ worsening situation, including Bernd Moeller and Miriam Chrisman, who, like Rösener, draw particular attention to the decrease in administrative positions at princely courts.³³ Many knights began to find that income from the traditional ‘service’ role was unavailable to them, as they were surpassed as administrators by the university-trained middle classes.

³⁰ Hutten Ulrich von, ‘Inspicientes’ in *Opera* IV, p.291

³¹ Quoted in Zmora, *State and Nobility*, p.3

³² Rösener, Werner, ‘Zur Problematik des spätmittelalterlichen Raubrittertums’ in Helmut Maurer and Hanz Patze (eds.), *Festschrift für Berent Schweineköper zu seinem siebzigsten Geburtstag* (Sigmaringen, 1982), pp.469-488

³³ Moeller, Bernd, *Deutschland im Zeitalter der Reformation* (Göttingen, 1988), p.27, and Chrisman, *Conflicting Visions*, p.29. Other historians, e.g. Zmora, *State and Nobility*, pp.10-11, and Keen, Maurice, ‘Huizinga, Kilgour and the Decline of Chivalry’ in *Medievalia et Humanistica* 8 (1978), pp.1-

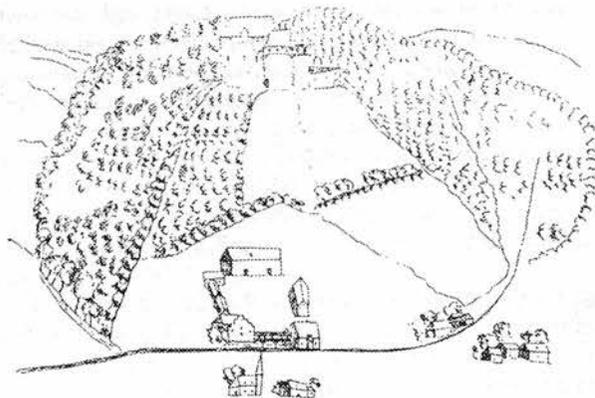
The effect of these problems on the Hutten family was limited, but not negligible. Certainly, they suffered less than many less prominent knightly families. Much of their income came from the rents paid by peasants on their estates. As the Hutten lands at Steckelberg (the main residence of Hutten's own branch of the family) were extensive, and rents were more frequently paid in kind than in cash (especially when valuable products such as grain and wine were available), problems of inflation and debasement of currency affected them less than it did others.³⁴ The extent of their territory also suggests that they would have used land which they did not lease out, to grow grain, which would provide further relief from poverty. We know that other branches of the Hutten family did so: around 1530, the Frankenberg line derived over one third of their annual grain from their demesne lands. Added to grain received from tenants, sales derived from this reached an impressive annual value of 860 gulden between 1528 and 1530. This was over half of their total cash income. In contrast, the actual cash received as rents totalled only 209 gulden per year, or 12.5% of their total income.³⁵ When the less successful noble family of Absberg were forced, through hardship, to sell their castle and lordship of Vorderfrankenber, three members of the same Hutten line bought it for the very high price of 28,000 gulden.³⁶ The same level of wealth did not necessarily apply to other branches of the Hutten family, but Ulrich's own line was clearly better off than many. His father kept the

20, have considered the widespread view of financial decline to be overrated, not least because of the payment of rents in kind (see below).

³⁴ The structure of the lesser nobles' income has been analysed in Andermann, Kurt, 'Grundherrschaften des spätmittelalterlichen Niederlands in Südwestdeutschland: Zur Frage der Gewichtung von Geld- und Natureinkünften' in *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 127 (1991), pp.145-190, and Andermann, Kurt, 'Zu den Einkommensverhältnissen des Kraichgauer Adels an der Wende vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit' in Stefan Rhein (ed.), *Die Kraichgauer Ritterschaft in der frühen Neuzeit* (Sigmaringen, 1993), pp.65-121. His research extends to a number of Franconian families. The Franconian knights' increasing reliance on rents in kind has been examined by a number of other scholars, listed in Zmora, *State and Nobility*, p.54.

³⁵ Schmitt, Richard, *Frankenberg: Besitz- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte einer reichsritterschaftlichen Herrschaft in Franken, 1528-1806* (Ansbach, 1986), pp.248, 256-257, 311-313

lands in good repair, and in 1509 was wealthy enough, at a time when others struggled, to add a large new defensive tower to the Steckelberg.³⁷ It is also true that the various branches of the Hutten family banded together in times of crisis, implying a feeling of equality among them: when Hans von Hutten, another member of the wealthy Frankenberg line and a cousin of Ulrich, was murdered by the Duke of Württemberg in 1515, the Huttens joined to avenge him. The leader of the attack on the Duke was not a Frankenberg Hutten, but Ulrich, in his capacity as an established pamphleteer.³⁸ Further evidence for the wealth of the Steckelberg Huttens is provided by a list of creditors or guarantors of the Margraves of Brandenburg, which includes Ulrich as a creditor among his close relatives Ludwig, Erasmus and Bernhard.³⁹



The Steckelberg and the village of Ramholz in the late 17th century. Reproduced in Gräter, *Ulrich von Hutten*, p.23

³⁶ Körner, Hans, 'Die Familie von Hutten', in Peter Laub (ed.), *Ulrich von Hutten, Ritter, Humanist, Publizist 1488-1523. Katalog zur Ausstellung des Landes Hessen anlässlich des 1500. Geburtstages* (Kassel, 1988), p.69

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.62. The round tower of the ruined castle still bears the inscription '1509 ...rich von Hutten'. Gräter, *Ulrich von Hutten*, p.30

³⁸ The distant relationship of Hans to Ulrich can be deduced from the genealogies shown in Körner, 'Die Familie von Hutten', especially Tables 2 and 4 on pp.59 and 65. Hutten's outpouring of printed venom against the Duke can be found in Böcking, *Opera*, for example 'In Ulrichum Wirtenpergensum orationes quinque', in *Opera* V, pp.1ff, and a joint condemnation by the Hutten clan, 'Ausschreiben Ludwigs und anderer von Hutten gegen Herzog Ulrich von Wirtemberg' in *Opera* I, pp.47-99. Ulrich von Hutten's familiarity with the Frankenberg Huttens is demonstrated by his long letter to the murdered man's father: 'Ulrichi de Hutten Equitis Germani ad Ludovichum de Hutten Equitem Auratum super interemptione filii consolatoria', in *Opera* I, pp.46-52.

Inevitably, however, Hutten's family was injured to some extent by the economic problems affecting the knights in general. Their military dominance, the original source of their power and wealth, was under threat. At the time of Hutten's birth, the mounted knight was being superseded in warfare by mercenaries and artillery. Firearms, with their ever-increasing range and penetration, meant that the knights' castles were no longer secure strongholds. Faced with firearms, their armour was all but obsolete. Warring parties now began to abandon the use of cavalry, turning instead to mercenary footsoldiers: the *Landsknechten*.⁴⁰ Even the wealthiest of knightly families could not escape this menace to their future in society: although they could counteract some of the problems (see below for the steps taken by Hutten's father to re-fortify his castle), the new developments threatened their prestige as well as their wealth and safety.

Although the Huttens were still able to live well off the produce of their land, even they were affected by changes in the way the land was farmed. The growth of cities – that very German phenomenon – was drawing peasants from the land and increasingly distorting the economy. Franz Rueb draws particular attention to the new methods of manufacture and production appearing in the cities, which were “constantly pushing at the borders of the feudal system”.⁴¹ The knights' economy was still based on medieval feudal principles, and the moneyed economy of the cities inevitably

³⁹ Zmora, *State and Nobility*, p.150. No date is given, but this seems most likely to be Ulrich senior. Unlike him, his son was poverty-stricken for most of his life (see chapter two).

⁴⁰ Bernstein, *Ulrich von Hutten*, p.11

⁴¹ Rueb, Franz, *Der hinkende Schmiedgott Vulkan*, p.22

threatened their way of life.⁴² The wave of famines which struck Germany in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries contributed further to the strain and uncertainty, even for large landowners.⁴³ The fifteenth century also saw plague raging across Europe, massively disrupting established social life and the economy. No one was safe. In 1494, when Hutten was six years old, one third of the 20,000 inhabitants of Nuremberg died of the plague.⁴⁴ Living mainly in rural areas, the knights fared better than the townsfolk, but the threat of plague was constantly present.

The personal, long-term effect of all this on the 30 year old Hutten is evident from a letter he wrote to Willibald Pirckheimer in October 1518:

‘Do not envy me my life as compared to yours. Such is the lot of a knight that even though my patrimony were ample and adequate for my support, nevertheless here are the disturbances which give me no quiet Those by whose labours we exist are poverty-stricken peasants, to whom we lease our fields, vineyards, pastures, and woods. The return is exceedingly sparse Nevertheless the utmost effort is put forth that it may be bountiful and plentiful, for we must be diligent stewards. I must attach myself to some prince in the hope of protection. Otherwise everyone will look upon me as fair plunder. But even if I do make such an attachment hope is beclouded by danger and daily anxiety. If I go away from home I am in peril lest I fall in with those who are at war or at feud with my overlord, no matter who he is, and for that reason fall upon me and carry me away. We cannot go

⁴² Bernstein, *Ulrich von Hutten*, p.11

⁴³ Holborn, Hajo, *Hutten*, p.22

⁴⁴ Rueb, *Der hinkende Schmiedgott Vulkan*, p.17. Nuremberg was Germany’s second-largest city after Cologne, which had a population of 30,000.

unarmed beyond two yokes of land We cannot visit a neighbouring village or go hunting or fishing save in iron The day is full of thought for the morrow If the harvest fails in any year, then follow dire poverty, unrest, and turbulence'.⁴⁵

Hutten's tendency to exaggeration is evident in this letter – he spent most of his career wandering, not only throughout Germany, but across Europe, so the dangers of leaving his estates hardly determined his actions. He had been briefly imprisoned in Pavia by the French at a time when poverty had driven him to accept military service, but that imprisonment was as a soldier in the imperial army, and not a consequence of his social status.⁴⁶ Still, the concerns voiced in the letter were real. The letter reflects the problems discussed above, both economic and political: protection had to be sought from princes, especially as the knights continued to feud despite Maximilian I's prohibition, and famine was a constant worry. As the eldest son of the family, Hutten could expect to inherit the main share of responsibility for dealing with these problems.⁴⁷ The fact that, by 1518, he clearly felt pulled in other directions – politics and religion demanded his attention even more than his family's lands and traditions – only intensified his anxiety about these issues.

Public perception of the knights

⁴⁵ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ulrichi de Hutten Equitis ad Bilibaldum Pirckheimer Patricium Norimbergensem. Epistola vitae suae rationem exponens' in *Opera* I, pp.195-217. The translation used here appears in Holborn, *Ulrich von Hutten*, pp.18-19.

⁴⁶ A brief account is given in Rueb, Franz, *Der hinkende Schmiedgott Vulkan. Ulrich von Hutten 1488-1523* (Zurich, 1988), p.114.

⁴⁷ Hutten's father's date of birth is uncertain, but he was obviously advanced in years when Hutten was 30. In fact, he would die just four years later, in 1522. See Körner, 'Die Familie von Hutten', p.62.

The practical problems faced by the knights were largely responsible for another difficulty during Hutten's lifetime: the changing way in which they were perceived by other members of society. Hutten would always have to contend with the worsening publicity surrounding the knights, especially their reputation as *Raubritter*, or robber knights, who committed highway robbery under the guise of the traditional knightly feuds.⁴⁸

The feud could certainly act as camouflage for robbery and violence. Indeed, it *was* robbery and violence, made semi-respectable by its long tradition among the nobility. However, when the distinction between the knights robbing one another and robbing innocent bystanders became blurred, in the eyes of the rest of society all respectability was lost. Such blurring was inevitable when an assault on another knight effectively meant an assault on the peasants he protected. It was a short step from there to banditry. The feud was a way of settling scores and extending one's own power. Knights offered violence to others but also offered protection: effectively, protection from themselves. In defeating one knight or prince, they were demonstrating to the peasants on that land the inability of their lord to protect them – and were also bidding to replace that lord as the peasants' protector. Under the guise of protection, therefore, the feud assisted the princes in territorial lordship and the lesser nobles in land lordship. Inevitably, power was gradually concentrated in the hands of relatively few noble families, marginalising many nobles but enhancing control over commoners. By the late fifteenth century, the competition among nobles was restricted to a fairly small number of families struggling for a share of political power. They were, of course, the same nobles who would lead the aristocratic resistance against some

⁴⁸ See above, p.11.

aspects of the growing power of the state (see the struggle over the Common Penny, above). The presence of the Huttens among these few families meant that Ulrich was even more concerned than most knights with feuds and their consequences. He understood the value of propaganda and public opinion better than any other knight – his later career was devoted to attempts to mobilise it – and he took very seriously the problem of how the feuds, or (according to many) banditry were received.

In 1939, Otto Brunner questioned the view of the knights as straightforward bandits. He emphasised the importance of judging the knights in accordance with their own times rather than the present, and portrayed feuds, even against the emperor, as a lawful feature of the political landscape.⁴⁹ This view has been challenged by other historians, including Werner Rösener (see above, p.12), who have emphasised the impact of the financial difficulties mentioned above, and the knights' distortion of the traditional feud. It was certainly not apparent to Hutten's contemporaries that the knights were acting lawfully: if it had been, Hutten's life would have been easier.

In fact, criticisms of the nobles' violent and rapacious behaviour abounded. A Roman cardinal of the late Middle Ages described the inhabitants of the German-speaking lands as 'a gang of bandits and, among the nobles, the more grasping the more glorious'.⁵⁰ The abbot Johann Trithemius, with whom Hutten was personally acquainted, spoke out against the behaviour of the knights, describing three princes laying siege to the castle of the Franconian noble family von Rosenberg, which was a

⁴⁹ Brunner, Otto, *'Land' and Lordship: Structures of Governance in Medieval Austria*, trans. Howard Kaminsky and James Van Horn Melton (Philadelphia, 1992), pp.9-14

⁵⁰ Kamann, Johann, *Die Fehde des Götz von Berlichingen mit der Reichsstadt Nürnberg und dem Hochstifte Bamberg 1512-1514* (Nuremberg, 1893), p.103, n.2

refuge for highway robbers.⁵¹ The Huttens found themselves at the centre of the criticisms, if not directly then by implication. Ludwig von Hutten, a relative of Ulrich and one of Franconia's wealthiest and most powerful nobles, used feuds very successfully to extend his own territories. For example, he forced the peasants of Bullenheim, who held their land from Baron Friedrich of Schwarzenberg, to give their allegiance to him instead.⁵² Nor was Ludwig the only feuder of note in the Hutten family. In his book State and Nobility, Hilla Zmora lists feuders within various parameters, and includes more Huttens than members of any other family. Huttens who conducted feuds include Ulrich himself, Hans, Friedrich, two named Lorenz, two named Konrad, two named Frowin, and two named Ludwig: no fewer than eleven members of the family.⁵³ The Huttens married into other knightly families, which also pursued feuds with enthusiasm. Ulrich's uncle, Mangold von Eberstein, was especially well-known for it.⁵⁴ Ulrich's grandfather, Lorenz, was much worse: he was notorious for straightforward banditry in his youth. Prior to filling traditional administrative roles, Lorenz had led a series of armed robberies in Ganerben, using the Steckelberg as a base.

⁵¹ Trithemius, Johann, Annales Hirsaugienses, vol.II (St Gall, 1690), p.470

⁵² Zmora, State and Nobility, p.106

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp.148-150

⁵⁴ Körner, 'Die Familie von Hutten', p.62



A robber knight waylays a merchant, 1519/1520
(Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie, Graphische Sammlung, Inv. No.
A2679). Reproduced in Laub, Ulrich von Hutten, p.140

As the self-appointed family and knightly polemicist, Hutten would defend the knights against accusations of crudeness and violence, and pay particular attention to the issue of feuding. Criticism of the knights' behaviour came not only from an objection to their violence, but also from a widespread feeling that the nobles had an obligation to reflect noble personal qualities, instead of relying on their descent to justify their status.⁵⁵ Hutten also took this view, although he twisted it to the nobles' advantage. His dialogue Praedones ('The Robbers') of 1520 consists of a discussion between Franz von Sickingen, a knight and also a great military commander, Hutten himself, and a merchant, who are discussing the right of noblemen to feud.⁵⁶ Sickingen says:

⁵⁵ Peukert, Will-Erich, Die grosse Wende: Das apokalyptische Saeculum und Luther. Geistesgeschichte und Volkskunde (Hamburg, 1948), pp.351-355

⁵⁶ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Praedones' (1520), in Opera IV, pp.363-406

‘I consider that virtue is not passed on through inheritance, and that anyone who must reproach himself with foul deeds would be counted well apart from the nobility, even if he is a prince ... So you should know, that if anyone in our family still displayed only a sordid baseness in his life, despite his lineage, I should not acknowledge such a person as a relative, nor as a noble, and in future I should have nothing in common with him’.

The merchant cannot see that anyone who feuds can also be virtuous, asking:

‘How can you say you are so upright, when you have robbed so many and killed others, for flimsy reasons and with no right?’⁵⁷

Hutten and Sickingen are infuriated by this, which amounts to ‘a negation of the nobility’: they are being denied their right to dispense justice and protection. They claim that the nobles’ main virtue is chivalric strength. Their rights depend upon their ability to safeguard justice, protect the weak members of society and help the oppressed. As force of arms is the only way to achieve this, they have not only the right but also the duty to feud.⁵⁸

Everyone could agree with Hutten in his ideal of the nobility’s role, but his conclusion about the permissibility of feuds was far less widely accepted. Sebastian Franck (1499-1542 or 1543) claimed that the feuding nobles robbed the same weak members of society they were supposed to defend,

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.365

‘and those who should be the sheepdogs at the enclosure are often the wolves themselves, seizing with violence whatever they can, so that it is necessary to be protected and guarded from the protectors and guards’.⁵⁹

The nobles were faced with a serious crisis of legitimacy during Hutten’s lifetime: it was very difficult for them to claim rights and privileges based on virtue, valour and heroism, when many observers felt that they transparently had none.⁶⁰

Hutten was very concerned to present the knights in a good light. However, when he wrote Praedones in 1520, he was not interested merely in the theoretical rights of the knights to feud. Praedones is not, first and foremost, a defence of old traditions for their own sake. Chapters four and five of this thesis will show that Hutten’s circumstances at the time depended very much on gaining support for the knights and justifying their taking up arms: to Luther’s dismay, Hutten saw the knights’ role in the Reformation as a military one, and he and Sickingen were on the verge of leading the Knights’ War. The choice of a merchant to oppose the two knights in the dialogue shows that Hutten knew that the knights particularly lacked sympathy in the towns. The words which he put into Sickingen’s mouth may, or may not, have expressed Sickingen’s own opinion, and chapter five will consider the extent to which Hutten used his contemporaries to express his own views rather than theirs.

Hutten’s efforts to justify the knights’ behaviour in Praedones failed. They continued to be criticised for their violent ethic, and townsfolk such as the merchant in

⁵⁸ Zmora, State and Nobility, p.2

Praedones were among their chief critics. Two such different lifestyles were sure to clash, and, if the towns objected to the knights, neither did the knights have any sympathy with the towns. Sebastian Franck warmed to his earlier theme:

‘They have no occupation but hunting with dog and falcon, guzzling, carousing, and gambling. They live in luxury on rent and interest. *They will not stoop to civic duty. Shopkeeping and handwork they despise, and they will not deign to marry a city girl*’.⁶¹

This could not have been a fair representation of all knights, especially the poorest, who could not hope to live the easy life which Franck described. However, Hutten certainly considered city ways and city people (excepting his patrician and other humanist friends) beneath his dignity, accusing them in his turn of luxury and extravagance.⁶² Social tensions were increasing as two very different interest groups clashed ever harder. The growth of towns, like the development of firearms, made the knights more and more of an anachronism, stranded in a time which had left their world behind.

Caught in the middle of these developments, Hutten would suffer more than most knights. The majority – Hutten’s own father, for example – were based firmly in their traditional rural environment, leaving only for specific services to their lords. On the other hand, Hutten the scholar had necessarily to live most of his adult life in cities, spending only a few years in service in court surroundings, and otherwise living a life

⁵⁹ Quoted in Peuckert, *Die grosse Wende*, p.352.

⁶⁰ Midelfort, ‘Curious Georgics’, p.221

⁶¹ Franck, Sebastian, *Siegel und Bildnis des ganzen Erdbodens* (Tübingen, 1534), pp.44ff, translated in Holborn, *Hutten*, p.21. The italics are mine.

of poverty among normal townsfolk.⁶³ The conflict between his position as a knight and his place in urban society inevitably took its toll on him.

The effect of the knighthood upon Hutten

For Ulrich von Hutten, the personal difficulties of being a knight were significant. One problem was caused by the traditional ‘service’ role of the knights. Later chapters will show how important that tradition was to Hutten, and loyalty to the princes was bound up in loyalty to the Emperor and to the Empire (for which Hutten was to become famous). He also needed the princes in a practical sense, for protection as a knight and for patronage as a poet. Nevertheless, he had a proud nature, and found it difficult to reconcile ‘service’ with the serious differences he would develop with some princes, and with the decreasing political power of his own class.

Hutten also yearned for the chivalrous medieval ideals of knighthood – a theme which will recur in this thesis. In some ways, he could see the knights and their failings very clearly. Despite Hutten’s defence in *Praedones*, Eckhard Bernstein rightly cautions against seeing him as completely tied to his origins. He could be ruthless in analysing the knights’ weaknesses, especially their widespread rejection of education and their conceited clinging to old privileges.⁶⁴ In a letter to his patron Eitelwolf von Stein in 1515, he described the knights as ‘centaurs’, entirely lacking in *eruditio* and *humanitas*.⁶⁵ Yet Hutten’s pride in his lineage forms a vital element in his writing, not

⁶² Bernstein, *Ulrich von Hutten*, p.14

⁶³ Hutten’s poverty as a student, although a member of a wealthy family, is discussed below.

⁶⁴ Bernstein, *Ulrich von Hutten*, p.14

⁶⁵ Hutten, Ulrich von, ‘Ad Clarissimum Equitem Eytelvolfum de Lapide sueuum, Magistrum Curiae et Civitatis Moguntinae Praefectum, Ulrichi de Hutten Equitis in Panegyricum (*in laudem Alberti Archiepiscopi Moguntini compositum*): Praefatio’, in *Opera* I, p.36

least because he came to depend upon it more and more as the crisis in his life approached. The letter to Stein was written before Hutten's political awareness took shape. It is only up to this point that there is real evidence that Hutten criticised his fellow knights. The blossoming of Hutten's ideas on German nationalism, and the upheaval of the Reformation, on behalf of which he would band together with other knights at Sickingen's castle, lay in the future. In that future, he would no longer write of the knights' failings. As the years went by, he would suppress the flaws and defend and glorify the concept of knighthood as much as he could. In the few works contained in Opera which pre-date 1515, Hutten makes no reference to himself as a knight. From 1515 onwards, he virtually always does. Prompted partly by his new position at the court of the Archbishop of Mainz, and partly by his growing need for security, Hutten began to cling to his privileged position in society and to do all that he could, such as writing Praedones, to enhance its respectability.

In the process, Hutten's view of the knights turned more and more towards a chivalric medieval past which had more basis in fiction than in fact. A great deal of medieval German literature offered romantic portrayals of knights, their status, origins and duties.⁶⁶ In 1517, it was echoed by the publication of Theuerdank, an allegory which cast Maximilian I (who was then acting as Hutten's patron) in the role of an Arthurian knight. The influence of such work on Hutten is illustrated in the dialogues Arminius and Bulla vel Bullicida, which are discussed in chapters three and four of this thesis.⁶⁷

His portrayal of himself as the liberator of his country in Bulla vel Bullicida is particularly striking, as he appears, sword in hand, ready to protect German liberty

⁶⁶ A wide selection of poetry and prose from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries is available in Arentzen, Jörg und Ruberg, Uwe (hg.), Die Ritteridee in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters: eine kommentierte Anthologie (Darmstadt, 1987).

from the savage Roman Bull – much as a knight from a medieval tale might have defended a maiden from a dragon. Hutten also chose to see chivalric ideals embodied in the Holy Roman Emperors Maximilian I and Charles V, and was ultimately disappointed by them both.



Theuerdank: Knights and chivalry
 One of 118 woodcuts by Leonhard Beck, Hans
 Schäuuffelein and Hans Burgkmair, 1517.
 Reproduced in Laub, Ulrich von Hutten, p.45

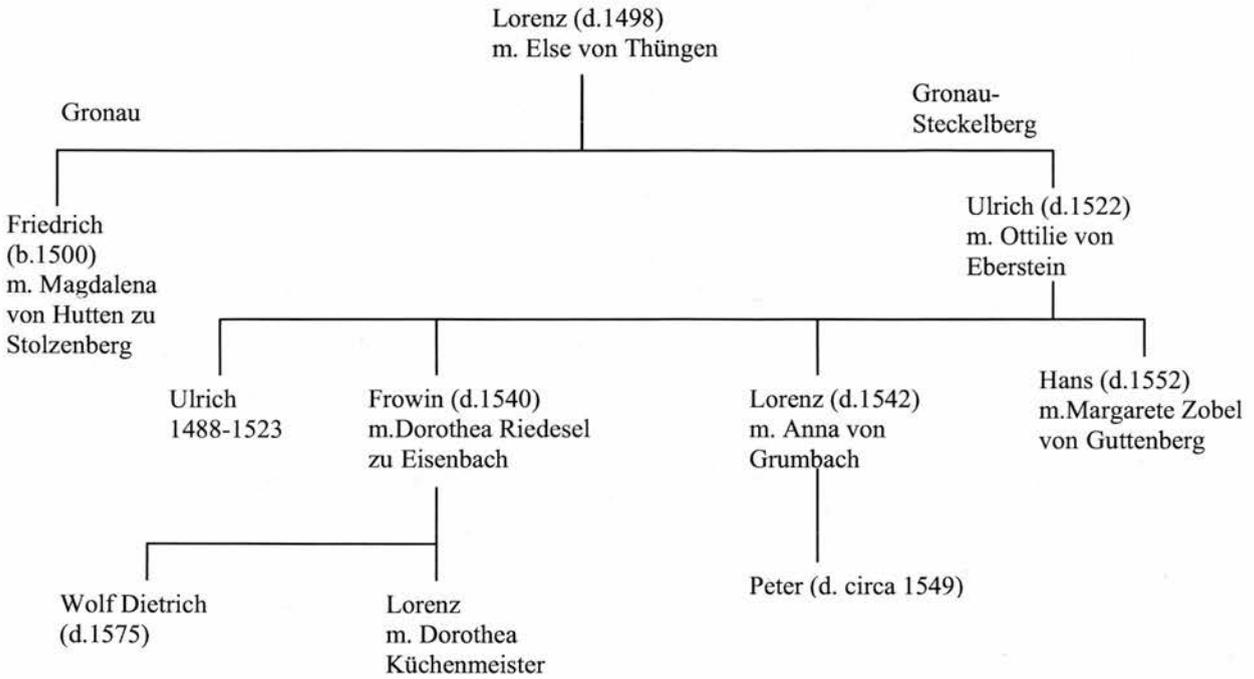
The knights were central to Hutten's view of himself, particularly in his later years. Almost until the end, his political outlook, literary endeavours and personal risks were founded on this: his absolute acceptance of the traditional relationship between the Emperor, his knights, and Germany, and his equally strong faith that it could not be broken. As chapters four and five will show, it was only in 1520 that this faith began

⁶⁷ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ulrichi Huttene Equitis Germani, Arminius Dialogus' (1519), in Opera IV,

to waver. Such faith did not sit well with the fact of the knights' political and economic decline and their crumbling public image. Within the knighthood, the inward and outward struggles produced by this tension would ultimately be resolved by the Knights' Revolt in 1522-23 and the knights' virtual destruction by the princes as a significant political force, but in the years before the revolt one can perceive their serious effect on Hutten, in his torn loyalties and frantic attempts to find allies. Every aspect of the knights as a class in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries pulled Hutten in a different direction: service and exploitation, protection and banditry, towns and country, wealth and poverty, ideals and harsh reality. The contradictions within the knights' situation would lead him into fatal misjudgements during the periods examined in chapters four and five. His birth into this struggling, dying social class contributed to his character and dictated some of his lifelong practical and ideological concerns: an influence which would be most marked in his final years.

The Hutten Family

The strength of Hutten's consciousness of his position as a knight came, of course, originally from his family. Their activities as feuders and servants of princes, and their comfortable degree of wealth, have been examined above. This section will examine Hutten's home and relationships with his family, for their lasting influence upon him. His immediate family is shown in the table overleaf:



There were several branches of the Hutten family in Franconia, one of which (the Frankenberg branch) is mentioned above. Other substantial branches included the Stolzenberg and Gronau branches, the latter being most closely related to Ulrich's branch of Gronau-Steckelberg.⁶⁸ With so many forceful and, frequently, wealthy relatives in the vicinity, the young Ulrich could not fail to understand what kind of life and attitude were expected of him: all the more so, since the Huttens were related by marriage to many prominent noble families, including the Sickingens.⁶⁹ As we might expect of the Hutten family, his three brothers had very traditional careers. Frowin was magistrate of Brückenau, Lorenz was a soldier, entering imperial military service (as did his son, Peter), and Hans held various civil appointments. Ulrich's two sisters entered a Dominican convent. The brothers all remained loyal to Ulrich even as he became more and more disreputable.⁷⁰ This is underlined by a letter written to Ulrich

⁶⁸ Tables showing the members of these branches are provided in Körner, 'Die Familie von Hutten', pp.59, 64 and 71.

⁶⁹ See, for example, the genealogies in *ibid.*, pp.64 and 65, especially the marriage of Elisabeth von Sickingen to Conrad von Hutten of the Stolzenberg branch.

⁷⁰ Körner, 'Die Familie von Hutten', p.62. The four brothers inherited the Steckelberg upon the death of Ulrich senior in 1522. The castle, with the fortifications added by their father, withstood an attack during the Peasants' War of 1525. Although Ulrich senior had four sons, he failed to establish his line at the Steckelberg. Hans von Hutten died childless, and the sons of Frowin and Lorenz left no male heirs. Frowin's son, Wolf Dietrich, was dean of the cathedral in Würzburg and died in 1575, the last of

by his brother Frowin late in 1520, when Ulrich, as a follower of Luther, had been forced to take refuge in Franz von Sickingen's castle. The letter speaks of matters at home, and of advice Ulrich has given his brothers, and sends good wishes not only from Frowin but also from Lorenz.⁷¹

Ulrich's mother, Otilie von Eberstein, may also have been an important family tie for Hutten. His modern biographers have been quick to point to her as an important influence.⁷² Certainly he did not forget her, for she appeared in the Latin Elegy of the German Poets of 1510, and in the German Gesprächbüchlein of 1520.⁷³ She was remembered under very different circumstances: writing the first poem, Hutten was a rising Latin scholar showing off his talents, and writing the second, he was about to commit himself irrevocably to war on the Roman Church, as an excommunicant and an outlaw. The second work famously contains the line:

‘Although my pious mother weeps’.⁷⁴

These mentions of Otilie have been taken to show Hutten's great affection and concern for her, but, given that he was a skilled poet, used to employing standard poetic devices, little reliance can be placed on such brief references. More telling are Hutten's comments on his mother's surroundings:

this line. The Steckelberg with its possessions and privileges came in 1552 to Sebastian and Alexander von Hutten from Altengronau. I have found no evidence of Hutten's relationship with his sisters (if any) from 1519 onwards, when he attached himself to Luther's cause and wrote ceaselessly against the Roman Church.

⁷¹ Hutten, Frowin von, ‘Frowin von Hutten an seinen Bruder Ulrich’ (November 1520), in Opera I, p.430

⁷² See Grimm, Heinrich, Ulrich von Hutten. Wille und Schicksal (Zurich and Frankfurt, 1971), Rueb, Franz, Der hinkende Schmiedgott Vulkan, and Gräter, Ulrich von Hutten.

⁷³ Hutten, Ulrich von, ‘Elegia X. Ad Poetas Germanos’ (1510), in Opera III, p.71, and ‘An den Leser des Gespraechbüchleins’, in Opera I, p.450

⁷⁴ Hutten, ‘An den Leser’, p.450

‘The Steckelburg, the ancient stronghold of my fathers, is no home for my affectionate mother. And my father does not make the house any brighter for her. A house of meanness and difficult, angry hearts. My father sits in it like an old raven in his nest’.⁷⁵

His sympathy with Otilie’s situation lends support to Eckhard Bernstein’s emphasis on her lasting emotional importance.⁷⁶ However, the evidence is still rather thin for Carlheinz Gräter’s suggestion that Otilie had a gentle, religious nature, and dreaded her son’s planned religious war, but that, while pious, she was also brave and capable of adapting.⁷⁷ The most we can deduce about Otilie is that Hutten remembered her sympathetically and fondly, and that, from his remarks about the Steckelberg, he seems to have shared something of her nature and her tastes.

Hutten returned to the Steckelberg in 1515, for the first time in many years. He would expand his picture of it in his letter of October 1518 to Willibald Pirckheimer. In the Steckelberg, he said, one was surrounded by narrow walls, and cramped by barns, armouries, powder magazines and gun emplacements. The castle was full of pitch, sulphur and other equipment of war. The stench of powder, dogs and excrement was everywhere. There was a continual coming and going of armed men, sometimes of dubious kinds, and of peasants, who were seeking help from their lord or were ordered to work in the miserable fields. All day long there was noise and shouting, sheep bleating, cows lowing and dogs barking. Nor was it unusual to hear wolves in

⁷⁵ Rueb, *Der hinkende Schmiedgott Vulkan*, p 85

⁷⁶ Bernstein, Eckhard, *Ulrich von Hutten*, pp.14-15

⁷⁷ Gräter, *Ulrich von Hutten*, p.27

the adjoining woods.⁷⁸ The latter part of Hutten's career would show that he took his position as a knight seriously. He had an idea of his responsibilities and of his entitlements, even if they were rather skewed by his chivalric ideals. And yet he could not like the trappings of knighthood, at least, not in his father's house.

Ulrich senior, the 'old raven sitting in his nest', had more influence over his son than any other family member. Little of it was positive. He was a tough character whose ambitions for his oldest son were very high. He seems to have shown his children little perceptible warmth – Hutten's closest friend, Crotus Rubeanus, would later remark on the difficulty of understanding Ulrich's father, who was reputed to be even more inscrutable than Ulysses.⁷⁹ In a time of such political manoeuvring, Ulrich senior must have been a formidable figure to be compared with this classical model of cunning. The reference to Ulysses, however, would probably have been lost on him. He was a knight in the traditional sense, displaying the characteristics which Hutten would later criticise as traditional failings of his class.⁸⁰ He had no interest in scholarship beyond that required for his administrative duties, and the educational and spiritual struggles of his age were of little concern to him. David Friedrich Strauss said of the Huttens:

“Their element was more the tournament and the open country than the altar. They would join in some great, laudable campaign; and every so often we see them enjoying themselves in some scrap or feud with neighbours”.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Hutten, 'Ad Bilibaldum Pirckheimer', p.202

⁷⁹ Rubeanus, Crotus, 'Epistola Croti Rubiani ad U. Huttenum' (1511), in *Opera* I, p.18

⁸⁰ See his comments to Eitelwolf von Stein, above, p.23.

⁸¹ Strauss, David Friedrich, *Ulrich von Hutten* (Leipzig, 1871), p.4

Ulrich senior's other interest was in extending his lands and castle, as described above. He was typical of the knights in his lack of interest in learning. Many knights paid so little attention to education that they were unable even to read and write.⁸² Rudolf Endres demonstrated their indifference in a study of the books owned by knights in the early sixteenth century. He showed that, of 58 Franconian noble families who submitted lists of damages for reimbursement after the Peasants' War, only six claimed for any books at all. Among them, the castle at Egloffstein had five books, Wachsenroth had 'some German books', and Wichsenstein had three. Only Christoph von Seckendorf's library hinted at any interest in scholarship.⁸³ Chapter two will show how Hutten's father, firmly among the great majority of knights on this issue, refused to acknowledge any value in his son's devotion to the *studia humanitatis*, leading to an almost unrelieved coldness between them.

Nevertheless, both the older Ulrich and his own father Lorenz saw themselves as excellent models for the young Ulrich. Before he died in 1498, Lorenz, in his youth a notorious bandit, lectured his grandson on family tradition and presented himself as an example of honesty and old-fashioned manners. He recounted tales of remoter forebears, such as Konrad von Hutten who had fought in Rome for Emperor Frederick III. To his grandfather, the young Hutten perhaps owed his deep belief in German righteousness and superiority, one of his memories of Lorenz being that 'despite his wealth, he tolerated no foreign spices at his table and no foreign clothes on his

⁸² Rueb, *Der hinkende Schmiedgott Vulkan*, p.88. Rueb emphasises the knights' anti-education outlook, with young Ulrich as the rare exception. However, the case is overstated. Hutten was certainly the exception rather than the rule, and apparently unique within his own family in his interest in learning. However, chapters two and, especially, five will show that there were other literary-minded knights, few though they were. Indeed, the knights were the only members of the lesser nobility to produce pamphlets on the Reformation, and the large circle at the Ebernburg prior to the Knights' War would have a considerable literary output

⁸³ Endres, Rudolf, 'Adelige Lebensformen in Franken zur Zeit des Bauernkrieges' in *Neujahrsblätter der Gesellschaft für fränkische Geschichte* 35 (Würzburg, 1974), pp.5-43, p.32

body'.⁸⁴ Ulrich may have been less aware of what he owed to his father, who was such a brooding, unsympathetic shadow over his youth. He acknowledged no debt of character to this opinionated, intolerant, traditional knight. Ironically, Hutten's own limitations caused him to ignore the many similarities between himself and his father. Heinrich Grimm has suggested that it is to the senior Ulrich that we might trace his son's obstinacy, his abruptness, his extreme sense of honour, his argumentative nature, and his tendency to see every issue in black and white.⁸⁵ Although his father cannot be held solely responsible for these characteristics (chapter two will demonstrate other very important influences at work on Hutten in his youth, which certainly encouraged all of these traits), Grimm is largely correct. The best-known aspects of Hutten's famously complex personality originated at the Steckelberg, with his father, his grandfather, and his education in what it was to be a knight.

Given all this, the importance of home and family to Ulrich von Hutten is reflected in a most surprising way at the very end of his life. Despite his dislike of the noise and oppressive surroundings, despite his father's disapproving presence, in his last desperate years and months Hutten remembered the Steckelberg fondly, colouring it with his chivalric ideals. During this time, he wrote more and more often in German rather than Latin, so as to appeal for aid and understanding to all his countrymen, and he constantly wrote of – and in the words of – peasants, hunters and fishermen.⁸⁶ Despite his complaints about a knight's life in his earlier letter to Pirckheimer, one of the most important and lasting influences of Hutten's home and family can be seen in

⁸⁴ Hutten recalled this in 1519 and is quoted in Grimm, *Ulrich von Hutten*, p.18.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.23

his devotion to the countryside and to the ideal of simple, free Germans working their land.⁸⁷

Destined for the Church

The older Hutten's expectations of his small son must have been a heavy burden to bear, and all the more so, since they did not accord with Ulrich's own wishes. Although he inherited some aspects of his father's nature, his ambitions were very different. Later in life, Hutten would appear in his desired role: that of a knight who fought the Emperor's enemies with both pen and sword. Yet this would be coloured with a defiance and bitterness which originated in his struggle against his father's intentions. For Ulrich senior, perhaps surprisingly at first sight, did not intend that his firstborn should be a knight in the traditional sense. Nor, obviously, did he wish him to devote himself to humanist pursuits. Instead, his son was destined for a career in the Church.

It was unusual for an eldest son to enter the Church, and Hajo Holborn has interpreted this as a result of Hutten's sickly constitution.⁸⁸ Perhaps his father thought him physically unsuited to the life of a knight. However, although it was unusual, it was by no means unknown, especially when (as in Hutten's case), there were other sons to secure the family line. Ulrich's cousin, Moritz von Hutten (who was fifteen years younger than him), was an eldest son, and entered a monastery as a child, at his

⁸⁷ This will be expanded upon in chapter three, when the importance of Tacitus's Germania to Hutten's thought is discussed.

⁸⁸ Holborn, Hutten, pp.24-25. All of Hutten's biographers have something to say about his poor health. They usually concentrate on the syphilis which afflicted him from his late teens and eventually caused his death, but he was also very small in stature, and it seems likely that he was not an especially healthy

parents' wish. This was certainly a deliberate career move, rather than a putting-away of a sickly child, as was no doubt the case for Ulrich too. It was also something of an investment for a novice's parents, who could not abandon responsibility upon consigning a child to the monastery: they still bore the cost of the child's clothing, footwear, laundry and food.⁸⁹ It was usually a worthwhile investment. By the end of the fifteenth century, the Church in the German-speaking lands was almost entirely in the hands of the nobility, and in this respect the knights took their full share of power and influence. Some monasteries actually restricted their intake of novitiates to include only nobility. The irony of this practice was not lost on everyone: on learning that one must have at least twelve noble ancestors on both the mother's and the father's side to enter the Strasbourg chapter, Erasmus observed, 'Christ himself could not have entered this college without a dispensation'.⁹⁰ Hutten's father was not interested in ironies, however, but in the fact that the Church was a means of real advancement for many knights and their families. Moritz's experience demonstrates the sort of career path which was undoubtedly intended for Ulrich. Entering the Eichstätt chapter as a boy, he studied canon law in Germany and Italy, won a comfortable benefice at the age of thirty, and by thirty-six was Bishop of Eichstätt, thus attaining princely status and promotion within the recognised ranks of the nobility.⁹¹ The power and wealth that could thus be gained were certainly in the elder Hutten's mind when he dedicated Ulrich to the monastery, although the choice may have fallen upon his oldest son as a consequence of the boy's relatively poor health.

The monastery of Fulda

child. See, for example, Rueb, *Der hinkende Schmiedgott Vulkan*, pp.161-182. Rueb also supplies a related bibliography on p.309.

⁸⁹ Leinweber, Josef, 'Ulrich von Hutten und das Kloster Fulda', in Laub, *Ulrich von Hutten*, p.79.

⁹⁰ Holborn, *Hutten*, p.23

The Benedictine cloister of Fulda was ideal for the older Hutten's aspirations. His personal connections with the monastery are mentioned above, on page 7. Lying within walking distance of the family's principal castle of Steckelberg, it had the largest monastic land-holdings in Germany, and, like Strasbourg, was home to leading members of the aristocracy of the surrounding area. Fulda was less particular about its monks than Strasbourg, requiring only four noble generations on each side of the family,⁹² but that still guaranteed that Ulrich would be surrounded by members of very influential families. For them, as for the Huttens, a career in the Church was the first step to increased wealth and social rank, and, among other advantages, Fulda would provide valuable acquaintances and connections in that career. The Huttens themselves already had representatives at Fulda, notably, in Hutten's time, Johann von Hutten, who had a responsible post at Fulda itself and, for a while, was also the head of a neighbouring monastery which belonged to Fulda.⁹³

Hutten was taken to Fulda in 1499. Long afterwards, he would offer a polite explanation, which ascribed a proper degree of piety to his very down-to-earth father:

‘In my youth, you see, when I was eleven years old, my father and mother, with reverently good intentions, brought me to the chapter of Fulda, with the desire that I should remain there and become a monk. I did not like it,

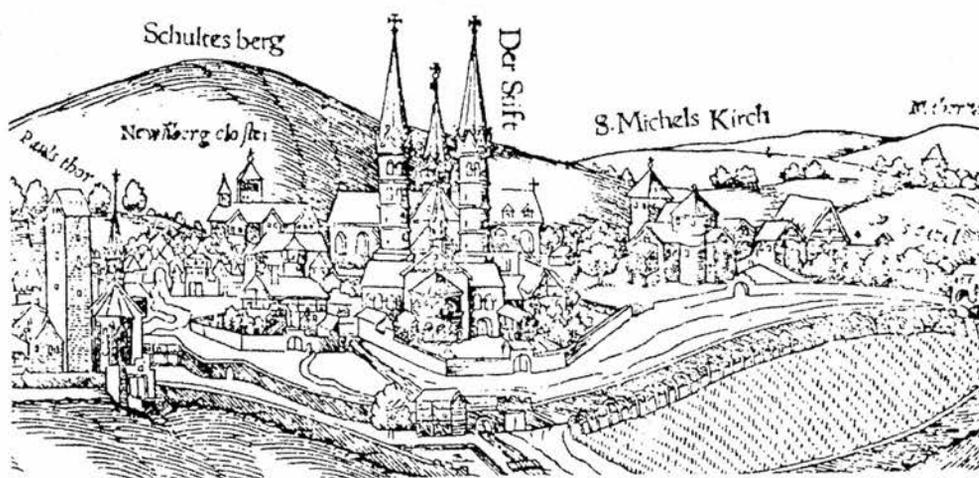
⁹¹ Ibid., p.25

⁹² Bernstein, *Ulrich von Hutten*, p.15. The number of generations was not a problem for the Huttens in any case, being able to trace their family fairly reliably back to the tenth century (see Holborn, *Hutten*, p.24.

⁹³ Leinweber, Josef, ‘Ulrich von Hutten und das Kloster Fulda’, p.79. Johann von Hutten had been resident at Fulda from at least 1469. He died there in 1503, during Ulrich's period of residence. The Hutten family's long-standing connections with Fulda are also considered in detail in Jäger, Berthold, ‘Die Beziehungen zwischen dem geistlichen Fürstentum Fulda und der Familie von Hutten’ in Peter

although I could not then recognise the fact, not yet understanding what was, for me, good and useful'.⁹⁴

His comment that he did not like the idea of becoming a monk is interesting in the light of his later departure from Fulda and his need to deny the charge of having broken monastic vows.⁹⁵ Possibly, the eleven-year-old Hutten did not wish to enter the monastery, but had, as he claims above, no mature understanding of his feelings or of monastic life. It may equally be that this was not the case. Hutten's half-imagined view of medieval chivalry, discussed above, shows his ability to imagine and describe things as they were not, and there are many more examples of his wishful thinking, or deliberate manipulation of facts, in later chapters. Years later, he knew that the life of a monk was not for him. Aged eleven, it is impossible to know what he thought, and, given his later circumstances, his own description of the situation should be treated cautiously.



The abbey of Fulda as it is depicted in Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia* of 1544. Reproduced in Gräter, *Ulrich von Hutten*, p.33

Laub (ed.), *Ulrich von Hutten, Ritter, Humanist, Publizist 1488-1523. Katalog zur Ausstellung des Landes Hessen anlässlich des 1500. Geburtstages* (Kassel, 1988), pp.87-101.

⁹⁴ Rueb, *Der hinkende Schmiedgott Vulkan*, p.88

Hutten would remain at Fulda for the next six years, and its effect on his life has never been adequately stated. There is a tendency among historians to pass over these years as if they were a mere breathing space before Hutten embarked on the real business of his life. Little attempt has been made to understand the long-term consequences for Hutten of spending his youth in a Benedictine cloister, particularly in religious and social terms.⁹⁶ Yet the influence of Fulda would be as profound as that of his family. Indeed, between the ages of eleven and seventeen, he was effectively part of a new family - the brothers at Fulda – and it was within this family that he received his early education and made his first, and closest, friends.

The abbot and his influence

The abbot of Fulda throughout Hutten's time there was Johann von Henneberg. He set the tone for this period of Hutten's youth, ruling Fulda and its outlying monasteries and convents firmly after an early period struggling to impose authority and reform. Johann's career as abbot demonstrates the closeness of Fulda to the nobility of the region, as well as the struggles which it had against some of them. Inevitably, being at Fulda, he came from a noble family: in this case, one which was exceptionally powerful in both secular and religious spheres. His father was Graf Wilhelm von Henneberg-Schleusingen, and his relative Berthold von Henneberg was Archbishop of Mainz. The knightly background and attitudes of some of his flock were apparent in Johann's early efforts at simple, practical reforms within Fulda. From 1572, when he

⁹⁵ See below for a discussion of the circumstances of Hutten's departure from the monastery.

⁹⁶ Some comment has been made on Fulda's impact on Hutten's education, but still only in the briefest terms. His chief biographer, Holborn, merely comments on the lasting respect which Hutten had for the monastery, relying on the mention of Fulda in the *Elegy of the German Poets* of 1510.

became abbot, his attempts met with serious opposition. This was exemplified by the arrival, for reform discussions, of the provost of the monastery of Petersberg, armed with a sword concealed beneath his habit.⁹⁷ If some of the local clergy had never quite cast off the knightly ethic of resisting change and solving problems with violence, Johann was more progressive. He not only made changes,⁹⁸ but also made every effort to settle disputes by negotiation. Thus, a feud with the Landgrave of Hesse was avoided in 1474 by arbitration, as was a potential uprising of various knights. When Johann's own relative, Friedrich von Henneberg, claimed lordship over Fulda's nunnery of Rohr in Thuringia, Johann let the matter be decided by Berthold of Mainz as another family member.⁹⁹

These incidents reflect the unruliness of the Franconian knights, and their tendency to feud even with monasteries, but also show that, under Johann, Fulda was somewhat out of the ordinary. He was a calming but strong influence. Rueb comments on the tendency of Fulda abbots to be wholly occupied with defence against knights 'without and within the walls', but this was not the case during Hutten's time.¹⁰⁰ Johann's diplomacy ensured a period of peace for Fulda during which Hutten could properly begin his education.

Education, friends and patrons

⁹⁷ Leinweber, *Die Fuldaer Äbte und Bischöfe* (Frankfurt am Main, 1989), p.97. For an account of Johann von Henneberg as Abbot of Fulda, also see Lübeck, Konrad, *Die Fuldaer Äbte und Fürstäbte des Mittelalters* (Fulda, 1952), pp.253-256.

⁹⁸ These were often quite simple reforms, which still met with resistance, such as the building of new refectories in Fulda and its dependent foundations in 1484, so that the monks could take their meals together. As Johann increased his authority, other projects followed, such as the building of new dormitories and abbey churches. *Ibid.*, p.98

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.99

¹⁰⁰ Rueb, *Der hinkende Schmiedgott Vulkan*, p.89

When Hutten entered the monastery school, it was run by Peter Schmerleib, who had received his Master of Arts degree from the University of Erfurt in 1497. Later, in about 1503, he would become Archdeacon and parish priest in Fulda.¹⁰¹ While in his care, Hutten studied rhetoric, dialectic, music, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and Latin grammar.¹⁰² In the last of these, he was to become one of the leading exponents of his time, writing Latin prose which even earned the public praise of Erasmus himself.¹⁰³ Fulda provided a good educational grounding for Hutten, as might be hoped for in an ancient foundation (established 743/744) with a famous library.¹⁰⁴

The circumstances were not perfect, of course. The lesser nobility's general lack of interest in education still held good at Fulda. The presence of a magnificent library did not guarantee a whole community of well-educated, classically-minded monks. One cannot conclude that this was a community devoted to the humanist study which would so appeal to Hutten. There were, however, a few monks who maintained connections with a lively intellectual circle at Erfurt, lending support to the theory that humanism was very much alive in the monasteries of the German-speaking lands, as well as in the universities and courts.¹⁰⁵ This proved to be Hutten's way of overcoming Fulda's limitations for a voracious scholar, making lasting friends and gaining a view of the academic world outside the monastery. In particular, he came

¹⁰¹ Leinweber, 'Ulrich von Hutten', p.79

¹⁰² Rueb, Der hinkende Schmiedgott Vulkan, p.89

¹⁰³ In the introduction to Erasmus's Greek translation of the New Testament (1516).

¹⁰⁴ Sources for the history of the monastery at Fulda are limited, in English, to passing references. Extensive work has been done in German, however. Particularly useful for the early history is: Hussong, Ulrich, 'Die Reichsabtei Fulda im frühen und hohen Mittelalter, mit einem Ausblick auf das späte Mittelalter' in Walter Heinemeyer und Berthold Jäger (hg.), Fulda in seiner Geschichte. Landschaft, Reichsabtei, Stadt (Fulda, 1995). The most prolific author by far on the history of Fulda is Josef Leinweber, whose work includes 'Ulrich von Hutten und das Kloster Fulda' and Die Fuldaer Äbte mentioned above, Hochstift Fulda vor der Reformation (Fulda, 1972) and Verzeichnis der Studierenden in Fulda von 1574 bis 1805 (Frankfurt am Main, 1991). Fulda's library is commented on below.

¹⁰⁵ See also Johannes Trithemius, the Abbot of Sponheim, in chapter two.

under the influence of three important figures, who would help to form his aspirations and philosophy, and to establish him as a respected scholar.

The first of these was Johannes Jäger of Dornheim, known in the humanist style as Crotus Rubeanus, the ‘red-haired hunter’. Eight years Hutten’s senior, Crotus was the son of poor parents, and seems an unlikely friend for the son of a leading knightly family. However, they were drawn together by their mutual interest in the ‘new’ humanist learning. Already a respected teacher, Crotus encountered Hutten through Fulda’s connections with the University of Erfurt, mentioned above, and became his friend and adviser.¹⁰⁶ It was probably while studying informally with Crotus (who would, much later, become a teacher at Fulda itself) that Hutten began to develop the interest in the *studia humanitatis* which would dominate his career after leaving Fulda. Rueb describes Crotus’s career as a teacher as ‘leading a hopeless struggle against the scholastic university teachers’. When the abbot travelled away from the monastery, Crotus accompanied him as his secretary, and in a report of one journey he provides an insight into the attitudes of the “stupiden Pfaffen” whom he regularly encountered. He tells how he bought a small book, of little importance, for a very modest price, and that:

‘the habit-wearers behaved as though they had given me a bishopric ... It seems, to me, unworthy of an educated person, to eke out a miserable existence under mindless, semi-literate clerics. No communication with

¹⁰⁶ Rueb, *Der hinkende Schmiedgott Vulkan*, p.90

them is possible here, if you don't drink and play, or want to grow wild or be a supporter of Venus'.¹⁰⁷

Presumably Crotus thought differently about his employer, Abbot Johann, but it is clear that he had a low opinion of the clergy in general, despising in particular their lack of learning. Crotus's views on the importance of humanism and the stupidity of monks are significant. He was, and remained, so close to Hutten that he could not help but colour the younger man's thinking. They certainly developed very similar outlooks on life, pooling their talents in 1515 to produce the famous satire Letters of Obscure Men.¹⁰⁸ Remaining chapters will show Hutten's devotion to humanism and his growing opposition to the Roman Church – two of the main strands of his life – and they began in Fulda, with Crotus Rubeanus. The trust which Hutten placed in Crotus, and the latter's devotion to Hutten, is shown in Crotus's role as a go-between in the difficult years when Hutten was at university and lacked funds (see chapter two).¹⁰⁹ As one of Hutten's first friends, Crotus was also one of his last, remaining loyal through Hutten's turbulent later years and continuing to correspond with him during their separate travels. His importance as an influence cannot be doubted.

While at Fulda, Hutten was also lucky enough to find friendship and, even more importantly, sponsorship, with two other visitors to the monastery. The first, Graf Hartmann von Kirchberg, was a frequent visitor to the monastery.¹¹⁰ Recognising in

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp.90-91. Crotus began to teach at Fulda in 1509, and continued to serve the abbot – with interruptions – until 1524. See Leinweber, 'Ulrich von Hutten', p.81.

¹⁰⁸ See Hutten, Ulrich von, et al., 'Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum cum Inlustrantibus Adversariisque Scriptis', in Opera VI and VII. The Letters are translated in Stokes, Francis Griffin, Letters of Obscure Men, by Ulrich von Hutten and others (Philadelphia, 1964). They are studied in, among other works, Becker, Reinhard Paul, A War of Fools: The Letters of Obscure Men. A Study of the Satire and the Satirized (Bern, 1981).

¹⁰⁹ Rubeanus, Crotus, 'Epistola ad U. Huttenum', pp.17-18

¹¹⁰ Rueb, Der hinkended Schmiedgott Vulkan, p. 89

Hutten someone who shared his inclination towards literature and humanist studies, he encouraged him to study and gave him material support.

The second, the knight Eitelwolf von Stein, was possibly the most important character in Hutten's youth outside his family. Another rare example of a knight who loved learning, he had followed in the German humanist tradition of travels in Italy, was a brilliant scholar, and acted as political adviser to the Archbishop of Brandenburg. In these respects, Hutten's later career was to mirror very closely the example of his first mentor. Stein acted as patron for many talented scholars, trying to link his high public office with academic work and to enable the two activities to help one another. His chief interest lay in education, and, in 1506, he founded the university of Frankfurt an der Oder with the aim of furthering humanist studies.¹¹¹ Rueb describes him as 'moulding the text of books as a new kind of weapon'.¹¹² Later chapters of this thesis will show that this could also very well be said of Stein's protégé at Fulda. Stein is reputed to have shouted at the abbot: "Do you want to dash such a talent to the ground?", while insisting that Hutten should pursue a worldly, political and academic career.¹¹³

Hutten never forgot the debt he owed to Stein. Many years later, he wrote to Willibald Pirckheimer (another outstanding patron), in praise of humanist studies:

¹¹¹ Hutten would be one of the first students at Frankfurt-an-der-Oder, no doubt influenced in this choice by his enormous respect for Stein. His career there is examined in chapter two.

¹¹² Rueb, *Der hinkende Schmiedgott Vulkan*, p.90

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p.90. No reference is given for Stein's words. If they are reported by Hutten (which seems most likely), they may or may not be true. As later chapters will show, it was not unusual for Hutten to exaggerate events for his own benefit. He may well have elaborated on Stein's early worldly ambitions for him if he were defending himself against a charge of being a runaway monk (see below).

‘In our rank, this good thing creeps in but slowly, and for many years now the view has persisted that a knowledge of letters is beneath a knight’s dignity. And nothing among us has produced greater or quicker jealousy of the famous knight Eitelwolf, than the fact that he distinguished himself with that virtue, and through it became great. It was through his aid and advice that I soon became well-known, and through his giving me as much protection as he could. We also found a prince in whom the normal level of education was raised above superstition, and humanist studies were encouraged: namely Albrecht,¹¹⁴ whom you, Willibald, rightly admire. But as I rose, with Eitelwolf’s support and through the generosity of the most outstanding prince, Eitelwolf died – alas, he died. I justly grieve over the death of the man who helped build my life, and yet, in dying, Eitelwolf aroused my private sorrow less than the public sorrow of all intellectuals and literary men. He was working on something which would have been wonderfully important to us, had his untimely death not cut short his worthy thought. My pain, however, causes me to digress. I say that such a man’s preoccupation with learning attracted jealousy. Thus are the hearts of our contemporaries hardened against a cultured humanist: so lacking in wisdom are they who should be first in it.’¹¹⁵

Eitelwolf von Stein’s influence on the young Hutten was clearly very great, encouraging his natural abilities and inclinations, and giving him the material support and political and social connections that he needed as he began his career. Hutten’s

¹¹⁴ Albrecht of Brandenburg, the Archbishop of Mainz, whose service Hutten would enter upon completing his university education. See chapter three.

¹¹⁵ Hutten, ‘Ad Bilibaldum Pirckheimer’, pp.199-200

appreciation of the worth of a humanist education, and his understanding of the strength of the written word in any struggle, began here.

With Eitelwolf's support, Hutten might have overcome the problem of being intended for a monastic life which, by the age of seventeen, he knew did not suit him, and might perhaps moved relatively smoothly into a university education, travel abroad, and recognition as a scholar. But it was not to be so easy. Here we must return to the other dominant influence in Hutten's youth: his father. The older Hutten was doubtless one of those that his son had in mind, when he mentioned the view that 'a knowledge of letters is beneath a knight's dignity'. He proved most unwilling to be robbed of his ambitions for family prestige and money by his son's fancy for the uncertain life of a scholar. Ulrich, he decreed, must remain in the monastery. This he did, until the age of 17, when he finally left – or, as nearly all accounts of his life have it, 'escaped' or 'fled'.¹¹⁶ Once he had left, his furious father refused him all financial support, and, without the support of patrons such as Stein, Hutten would have found it difficult indeed to survive as a poet.¹¹⁷ It is little wonder that, while he revered one person who influenced his young life so strongly, he was profoundly disappointed in the other. His father scarcely features in the rest of Hutten's story. His influence was all in the early years, and little of it was positive. The failure of Ulrich's father to offer support or to show any understanding of his son's need for learning, would be echoed later in Hutten's life when Maximilian I, who painted himself so carefully as the father of the whole German nation, also failed to respond to Hutten's expectations with regard to German independence. This is expanded upon in chapter three. With this double betrayal, Stein's counter-influence becomes all the more significant: this

¹¹⁶ See, for example, Holborn, Hutten, p.26.

was a knight who behaved as Hutten thought all knights should, who perhaps acted more like a father than did his own, and who provided a model for the rest of his life. Hutten did not always live up to that model, but he never forgot it.

Departure from Fulda

As for Fulda, its direct influence ceased after six years, when Hutten left the cloister in a manner which remains unclear. It seems certain that he departed without the approval of either the abbot or his father, but the controversy which dogged him towards the end of his life, and which is still the subject of debate today, is this: did Hutten abandon Fulda before or after taking his monastic vows? The details of the debate will not be covered here, but the question is relevant to an understanding of Hutten's character. The traditional view is that Hutten left Fulda without taking his vows. Although his many enemies would later claim, for propaganda purposes, that Hutten was a runaway monk and deserved to be punished as one, he always vehemently denied it.¹¹⁸ His challenges to his enemies in the Roman Church to prove their assertion were never met. There is, indeed, no surviving record of his having taken his vows.

The opposing case has been put by Josef Leinweber, who has worked extensively on the history of Fulda rather than on Hutten himself, and has shown that it was usual for vows to be taken at the age of fourteen, as novices neared completion of their studies

¹¹⁷ See chapter two.

¹¹⁸ The controversial circumstances of Hutten leaving Fulda, and the accusations which he later faced, are covered by virtually all of his biographers, but see especially Leinweber's article below.

in the monastic school.¹¹⁹ Leinweber relies upon the usual route followed by pupils in the monastery school: progressing through four or five classes in their time there, they took their final examination at the age of fourteen. The examination was followed immediately by ‘Emancipation’, as the school’s statutes of the late middle ages called graduation, and by the taking of vows. The monastery’s regulations in the early sixteenth century therefore prescribed a period of three years for education and novitiate for those who, like Hutten, entered the cloister in boyhood. Leinweber therefore concludes that Hutten must have taken his vows in 1502, thus binding himself irrevocably to Fulda.¹²⁰

Leinweber’s case has gained acceptance in some quarters. Keith D. Lewis, for example, finds it convincing.¹²¹ However, to accept this argument is to deny the strength of other influences on the young Hutten, including such important ones as Stein and Crotus Rubeanus, and to take no account of Hutten’s personality as revealed in his later writing and actions. His own comments, quoted above, suggest that he realised quite quickly that he was ill-suited to life at Fulda. Even if he did not understand it aged eleven, his dissatisfaction with the monastic life can hardly have dawned on him at the last moment. Bolstered by Stein’s idea that he should take on a role in politics and scholarship, and by Crotus’s (and surely his own) observations on the limitations of humanist opportunities within the cloister, Hutten seems very likely to have prevaricated over a final commitment to a monastic career. He could have put forward various reasons for delaying his vows, and we have already seen in Abbot

¹¹⁹ Leinweber, Josef, “Ulrich von Hutten – ein Fuldaer Mönch? Ein Beitrag zur Biographie des jungen Ulrich von Hutten und zur Geschichte des Klosters Fulda im Spätmittelalter”, in Würzburgische Diözesangeschichtsblätter (1975), pp.541-546

¹²⁰ Leinweber, ‘Ulrich von Hutten und das Kloster Fulda’, p.80

¹²¹ Lewis, Keith D., ‘Ulrich von Hutten, Johann Faber, and *Das Gyren Rupffen*: A Knight’s Last Campaign?’, in Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte 78 (1987), pp.124-146, p.142

Johann a man who preferred to settle difficulties through negotiation. Later chapters in this thesis will show that, despite his faults, which included a tendency to exaggeration, Hutten was a brave and fundamentally truthful character, who openly admired Martin Luther (himself a former monk) and who did not shirk from words and deeds for which the Church condemned him. Had he taken his vows, he would not have denied it, but would have used his considerable literary skills to justify taking another course.

Nor should Hutten's departure from Fulda be seen as a cowardly departure at dead of night. The story of a dramatic escape, now firmly associated with Hutten, was popularised by David Friedrich Strauss and was not really questioned for over a century. Then Heinrich Grimm suggested that, in 1503-04, probably with the abbot's permission, Hutten took the standard course known as *biennium studii* at the University of Erfurt.¹²² This seems very likely, as not only would it have suited Hutten's temperament and abilities, but it was also quite normal, and, indeed, prefigures his cousin Moritz's studies outside his monastery of Eichstätt. It was presumably towards the end of this time that he decided to break from Fulda. Instead of the midnight flight of popular myth, he merely declined to return. The early summer of 1505 found him at the University of Mainz, and by the winter he was studying in Cologne, set firmly on the path of learning and political exposure which would lead to the crisis years of 1519 and 1520. In those same years, he was to return to Fulda, where he would see Crotus Rubianus and search for texts in the library: not the act of a professed monk guilty of flight from the same monastery.¹²³

¹²² Grimm, Heinrich, Ulrich von Hutten. Wille und Schicksal (Göttingen, 1971), pp.32ff

What of Hutten's feelings towards Fulda after his departure? There is no hint in his writing of any feelings of antipathy towards his old monastery, which makes it all the more likely that he left under far more regular circumstances than his opponents later suggested. The anti-clerical feeling which was rife in the German-speaking lands at the time may have come to Hutten first at Fulda, through his friend Crotus. Indeed, on leaving Fulda he would soon be exposed to it at first hand, and come to take a leading role in promoting it.¹²⁴ It is notable, however, that Fulda would suffer less from the contempt of Hutten and Crotus than would many monks and monasteries. It was, after all, Fulda which provided the intellectual connection with Erfurt which allowed them to meet, and in 1510, Hutten would praise Fulda as one of the sacred centres of the new learning in his Elegy of the German Poets.¹²⁵ Modelled on the style of other humanist poetry of the time, the Elegy contains sentiments frequently found in the work of Hutten's predecessors and peers, such as pride in the idea of a united 'Germany' and its importance in history.¹²⁶ Hutten's praise of Fulda may therefore be seen as a polite poetic convention: a view encouraged by Holborn in his suggestion that Hutten still saw the great figures of Fulda's past, such as its founder, St Boniface, as legendary beings rather than as real people.¹²⁷ It is a view which fits very well with Hutten's predisposition to see the past, and, in Fulda's case, representations of the past, in a romantic light. The Elegy was a literary exercise on an accepted subject, containing the inevitable hyperbole, but the inclusion of Fulda shows a reverence for

¹²³ Rueb, Der hinkende Schmiedgott Vulkan, p. 94

¹²⁴ Anti-clericalism is a constantly recurring theme in the historiography of the German-speaking lands in the early sixteenth century, but of special interest here is Dipple, Geoffrey, Antifraternalism and Anticlericalism in the German Reformation (Aldershot, 1996), which includes numerous observations on Hutten's contribution.

¹²⁵ Hutten, 'Elegia X', p.71

¹²⁶ This will be an important theme in chapter two.

¹²⁷ Holborn, Hutten, p.28

the institution and its history which makes it impossible to believe that Hutten had any quarrel with it.

Hutten's genuine pride in the German-speaking lands and their history is apparent, and his pride in his country was certainly connected with his idealised vision of Fulda itself. Regardless of Hutten's reluctance to live in the cloister himself, Fulda was the oldest monastic foundation in Germany, and therefore a preserver of learning in what many saw as the darkness of the Middle Ages. Its famous library alone was reason enough for Hutten to revere it. Indeed, he is known to have borrowed books from it himself.¹²⁸ Not least, Fulda would give Hutten a genuine concern for spiritual matters, which would show itself in his defence of Luther and in his writings from the Ebernburg in the early 1520s.¹²⁹ Hutten had the piety attributable to nearly everyone in Germany in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and the monastery school at Fulda no doubt made him far more aware than most of Church doctrine and the Rule.¹³⁰ Six years in Fulda can only have increased the burden of supporting Martin Luther's doctrines from 1517.

Legacies

¹²⁸ This was originally brought to light by Paul Kalkoff, who, while regarding Hutten as (in Robert Herndon Fife's words) as his 'pet abomination', wrote two works on Hutten: Hutten und die Reformation (Leipzig, 1920) and Huttens Vagantenzeit und Untergang (Weimar, 1925). He is strongly criticised for his assumption that Hutten's failure to return the books before his death proves him to be a thief, in Fife, Robert Herndon, 'Ulrich von Hutten as a Literary Problem', in Germanic Review 23 (1948), pp.18-29.

¹²⁹ See, especially, chapter five of this thesis.

¹³⁰ Bernd Moeller has commented on the deep and widespread piety and concern with obtaining salvation in his 'Religious Life in Germany on the Eve of the Reformation', in Gerald Strauss (ed.), Pre-Reformation Germany (London, 1972), pp.13-30. He speaks of the 'profound and anguished longing for salvation' which so many people sought. Many other historians comment on this common search for salvation, and especially on the influence of the *Devotio Moderna*, e.g. Peter Dykema, 'The reforms of Count Eberhard of Württemberg: "confessionalization" in the fifteenth century', in Beat A. Kumin (ed.), Reformations Old and New. Essays on the Socio-Economic Impact of Religious Change

As Hutten emerged from Fulda and began to make his way in the outside world, he carried with him some complex legacies. Few aspects of his youth were very unusual, yet they came at such times, and combined in such ways, that Hutten would be uniquely marked by them.

Birth into the social group of German knights had straightforward consequences for men such as Hutten's father. They were sure of their rights, obligations and traditions, and responded to problems accordingly. For Hutten, the knighthood had much more complex implications. He was faced with many contradictions: the half-imagined chivalric past which he revered and the activities of the *Raubritter*, the prestige owed to the nobility and the knights' declining fortunes, his class's general lack of regard for learning and his own passion for it, traditional service to princes and the growing view of princes as oppressors.

His family provided similar difficulties. Hutten faced the problems of a castle which he disliked during life and a country idyll which haunted his mind before he died. His father had no understanding or care for his wishes, or, by implication, for his mother. Both father and grandfather preached a military approach to life, but he was sent into a monastery. He longed to adopt the traditional role of an armed knight on horseback, but was never able to separate that from study and writing.

Even Fulda was problematic. It offered a good monastic education, but Hutten was drawn to the 'new learning' of humanism. Fulda would not satisfy his need for this.

The monastery offered the likelihood of advancement in later life, but the life did not suit him. He had encouragement from patrons but still found it difficult to take their advice. Fulda also gave him an ambivalence towards the role of the monasteries – as shelters of idle, ill-educated monks, and, simultaneously, as preservers of Germany's history and literary greatness, and as the place where he had received an intensive education in the Roman faith which he would eventually feel compelled to reject.

Many of his contemporaries were knights, or had family problems, or entered monasteries. Nearly all of them have faded from history. Hutten, on the other hand, has retained his fame for five centuries, and this is largely because his youth was filled with problems and contradictions. Instead of doing as was expected of him, he wrestled with the problems. He was still wrestling with them when he died aged thirty-five, and his actions in between reflect his willingness to engage with them, not just on personal levels, but on national and international, secular and religious levels too. During his youth, he failed to fit in, as a knight, a Hutten, or a monk. Chapters two and three will show how he did find a place to fit, and how he also found a cause, but never stopped wrestling.

Chapter Two

Intellectual development: The German universities, 1505-1511, and The Letters of Obscure Men

The year 1505 marked a significant change for Hutten. His early years had been shaped by the choices made for him by his aristocratic family, who imposed on him their traditions, responsibilities and choice of career. Hutten's feelings of pride and responsibility in being a knight, and a concern for the Church of which he had so long been a servant, would reawaken in later years.¹ Nevertheless, his rejection in 1505 of a monastic life was also a rejection of his father's authority and of a life devoted to obedience, whether to family or to Church. From this point on, he was to choose his own allegiances, all of which would influence the path his career would take.

Hutten's future course was determined, above all, by his decision in 1505 to study at various German universities. This would result in his making talented friends, acquiring influential patrons and fame for his scholarship, moving in court circles, and, perhaps most importantly, developing his own views of the Church and of the German people's place in the world. He was to spend the next eight years studying in German and Italian universities, and learning his trade as a poet and polemicist, before moving on to another important stage in his career in 1513: a position at the court of Albrecht of Brandenburg, the Archbishop of Mainz.

¹ Hutten's growing dependence on the knighthood as an institution and his return to religious concerns are examined in chapter five.

Hutten's progress around the universities was unusual in itself, and is an early indication of his unorthodox approach to life, his determination and his restless nature. He moved very rapidly between German universities, and Hajo Holborn has pointed out the consequent difficulties in completing a typical well-integrated arts course.² The course leading to the master's examination at Erfurt, for example, lasted between three-and-a-half and four years, while it took at least one-and-a-half years to study for the baccalaureate examination. In contrast to this requirement, Hutten's movements in the first five years after leaving the monastery were as follows:

Winter 1505	Cologne
Summer 1506	Erfurt
Winter 1506	Frankfurt an der Oder
1507	Leipzig
1509	Greifswald, and soon (after quarrelling with his patrons), Rostock
End of 1510	Wittenberg ³

Unlike Holborn, Franz Rueb, one of Hutten's most recent biographers, does not see the constant movement as a problem. He claims that the lectures in Germany's seventeen universities followed plans so similar that a seamless progression from one to another was perfectly possible.⁴ Even if this was true in theory, the long travelling involved and the great frequency of movement must have caused Hutten difficulties.

² Holborn, *Hutten*, p.29

³ *Ibid.*, pp.29-30

⁴ Rueb, *Der hinkende Schmiedgott Vulkan*, p. 94. The universities were: Prague, founded 1348, Vienna 1365, Heidelberg 1386, Cologne 1388, Erfurt 1392, Leipzig 1409, Rostock 1419, Löwen 1426, Griefswald 1456, Basel 1460, Freiburg 1460, Trier 1472, Ingolstadt 1472, Mainz 1477, Tübingen 1477, Wittenberg 1502 and Frankfurt-an-der-Oder 1506.

Nevertheless, he gained his baccalaureate degree in Frankfurt-an-der-Oder, although he later renounced it, presumably as a result of his unhappy departure (see below).⁵

Quite apart from the travelling involved, in his progress around the German universities Hutten would experience upheavals of another kind. He was to become one of the most famous German humanists, but this was by no means apparent at the start of his career. The period of Hutten's youth, the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, was one of turbulent quarrel and change within the world of scholarship in general and the northern universities in particular. The long-established 'scholastic' teaching within Europe's universities found itself – in some areas at least – being challenged by the newer 'humanist' approach to scholarship. Hutten soon found himself in the thick of the debate, all the more so as he travelled from place to place. Not every university received new ideas in the same way – for example, some, such as Cologne and Leipzig, would become known as strongholds of traditionalism, where it was particularly difficult for humanist studies to find inclusion in the curriculum.⁶ Hutten was therefore exposed to different elements of the scholastic-humanist debate in each place he visited. In this time of change and dispute, he himself would come to play a leading role, and be the friend or enemy of many other important figures.

The emergence of humanism as a challenge to scholasticism in Europe's universities was the subject of much study throughout the twentieth century. The chief questions

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 99. See also Lewis W. Spitz, 'Hutten: Militant Critic' in Spitz, The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists (Harvard, 1963), p.111, which gives the date more precisely as September 1506.

⁶ The reputations of the various universities in this respect were not always *entirely* deserved, springing largely from the attacks on them by humanist authors. Cologne and Leipzig are among the universities whose approach to the 'new learning' is discussed later in this chapter.

under discussion have been: How should we define scholasticism and humanism? How did humanism emerge as an alternative kind of education? What level of animosity (if any) existed between scholastics and humanists? Should we differentiate between the debates in Italy and in the northern universities? Scholars have held very different views on these questions, up to and including very recent times. Conflicting but useful contributions to this long-running debate are presented, for example, in Ernst Borkowsky's Aus der Zeit des Humanismus (Jena, 1905), Hajo Holborn's introduction to Hutten et al., Letters of Obscure Men, trans. Francis Griffin Stokes (Philadelphia, 1964), Lewis Spitz's The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists (Harvard, 1963), J.H. Overfield's Humanism and Scholasticism in Late Medieval Germany (Princeton, 1984), Alister McGrath's Reformation Thought (Oxford, 1988), pp.40-86, and Erika Rummel's The Humanist-Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and Reformation (Harvard, 1995). A full exploration of the scholarship on this subject is outside the scope of this thesis. However, an appreciation of the main issues is essential in understanding Hutten's development while at university, for it was during these years that he turned from an eager student into Germany's leading patriotic humanist. Some brief comments on the emergence of humanism and its place in the educational programme of the German universities are therefore made below.

The question of how 'scholastics' and 'humanists' should be defined is helpfully addressed by Erika Rummel in her book The Humanist-Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and Reformation, in which she suggests that 'intellectual curiosity' is the

best indication of a scholar's membership of one camp or the other.⁷ She takes as her own starting-point Hanna-Barbara Gerl's book Philosophie und Philologie.⁸ Gerl defines a scholastic as one who investigates problems by deliberately narrowing the scope of the investigation. Heiko Oberman adopts a similar definition, applying the descriptions *Seelenwinkel und Weltall* to the contrasting scholastic/humanist psychologies, and demonstrating that scholastics adopted rigid boundaries to an exercise (which they considered more mentally rigorous) and that humanists were more expansive in their approach.⁹ James Overfield stresses that the 'mental rigour' was essential to scholastics, especially in matters of logic:

'It is difficult to exaggerate the preeminence of logic ... to be a 'scholastic' was first and foremost to be a logician. Theology might be the "queen of the sciences", but even she was lorded over by logic, the "empress" of all things knowable'.¹⁰

On the other hand, Paul Oskar Kristeller has argued against the notion of any single ideology for humanism. Not only was logic *not* preeminent, but:

'Renaissance humanism as such was not Christian or pagan, Catholic or Protestant, scientific or antiscientific, Platonist or Aristotelian, Stoic or Epicurean, optimistic or pessimistic, active or contemplative, although it is

⁷ Rummel, Erika, The Humanist-Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and Reformation (Harvard, 1995), pp.12-13

⁸ Gerl, Hanna-Barbara, Philosophie und Philologie (Munich, 1981)

⁹ Oberman, Heiko, Contra vanam curiositatem: Ein Kapitel der Theologen zwischen Seelenwinkel und Weltall (Zurich, 1974). Oberman's work is summarised in Rummel, The Humanist-Scholastic Debate, p.13.

easy to find for these attitudes, and for many others, a certain number of humanists who favoured them. What they all have in common is something else: a scholarly, literary, and educational ideal based on the study of classical antiquity.’¹¹

The range of humanist interests was certainly very wide, including classical poets, history, the study of the Cabbala, politics and theology. Scholastic interests usually revolved around theology and the application of logic, as mentioned above, and, in response to the humanist interest in the classics, the dangers of immoral pagan ideas. Indeed, it will be seen that their humanist opponents and some modern historians use the terms ‘scholastic’ and ‘theologian’ almost interchangeably.¹² Beyond this broad distinction between scholasticism and humanism, other differences have traditionally been ascribed to the two disciplines. For instance, humanist attacks on scholasticism in the early sixteenth century would often focus on the scholastics’ use of a simplistic Latin style, criticising it as ‘barbarian’, as it differed in some ways from the pure classical style which Hutten (at least in his early career) and his peers adopted.¹³

It would be wrong, however, to use these definitions as a basis for thinking of scholastics as narrow-minded and humanists as open-minded, and thus assuming that there was no overlap between the two disciplines. In practice, they cannot be so easily

¹⁰ Overfield, J.H., *Humanism and Scholasticism in Late Medieval Germany* (Princeton, 1984), pp.43-44. Overfield notes that logic was given the title ‘benevola imperatrix’ by Jodocus Trutvetter, one of Luther’s teachers at Erfurt, in his *Breviarum Dialecticum* (Erfurt, 1500), B i a.

¹¹ Kristeller, Paul O., ‘Studies on Renaissance Humanism during the Last Twenty Years’, in *Studies in the Renaissance*, Vol.9 (1962), p.22

¹² See, for example, the references to ‘scholastics’ as ‘theologians’ which frequently arise in Rummel, *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate*.

¹³ Hoenen, M.J.F.M., ‘At the Crossroads of Scholasticism and Northern Humanism’ in Akkerman, A.J. Vanderjagt and A.H. Van der Laan (eds.), *Northern Humanism in European Context. From the ‘Adwert Academy’ to Ubbo Emmius* (Leiden, 1999), pp. 138,140. See also Trapp, D., ‘Peter Ceffons of Clairvaux’ in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 24 (1957), pp.101-154, p.112.

separated. There was actually a good deal of common ground between the two disciplines, both in the subjects researched and in the methods used to research them, and J.H. Overfield is right to warn of the dangers of 'simple dualism'. At first, similarities between the two disciplines were inevitable – humanism did not appear, fully formed, overnight. Indeed, discussion between 'scholastics' and the emerging 'humanists' was characterised by mutual respect and interests, such as the hunt for work by ancient authors.¹⁴ Early evidence suggests that the development of the studia humanitatis took place in a very positive atmosphere. There is no room in this picture of events for a serious conflict between the two sides. Yet conflict did eventually arise, although the Italian and northern humanist/scholastic confrontations were fundamentally different in character. Hutten's career would be deeply marked by these quarrels. Why, then, did problems occur?

In Italy, differences between Italian scholastics and humanists usually arose over questions of theological interpretation and, as the scholastics saw it, humanist intrusion into theological matters. This will not be discussed in detail here, as it had no direct consequences for Hutten, but for an examination see, for example, John D'Amico's work on Renaissance humanism.¹⁵

It was in Hutten's homeland that occasional skirmishes between humanists and scholastics became a war, and he was in exactly the right place, at the right time, to witness and take part in the events. Two key events are responsible for the scattered but energetic warfare which did at last ensue: the transmission of humanism from

¹⁴ Some examples of friendly debates are given by Rummel in *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate*, pp.2-3. Conrad Celtis (see below) and Hutten were particularly keen Latin manuscript hunters, emulating scholastic searches for Greek and Arabic sources which had begun in the twelfth century.

Italy to the northern universities, and the emergence of Martin Luther and his Reformation. Following these events, scholasticism and humanism – especially in Northern Europe - acquired new characteristics and moved further apart. As a result of the German humanists' sense of political oppression by the Roman Church and condescension from their fellow humanists in Italy, politics and patriotism became central issues in 'northern' humanism. The onset of the Reformation caused a still greater change in Northern Europe, as humanists and scholastics divided on religious issues, including the right to study and comment upon Scripture and the relevance of pagan works. The very real threat to the Church which emerged with Luther's reform movement made that particular question far more urgent and more bitterly argued than it could have been in earlier times.

These were all issues with which Hutten would engage enthusiastically. Later chapters will show how he tried to deal with them, and his readers must be struck by the sheer breadth of his involvement. He would have priorities, but they would change from time to time as he threw himself into every raw, urgent debate which was encouraged by the coming of humanism to the German-speaking lands. His ready adoption of 'humanist' causes would result in severe problems. He would prove unable to support the cause of patriotism *or* the cause of religion *or* learning for its own sake: even when he ascribed more importance to one of them, the others are still present in his writing, and some of his difficulties would result from his attempts to satisfy more than one concern at once. For example, chapter five shows how Hutten favoured patriotism over Luther's cause, but his attempts to deal with them together

¹⁵ For example D'Amico, John, Renaissance Humanism in Papal Rome. Humanists and Churchmen on the Eve of the Reformation (Baltimore, 1983), especially pp.144-147

contributed to the alienation of Luther as a friend and his own rejection by other patriotic humanists as a violent extremist.

Conrad Celtis

Hutten was to see the height of humanism's struggle for recognition, but, even in Germany, it had started long before his birth. Germany was the first of the northern lands to receive the 'new learning', mainly because of old political ties between Italy and the Holy Roman Empire, trade between German cities, and the traditional student visits (often for legal education) to the Universities of Pavia, Padua and Bologna. Erasmus credited Agricola (1444-1485) with the first recognition of humanism's worth in Germany:

'It was Rudolf Agricola who first brought with him from Italy some gleam of a better literature'.¹⁶

Agricola has been called 'the father of (German) humanism'.¹⁷ However, even he was outshone by his pupil Conrad Celtis, the leading German humanist of the late fifteenth century.¹⁸ A student of Agricola at Heidelberg, he was named 'the German Arch-

¹⁶ Spitz, Lewis W., 'Humanism in Germany', in Goodman, Anthony, and MacKay, Angus (eds.), The Impact of Humanism on Western Europe (London, 1990), pp.209-210. For a series of essays on different aspects of Agricola's life and work, marking the 550th anniversary of his birth, see Kühlmann, Wilhelm (Hg.), Rudolf Agricola 1444-1485. Protagonist des nordeuropäischen Humanismus (Bern, 1994). For an appraisal of the religious influences on Agricola, see Spitz, Lewis W., 'Agricola – Father of Humanism' in Spitz, Religious Renaissance, pp.20-40.

¹⁷ In truth he cannot take all the credit for its introduction. Lewis Spitz draws particular attention to the role of the monasteries in transmitting humanism from Italy into the north, and to the work by Paul Oscar Kristeller on this subject. See Spitz, 'Humanism in Germany', pp.202-219, and especially p.210.

¹⁸ Rupprich, Hans (ed.), Der Briefwechsel des Konrad Celtis (Munich, 1934) contains all of Celtis's extant correspondence.

humanist' by David Friedrich Strauss in 1858.¹⁹ His career and published work were a direct inspiration for Hutten, who was also influenced by Celtis's brand of humanism through his tutor, Aesticampianus, and Mutianus Rufus, (see below), who had themselves been among Celtis's pupils. Celtis's direct influence on Hutten came primarily through his (Celtis's) coronation as poet laureate (first by the Pope and then, much more importantly, by the Holy Roman Emperor) and his attacks on Italy and the Roman Church.²⁰

The sense of oppression by Rome and condescension from Italian humanists is noted above as a strong feature of German humanism. It is particularly evident in Celtis's work, as it is in Hutten's. Celtis's poem Concerning the kiss of the Emperor and of the Pope is one example:

'When you gave the sacred crown, Frederick, my Emperor,
 You placed bland kisses on our cheeks.
 But when at Rome I saw the house of Innocent (Nocentis),
 He commanded me to kiss his foot.
 I, lying prone, gave kisses, but the lips of Caesar delight me more
 Than to give kisses to a noxious foot.'²¹

The poem is reminiscent of Cranach's later woodcuts, showing Christ washing his disciple's feet and the Pope insisting on his feet being kissed. However, Celtis was less concerned than Cranach about the religious implications. Lewis Spitz makes an important point about this:

¹⁹ Spitz, Lewis W., Conrad Celtis. The German Arch-Humanist (Harvard, 1957), p.viii

‘Celtis’s pique was not moral indignation. It was rather the reaction of a proud and sensitive northerner to his neglect and humiliation at the hands of the Italians. It was more in the manner of Hutten’.²²

Spitz’s analysis is essentially correct, although he does not make the point that Hutten did talk a great deal about the morality (or immorality) of the Pope’s self-importance. Hutten was not blind to the moral issues, but was personally far more motivated by patriotism than by theological rights and wrongs. He made use of moral questions in his writing, rather than advancing them for their own sake (see, especially, chapter five).

When Celtis was appointed as a professor in the University of Ingolstadt in 1492, he used his inaugural address to develop both his views on the importance of humanist learning and his anti-Italian theme. Here Celtis brought together, for the first time, three elements which would characterise German humanism: a belief in the German Empire as the rightful successor to the ancient Roman Empire, an insistence on the traditional learning and purity of the German people, and a conviction that Germany was being exploited by a corrupt modern-day Italy.²³

Many German humanists would reflect one or more of these elements in their work, but none would take them so completely to heart as Hutten. His later works emphasised these aspects of German humanism so heavily that Hutten may be said to

²⁰ Emperor Frederick III, Maximilian I’s father, crowned Celtis at Nuremberg on 18th April 1487.

²¹ Quoted in Spitz, *The German Arch-Humanist*, p.14.

²² *Ibid.*, p.14

²³ The Ingolstadt address is quoted and discussed in chapter three.

be their foremost proponent. Indeed, they are the basis of his reputation as the leading patriotic German humanist. Nowhere are they more evident than in his dialogues Arminius and Bulla vel Bullicida, which are analysed in chapters three and four of this thesis. Although Celtis was active a generation earlier than Hutten, his influence can plainly be seen in Hutten's later work. Celtis's ideas are developed, often well beyond anything he had intended, but the basis for Hutten's patriotic thought was originally expressed in Celtis's speech at Ingolstadt when Hutten was only four years old. The transmission of Celtis's approach to learning and to the Italian problem through his students, who in their turn taught Hutten, is addressed below.

Humanism in the German universities²⁴

If the north was more deeply marked by differences between humanism and scholasticism, it was especially true of the German-speaking lands. Hutten left the monastery of Fulda and arrived at the University of Cologne in the winter of 1505, precisely when humanism was struggling to establish its own identity and to gain acceptance at the German universities, and a generation of German humanists had already strongly criticised the Roman Church and the Italian people, although the tumult of the Reformation was still unimagined. The relationship between humanists and scholastics from 1500 to 1515 was especially complex. The early years of the sixteenth century saw humanism making very gradual progress within the German universities. By 1515 it was widely recognised, and was a part of the education generally available in the German system, but it was not established on an equal

²⁴ Two connected papers contain useful comments on studies published between 1970 and 1990: Nauert Jr, Charles G, 'Humanist Infiltration into the Academic World: Some Studies of Northern

footing with the traditional elements of the syllabus: courses in the *studia humanitatis* were ‘optional extras’ rather than requirements for the award of a degree.²⁵ James Overfield describes humanism in the late fifteenth century as ‘a presence that was tolerated, but was peripheral to the universities’ academic priorities’.²⁶ The potential role of the *studia humanitatis* in the universities – the degree to which it should be integrated into the official curriculum, and the scholastics’ proper response to it – was constantly debated from 1500 to 1515.²⁷ When it coincided so precisely with his university career, Hutten could hardly avoid the issue. By the time Hutten ceased his travels around the universities of Germany and had made his first visit to Italy, in about 1513, he was a passionate advocate of humanism, but its role within the universities was still unclear.

Cologne

However, when Hutten came to Cologne in 1505, these worries were hidden far in the future. Cologne was among Germany’s larger educational centres, as Franz Eulenburg demonstrates with his examination of the matriculation records of twelve German universities. Between 1450 and 1520, Cologne averaged an intake of 322 matriculating students per year: the fourth highest number, compared with the largest university, Vienna, at 420, and the smallest, Greifswald, at 50. Eulenburg also points out that the number of matriculations is no guarantee of the number of students

Universities’, and Proctor, Robert E., ‘The *Studia Humanitatis*: Contemporary Scholarship and Renaissance Ideals’ in *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol.43 No.4 (1990), pp.799-812 and 813-824.

²⁵ See the very full discussions of humanist progress at the German universities in ‘Humanism at the Universities, 1500-1515: The Prelude to Reform’ in Overfield, *Humanism and Scholasticism*, pp.208-246, and ‘The Debate at the Universities’ in Rummel, *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate*, pp.63-95.

²⁶ Overfield, *Humanism and Scholasticism*, p.208

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.209

actually attending. He suggests that the number of active students might reasonably be estimated at double the numbers above.²⁸

Hutten was therefore one of many new students at Cologne, but his social rank would have made him conspicuous. There were very few 'paupers' among university students by 1500 (no more than 5%; a substantial decrease from the early fifteenth century),²⁹ but even fewer members of the aristocracy. They contributed only 1% of students, the majority of whom were members of the clergy – a level which remained fairly constant in later years.³⁰ A lay member of the aristocracy such as Hutten would have stood out from the beginning, and he would do so much more once he began to achieve academic success: in the years prior to the Reformation, even the lowest degree – B.A. – was attained by only one in four matriculants.³¹

The University of Cologne has long had a reputation as a conservative institution, unfriendly towards humanism and therefore presumably unsuited to Hutten's scholarly leanings.³² It is certainly true that he only remained there for about six months. The real stance of Cologne in humanist affairs is less clear-cut, however, as some researchers, especially in the last twenty years, have shown. As early as 1937, Hajo Holborn warned that, if Cologne was hardly known for its liberal approach to humanism, it was not as completely closed to it as David Friedrich Strauss would

²⁸ See Eulenburg's whole discussion in Eulenburg, Franz, 'Die Frequenz der deutschen Universitäten' in *Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philologisch-Historische Klasse, Abhandlungen* 24 (Leipzig, 1904). Some of his figures are reproduced in Overfield, *Humanism and Scholasticism*, p.23.

²⁹ Overfield, *Humanism and Scholasticism*, p.23

³⁰ For a detailed study, see Overfield, 'Nobles and Paupers at German Universities to 1600' in *Societas – A Review of Social History*, 7 (1974), pp.175-210. Overfield describes the increase in aristocratic students as 'barely discernible' in *Humanism and Scholasticism*, p.23.

³¹ Overfield, *Humanism and Scholasticism*, p.25

³² A view reiterated by Rummel in *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate*, p.65.

have his readers believe.³³ Those who support the view of its rigid conservatism can point to early criticism by Conrad Celtis in a poem on Cologne:

‘This is the city where I learned
to proffer fraud and sophistry
with syllogistic knots, as taught
by dialectic with contentious tongue.
.....
They laugh at learned poetry;
the books of Virgil and of Cicero
are feared by them more than the meat
of swine is feared by the stomach of a Jew.’³⁴

Lewis Spitz calls Cologne ‘intellectually a victim of inertia’, and refers to Celtis’s ode to Wilhelm Mommerloch (possibly a fellow student), in which he bewails scholastic dialectic and the lack of opportunity to study Latin grammar and rhetoric.³⁵

James Overfield takes a more positive view of Cologne’s attitude towards humanism, pointing out that it did have a ‘modest exposure’. The matriculation book shows several members registering as teachers of the liberal arts during the 1490s, including the knight Hermann von dem Busche, who would later become a friend of Hutten’s. He is described in the matriculation book as ‘a man uncommonly learned in the *studia*

³³ Holborn, Hutten, p.30. D.F. Strauss based this section of his biography on a superseded work, Kampschulte, F.W., Die Universität Erfurt in ihrem Verhältnis zu dem Humanismus und der Reformation (Trier, 1858).

³⁴ L Forster (ed.), Selections from Conrad Celtis, 1459-1508 (Cambridge, 1948), p.22. The translation is by Erika Rummel, The Humanist-Scholastic Debate, p.65.

humanitatis, who has been teaching various poetical subjects at our beloved university for almost a year'. From 1495 to 1500 Busche offered private lessons on a range of humanist subjects.³⁶

Nevertheless, the fact remains that Celtis, the 'arch-humanist', had felt marginalised there,³⁷ that in 1498 Rudolph of Langen had complained to the city council about the university's neglect of the *studia humanitatis*,³⁸ and that Hermann von dem Busche was forced to offer *private* lessons. Cologne was one of only two universities which failed to appoint a salaried lecturer in the *studia humanitatis* prior to the Reformation.³⁹ Indeed, in 1508, several years after Hutten left, Cologne's theology faculty attacked the immoral pagan teachings of the humanists.⁴⁰ The evidence of modest humanist activity which has come to light in recent decades should not detract from Cologne's position as a fundamentally conservative institution, where humanist progress was slow and, sometimes, deliberately hindered.

If there were known problems with Cologne's attitude to humanism, why did Hutten choose to begin his career there? Even within the monastery, he was presumably able to gain some idea of the academic world from contacts such as Crotus Rubeanus and Eitelwolf von Stein. If he wished to study humanist subjects, Cologne seems an unlikely starting-point. Some time after Hutten's death in 1523, Joachim Camerarius wrote an account of the main events of his life, and suggested that Hutten went to

³⁵ Spitz, *The German Arch-Humanist*, pp.1-2. Celtis registered at Cologne, his first university, on 9 October 1477 at the age of 18.

³⁶ Overfield, *Humanism and Scholasticism*, p.111

³⁷ Celtis was christened 'the German Arch-humanist' by David Friedrich Strauss in 1858. See Spitz, *Conrad Celtis*, p.viii.

³⁸ Overfield, *Humanism and Scholasticism*, p. 110

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.235

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.235

Cologne after leaving Fulda with the specific intention of pursuing humanist studies.⁴¹ Given the situation at Cologne, and even more importantly, Hutten's relative lack of exposure to the academic world, it hardly seems credible that he could have such a firm plan or that he would choose Cologne as the place to carry it out. It must have been easy to assume that Hutten had always had the passionate humanist, anti-scholastic ideals which were so characteristic of his later career. Certainly, it helped Camerarius's efforts to glorify Hutten as a humanist to portray him as destined for this role from his youth. It could not have been the case, however. Hutten was a promising Latinist, but he came to Cologne aged seventeen, having lived in a monastery since childhood. He wanted only to learn. Even if he had a particular interest in classical culture, now so strongly associated with humanism, Cologne could accommodate it, because of the significant overlap between humanism and scholasticism described above. As the scholastics had long had their own reasons for being interested in the classics, it was possible to make considerable progress in studying classical authors while remaining within the conventional education system. Therefore, we must assume that Holborn is correct in his suggestion that 'Hutten's emancipation from scholasticism was gradual', as there was much in the traditional curriculum to satisfy a thirst for learning.⁴² Meetings with humanists who were directly opposed to scholasticism, and who would influence Hutten's own anti-scholastic rhetoric, lay a short distance into Hutten's future. In 1505, for a youth who was simply eager to learn all that he could, the large and famous intellectual centre of Cologne was a natural choice.

Erfurt and the circle of Mutianus Rufus

⁴¹ Camerarius, Joachim, 'An account of Hutten's Life', in *Opera II*, p.361

Any impediments to humanist progress in Cologne would hardly have affected Hutten in six short months. However, it may have been under the influence of his friend Crotus Rubeanus, who was older, had more experience of the academic world, and already had decidedly humanist leanings, that he moved from Cologne to Erfurt in the summer of 1506. In Erfurt, Hutten found more humanist friends, and it is here that we can discern the beginnings of his movement towards humanism and of conditions which may have influenced him against scholasticism. The most significant of these early steps was his introduction to Mutianus Rufus (formerly a pupil of Conrad Celtis), probably also arranged by Crotus Rubeanus.⁴³

Mutianus had been exposed to various educational modes, including the *via antiqua* and the *via moderna*, all of which influenced him in some way. Nevertheless he gradually became more opposed to scholasticism, seeing classical authors as worthy of study in their own right, rather than as a mere tool in understanding Scripture. After graduating, and then lecturing in Erfurt, he spent some years in Italy, where he befriended many notable humanists who strengthened his growing allegiance to the *studia humanitatis*.⁴⁴ In 1503, soon after returning to Germany, he entered the Chapter of St Mary in Gotha, where he remained as a canon for the rest of his life.⁴⁵

It was therefore only from Gotha, and not from within the university at all, that Mutianus could influence Hutten during the latter's time in Erfurt. Resident some

⁴² Holborn, *Hutten*, p.31

⁴³ Holborn, *Hutten*, p.32

⁴⁴ These included Philip Beroaldo, the poet Baptista Mantuanus, and Francesco Piccolomini (later Pope Pius III). See Kleineidam in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, p.474, and Spitz, *Religious Renaissance*, p.135.

⁴⁵ Spitz, *Religious Renaissance*, p.135

miles distant from the town, and with a deep inner piety and interest in Florentine Platonism, Mutianus seems an unlikely model for Hutten.⁴⁶ Mutianus's letters illustrate that his religious views were often unconventional, but were the product of serious reflection and scholarship rather than passion for a cause. He suggested, for example, that the true Christ was not crucified, for the true Christ is only soul and spirit.⁴⁷ Mutianus was also quite timid, writing to a friend shortly after the Diet of Worms:

‘I am a good friend of the Lutherans. But I must consider my circumstances and position. Doors are broken, windows smashed, and one lives in barbarity. I would be a fool to acknowledge the boisterous Lutherans openly. The holy fathers would murder me. If you good people were in my position, what would you do?’⁴⁸

Mutianus's musings on the nature of Christ were utterly alien to Hutten. Chapter five will demonstrate that Hutten's adherence to the Lutheran cause, however sincere, was not based on any prolonged religious reflection, or even upon any profound understanding of Luther's message. Similarly, it will be shown that Hutten was never timid and never tried to conceal his ideas. On the contrary, he was often rash, always outspoken, and, far from being anxious to restrict or hide his beliefs, he published them widely and eventually turned to publication in German as a way to reach a wider audience. Hutten was equally unreserved in his support of both the Reformation and his fellow humanists. His support of the beleaguered Johann Reuchlin through the

⁴⁶ Holborn likens this ‘spiritualised piety’ to that of Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, in *Hutten*, p.32.

⁴⁷ Krause, *Briefwechsel*, Letter 85, pp.93ff

⁴⁸ Krause, *Briefwechsel*, Letter 644, pp.660ff, translated in Spitz, *Religious Renaissance*, p.153

composition of the Letters of Obscure Men is discussed later in this chapter. At the Diet of Worms Hutten famously shouted his support for Luther, and did not worry about broken windows. As the Diet approached, one observer wrote:

‘Herr von Hutten has put out so many astounding tracts that he is much more incensed and the Romanists much more infuriated against him than against Luther’.⁴⁹

It is difficult to see how Hutten, who was not a profound theological thinker but would become so well-known for his fiery outspokenness, could have been influenced by the canon of Gotha, from whom he differed so much. Part of the answer lies, once again, in Hutten’s youth and eagerness to learn all that he could. At Erfurt in 1506, he came into contact with a circle of humanists who were themselves presided over by Mutianus, although he did not live in Erfurt itself. Among Mutianus’s followers were Crotus Rubeanus, already Hutten’s closest friend, and Eobanus Hessus, who would also be his friend until the end of Hutten’s life – which is significant, given that when Hutten died in exile in 1523, he had few friends left. These two humanists, whom Hutten so respected, held Mutianus in the highest esteem. It was inevitable that they would introduce Hutten to Mutianus, and that he would come to know the other humanists who looked to Mutianus for their inspiration.

In fact, there were some things on which Mutianus and Hutten could agree, regardless of their very different personalities. For example, they both considered their friend

⁴⁹ Quoted by Holborn in Hutten, p.163.

Eobanus to be Germany's greatest Latin poet.⁵⁰ But the lasting importance of Mutianus and the Erfurt circle of humanists lay not in the details of their philosophy but in Hutten's increasing association with the humanist camp. Whether Mutianus was reticent about religion or not, in his growing opposition to scholasticism we may discern an early influence on the student Hutten. Some years after Hutten's departure from Erfurt, Mutianus wrote to Urbanus Rhegius about a dispute between the poet Tillmann Conradi and some 'inarticulate sophists'. He chose not to see this as an isolated quarrel, but as part of a broader problem:

'Latin letters made their debut here recently, after a difficult journey that ended safely thanks to the industry of a few. The younger generation received them, eager for pure speech. A felicitous development, I said, hoping for a gradual increase in intellectual vigour and for the deliverance of Greek and Latin literature from their lowly station. With barbarism driven out of our midst, I hoped for a general flourishing of studies supported by learned teachers and a good supply of books. I encouraged individual students to leave behind the old grammar teachers and acquire a splendid education. I found some who took my good advice. Some gave proof of their eloquence in the legal profession; others, inspired by poetic ardour and in admiration of the dignity of poetry, wrote verse; still others purified their style and attempted to speak and write with utmost elegance. I was filled with joy therefore and congratulated the students. But alas for the attitude of the barbarians! Oh, capital crime! The *magistri nostri* spoiled this blessing,

⁵⁰ Rupprich, Hans, 'Helius Eobanus Hessus' in *Neue Deutsche Biographie* Bd. 4 (Berlin, 1959), pp.543-545

to the immense detriment of the student body. While I praise the *magistri* for their keen minds, their zeal, labour, vigilance, religious devotion, and integrity, I condemn them for their inflexibility, envy, and ill will – fatal flaws in the human character. They will not abandon their mean studies, they refuse to look favorably on a better doctrine, they begrudge youth the privilege of studying the best arts and command that everyone board their ship of fools.’⁵¹

Mutianus’s remarks show that he was giving the sort of advice which Hutten would follow only too gladly – he was certainly among those willing to abandon his old-fashioned teachers out of ‘poetic ardour’. Hutten’s growing allegiance to the humanist camp was very significant in the early and middle part of his career, as he joined Mutianus and others in decrying the scholastics. Its importance is less obvious in the crisis years of 1519-1520, as he turned from taking part in scholarly debate to engaging in political struggles. Nevertheless, humanism is important in that it permanently coloured Hutten’s character and work. His education in the classics was essential to the composition of *Bulla* (see chapter four), his attitude to reform was influenced by the humanists he had met at the universities, and through the humanists he encountered the ideas of patriotism which would become his obsession.

Mutianus’s religious influence on Hutten was very limited, although Holborn maintains that Hutten did learn an important lesson: that classical antiquity could provide a philosophy of life which made the sacramental system and scholasticism

⁵¹ Krause, C., ‘Briefwechsel’ in *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde* NF Supplement IX (1885), p.325. The translation is by Erika Rummel and appears in her *Humanist-Scholastic Debate*, pp.1-2.

superfluous.⁵² This is a very broad and bold assertion in view of Mutianus's continuing loyalty to the Church, and in any case the fact that Hutten was a member of Mutianus's circle for only a few months must limit the effect that Mutianus could have had in this respect. It is certain, however, that the seeds of Hutten's growing devotion to the *studia humanitatis*, and his contempt for unbending scholastics, can be seen here at Erfurt. This was a university in which, in 1506, the humanist group was small and peripheral to the university's main activities: it was tolerated rather than welcomed.⁵³ Robert Scribner describes the university's attitude towards it as 'good-natured benevolence', which the other faculty members could afford as the humanists were – they thought – poets rather than career men, and therefore need not be taken seriously.⁵⁴ This marginalisation would in itself have provided Hutten with a taste of the future, when he would often be criticised for failing to conform to received doctrine or to norms of polite, safe behaviour. It may even have suited his rebellious nature and his fondness for medieval chivalric tradition, to be fighting a lonely battle for understanding and recognition. Certainly, from this point on, he fought such battles over and over again, on personal and national levels.

Frankfurt-an-der-Oder and Johannes Rhagius Aesticampianus

Whether Hutten would have understood and adopted Mutianus's philosophy on a more subtle level we cannot say, as time only permitted him a taste of Mutianus's brand of humanism. Late in the same year, he moved on again, this time to the new University of Frankfurt-an-der-Oder. It was here that he encountered Johannes

⁵² Holborn, *Hutten*, p.33

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.30

Rhagius Aesticampianus, a humanist lecturer whom Hutten would come to admire above all his other teachers. Comparatively little has been written about Aesticampianus in the last century,⁵⁵ and the main body of work about him and his universities was completed by Gustav Bauch in the late nineteenth century.⁵⁶ Existing work frequently mentions Hutten's presence as his student, but usually as an aside: very little notice has been taken of the extent of Aesticampianus's influence on Hutten at a time when Hutten was young and keen to learn.⁵⁷ This chapter will show that his influence was, in fact, very great. Crucially for the young poet's later career, Aesticampianus provided his first publishing opportunities, and his personality and example can be discerned in Hutten's later works and attitudes long after they parted company.

Aesticampianus's career before meeting Hutten was to prefigure that of his more famous student in several ways. It was marked not only by academic excellence, but by a wandering life, fervent love of his homeland, and, eventually, bitter disagreement with his colleagues. Born in Sommerfeld in Lower Lusatia in 1457, he retained a close attachment to that part of Germany all his life. The trait for which Hutten was to become and remain famous – fervent patriotism – has no clear origin in his family or monastic background, and Aesticampianus may have been a strong influence in this respect. This seems all the more likely, given that Aesticampianus was himself a pupil

⁵⁴ Scribner, R.W., 'The Erasmians and the Beginning of the Reformation in Erfurt' in The Journal of Religious History, Vol.9 No.4, pp.3-31, p.4

⁵⁵ But see as a rare exception Lutz, Cora E., 'Aesticampianus' Commentary on the De Grammatica of Martianus Capella' in Renaissance Quarterly 26 (1973), pp.157-166.

⁵⁶ This includes: Bauch Gustav, Geschichte des Leipziger Frühhumanismus mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Streitigkeiten zwischen Konrad Wimpina und Martin Mellerstadt (Leipzig, 1899), Die Anfänge der Universität Frankfurt an der Oder (Berlin, 1900), 'Johannes Rhagius Aesticampianus in Krakau, seine erste Reise nach Italien und sein Aufenthalt in Mainz' in Archiv für Literaturgeschichte XII (1884), pp.321-370, 'Die Vertreibung des Johannes Rhagius Aesticampianus aus Leipzig' in Archiv für Literaturgeschichte XIII (1885), pp.1-33.

of the 'German Arch-humanist' Conrad Celtis, whose outspoken pro-German, anti-Italian stance has been described above.

The first record of Aesticampianus appears on 19th May 1491, in the matriculation register of the University of Krakow.⁵⁸ It was here that he became a pupil of Celtis, whom he would always regard as the ideal model of scholarship and poetry.⁵⁹ In Bologna, Aesticampianus emulated his former tutor and set an example for his future student, being crowned poet laureate in Rome by Pope Alexander VI.⁶⁰ In Strasbourg, he waded into Jakob Wimpfeling's quarrel with Thomas Murner, taking the side of the former.⁶¹ Both devout Catholics, Wimpfeling and Murner (b.1475, d.1537 in Alsace) attacked one another in print over Wimpfeling's Germania, in which Wimpfeling had tried to show that Alsace had never belonged to France. This episode was to be echoed years later, when Hutten famously spearheaded the defence by fellow-humanists of Johann Reuchlin against the attacks of the supporters of Johann Pfefferkorn.⁶² Teacher and pupil were equally willing to fight for oppressed colleagues, endangering their own reputations as a result.

Early in 1506, Aesticampianus took the opportunity to return home to Lusatia, arriving at the newly-founded University of Frankfurt-an-der-Oder as Professor of

⁵⁷ Hajo Holborn briefly mentions his teachings on morality and Tacitus, in Holborn, Hutten, pp.34 and 44, but nothing of the wider and longer-term effects on Hutten's development.

⁵⁸ Grimm, Heinrich, 'Johannes Rhagius Aesticampianus' in Neue Deutsche Biographie, Bd.I (Berlin 1953), p.92

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.92

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.92. A basic outline of Aesticampianus's career is also to be found in Lutz, 'Aesticampianus on Capella', pp. 165-166.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.92

⁶² For an account and analysis of the 'Reuchlin Controversy', see Rummel, Erika, The Case Against Johann Reuchlin (Toronto, 2002). Interestingly, she points out that Thomas Murner participated in this quarrel too, on the side of Reuchlin (p.125). For Hutten's contribution to the debate, see, for example, his satirical 'letters' in Letters of Obscure Men (trans. Francis Griffin Stokes, Philadelphia 1964).

Rhetoric and Poetry. By now, he was firmly established as a supporter of the humanist cause. Gustav Bauch gives an account of the opening of the university, full of ceremonial which was not only designed to impress, but also accorded Aesticampianus the place of honour which he loved and which Hutten would value even more highly.⁶³

The central characters in the university's official opening were Joachim I of Brandenburg, his brother Albrecht, and Johann Trithemius, at that time Abbot of Spanheim. Joachim and Trithemius had both been heavily involved in the founding of the university.⁶⁴ It is unclear from contemporary sources whether or not the university's chief founder, Eitelwolf von Stein (Hutten's leading patron during his years at Fulda), was present. The day would be significant for the young Hutten's future, not only in terms of his studies with Aesticampianus, but because the first ceremony of the day was Albrecht's ordination at the Marienkirche. Albrecht was then only fifteen years of age, but within eight years he would be the Archbishop of Mainz (in addition to holding several other high Church offices) and one of Hutten's most important patrons.⁶⁵

⁶³ Bauch, 'Die Vertreibung des Johannes Rhagius Aesticampianus aus Leipzig', pp. 2-3. See, for example, Hutten's delight in being awarded the poet's crown by Maximilian I, expressed in his letter to Conrad Peutinger of 25 May 1518, *Opera* I, pp.173-174.

⁶⁴ Joachim's role would be described by Publius Vigilantius Bacillarius Axungia, a witness of the events, in his book *Descriptio gymnasii*, referred to in greater detail below. Johann Trithemius's role is referred to in *Chronicon Trithemii Sponheimense ad annum 1506* (Frankfurt 1601), fol. I, 425. For further information on Trithemius, see also Arnold, Klaus, *Johannes Trithemius (1462-1516): Zweite, bibliographisch und überlieferungsgeschichtlich neu bearbeitete Auflage* (Würzburg, 1971, rev. ed. 1991), and Brann, Noel L., *The Abbot Trithemius (1462-1516): The Renaissance of Monastic Humanism* (Leiden, 1981). Albrecht is studied in: Jürgensmeier, Friedhelm (hg.), *Erzbischof Albrecht von Brandenburg 1490-1545 (Beiträge zur Mainzer Kirchengeschichte)* (Frankfurt am Main, 1991), Reber, Horst (hg.), *Albrecht von Brandenburg, Kurfürst, Erzkanzler, Kardinal 1490-1545: Zum 500. Geburtstag eines deutschen Renaissancefürsten* (Mainz, 1990), and Roesgen, Manfred von, *Kardinal Albrecht von Brandenburg: Ein Renaissancefürst auf dem Mainzer Bischofsthron* (Moers, 1980).

It was thanks to Aesticampianus's friendship with his fellow professor, Publius Vigilantius Bacillarius Axungia, that some of Hutten's earliest work became available to a wider audience. In 1507 Vigilantius published his book Descriptio gymnasii litterarii introductionis caeremoniarumque observatarum, to which Aesticampianus contributed an epigram. Further poetic contributions came from two young men whom Vigilantius describes as students of Aesticampianus: Ulrich von Hutten and Heinrich Brumann of Mainz.⁶⁶ Hajo Holborn points out that this was a normal way for a promising young scholar to break into print: he could fill any free pages in the work of an already distinguished author.⁶⁷

This contribution was such an early example of Hutten's work that it is the first item in the 'Poetry' volume of Böcking's great edition of his works. Simply entitled Uldaricus Huttenus Phagigena Rhagii Aesticampiani Discipulus ad Lectorem Huius Libri, it is an elegy in praise of the area around Frankfurt-an-der-Oder.⁶⁸ Hutten claims that this blessed spot exceeds even the fertile slopes of Greek myth in its fruitfulness. He continues:

'The inhabitants have an abundance of heavy grapes in the autumn, and a harvest of the finest fruits in late summer; one scarcely feels the cold winds

⁶⁵ Hutten wrote many pieces for Albrecht, reflecting the Archbishop's own glory and the wide range of artistic and scientific interests at his court. The best-known example is 'In laudem reverendissimi Alberthi Archiepiscopi Moguntini panegyricus', Opera III pp.343ff.

⁶⁶ Vigilantius's book is commented on by Gustav Bauch in 'Die Vertreibung des Aesticampianus aus Leipzig', pp.2-3. The full title of the book is Publii. Vigilantii. Bacillarii. Axungie poete et oratoris. Ad Illustrissimum principem Joachimum. Sacri Romani imperii Archicamerarium et Electorem Marchionem Brandenburgensem. Stettinensem. Pomeranie. Cassubie Schlaworumque ducem. Burggrauuim Nurembergensem ac Rugie principem. Franckphordiane urbis ad Oderam. Et Gymnasii litterarii introductionis. Ceremoniarumque observatarum descriptio. Exaratum in officina honorandi viri Conradi Baumgardt Rottenburgii in urbe Francphordiana ad Oderam. Anno ab Incarnatione Salvatoris nostri. M.D.vii. Idibus Februariis. Bauch believed the copy in the Breslau University Library to be unique.

⁶⁷ Holborn, Hutten, p.34

from the pine forests, in spring time the land overflows with newborn creatures. Cattle are farmed abundantly here, as on the shores of southern Greece. There are swift horses, and asses born to carry heavy burdens. The shepherd seeks after innumerable sheep in the pastures The wandering Oder has divided the rich earth, and filled it with fish'.⁶⁹

The Oder is favourably compared with several rivers of ancient civilizations, including the Xanthus, the Tiber and the Caystros.⁷⁰ It is even considered superior to the Pactolus, a Lydian river which supposedly carried grains of gold instead of sand along its bed.

This short poem reveals some interesting points about the young Hutten's early education and concerns. It is a polite, conventional piece of work, praising the environs of his new university, and showing no hint of the aggressive, obsessive patriotism which was to dominate all of his work in later years. It balances Heinrich Brumann's contribution to the same book, which concentrates more on the glories of studying at Frankfurt-an-der-Oder,⁷¹ and both poems are loaded with classical references: real and mythical rivers, the constellation Arctophylax, Mount Ida, Phoebus, Xenophon, Bacchus and Ceres all make an appearance. Both works are designed as a compliment, not only to the university, but also to Vigilantius. An examination of them lends support to Hajo Holborn's general assertion that Hutten's work at this time consisted of 'conventional school exercises'.⁷² It is, however, interesting to note the fact that Hutten prefers the river full of fish to the river full of

⁶⁸ *Opera* III, pp.5-6

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.5

⁷⁰ Located in Phrygia, Rome and Ephesus respectively.

⁷¹ Böcking includes this for interest and comparison in *Opera* III, p.7.

gold. This may merely be poetic exaggeration, or perhaps the beginning of Hutten's later attachment to simple German values – a theme that will emerge strongly in later chapters of this thesis. He would not attend Aesticampianus's lectures on Tacitus' *Germania* until 1509, when they were both at the University of Leipzig,⁷³ but in 1507 he may already have read the ancient work and been impressed by the qualities which Tacitus attributed to the German tribes. Tacitus would certainly have had the *Germani* favour fish over gold:

'Their foodstuffs are simple: wild fruit, fresh game, or curdled milk, and they satisfy hunger without fancy dishes or seasonings Owning and using (gold and silver) does not much impress them: among them one can see silver vases, given as presents to their envoys and leaders, held in as low esteem as those shaped from clay'.⁷⁴

The enormous influence of Tacitus' work on Hutten is considered in detail in chapter three. However, Hutten's confinement to conventional themes would continue for some time. In the same year, 1507, Aesticampianus himself gave Hutten a similar opportunity, asking him to contribute to a new edition of the *De Grammatica* of Martianus Capella.⁷⁵ The *De Grammatica* was a fifth-century encyclopedia of the seven liberal arts: a difficult text which scholars had long tried to annotate and explain. At least three authors in the ninth century had struggled with close

⁷² Holborn, *Hutten*, p.35

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.44

⁷⁴ Tacitus, *Germania*, trans. J.B. Rives (Oxford, 1999), pp. 79, 86

⁷⁵ *Grammatica Martiani Foelicis Capellae cum Iohannis Rhagii Aesticampiani Rhetoris et poete prefatione* (Frankfurt-an-der-Oder: Nicolaus Lamparter and Balthasar Murrer, 1507). The book is located in the Munich University Library.

examinations of the text.⁷⁶ Aesticampianus's version included only the material on grammar, omitting the complicated allegorical setting, and was intended to further the education of his nephews (it is dedicated to 'Georgi et Iohannes nepotes mei charissimi').⁷⁷ Hutten's contribution consists of an elegiac poem exhorting the boys to study the liberal arts: Ulrici Hutteni ad studiosos adulescentes de liberalibus studiis Elegiaca exhortatio.⁷⁸ Again, it is a standard work on a standard theme, praising learning with frequent references to classical models. The only way in which Hutten can be differentiated from other young German scholars in 1507 is in being outstandingly good at the normal exercises. Without exceptional ability, he could not have been singled out for support by either Vigilantius or Aesticampianus.

In 1507, then, Hutten was an excellent pupil but showed no other extraordinary features. Indeed, as late as 1511, the same concerns can be seen in his work: his De Arte Versificatoria is praised by later historians for its quality, but none claim any originality in its subject-matter.⁷⁹ From Aesticampianus he had so far received instruction in a variety of classical works, and, as Holborn puts it, 'a better grounding in rhetoric and moral philosophy'.⁸⁰ This was an education that could have been offered by many other teachers of the time, but Aesticampianus was to go further, and his particular interests and emphases would be echoed and, sometimes, developed in Hutten's later work. Holborn comments on the very practical streak which runs

⁷⁶ Lutz, Cora E., 'Aesticampianus' Commentary on the *De Grammatica* of Martianus Capella' in Renaissance Quarterly 26 (1973), pp.157-158

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.158

⁷⁸ This is the title ascribed to it by Lutz, above, but it appears to be the same work as that entitled 'Ulrichi Hutteni adolescentis de virtute elegiaca exhortatio', Opera III, pp.8-10.

⁷⁹ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ulrici Hutteni De Arte Versificatoria Carmen Heroicum ad Ioannem et Alexandrum Osthensios Pomeranos incipit' (1511), in Opera III, pp.93-106. See Holborn, Hutten, p.35, Bursian, C., Geschichte der klassischen Philologie in Deutschland (Munich, 1883), p.130 and Kalkoff, Paul, Huttens Vagantenzeit und Untergang (Weimar, 1925), p.118. Brief comments on Hutten's works 1507-1511 are also to be found in Flake, Otto, Ulrich von Hutten (Berlin, 1929), p.59.

⁸⁰ Holborn, Hutten, p.34

through Aesticampianus's work. For him, secular and theological learning served the same purpose: Church Fathers such as Jerome, Ambrose and Augustine were teachers of morality. The scholastics he saw as hairsplitters who wasted time on artificial debates when they should be thinking of the duties of life. Holborn summarises:

'Not only was he a poet seeking a place beside the theologians at the university, but also a lay Christian asserting his independence of the sacerdotal. The priest for him was a hypocrite; scholasticism was superstition'.⁸¹

The same could well be said of Hutten later in his career. His criticisms of the clergy, his harsh treatment of theology-bound scholastic thinkers, and his practical approach to solving Germany's problems, all seem likely to have stemmed from the time he spent with first Mutianus, and then Aesticampianus, in his formative years.

An interesting example of Aesticampianus's approach to philosophy is his edition of the Tabula attributed to Cebes, a friend of Socrates. Heinrich Grimm sees Aesticampianus's chief claim to fame as being the introduction of the Tabula to the northern lands.⁸² He published an edition in Frankfurt in 1507, when it proved so popular that it was reprinted in Leipzig in 1512.⁸³ The Tabula is in the form of a dialogue, a literary form later favoured by Hutten, which Lutz describes as 'a kind of proto-*Pilgrim's Progress*'.⁸⁴ The publication of Aesticampianus's version of this dialogue is likely to have made a lasting impression on Hutten. This was a time when

⁸¹ Ibid., p.34

⁸² Grimm, 'Johannes Rhagius Aesticampianus', p.92

⁸³ Lutz, Cora E., 'Aesticampianus' Edition of the Tabula Attributed to Cebes' in Lutz, Cora E., Essays on Manuscripts and Rare Books, pp.79-86 (Hamden, 1975) p.79

he was closely involved with Aesticampianus, publishing work at his invitation. Indeed, the Tabula would have been close to his heart as he contributed another Elegiaca Exhortatio to his tutor's edition,⁸⁵ and, as the book proved immensely popular, it provided wide circulation of Hutten's early work. The classical setting of the Tabula and the personification of virtues and vices were used to great effect by Hutten later in his career. Two examples, his dialogues Arminius and Bulla vel Bullicida, are examined in detail in chapters three and five.

Just as important to Hutten as the publishing opportunities and humanist teaching available to him at Frankfurt-an-der-Oder, was undoubtedly Aesticampianus's friendly and fatherly attitude to his favourite students. This went a step further than Mutianus's offer of his 'beata tranquillitas' as an occasional refuge for Erfurt students. Aesticampianus's edition of the Tabula was dedicated to Christoph Ziegler, a wealthy and beloved pupil, and apparently one of several who actually lived in Aesticampianus's house and studied the works of Sallust, Virgil, Cicero and others 'both day and night'.⁸⁶ In the dedication of the De Grammatica to his nephews, Aesticampianus had also referred to the noble and eloquent young men at this house, who lived in the same room, ate at the same table, and studied together.⁸⁷ It is not known how or where Hutten lived during his years at Frankfurt-an-der-Oder, but, given the way in which Aesticampianus repeatedly singled out his works, it would be surprising if he were not among the favoured ones who lodged with his tutor. Aesticampianus's care of, and interest in, his students, must have been very welcome

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.80

⁸⁵ Bauch, 'Die Vertreibung des Johannes Rhagius Aesticampianus aus Leipzig', p.5

⁸⁶ Aesticampianus makes this claim in his dedication to the Tabula. See Bauch, 'Die Vertreibung des Johannes Rhagius Aesticampianus aus Leipzig', p.5, and Lutz, 'Aesticampianus' Edition of the Tabula', p. 84.

⁸⁷ Bauch, 'Die Vertreibung des Johannes Rhagius Aesticampianus aus Leipzig', p.5

to Hutten at a time when his own father had cut off all means of support and proved unable to understand Hutten's intellectual interests. It is no wonder that Hutten took his lessons to heart, and imitated not only his tutor's academic stance but also, as this chapter will show, his tendency to self-importance and his aggrieved sense of being wronged by those around him.

However, the new university of Frankfurt-an-der-Oder, founded chiefly upon Eitelwolf von Stein's eagerness to promote humanist learning, and so keenly embraced by Aesticampianus and Hutten, would not fulfill their expectations. Upon the death of Stein in 1515, Hutten wrote to Jacob Fuchs, recalling Stein's admiration for Aesticampianus ('Ioannem Rhagium venerabilem patrem salutabat'),⁸⁸ and his disillusionment with his experiment at Frankfurt-an-der-Oder:

'He admitted to me that he blamed himself that Margrave Joachim was ever appointed to the university of Frankfurt-an-der-Oder through his advice, because it would be distinguished ... by the possession of unlearned "learned men", not learned in Greek and Latin.'⁸⁹

Stein's distress was matched by that of Aesticampianus and Hutten. Aesticampianus and like-minded colleagues found themselves heavily outnumbered by lecturers with a more traditional, 'scholastic' approach to education. The high reputation for interpreting the classics, which Aesticampianus had established in Mainz, was of little use in Frankfurt-an-der-Oder.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ulrichus de Hutten Eq. Germanus Iacobo Fuchs ecclesiarum Bambergensis et Herbipolensis Canonico amico salutem', in *Opera* I (1515), pp.40-45

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁹⁰ Bauch, 'Die Vertreibung des Aesticampianus aus Leipzig', p.6

The problem seems to have been similar to the one Hutten witnessed at Erfurt. There is no evidence of actual hostility towards humanism at Frankfurt-an-der-Oder – indeed, the prompt appointment of Aesticampianus and Vigilantius shows that, in accordance with Stein's wishes, the 'new learning' was welcome. However, most members of staff still chose to see it as an ornament to the curriculum rather than an essential component. Possibly, as Overfield suggests, the fear that humanism could be a threat to the old ways was beginning to grow,⁹¹ but inertia and inflexibility are more likely to have been problems for Aesticampianus. The official records of the university's early years have been lost, but it appears to have been modelled on Leipzig. The rector, Konrad Wimpina, was a Leipzig theologian who recruited most of the initial staff from his old university.⁹² Naturally enough, familiar administrative and teaching methods were imported too, and so, despite Stein's original vision, the staff and structure of the new university would perpetuate old attitudes and problems. Many humanist courses were offered, but there was little recognition for those who gave them.

The problem was not confined to Frankfurt an der Oder. The slightly earlier foundation of Wittenberg, in 1502, suffered similar difficulties. The university was new, but, under the leadership of Martin Polich (Leipzig physician) and Johann von Staupitz (a Tübingen theologian), the degree requirements remained exactly as they had been in Germany for over a century. Far from being a bold venture, the two new

⁹¹ Overfield, *Humanism and Scholasticism*, p.217

⁹² *Ibid.*, p.215

universities have been described as ‘in a sense the last expression of Germany’s scholastic age’.⁹³

It was a familiar and frustrating problem for Aesticampianus, who advertised the humanist cause so energetically. So, less than two years after the triumphal opening procession, he chose to leave, and in the winter semester of 1507-1508, took up the post of *professor rhetoricae artis* at the University of Leipzig. Very importantly, his favoured pupil Hutten went with him. The fact that Hutten moved at the same time is more than coincidence. It serves to emphasise both Hutten’s growing attachment to specifically humanist studies, and his personal admiration of Aesticampianus. Pushed away from scholasticism and towards humanism by Mutianus Rufus, Hutten had by this time made an irrevocable choice: for humanism, with all that it represented in the German-speaking lands, no matter how uncertain its future appeared at the time.

Leipzig and Greifswald

Aesticampianus’s time in Leipzig has been closely studied by Gustav Bauch.⁹⁴ His work reveals that Aesticampianus found Leipzig an even more oppressive environment than Frankfurt-an-der-Oder (which is, perhaps, unsurprising, given that the inflexible approach to humanism at Frankfurt had been imported from Leipzig). His students apparently followed his lectures with enthusiasm, but his colleagues in the faculties of Theology, Law, Medicine and Philosophy were less impressed. They distrusted his modern interests and, very likely, resented his implied criticism of their own, more traditional, teaching methods.

⁹³ Ibid., pp.211-212

In fact, Aesticampianus had arrived at a university which had been experiencing some friction between humanists and scholastics for several years. A salaried lecturer in poetry, Hermann von dem Busche, had left in 1505 amid controversy and resentment and was replaced by Aesticampianus in 1508.⁹⁵ According to the senate's records, Busche had been fined for constantly insulting the rector, other lecturers, and students. Now he moved on to create problems with scholastics in other universities – a disreputable example of humanism.⁹⁶ The established staff at Leipzig were almost sure to treat his humanist replacement with reservations, and even with suspicion. Hutten, as Aesticampianus's favoured student, and as a knight like Busche (who would later actually become his friend and co-author – see The Letters of Obscure Men, below) could expect no better reception.

In a provocative manner which foreshadowed Hutten's own insensitivity – or, perhaps, his willingness to look for a fight – Aesticampianus published an edition of Jerome's letters upon his arrival, in which he criticised contemporary theologians. Overfield speculates that it was Aesticampianus himself who prompted the anti-humanist measures which were soon taken by the dean of arts.⁹⁷ The dean, and other long-established members of the university, claimed:

⁹⁴ See Bauch, 'Die Vertreibung des Aesticampianus aus Leipzig', and Bauch, Gustav, Geschichte des Leipziger Frühhumanismus (Leipzig, 1899).

⁹⁵ Overfield, Humanism and Scholasticism, p.227

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.236-237. In 1507 Busche was instrumental in increasing humanist-scholastic tensions at Erfurt, where he began to lecture on the *ars poetica*, beginning with the Aeneid. He was criticised for his 'outrageous boasting' and 'frivolous and shameful talk', and when he left early in 1508 the dean wrote 'again he has disappeared, for our people could hardly stand such a fellow'. See Kleineidam, Universitas Studii Effordiensis II (Leipzig, 1969), pp.186-187. By 1508 Busche was in his mid-thirties and rarely sober: see Overfield, Humanism and Scholasticism, p.237. Busche's friend the abbot Trithemius had written a letter warning him of the consequences of his behaviour in 1506, the text of which is reproduced in Liessem, Hermann J., Hermann von dem Busche (Nieuwkoop, 1965), p.26.

⁹⁷ Aesticampianus, Septem divi Hieronymi epistole cum Johanni Aesticampiani epistola et Sapphico Carmine (Leipzig, 1508), and Overfield, Humanism and Scholasticism, p. 228

‘the foreign poets as well as masters not enrolled in or obedient to the faculty of arts have like an epidemic privately and publicly taught all hours of the day, whenever it pleased them’.⁹⁸

Given his hospitality and self-avowed habit of teaching day and night while at Frankfurt-an-der-Oder, it must be assumed that Aesticampianus was one of the chief offenders in this respect.

Disagreement between Aesticampianus and the traditionalists reached its peak in 1511 when the university staff collectively refused Aesticampianus a lecture room for his new-fangled course of poetry and classical grammar, in which he almost certainly derided the corrupt Latin spoken by his colleagues. Aesticampianus decided to leave.⁹⁹ No doubt the other lecturers had reason to feel aggrieved – in none of his work does Aesticampianus appear modest or inclined to meet other scholars halfway, and no doubt he often gave offence. However, this did not stop Aesticampianus from appearing as the injured party in a very bitter farewell speech to his pupils. In this speech, he recounted the many injustices he had suffered, and told his colleagues just how he despised them. Hutten was not present during this crisis, having already moved on from Leipzig. However, he was aware of the dispute, and his dramatic reaction is detailed below.

⁹⁸ Overfield, *Humanism and Scholasticism*, p.229

⁹⁹ This story is told in Bauch, *Geschichte des Leipziger Frühhumanismus*, pp.172-182.

A copy of the speech is held in the University Library at Cambridge.¹⁰⁰ It reflects Aesticampianus's choice of friends at the time, as this is the copy which he dedicated to Hutten's close friend Crotus Rubeanus. The title page bears the affectionate handwritten inscription:

κροτω τω ρουβιανω των φιλων φιλτατω ειζ του αυτου ταζ χειραζ.¹⁰¹

The short preface is in verse:

'O truth, you are invisible to mortal men. The ghost of Aesticampianus addresses Leipzig. My spirit could naturally gnash its teeth: it deems it unfair that I should be sentenced to exile. The cause was truth: delight in justice must be bewailed, for it is unremitting hatred which begets this ... Thus a lecture was for me fate's most tragic disaster.'¹⁰²

The bulk of the oration complains of his many hardships, and those of his predecessors:

'You hunted Conrad Celtis as a fiend, you tormented Hermann von dem Busche and expelled him, and now you have made war on Aesticampianus, with all kinds of intrigues'.

¹⁰⁰ Rhagius, Jo. Aesticampianus, (Sommerfeld), Oratio Lypsi Aesticampianum Rhetorem et Poetam Laureatum virum undecumque doctissimum; ob quam ad decennium relegatus Anno salutis 1511. Hanc, lege, quicumque est lector, et lecta sententiam estimabis. Impressum spire ex emendatione Rotorodami iunioris. (speier, Conr. Hist., 1512). In a letter to the University Library, which is kept with the book, the donor (E.P. Goldschmidt, an antiquarian book dealer) states that this may be the only extant copy. He refers to Bauch's Geschichte des Leipziger Frühhumanismus, but the article 'Die Vertreibung des Aesticampianus aus Leipzig' shows that Goldschmidt was mistaken in supposing that Bauch had never had access to the text of this speech.

From the known abrasiveness and arrogance of Celtis and, especially, Busche, it is clear that Aesticampianus is exaggerating. It is the kind of device which Hutten would use repeatedly and with great effect (see his Lötze Philippics, below).

The drama of the preface continues, with many humanist asides to the work of Horace, Cicero and Tacitus to lend credibility to Aesticampianus's claims. However, it is almost at the end of the speech that Aesticampianus made the deliberately offensive remarks which would infuriate every faculty in the university:

'The theologians are known as good men, who no more despise the verses of the poets than the Pharisees despised sin.¹⁰³ Who could deny this? But I ask you, tell me, why do they summon other sinners and tax collectors¹⁰⁴ to their banquet, but never invite poets to lunch? Do they fear, for example, that they would be deprived of too much of the best food and drink? What should they eat? The poets should live on peas and black bread. But we wish to dismiss that without criticism, so that they might not be angry with you, nor treat us badly – for they have the power to deny the Cross or to nail themselves to it, just as they wish.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ 'To Crotus Rubeanus, the dearest of friends, into your own hands (I give this book).'

¹⁰² Ibid., p.1

¹⁰³ The Biblical reference should be straightforward: as priests, the Pharisees loudly despised sin. But the choice of the word 'Pharisees' lifts this above an accusation of disliking poetry, and compares the theologians directly with priests whose behaviour is always associated with opposition to Christ and to the way of life which He taught. See, for example, the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:10-14), and Christ's warning to his disciples, 'Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy', (Luke 12:1).

¹⁰⁴ In the Bible, a class despised by everybody. See the parable with the Pharisee, mentioned above, and Christ's meal with 'many tax collectors and sinners, (Matthew 9:9-13).

¹⁰⁵ Aesticampianus accuses the theologians of supporting or denying Scripture, as it suits them.

Then there are the lawyers, who, although knowing how to behave correctly, seldom actually do so. The poets, who do not teach their students old wives' tales (dreadfully explained), but skilfully make them understand the law, are not permitted in their lecture hall, still less brought into their banquet. But that must be let pass, too, for they can both set free and condemn.

The members of the Faculty of Medicine are next, who actually have invited the poets, but not out of the slightest affection – instead, out of sheer boastfulness that they were seated higher up, with the filth of Medicine's kitchen standing right next to our divine and holy poetry. And this is despite the fact that, in Rome, poetry was always taken seriously, and the Greek art was really never practised.¹⁰⁶ But we wish to leave them, too, so that they can either nurse their drinks or send them down to Hades.¹⁰⁷

That leaves the philosophers, who have sometimes heard me kindly, and sometimes deeply despised me. The former group, however, was very small, and the latter very big. But I thank them all, either because they have once invited me to lunch, or because they have driven me, through their jealousy and their disparagement to righteous living – and, occasionally, to a strongly phrased speech.¹⁰⁸

The speech is typical of humanist work in its inclusion of many Biblical and Christian references, but its particularly harsh language and cruel treatment of its subjects is not

¹⁰⁶ A reference to ancient Rome, so beloved of the humanists. By 'the Greek art' we are to understand 'medicine' and the reliance placed by Romans on Greek doctors.

¹⁰⁷ The Greek god of the Underworld, or the Underworld itself.

¹⁰⁸ Aesticampianus, *Oratio Lypsi Esticampianum*, p.6

so common. It will later be shown that Hutten often took a similar approach in his own work, suggesting a strong degree of influence from his teacher. The insults are carefully constructed: the theologians live in a way directly opposed to Christ's teachings, the lawyers cannot interpret the simplest story for their students, the doctors live dissolute lives, and the philosophers (who get off relatively lightly, presumably because some of them were kind) cannot agree upon a sensible and consistent view. Further insults are added by Aesticampianus's pretended fear of saying too much: the theologians and the lawyers, in particular, could jump either way when faced with a decision. To suit their own purposes, the theologians will either deny the Cross or nail themselves to it, and the lawyers will freely release someone or condemn him. These accusations prefigure many remarks made by Hutten in his later outbursts against the priesthood and lawyers.¹⁰⁹

Aesticampianus's former colleagues were enraged. Not content with his departure, they obtained the assistance of Herzog Georg von Sachsen in banning him from the university and from the town itself for a period of ten years.¹¹⁰ A few lines from the statutes of the University of Leipzig are affixed to the end of the published speech, supposedly showing that such a ban was illegal even if Aesticampianus had been offensive: the maximum penalty for an 'injuria vel verb vel facto facta' being a fine of four grossi.¹¹¹ The 'sentence of exile' mentioned in the preface must also relate to the ban which followed the delivery of the speech. By the time of publication, the focus of Aesticampianus's complaints had changed. He was no longer merely speaking of

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, 'Hulderichi Hutteni equitis Germani Vadiscus Dialogus qui et Trias Romana inscribitur', *Opera* IV, pp.149-264.

¹¹⁰ A detailed account of the expulsion process is contained in Bauch, 'Die Vertreibung des Johannes Rhagius Aesticampianus aus Leipzig'. See also Lutz, 'Aesticampianus on Capella', p.166, and Grimm, 'Johannes Rhagius Aesticampianus', p.92.

¹¹¹ Bauch, 'Die Vertreibung des Johannes Rhagius Aesticampianus aus Leipzig', p.7

unfair treatment by less learned colleagues, but had succeeded in portraying the whole matter as a fight against gross injustice.

Two years earlier, in Greifswald, Hutten had done something similar. He had left Leipzig early in 1509, going first to Greifswald and then to Rostock and Wittenberg. Whether his departure was caused by expulsion from the university, a desire for a wider range of influences, or impatience with the narrow-minded Leipzig staff, we cannot say. However, when he left he had no obvious means of support, and was taken in by Greifswald's professor of law, Henning Lötze. Hutten had only been living with the Lötze family for a few months when he left as a result of a serious quarrel with his hosts. Holborn speculates that he had promised to pay them rent, but never did. Certainly, when he fled to Rostock, they kept his books and clothes in lieu of payment.¹¹²

Hutten's response was the publication of the Lötze Philippics in 1510, a series of poems addressed to a number of prominent people, which set out Hutten's side of the quarrel at great length.¹¹³ It was a detailed and vicious attack on the family which had sheltered him, and, as Holborn points out, it reveals Hutten as 'one who could turn the molehills of his life into mountains and charge up and down them with foaming steed'.¹¹⁴ In this insistence on making large issues out of small ones, and dragging the rest of the world into his personal affairs, his behaviour was very similar to that of Aesticampianus. After his expulsion from Leipzig, not content with insulting his colleagues himself and then encouraging his friends to do so, Aesticampianus even

¹¹² Holborn, Hutten, p.37

¹¹³ 'Ulrici Hutteni Equestris Ordinis Poetae in Wedegum Loetz Consulem Gripswaldensem in Pomerania et Filium Eius Henningum utr. Iuris Doctorem Querelarum Libri Duo pro Insigni quadam Iniuria sibi ab Illis Facta', Opera III, pp.19ff

travelled to Rome to appeal to the Pope for justice: all for a quarrel which had apparently begun with the refusal of a room in which to lecture.¹¹⁵

The similarity of temperament between Hutten and Aesticampianus is very noticeable. Both were prepared to savage their acquaintances' characters, at length and in print, on the basis of a personal quarrel. The kind of invective which they use is by no means rare in Renaissance literature – Erasmus, for example, was willing to defend himself very strongly and insistently – but the author usually had better cause than this.¹¹⁶ It seems probable that Hutten acquired some of his feeling of self-importance and love of melodrama from Aesticampianus. However, just as Aesticampianus's pretended fear of the staff at Leipzig would be eclipsed by the genuine cause for fear which Hutten would later have, so Aesticampianus's attack on his colleagues would be a small matter compared with Hutten's later work. For Aesticampianus, the Leipzig speech, with all its pettiness, was the most dramatic point in his career. For Hutten, the Lötze Philippics were only the beginning. He would later take the same approach, but with greater poetical maturity and a more serious subject, when he wrote against Duke Ulrich von Württemberg, who had murdered his cousin, Hans von Hutten.¹¹⁷ Hutten broadened his horizons by personifying Fortuna as having a role in the affairs of nations in his epigrams to the

¹¹⁴ Holborn, Hutten, p.37

¹¹⁵ For the appeal to the Pope, see Overfield, Humanism and Scholasticism, p.241.

¹¹⁶ See, for example, Erasmus, Desiderius, 'Spongia Erasmi adversus Aspergines Hutteni' (1523), in Opera II, pp.265-324, written as a savage refutation of Hutten's accusations at the end of Hutten's life. The most important of these accusations was that Erasmus had initially supported Luther and now treacherously sought to combat the cause of Christ. See Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ulrichi ab Hutten cum Erasmo Roterodamo Presbytero Theologo Expostulatio' (1523), in Opera II, pp.180-248. This is another example of Hutten's work which was translated into German in order to reach as many people as possible. Erasmus urgently defended himself against both charges. The 'Expostulatio' and the 'Spongia' are both translated, with a commentary, in Klawiter, Randolph J., The Polemics of Erasmus of Rotterdam and Ulrich von Hutten (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1977).

¹¹⁷ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'In Ulrichum Wirtenpergenssem orationes quinque', in Opera V, pp.1ff

Emperor Maximilian in 1512-13¹¹⁸ – a device he would continue to use in his later political writing – rather than a role in his own small affairs, as he had done in the Lötze Philippics. His literary efforts would gradually be turned towards wider issues, in a way that Aesticampianus's were not. Although he remained capable of pettiness to the end of his life, Hutten outgrew his tutor. He would not stop at the poetic exercises and personal pride learnt from Aesticampianus, but would build on those exercises and extend the idea of pride to pride in the potential German nation. The quarrels would be about something bigger than himself and bigger than the importance of humanist lectures. The calls for support from his friends would be real ones, and the enemies would be mortal.

The Letters of Obscure Men

For the present, however, just as Aesticampianus had once defended Jakob Wimpfeling, his friends now defended him. They included the publisher of the farewell speech, Johannes Philomusus, the knight and like-minded humanist Hermann von dem Busche, and Hutten himself.¹¹⁹ Despite his earlier departure from Leipzig, Hutten's loyalty to his old teacher was undiminished. In a dispute which lived on for years, Hutten, Crotus Rubeanus and Hermann von dem Busche made their contribution in the famous satire Letters of Obscure Men.¹²⁰ Published in 1515-16, the Letters are best known for their contribution to the defence of Johann Reuchlin

¹¹⁸ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ad Caesarem Maximilianum epigrammatum liber unus', in Opera III, pp.205ff

¹¹⁹ Busche, who had left Leipzig under such a cloud, was a member of the circle of knights who supported Martin Luther, which also included Hutten and Franz von Sickingen. See chapter five.

¹²⁰ The edition used here is Ulrich von Hutten and Others, Letters of Obscure Men, trans. Francis Griffin Stokes, introduction by Hajo Holborn (Philadelphia, 1964). Hermann von dem Busche's contribution is probably limited to the last two letters, and to overseeing the book's publication, which he managed to do in Cologne itself. *Ibid.*, p.xiii

against the attacks of Johannes Pfefferkorn and the University of Cologne,¹²¹ but there is also space for satirical attacks on the opponents of Jakob Wimpfeling (see above) and Aesticampianus. The range of quarrels addressed by the Letters shows that this was a work designed not so much to defend Reuchlin in particular, as to expose the general stupidity and intolerance towards humanist study displayed by many scholars at the time. Describing it as ‘the contribution of sixteenth-century German humanism to the great satires of world literature’, Holborn summarises its attraction and merit:

‘Seldom has human stupidity among scholars been so wittily depicted and a degenerate philosophy so cleverly held up to ridicule’.¹²²

The letters are addressed to Ortwin Gratius, a member of the arts faculty at the University of Cologne, who led the university’s attack on Reuchlin.¹²³ Like the supposed letter-writers, he is made to look ridiculous by the letters’ exaggerated and petty content. Letter XVII is said to be from Magister Johann Hipp, who was involved in the expulsion of Aesticampianus from Leipzig,¹²⁴ and who would also be the butt of Crotus and Hutten’s satire. An extract reads:

‘You shall have it in a nutshell. There was a poet here, calling himself Joannes Aesticampianus – a bumptious fellow, ever girding at the Masters of Arts, and decrying them in his lectures. He would dub them dunces, and aver that one Poet was worth ten Masters, and that Poets should always take precedence of Masters and Licentiates in processions ... But the Magisters

¹²¹ For a detailed examination of the feud, see Rummel, Erika, The Case Against Johann Reuchlin (Toronto, 1992).

¹²² Hutten et al., Letters of Obscure Men, p.vii

¹²³ See Rummel, The Case Against Johann Reuchlin, pp.20, 109-122.

bided their time, to avenge themselves by the help of the Lord. And by the Lord's will, at last he made a speech, and railed at the Magisters, and the Doctors, and the Licentiates and the Bachelors, and extolled his own Faculty, and reviled sacred Theology.

Thereupon mighty indignation arose among the heads of the Faculty. And the Masters and Doctors took counsel together, saying, "What shall we do? For this man hath done many notable things; and if we send him away, all men will believe that he is more learned than we. And mayhap the Moderns will come and say that their way is better than that of the Ancients, and our University will be defamed, and will become a laughing-stock ...

Then the fellow put in an appearance – an advocate with him – and made as though he would defend himself, nor was he without friends to support him, but the Masters told them to stand aside, if they would not commit perjury in opposing the University. And the Masters waxed valiant in fight, and stuck to their guns, and swore they would spare nobody – for justice's sake.'¹²⁵

The Letters of Obscure Men marks a stage in Hutten's literary development which would soon be over. This joint effort with Crotus and Busche came several years after the conventional poems written for inclusion in other authors' books. Hutten was now (1515-16) becoming well-known as an author in his own right, and there are suggestions in the Letters of his developing political concerns. Holborn claims that Hutten's contributions (mostly in Part Two of the Letters) show that 'this humanist in

¹²⁴ See Bauch, 'Die Vertreibung des Aesticampianus aus Leipzig,' p.25.

armour did not merely wish to rise in laughter above his literary adversaries, as Crotus Rubeanus did, but wanted to smash the public enemies'.¹²⁶ It is unclear whether Hutten or Crotus was personally responsible for the letter written in defence of Aesticampianus, although the letter belongs to a section chiefly authored by Crotus. Despite the differences which were emerging in their priorities, however, the Letters were jointly undertaken with the same aim in mind: the public ridicule of pompous figures through humour. This was the point at which Hutten's literary abilities were highly developed and widely recognised. In the near future (15th August 1517) he would be crowned poet laureate by the Emperor Maximilian I, but he was still able to raise genuine laughter. Erasmus himself was very amused by some early examples of the Letters, although he was ultimately dismayed by the licentiousness of the whole book. Luther was to call the unknown author of the Letters 'a clown'.¹²⁷

This phase in Hutten's development, in which he deliberately made his point through humour, was soon over. 1516 would also see the publication of his Italiae Ficticia, the heart-rending poem in which Italy begs Maximilian to free her from oppressive upstart rulers, and drama rather than humour became the norm in Hutten's writing.¹²⁸ The potentially humorous elements are turned instead towards biting sarcasm, marking Hutten's gradual descent into disillusionment with the Church, his Emperor, and his fellow countrymen. This very important transition from eager young poet to despairing cynic is reflected in Hutten's later work, and is illustrated in chapters three, four and five.

¹²⁵ Hutten et al., Letters of Obscure Men, pp.36-37

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.xiii

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.xiii-xiv

Conclusion

By the time Hutten had completed his studies at the German universities, he had witnessed vital years in the development of humanism in the northern universities. This was the period during which it perceptibly began to change from a peripheral, tolerated form of education, into a potential threat to the established order. Concerns were growing over the liberties which humanist scholars were taking with Biblical texts. Personal quarrels were blown up out of all proportion, encouraging a reputation for the humanists as troublemakers and for the scholastics as narrow-minded old men. The work of Conrad Celtis and his followers had begun to establish a very important distinguishing feature of German humanism: its strong anti-Italian element.

Hutten's own personality and experience had developed considerably, and had done so in very specific directions. He had made a wide circle of friends, some of whom would remain loyal for the rest of his life. He had bound himself to the humanist cause, and been exposed to radical religious and political notions. He had become a respected Latin poet, and learnt to use humour and aggression in order to make his point. He had started to become known for his outspokenness and action on behalf of others as well as himself. These are all now recognisable as defining characteristics of Hutten: evidence of them appears in all his written work, as this and later chapters demonstrate. The university years were crucial in shaping the Hutten who would take a central role in the events of 1519 and 1520.

¹²⁸ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Epistola ad Maximilianum Caesarem, Italiae Ficticia Huldericho de Hutten Equite Authore' (1516), in *Opera* I, pp.106-113

After university, Hutten's life would not follow a normal path. He would not become a lecturer or an administrator, or even a lawyer (as his father at last came to hope). A diplomatic role for the Archbishop of Mainz would not last for long. Instead, he was condemned by the Pope for his religious views, abandoned by the Emperor in his nationalist hopes, and led a hopeless revolt against princely authority. In fact, the years he spent at university account to a large degree for Hutten's experiences. He was unusual in the amount of travelling he undertook, and so was buffeted by many conflicting views. As was customary for him, he reacted to them *all*, never settling contentedly to just one course of study or set of values. He was therefore exposed to the full complexities of a very complex time, tried to reconcile them all (as later chapters will show), and inevitably failed. He was also in the unique position of being the favoured student of Aesticampianus, and thus being set the example of his extreme reactions to circumstances and an exaggerated sense of self-importance. Yet Hutten's character-forming experience of university cannot be viewed in isolation. Although the universities appear to mark a completely new phase for Hutten, in fact they are closely connected to his earlier experience in four crucial ways: education, the Roman faith, patronage and friendship.

In 1505, education and the Roman faith were subjects in which Hutten already had a better grounding than most. His experience of it also had a very specific slant. His education consisted of traditional subjects taught at the monastery school. Most humanist influences apparently came from outside – from connections with the University of Erfurt and from visiting patrons, at least one of whom, Hutten claimed, argued with the abbot for Hutten's right to a broad humanist education. The wide range of subjects taught at the universities, and the world in which his patrons moved,

were unattainable to a novice, and very likely seemed exotic and desirable. This is all the more probable given Hutten's admission that the monastic life did not suit him (see chapter one). It is not surprising that he threw himself into the full range of university education with an enthusiasm missing from a student with a secular background. He was not merely studying for a degree in order to gain an administrative post. He had chosen this life over the monastery, denying parental and religious authority in the process, and it mattered above everything else.

Similarly, Hutten's time at Fulda presumably added an intensity to Hutten's religious stance which was missing from that of secular students. He had lived for six formative years with the beliefs and rituals of the Roman Church as the unquestioned centre of his daily routine. Soon after entering university, he was confronted with the unorthodox ideas of Mutianus Rufus and the criticisms of the Church levelled by Erasmus and others. No matter that they were still faithful members of the Church; these were ideas which Hutten never encountered at Fulda, and they were contrary to everything he had been taught. Hutten knew his duty to the Church, and he knew the serious consequences of papal condemnation all too well. His decision to follow Luther was not taken lightly, and his knowledge of what he had done – and his need to be right about it - increased the savagery with which he would attack the Papacy and the Church.

The patronage which Hutten received as a poet also had its roots in Fulda. It was through Eitelwolf von Stein that he met many of the most important figures in his life, and, in particular, it was probably out of regard for Stein that he attended the new university of Frankfurt-an-der-Oder, where he encountered Aesticampianus. Stein

would also be influential in obtaining Hutten one of his most valuable pieces of patronage: a post at the court of Albrecht of Mainz.¹²⁹

However, friendship was the central feature of Hutten's unique career at university, and, in understanding Hutten's friendships with individuals and his notion of friendship in general, we must again look back to Fulda and to his family. Throughout his career at the German universities, Hutten struggled with poverty, despite the impressive wealth of his family. Angered by his son's departure from Fulda, his father refused him any means of support. Crotus Rubeanus tried to intercede for him, asking both Ulrich senior and the abbot of Fulda for help on Hutten's behalf. His letter to Hutten of 3rd February 1511 recounts his efforts, praising Hutten, beseeching, quarrelling, but all to no avail.¹³⁰ The result of abandonment by family and by monastery meant that Hutten had a clear idea of his true friends. Like Crotus, they were all humanist students, teachers or patrons. In later years, Hutten would be on good terms with his brothers (see chapter five), but for now, without the ties to family and childhood friends which others usually had, Hutten took his humanist friends completely to heart. His ready involvement in their quarrels resulted largely from his devotion to them and to their causes. University was not merely a means of obtaining a position, or even a vocation: it was much more than that. University, and the people in it, became central to Hutten's life. During these years, it meant more than being a Hutten or a member of the Church. Lacking support from elsewhere, he plunged completely into the humanist world, sparing nothing.

¹²⁹ Holborn, *Hutten*, p.49

¹³⁰ Rubeanus, Crotus, 'Epistola ad U. Huttenum', pp.17-18

Peter Burke notes the importance of friendship in humanist circles from the days of Petrarch.¹³¹ Humanist friendship could encompass people from very different backgrounds, and evidently took precedence over concerns that might otherwise make friendship impossible. Under other circumstances, for example, Hutten would be very unlikely ever to associate with Crotus, a peasant's son. His arrogance and self-importance, encouraged by Aesticampianus, are well-known. During this period, however, he had no impulse to set himself above other humanists socially. As long as scholarship for its own sake remained his priority, he found that humanism could transcend normal social boundaries.

Humanist authors addressed one another in affectionate and extravagant terms. Vives called Erasmus his *amicus probatissimus*, and Erasmus called Pirckheimer an 'incomparable friend' and Beatus a 'Pythagorean friend'.¹³² Hutten eagerly adopted this style of address, for example 'Iacobe suavissime' to Jakob Fuchs on 13 June 1515, and 'Bilibalde fidissime' to Pirckheimer on 25 May 1517.¹³³ We still see something of the respectful student, however, in 'Erasme doctissime' on 2 July 1517.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Burke, Peter, 'Humanism and Friendship in Sixteenth-Century Europe', in Julian Haseldine (ed.), *Friendship in Medieval Europe* (London, 1999), p.264

¹³² *Ibid.*, p.264. Burke interprets this as a reference to Damon and Pythias, models of devoted friendship from the fourth century BC. However, the Latin suggests a more likely interpretation: that Erasmus was referring to Pythagoras, the sixth century BC philosopher and mathematician, to whom the earliest philosophical conception of friendship is attributed. In founding the Pythagorean Brotherhood, Pythagoras dictated that friends should hold all things in common. See McEvoy, James, 'The Theory of Friendship in the Latin Middle Ages: Hermeneutics, Contextualization and the Transmission and Reception of Ancient Texts and Ideas, from c.AD350 to c.1500', in Julian Haseldine (ed.), *Friendship in Medieval Europe* (London, 1999), pp.4-6, and Vogel, C.J. De, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism. An Interpretation of Neglected Evidence on the Philosopher Pythagoras* (Assen, 1966), p.150.

¹³³ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ulrichus de Hutten Eq. Germanus Iacobo Fuchs ecclesiarum Bambergensis et Herbipolensis Canonico amico salutem', in *Opera* I, p.40, and 'Bilibaldo Pirckheimero Patricio Norimbergensi, viro forti et in literis absoluto amico bono ac integro salutem tuus Reuchlinista Ulrichus de Hutten Eques', in *Opera* I, p.133

¹³⁴ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Hulderichus de Hutten Eques Erasmo Roterodamo Theologo SPD', in *Opera* I, p.146

Interestingly, despite the importance of humanist friendships to Hutten, he took part in this conventional expression of it for only a few short years. His earliest letters lack any such ornamentation. He was still serving his apprenticeship as a humanist, learning the modes of address, and, more importantly, building a network of friends and taking a while to reach a point where he could refer to people in such affectionate and familiar terms. After 1517, such ornamentation became very rare. Hutten was turning his attention to more serious matters, and seems to have left some humanist conventions, including symbols of friendship, behind. He was also writing more and more to people whom he did not know well, such as Luther, or to those significantly above him in rank, and so was much less likely to follow the humanist forms of friendly address. However, the period spent at the German universities was one in which Hutten made and consolidated all his important friendships, some of which would last him all his life, and they were given an added importance by his lack of ties outside the humanist community.

Chapter Three

Arminius: the assertion of German liberty¹

Hutten's career in Vienna was short-lived. Encouraged, no doubt, by his awareness of his own social standing, and by his admiration of such models as Celtis, Aesticampianus and Busche, his insolence and lack of discipline soon brought him to a point where he could no longer remain there.² Therefore, in 1512 he moved to Pavia and embarked on the study of law.³ Hutten's arrival in Italy marked the beginning of a new and crucial phase in his life. It was here that his humanist education, intellectual energy and confrontational nature would find a focus, in the cause of German patriotism. This chapter will discuss this stage of his development, first in Italy and then at the courts of the Emperor Maximilian I and Albrecht of Brandenburg, the Archbishop of Mainz. These years saw Hutten's gradual emergence as Germany's most aggressive patriot and leading anti-Roman polemicist. By 1519, pro-German, anti-Roman politics were his chief concern, and would remain so for the rest of his life. The chapter will then examine Arminius (1519), the first of four dialogues which are central to this thesis. Arminius is the strongest expression of Hutten's patriotism, glorifying the German nation by referring to its ancient history. In composing it, Hutten drew extensively on the works of the ancient Roman historian Tacitus, which were newly fashionable among German humanists. The importance of Tacitus to the cause of German patriotism, and Hutten's place among the authors who used his work, will also be discussed.

¹ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ulrichi Hutteni Equitis Germani, Arminius Dialogus' (1519), in Opera IV, pp.409-418

² Holborn, Hutten, p.45, and Strauss, Hutten, p.64

³ Holborn, Hutten, p.45. Holborn relies on D.F Strauss's account of Hutten's departure from Vienna, citing Strauss, Hutten, p.64.

Hutten's reluctant decision to study law may have been a condition of his father offering him any financial support.⁴ If so, Hutten did not feel the benefit of that support for long. By July of that year, he was forced to take military service in Italy with the army of Maximilian I in order to survive. His first extant private letter, written to Jakob Fuchs on 21st August 1512, tells of his misery. In true humanist style, and in a manner appropriate to his classical surroundings, he compares himself with the lame Roman god Vulcan, saying that he limps like him.⁵

Despite his unhappiness, this short time in Italy was vital to the emergence of the aggressively patriotic Hutten who composed Arminius in 1519. It consolidated his personal attachment to the Emperor: at last, he was fulfilling the role of a knight fighting for his traditional lord. His brief imprisonment at the hands of French soldiers, mentioned in chapter one, could only have strengthened his devotion to the Empire and his personal opposition to its enemies. Even more importantly, personal experience of Italy drew Hutten's attention to problems within the Church, as his epigrams against Julius II clearly show. The 'Holy Father, doorkeeper of the golden heavens, by whom the crown of highest sanctity is worn' is accused of a variety of crimes, not least an unfitting involvement in warfare, which recalls Julius' well-known nickname of 'Warrior Pope'.⁶ The epigrams reflect the early stages of Hutten's perception of abuses within the Church and of his interest in the German patriotic cause. It is important that they were *early* stages, however. Chapter five will show that, although Hutten now emerged as a strong critic of the Church, he was not yet

⁴ Holborn, Hutten, p.73

⁵ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Epistola Hutteni ad Phacum' (1512), in Opera I, pp.26-27

perceived as a threat to it. His criticism was harsh, but still reminiscent of that already voiced by other humanists. He could still be seen as an anti-Italian, anti-Roman Church, pro-German author in the same light as Celtis and others, and his work did not approach the damning polemic that he would produce in 1520. Indeed, although the seeds of discontent with the Church had been sown, in 1512 and 1513 Hutten's writings against Rome were probably intended more to impress the Emperor Maximilian, whose patronage Hutten sought, than to raise a sudden crusade against the Church. The fact that Erasmus also produced polemic against Julius II, Julius Exclusus, in 1513 is indicative of the fact that Hutten's work at the time remained essentially within the humanist mainstream.⁷

Upon his return to Germany in 1513, Hutten's uncle, Frowin von Hutten, and his patron, Eitelwolf von Stein, secured a place for him at the court of the Archbishop of Mainz. The post was to become permanent on completion of his legal studies, and he was awarded a stipend to assist him in achieving this.⁸ In 1515, therefore, he returned to Italy. A letter written to Erasmus on 24 October 1515, as he prepared to leave, shows that he was still preoccupied with humanist friends and learning:

‘I think all the gods must be angry with me, by whose will it is that I will be deprived of you for a few years, and who tear me away to hide me from you, to whom I would have clung more tenaciously than Alcibiades to Socrates,

⁶ Hutten, Ulrich von, ‘Ad Caesarem Maximilianum Epigrammatum Liber Unus’ (1512-1513), in Opera III, pp.207-268. The epigrams against Julius II are found on pp.263-267. The quotation is taken from p.267.

⁷ Erasmus, Desiderius, ‘Julius Exclusus’ in A.H.T. Levi (ed.), The Collected Works of Erasmus, Vol. 27 (Toronto, 1986)

⁸ Holborn, Hutten, pp.49-50

had Fortune allowed.⁹ For why would I not call you the German Socrates, Erasmus? ... I am not so fortunate as to be able to please you entirely, whom indeed one is very lucky to be able to please; but I would not have been unworthy, I who would have learnt Greek letters at your feet, followed you devotedly, observed you vigilantly, carried out all your orders, and rejoiced at every command. Nor would it have been unbecoming for you, if I, a German knight, had waited upon you with wonderful zeal and extraordinary faithfulness'.¹⁰

Hutten's language was still that of his fellow humanists, including classical references to the great philosopher Socrates, Fortune and the gods. Such language would be far less common in his work in 1520, when he used Christian references, or often none at all, concentrating on practical political matters.

This second visit to Italy was clearly undertaken with as great a reluctance as the first. Hutten goes on to bemoan the fact that the study of law in Italy was a condition of his receiving the post at Albrecht's court. This letter to Erasmus demonstrates that Hutten was still very much a part of the humanist world of learning and patronage. He took comfort solely from the thought of new humanist acquaintances in Italy, and so his letter also asked Erasmus for letters of introduction to his friends there.

Hutten spent the summer of 1516 in Rome, and, in view of the activity in the Reuchlin case, was paying particular attention to papal politics. He was now shocked

⁹ Alcibiades was a student of the philosopher Socrates, and admired him greatly although he was unable to match him in intellect.

¹⁰ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ulrichus Huttenus Erasmo Roterodamo Salutem' (1515), in *Opera* I, p.102

by the luxury and corruption that he perceived in the holy city itself.¹¹ He commented on this, and on the Pope's personal involvement in the corruption, in his poem Italiae Ficticia:

‘An Etruscan involved in usury possesses the honoured city, all of Rome is betrayed by Florentine deceit’.¹²

His opposition to that corruption became more marked than before, but he was still strongly attached to his old priorities and, indeed, to aspects of the Roman faith. In 1517 he was narrowly dissuaded by Crotus Rubeanus from going on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land with some of his relatives.¹³ Such a journey could not be undertaken lightly, and indicates not only genuine religious feeling on Hutten's part but also an acceptance of at least some Roman doctrine and tradition. A knight's pilgrimage to a distant land would also have appealed to the romantic side of Hutten's nature, in which he applied to himself the ideals of medieval chivalry, an image that would reappear in his role in the dialogue Bulla (see chapter four). In 1517, his extreme criticism of abuses within the Church (especially when they affected Germany directly) had not declared its doctrine and customs invalid. He had moved a long way from his more conventional position among the German humanists of 1512, but had not fully developed the fervent anti-Roman politics that so worried the Church in 1519 and 1520.

¹¹ Ibid., p.74

¹² Hutten, Ulrich von, ‘Epistola ad Maximilianum Caesarem, Italiae Ficticia Huldericho de Hutten Equite Authore’ (1516), in Opera I, pp.106-113

¹³ The incident is reported by Johann Cochlaeus in a letter dated 26 June 1517 to Willibald Pirckheimer, which announces Hutten's return to the German-speaking lands: ‘Ioannes Cochlaeus Bilibaldo Pirckheimero’ (1517), in Opera I, p.141.

Even after his return from Rome, Hutten's personal emphasis was still on humanism. He could incorporate strong criticism of the Church and defend the dignity of his country within the world of scholarship to which he belonged – indeed, he was not unusual in doing so, being marked out at present only by the skill and exceptional vehemence of his writing.¹⁴ In 1517, his pride in his role as a German poet and his loyalty to the Emperor were strengthened when Maximilian I crowned him poet laureate – an event recalled in a letter from Hutten to Conrad Peutinger, whose daughter had braided Hutten's crown of laurel wreaths.¹⁵ Also in 1517, the Archbishop of Mainz sent him on an errand to the French court, where he befriended the French humanists, and Budé subsequently wrote to Erasmus, speaking of his friendship and admiration for Hutten.¹⁶ Evidently, he had appeared to the French court as a scholar and a nobleman, and not at all as an aggressive patriot or potential destroyer of the Church. Delighting in his position at the centre of this great flowering of humanist learning, he wrote to Pirckheimer in October 1518:

‘Behold this generation, and its learning! Willibald, one must delight in being alive, although one cannot yet delight in living in peace. Learning thrives, talents blossom. Barbarism, receive a noose and resign yourself to banishment!’¹⁷

¹⁴ Examples of the German humanists who engaged with these themes are given in chapter two.

¹⁵ Hutten, Ulrich von, ‘Huldericus de Hutten Eques Germanus Chunrado Peutingero Patricio Augustano salutem’ (1518), in *Opera I*, pp.173-174

¹⁶ Budé, Guillaume, ‘Budaecus Erasmo’ (1518) in *Opera I*, p.171

¹⁷ Hutten, Ulrich von, ‘Ulrichi de Hutten Equitis ad Bilibaldum Pirckheymer Patricium Norimbergensem. Epistola vitae suae rationem exponens’ (1518), in *Opera I*, p.217

In the same letter, he celebrates Budé, Erasmus and other leaders of this great event. His continued devotion to the humanist culture to which he had been exposed in his university days cannot be doubted.

Indeed, Hutten's major works in the few years before Arminius reflect his gradual move towards extremism while remaining for as long as possible within the wider world of German humanism. We have seen that, by 1515, he had written epigrams against the Pope, but this did not prevent him from behaving like any other humanist and composing a panegyric in praise of his new patron, Albrecht of Brandenburg, perhaps the Pope's foremost representative in Germany.¹⁸ The Letters of Obscure Men was a work written to spite individuals, mostly within the German universities, and designed to make fellow humanists laugh rather than to incite opposition to the Church. Hutten took an important step towards the dialogues discussed in this thesis by adopting the dialogue form for the first time in 1517. However, he did not do so in order to oppose the Church or to glorify Germany. His first dialogue, Phalarismus, formed part of his campaign against the Duke of Württemberg, his cousin's murderer.¹⁹ In 1518, the dialogue Aula was a condemnation of the excesses of court life, based on his brief experience of Albrecht's court.²⁰

The composition of Arminius therefore marked a moment of transition for Hutten. In retelling the story of Arminius as the liberator of the ancient German tribes, Hutten combined his belief in German superiority and his support of Maximilian's military

¹⁸ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'In laudem reverendissimi Alberthi Archiepiscopi Moguntini panegyricus' (1515), in Opera III, pp.343ff

¹⁹ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ulrichi Hutteni Equitis Germani Phalarismus Dialogus' (1517), in Opera IV, pp.4-25

²⁰ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ulrichi Hutteni Equitis Germani Misaulus qui et Aula inscribitur Dialogus' (1518), in Opera IV, pp.45-74

exploits in Italy, about which he had been writing for some years, with the disgust he had gradually developed for the Church's influence in Germany. Arminius is not an example of the explicit and brutal attacks on the Church which Hutten was to make in 1520, after coming under direct personal threat from the papacy, but the dialogue's theme of repelling the Roman army from ancient Germany clearly equates with banishing the Church from the same lands in the sixteenth century: in no other way was Italian influence so perceptible within Germany. Hutten had taken the deeply significant step of moving the fight against foreign influence onto German soil. No longer did he write, as others did, about glorious German exploits many miles away. The new mission for Germans was to expel the enemy in their very midst. The classical setting for Arminius, a legacy of Hutten's humanist training, owed much to the recently rediscovered works of the Roman historian Tacitus, which are introduced below.

Tacitus' re-emergence during the Renaissance

The works of Tacitus became very closely associated with the attempts of the German humanists to establish themselves as superior to their Italian counterparts and to claim for themselves the role of preservers of civilisation through the 'darkness' of the Middle Ages. In particular, they adopted the Annals and the Germania for their cause. Written in about 109AD, the Annals was Tacitus' last and most important work, and contains the story of the Roman Empire from just before the death of Augustus until the death of Nero. A few years are missing from the surviving texts, but this essential source for the history of Ancient Rome covers virtually the whole of the reigns of

Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero, while the Germania, dating from 98AD, remains the most important literary source for the history of the ancient Germans.²¹

Tacitus' works had not been long established among classical texts at the time of the Renaissance. In fact, this great author had been out of sight for most of the Middle Ages. Although quite well-known in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, he is rarely mentioned thereafter, and from c.550 he is not mentioned at all for three centuries.²² The reappearance of the Annals and the Germania during the Renaissance aroused enormous interest: not only were they of great historical value, but they had a moral and political content which many saw as startlingly relevant to the problems of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was in German monasteries that these works survived the Middle Ages, but their triumphant rediscovery was the work of Italian scholars. Following rumours of their existence, Tacitus' lost works were the subject of searches by the famous book-hunter Poggius Bracciolini, whose constant scheming to obtain these and other classical works forms a fascinating story, told through his correspondence with his friend Nicolaus De Niccolis.²³ On 25th September 1427, Poggius wrote to Nicolaus:

'Now to more important matters. When the Cornelius Tacitus comes I shall keep it hidden with me for I know that whole song: "Where did it come from and who brought it here? Who claims it for his own?" But do not worry, not a word shall escape me.'²⁴

²¹ Rives, J.B., in Tacitus, Germania, (trans. and ed. J.B. Rives, Oxford, 1999), p.1

²² Rives, J.B., in Tacitus, Germania (trans. and ed. J.B. Rives, Oxford, 1999), pp.66-67

²³ Their letters are translated by Phyllis Walter Goodhart Gordan in her Two Renaissance Book Hunters. The Letters of Poggius Bracciolini to Nicolaus De Niccolis (New York, 1974, 1991).

²⁴ Phyllis Walter Goodhart Gordan in her Two Renaissance Book Hunters. The Letters of Poggius Bracciolini to Nicolaus De Niccolis (New York, 1974, 1991)

On 11th September 1428, he wrote again:

‘I have found out that he (Nicolaus of Trier) will be with us this winter and I think with the books, for he has been told in writing to come back early and bring the books; if he does so we shall be free of this worry. Cornelius Tacitus is silent in Germany and I have heard nothing new from there about his activities.’²⁵

Renowned manuscript collector though Poggius was, he never did succeed in acquiring the Tacitus manuscript of which he had heard rumours, and which he had pursued so diligently. Instead, it came into the possession of Enoch of Ascoli, acting as a book-collecting agent in Germany for Pope Nicholas V. Among the texts Enoch acquired was the Germania. That manuscript is now lost, but it is generally thought to be the original source for the earliest existing copies, which date from the fifteenth century.²⁶ It was probably found in the monastery of Fulda (see chapter one for mention of the great library at Fulda, which Hutten would know and praise almost a century later – a very promising hunting ground for rare manuscripts).²⁷

The Annals remained similarly unknown for almost fourteen hundred years, surviving into Hutten’s times only through two medieval manuscripts, both now in Florence.²⁸

A manuscript containing the Annals XI-XVI and Tacitus’ Histories was copied at

²⁵ Ibid., Letter LX, p.128. By implication in *ibid.*, Letter LII, p.117, Nicolaus of Trier travelled between Germany and Rome and was expected to bring the manuscripts from the Hersfeld monk.

²⁶ Rives, in Tacitus, Germania, p.70

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.69

²⁸ Grant, Michael, in Tacitus, The Annals of Imperial Rome, trans. and ed. Michael Grant (London, 1956, 1971, 1989), p.23

Montecassino in the mid-eleventh century, and was possibly taken from there by Boccaccio, who was certainly familiar with it in 1371.²⁹ In 1427 it belonged to Nicolaus De Niccoli. However, the Annals I-VI emerged only in the early sixteenth century. It had survived in a single manuscript, probably copied at Fulda c.850, and was later kept at Corvey. It was brought to Italy in 1508 and bought by Pope Leo X for 500 ducats.³⁰ This would be of great significance for the German humanists, and for Hutten in particular, as Books I and II of the Annals revealed, for the first time, the story of the great German hero Arminius.

The reception of Tacitus outside the German-speaking lands

Tacitus' famous adoption by German humanists was not immediate and automatic: others, too, found material in his books which seemed of direct relevance to them. Michael Grant, the editor and translator of the Annals, observes that Tacitus' versatility and complexity provided slogans for all political opinions. Readers could see him as propounding any idea that suited them.³¹ The scope of Tacitus' work was enormous. He dealt with moral, political and religious affairs across a century of Roman history, introducing scores of personalities and discussing the affairs of many parts of the Empire. Inevitably, he provided so much varied material that it was possible for later readers to find something in support of their own arguments, even if they took the material out of context. It was a problem which Guicciardini noticed in the mid-sixteenth century, as his comments (quoted below) demonstrate. Although Hutten was the author who most famously drew upon the Annals and the Germania

²⁹ Reynolds, L.D. (ed.), Texts and Transmissions: A Survey of the Latin Classics (Oxford, 1983), p.113

for his own purposes, Tacitus' work had been used for political purposes outside Germany for more than half a century before Hutten even read it.

The first written citation of the Germania, which would be of such vital interest to Hutten, was actually made in *opposition* to early claims for German preeminence. It appeared in 1457 in a treatise composed by Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini – soon to be Pope Pius II – who had acquired the manuscript of the Germania upon Enoch of Ascoli's death. Martin Mayer, the chancellor of the Archbishop of Mainz, had written to Piccolomini complaining of Rome's oppression of the German Church, claiming that:

‘our once famous nation, which purchased the Roman empire with its own virtue and blood and was the mistress and queen of the world, has now been reduced to poverty and made a servant’.³²

This early statement of German objections to Roman dominance, and of ‘Germany’s’ rightful status, prefigured the more elaborate arguments which would be constructed by Hutten and his contemporaries. Piccolomini's reply consisted of three books, the second of which was composed almost entirely of a description of Germany. His point was to prove that the German-speaking lands were neither poor nor powerless in comparison with their past. He used the Germania to show that the ancient Germans were poor and barbarous, and that modern Germans owed their civilisation, as well as

³⁰ D'Amico, John F., Theory and Practice in Renaissance Textual Criticism (Berkeley, 1988), pp.113-114

³¹ Grant, in Tacitus, Annals, p.23

³² Schmidt, A., Enea Silvio Piccolomini: Deutschland. Der Brieftraktat an Martin Mayer (Cologne, 1962)

the true religion, to Rome.³³ Quite the opposite of the interpretation which Hutten and his peers would place on the Germania, it even contradicted the spirit of earlier verbal remarks made by Piccolomini. In an oration before the Frankfurt Diet of 1454, he had flattered his German audience by recalling (with reference to Tacitus) the military prowess of the ancient *Germani*. On that occasion, he had been trying to recruit German soldiers for a crusade against the Turks.³⁴ Thus, the first person to use the Germania in modern times proved the point that Tacitus could be interpreted differently for different purposes. The Germania was next put to political use by another Italian, Giovannantonio Campano, who in 1471 also cited some passages in support of the German ancestors' valour in an attempt to persuade them to go on crusade against the Turks.³⁵

In later years, the popularity of the Annals and the Germania continued to grow in Italy, a phenomenon which Ronald Mellor attributes largely to foreign invasions and, especially, the Sack of Rome in 1527. He suggests that these events destroyed the republican values of Livy and Cicero, with the result that 'Italy of the sixteenth century turned to the acerbic style and political ideas of the imperial historian'.³⁶ Such broad assumptions must be open to debate, but it is true that major features of the newly fashionable Tacitus were his descriptions of the dishonesty of princes and courtiers, and guidance for those subject to them. This gave rise to two contrasting images of the Roman historian – the moral Tacitus and the 'Black' Tacitus – which eventually appeared in the literature of several countries. The 'Black' Tacitus provided advice for tyrants and models for sycophantic courtiers. Mellor describes

³³ Rives, in Tacitus, Germania, p.71

³⁴ Kelley, '*Tacitus noster*', p.155

³⁵ Rives, in Tacitus, Germania, p.71

³⁶ Mellor, Ronald, Tacitus (New York and London, 1993), p.140

Francesco Guicciardini's History of Italy, published posthumously in 1561, as 'Tacitean in its detailed analysis of politicians and political events', but Guicciardini himself warned that, while Tacitus could teach his readers discretion, he also had drawbacks:

'Tacitus teaches those who live under tyrants the mode of life and how to govern oneself prudently, and he teaches tyrants how to establish tyranny'.³⁷

He may have been mindful that Machiavelli was an admirer of Tacitus, to the extent that a committee of Venetian scholars blamed Tacitus for Machiavelli's thinking, which was in danger of 'destroying public virtues'.³⁸

In France, Tacitus became popular rather later than in Italy and Germany, but he eventually came to be regarded in similar ways. In the second half of the sixteenth century, the French began to study Tacitus for information on the political practices of their ancestors the Franks, and their relevance to their own time, as both the Italians and the Germans had done. Etienne de la Boëtie, Jean Bodin, Etienne Pasquier, Jean du Tillet and François Hotman all made use of Tacitus in their historical and political writing, but they did not necessarily agree with one another, and indeed Guillaume Budé had called him 'omnium scriptorum perditissimus', largely because he had been denounced long before by the Church Fathers Orosius and Tertullian.³⁹ It is a view of Tacitus which echoes the earlier accusations of his negative influence on Machiavelli.

³⁷ Guicciardini, Francesco, Ricordi, ed. R. Spongano (Florence, 1951), chapter 18. Translated in *ibid.*, p.140

³⁸ Grant, in Tacitus, Annals, p.23

³⁹ Salmon, J.H.M., 'Cicero and Tacitus in Sixteenth-Century France' in The American Historical Review, Vol.85, No.2 (April 1980), pp.318,310. See also Schellhase, Kenneth C., Tacitus in

However, one could also take Hotman's approach in his Francogallia of 1573. Hotman used Tacitus to oppose monarchical absolutism, and maintained that the tribal customs of the Germanic Franks were more important to Frenchmen than Roman jurisprudence.⁴⁰ In this, as the examination of Arminius later in this chapter will show, Hotman echoed the line taken by Hutten nearly sixty years earlier.

Despite the early use of Tacitus by Piccolomini and others, it was not until 1472 that the text of the Germania was first published, by Franciscus Puteolanus in Bologna. Then, in Nuremberg in 1473, it received its first publication in northern Europe.⁴¹ Reflecting the upsurge of interest in Tacitus from the late fifteenth century onwards, more than a dozen editions were published in Italy and Germany between this first appearance of the Germania and Filippo Beroaldo's printing of Tacitus' complete works in Rome in 1515 (which incorporated the first section of the Annals, bought by the Pope a few years earlier).⁴² Thus, by the time Hutten glorified the German nation in Arminius, he had a ready audience in both Italy and Germany who were familiar with the material and themes upon which he drew.

The impact of Tacitus in Germany

Tacitus was rare among classical authors in giving the German tribes any prominence at all in his books. When they were mentioned, it tended to be in a negative way, as demonstrated by examples from Seneca:

Renaissance Political Thought (Chicago, 1976), p.3, for examples of the Church Fathers' judgements on Tacitus.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.318

‘Living on a sterile soil, they (the Germans) must bear a perpetual winter ...They walk about on swampy ground hardened to ice by the cold. They nourish themselves on the wild beasts which they hunt in the forests They have no shelter and no home other than the place where fatigue forces them down each night. ... They are exposed to the intemperance of a frightful climate and have no clothing to protect their bodies’,

and Pomponius Mela:

‘Their manner of living is crude and barbarous; they even eat raw the flesh of their cattle and of wild beasts, being content, when the meat is no longer fresh, to beat it with hands and feet without even removing the skin’.⁴³

Tacitus’ recently discovered works offered a chance to overcome this negative stereotype. Some German humanists, Wimpfeling among them, seized the chance joyfully, and hoped for even more evidence of their glorious past from the same author – so much so, that they were ready to accuse the Italians of deliberately withholding such information. Strauss quotes the Saxon chronicler Albert Kranz on this:

‘Let them restore to us the entire history of Tacitus which they have hidden away. Let them give back Pliny’s twenty books on Germany’.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Rives, in Tacitus, *Germania*, p.71

⁴² Kelley, ‘*Tacitus noster*’, p.156

⁴³ Seneca, ‘De Providentia’, *Dialogues*, Book I, quoted in Strauss, Gerald, *Enacting the Reformation in Germany. Essays on institution and reception* (Aldershot, 1991), p.224

⁴⁴ Kranz, Albert, *Saxonia* (Cologne, 1520), a ii verso, quoted in Strauss, *Enacting the Reformation*, p.231

Others accepted the traditional image of Germany, and chose to emphasise the extraordinary progress made by the German people, conquering swampy terrain and biting cold, and achieving a superior civilisation despite their handicaps.⁴⁵ Emphasis was therefore sometimes placed on the continuous tradition of pride and honour portrayed in the Germania and allegedly continuing into modern times, and sometimes on the *changes* since ancient days. The latter course implied that cultural superiority and the role of preservers of civilisation after the fall of the Roman Empire had been earned by the descendants of the German tribes, armed with their inbuilt nobility and courage. Many works were produced to illustrate the glories of modern 'Germany', among them Sebastian Münster's famous Cosmographia, published in 1544.⁴⁶

Some humanists managed to combine both approaches. Conrad Celtis led the way, promoting the idea hinted at by Martin Mayer forty years earlier and denied by Piccolomini: that ancient Germany was actually more civilised than ancient Rome. His inaugural speech at the University of Ingolstadt in 1492 drew heavily on Tacitus' image of a pure Germany. Addressing the 'most worthy fathers and most admirable young men of Germany', he said:

I would not have considered it exceptional ... that I as a German and your fellow countryman should be able to speak to you in Latin, if those former geniuses of our Germany were still flowering and that age had returned when our ambassadors are said to have spoken Greek rather than Latin. But

... through the evil of the centuries and the ravages of time not only among you but even in Italy, the mother and venerable parent of letters, all the splendour of literature has at last become extinct and passed away and all noble studies have been beaten down and routed by barbarian movements ... I have decided, therefore, that I could speak to you on no subject more worthy or pleasant than encouraging you to virtue and the study of the liberal arts. For thereby true glory, immortal fame, and happiness can be so easily obtained in this brief life of ours! ...

Noble men and lofty-minded youth, to whom because of the ancestral virtue and that unconquerable strength of Germany the imperium of Italy has passed (you) ought to reject shameful barbarism and become enthusiasts for the Roman arts ...

Take up again, Oh German men, that old spirit of yours with which you so many times were a terror and spectre to the Romans ... We should be ashamed, ashamed, that we have placed the yoke of slavery on our nation and that we are paying tributes and tariffs to foreign and barbarian kings ... Italian luxury and fierce cruelty in extorting pernicious silver have corrupted us so badly that it would have been much more holy and sacred for us to live such a rude forest life, as when we lived within the limits of continence, than to have adopted the instruments of epicureanism and luxury which are never satisfied and to have taken over foreign customs'.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Strauss, *Enacting the Reformation*, p.226, and see my later comments on the purpose of Celtis's *Germania illustrata*.

⁴⁶ Münster, Sebastian, *Cosmographia*, Bd.1 and 2 (Lindau, 1987)

⁴⁷ Quoted in Spitz, *Conrad Celtis*, pp.26-29

Here Celtis's words prefigured themes which would become closely identified with Hutten. The 'yoke of slavery' is a theme relevant to all of the dialogues examined in this thesis. The extortion of money from Germany was also a constant complaint of Hutten's, and appears later in this chapter, as well as in chapters four and five. The description of the ancient Germans as 'a terror and spectre to the Romans' is derived from Tacitus' Annals, referring to Arminius' victories in battle over the Roman legions. In particular, the Romans had been shocked and disgraced by Arminius' unexpected defeat of Quinctilius Varus in the Teutoburg Forest, and the consequent loss of a Roman Eagle.⁴⁸ Tacitus describes the terrors which the German tribes inflicted on the Romans in that defeat:

'On the open ground were whitening bones, scattered where men had fled ... also human heads, fastened to tree-trunks. In groves nearby were the outlandish altars at which the Germans had massacred the Roman colonels and senior company-commanders. ... (Survivors) told of the platform from which Arminius had spoken, and of his arrogant insults to the Eagles and standards – and of all the gibbets and pits for the prisoners.'⁴⁹

Unsurprisingly, Celtis neglected to mention the extreme cruelty of the German tribes under Arminius, or the 'outlandish altars'. In the fifteenth-century Holy Roman Empire, neither would assist a claim for ancient German civilisation. Nor would Hutten remind his readers of this in his dialogue Arminius, concentrating instead upon Arminius's noble qualities, such as his refusal to yield to his enemies under the most pressing circumstances, and the terrifying attacks he launched from the depths of the

⁴⁸ See Tacitus, Annals, p.66

forest in his 'pathless country'.⁵⁰ For Celtis, as later for Hutten, the basic idea of a German defeating his enemy under difficult circumstances provided the message which was relevant to their own time, and it could be trimmed or embroidered as necessary.⁵¹

Celtis lectured on the text of the Germania at Vienna in the 1490s, becoming the first person to lecture on Tacitus in a northern university, and in 1500 he published an edition of the Germania, together with his own poem Germania generalis, and dedicated it to the Emperor Maximilian. These were forerunners to his ambitious Germania illustrata, which, in its obvious rivalry with Biondo's Italia illustrata of 1474, emphasised the efforts now being made by German humanists to respond to the notion of Italian superiority.⁵² In trying to illustrate the history, geography and culture of 'Germany', this unfinished work was an early attempt to establish the German-speaking lands as a single nation. If his work on the Germania proclaimed the worth of the ancient German tribes, and its continuity in their descendants, the Germania illustrata demonstrated Celtis's role in showing the physical changes in modern 'Germany' and the progress made since Tacitus' time.

Celtis's influence on other humanists' views of Germany was considerable. His idea for the great Germania illustrata was taken up by Willibald Pirckheimer's circle in Nuremberg. Several significant works emerged from the project, including Sebastian Münster's Germaniae descriptio of 1530 and Aventinus's Zeitbuch über gans

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.67

⁵⁰ See *ibid.*, pp.65 and 68, and Hutten, 'Arminius', for Tacitus's short accounts of Arminius's continuing hostility after the capture of his pregnant wife and of the forested terrain in which the Romans were repeatedly ambushed, and Hutten's later elaborations on them.

⁵¹ Hutten's willingness to trim and embroider classical works to suit his purpose is discussed in the section **Arminius: the text**, below.

Teutschland, although the scope of Celtis's original idea was never fully realised.⁵³ An account of humanist efforts to complete Celtis' project is provided by Jacques Ridé in his 'Un Grand Projet Patriotique: *Germania Illustrata*'.⁵⁴ Celtis also influenced Aventinus, the noted Bavarian historian, who had been a devoted student of Celtis, following him from Ingolstadt to Vienna and living in his house.⁵⁵ A parallel may be drawn with Hutten's later relationship with another of Celtis's students, Aesticampianus. Hutten's connections with the emerging patriotic school of thought were, therefore, very strong. He would directly encounter Celtis's ideas, and elaborations upon them, through his tutor Aesticampianus, and through his patron Willibald Pirckheimer and his associates.

At about the same time as Celtis, Jakob Wimpfeling also used the Germania in patriotic contexts. He used Tacitus to prove that Alsace was, and always had been, German, and his Epithoma rerum Germanicarum, published in 1505, rehearsed the Germanic virtues listed by Tacitus: chastity, generosity, uprightness, faith, freedom, perseverance, courage, intelligence, and noble bearing.⁵⁶ Wimpfeling admitted that his purpose in writing was patriotic:

'lest while other nations zealously disseminate the noble deeds of their ancestors, we should seem to doze perpetually, sleepy and mean spirited, despisers of our ancestral glory'.⁵⁷

⁵² Spitz, Conrad Celtis, pp.40, 66-67

⁵³ Ibid., p.103

⁵⁴ Ridé, Jacques, 'Un Grand Projet Patriotique: *Germania Illustrata*' in L'humanisme allemande (1480-1540). XVIIIe Colloque International de Tours (Munich, 1979), pp.99-111

⁵⁵ Spitz, Conrad Celtis, p.103

⁵⁶ Kelley, '*Tacitus noster*', p.159. Kelley gives Tacitus' original words: 'pudicitia, liberalitas, integritas, fides, libertas, constantia, fortitudo, ingenium, and nobilitas'.

⁵⁷ Quoted by Rives, in Tacitus, Germania, p.72

So great was the need to negate Italian charges of barbarism and indebtedness to Rome, that in 1515 Wimpfeling was still trying to refute Piccolomini's comments to Martin Mayer.⁵⁸

The poet and scholar Heinrich Bebel also used the Germania for patriotic ends, sometimes quoting it to illustrate German valour, and to prove that the Germans were the original, pure-blooded inhabitants of the German lands. In his Oratio ... de Germaniae laudibus, he claimed:

‘We are therefore almost the only ones out of all the nations of the earth who have held sway without any mixture of immigrants, and have held sway widely without the yoke of foreign servitude Our people does not lack for a past of glorious deeds. We lack only the historians who should have recorded those deeds ... our renown rests not only on what we have made of ourselves but also upon our roots and our first beginnings ... Cornelius Tacitus, the great Roman historian, is witness to this fact’.⁵⁹

Such was the popularity of Tacitus' works in promoting German excellence, that they were not only subject to serious study. A popular view was also possible, as this piece of doggerel shows:

Good manners to the German

⁵⁸ Kelley, ‘*Tacitus noster*’, p.156

⁵⁹ Bebel, Heinrich, ‘Oratio Henrici Bebeli ... ad ... Regem Maximilianum, de eius atque Germaniae laudibus’, printed in Simon Schardius, Rerum Germanicarum scriptores varii, I (Giessen, 1673), translated in Strauss, Manifestations of Discontent, pp.69-70

count more than laws to Rome.
 Not fraud, nor guile, nor usury
 find place in the German home.
 Adultery and whoredom are
 unknown in the German's life.
 He covets no man's woman but
 honors his proper wife.
 He knows neither gold, nor profit,
 nor any such form of greed,
 But takes the produce from the land
 and thus satisfies his need.
 He never eats or drinks too much;
 he's modest in his dress.
 When he says 'no' he means it,
 and 'yes' when he means 'yes'.
 To self and friends, he's always true,
 and likewise to his mate.
 All his life he lives, you see,
 In a pure and simple state.⁶⁰

Although a jingle, this is the essence of the image of a typical 'German' which Celtis and others, including Hutten (see below) were trying to advertise. The characteristics

⁶⁰ Cited in Ridé, Jacques, *L'image du Germain dans la pensée et la littérature Allemandes de la recouverte de Tacite à la fin du XVIe siècle* (Lille, 1977), Vol. 2, p.953. The translation is by Donald R. Kelley, who observes: 'I do not think that my rendering is significantly less elegant than the original German jingle'. Kelley, '*Tacitus noster*', p.152

portrayed here are taken almost entirely from the Germania.⁶¹ As with other works, however, again including Hutten's Arminius, some elements of the poem are invented, and criticisms in the Germania are ignored or flatly contradicted.⁶²

In 1519, the prominent humanist Beatus Rhenanus edited two editions of the Germania, which were published in Basel by Johann Froben. To the first, he added a commentary in which he discussed the names of the tribes and tried to determine their modern location and status.⁶³ This was a more detailed approach to the Germania than Celtis's had been – the most detailed so far – and placed far more emphasis on genuine investigation than on patriotism. Beatus would also produce a further edition and commentary in 1533. His were the first efforts to link Tacitus' information with the situation in the sixteenth century, and almost 500 years later the most recent commentator on the Germania, J.B. Rives, would state that Beatus's work on that text and on Tacitus in general was 'fundamental for later scholarship'.⁶⁴ Beatus's work appeared in the same year as Hutten's dialogue Arminius, but we cannot say whether or not Hutten had access to Beatus's manuscript at the time he was writing his own. However, their purposes could not have been more different, the latter being a piece of nationalist polemic, written with no intention of investigating the accuracy of the story or the correlation between it and the present day.

1519 was a year when German enthusiasm for Tacitus reached a peak. In addition to the works by Hutten and Beatus, a woodcut of Arminius appeared as the extraordinary

⁶¹ See, for example, Tacitus, Germania, 19.1, p.85, on chastity and the rarity of adultery, and 5.3, p.79, on the German tribes' indifference to gold and silver.

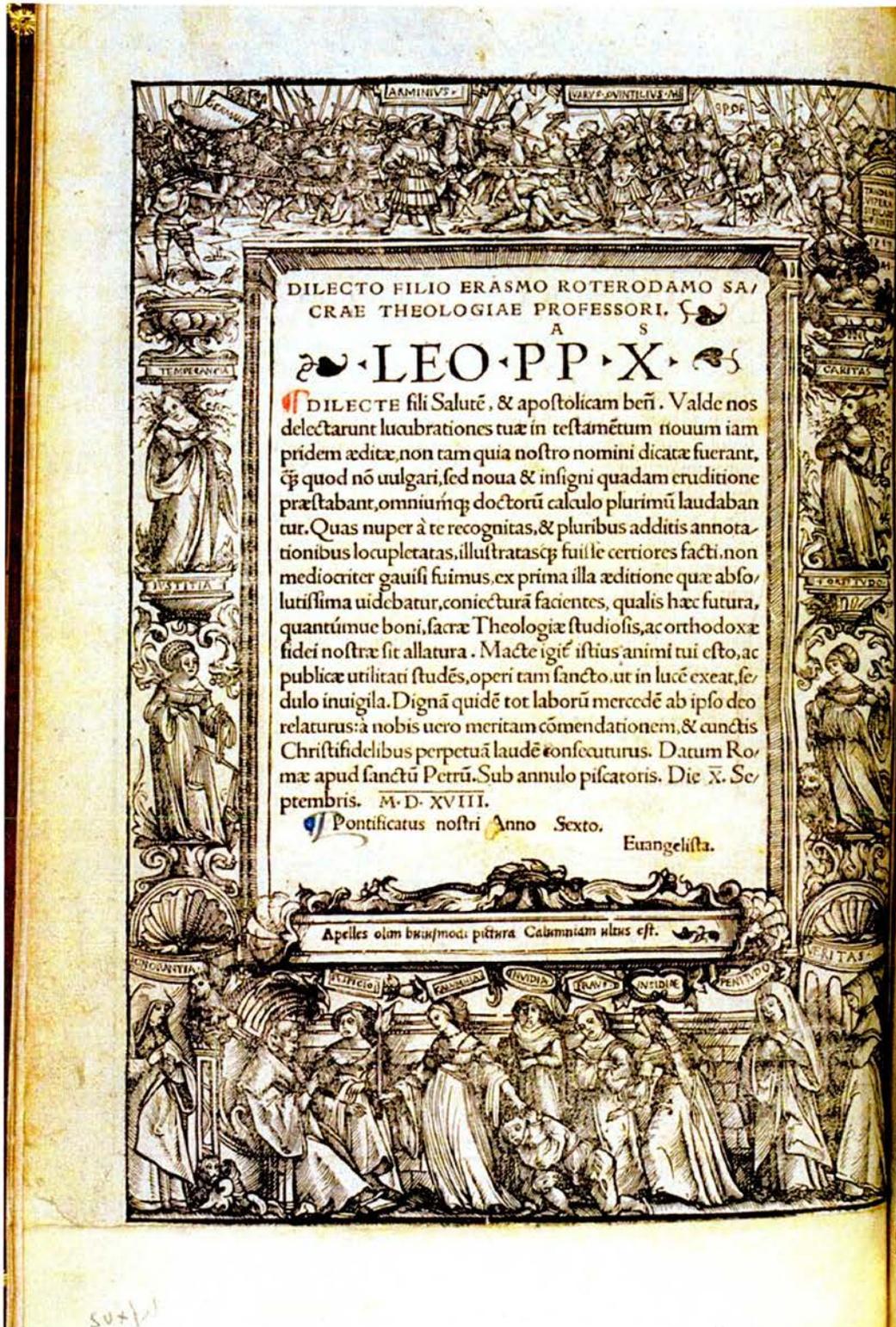
⁶² For example, Tacitus specifically comments on the German habit of eating a great deal. *Ibid.*, 15.1, p.83

⁶³ Rives, in Tacitus, Germania, p.72

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.72

frontispiece to the second edition of Erasmus' New Testament, printed in Basel by Johann Froben (see overleaf). It depicts Arminius confronting the defeated Quinctilius Varus, and is of no possible relevance to its setting. Its only purpose appears to have been to encourage sales.⁶⁵ The fact that the same printer was responsible for Beatus' edition of the Germania and for Erasmus' New Testament in the same year should not be overlooked. No doubt it made economic sense to Froben to continue the Tacitean theme in another project, not least because he would have been well aware of its appeal.

⁶⁵ Schellhase, Tacitus in Renaissance Political Thought, p.45



The second edition of Erasmus's New Testament, 1519. Leo X's letter, acknowledging the dedication to him of the first edition, was included. Arminius and Varus confront one another at the top of the page. (Bridwell Library, Southern Methodist University, Texas)

Fervent German interest in Tacitus continued. In 1529, Andreas Althamer published his first commentary on Tacitus' works. Although he based it on Beatus's 1519 edition, he demonstrated much the same purpose as Celtis, Bebel and others, beginning by complaining that the Germans were ignorant of their own heritage, and concluding:

‘Receive, candid reader, my comments on Cornelius Tacitus, a most weighty authority and in every way worthy of repeated readings, on account of the elegance of his style and his splendid description of the fatherland; through them I hope to have demonstrated to you my love for Germany, our common fatherland’.⁶⁶

Although he was motivated by patriotism, Althamer was a diligent and thoughtful scholar of Tacitus. In 1536, he produced another commentary, which proved to be the most significant of the many commentaries which now existed: indeed, it has been described as ‘a model of humanist scholarship, dedicated in its treatment of the source and the interpretive problems’.⁶⁷ He did not neglect the changes in German culture, repeatedly pointing out that much of what Tacitus wrote was no longer valid.⁶⁸ Had Hutten survived to read either of Althamer's commentaries, he would have approved of the patriotic sentiment, but the scholarly approach would have been as alien to him as Beatus's. The argument made in Arminius rests largely upon the premise that Tacitus' word can be taken, without question, as literally true. He is, after all, called

⁶⁶ Ulery, R.W., ‘Tacitus’: Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum: Medieval and Renaissance Latin Translations and Commentaries, vi (Washington, 1986), p.144, quoted in *ibid.*, p.72

⁶⁷ Strauss, Enacting the Reformation in Germany, p.229

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.229

as Arminius's only witness in a debate before the gods, and Mercury himself vouches for his truthfulness.

So, by the time Hutten composed Arminius, German scholars were familiar with his themes and, in many cases, eager to learn more about Tacitus and their early 'ancestors'. The idea of a moral and brave people who overcame Roman oppression fitted with German political concerns in the early sixteenth century, and suited the German humanists' image of their country's destiny. It was a concern for the present and a hope for the future which, as Althamer showed, outlived Hutten, but in 1519 it was particularly strong. There could not have been a better time for Hutten to use the Annals and the Germania as a basis for a dialogue in the cause of German patriotism. In a sense, when he composed Arminius, he was merely following where others had led. The ideas of 'Germany' as a single nation, of its superiority to other nations (especially Italy), and of its rightful role as a leader and preserver of civilisation, had all been propounded before. They were the product of the experience and ambitions of fine scholars, many of whom Hutten admired, working during his childhood or even before his birth. Even so, it was Hutten who became enduringly famous for these ideas. He did so because he was not satisfied with writing elegant poems to snub the Italians and to flatter the Holy Roman Emperor. To a far greater extent than any of his predecessors, he had concrete aims in mind, and expected concrete results from his work. He worked to establish a united 'Germany' in the minds of German-speaking people, through the content and even the language of his writing. In his later years, he switched from Latin to German in much of his work, giving as his reason:

'Once I wrote in Latin

And was listened to by none;
 Now I cry in German
 And am heard by everyone'.⁶⁹

He urged Maximilian I to go to war with the Pope, and expected similar devotion to 'Germany' from his grandson Charles V.⁷⁰

Arminius came quite early in Hutten's campaign to liberate 'Germany' from Roman shackles (the other dialogues in the appendices to this thesis show how that campaign developed). Even before the dramatic events of 1520, which pushed Hutten to extremes that he could not have foreseen in 1519, Arminius was more than a theoretical criticism of Italians and a proud proclamation of German virtues. It was a call to arms. This is what sets Hutten apart from the many predecessors and contemporaries who shared his interests: his aggression and lasting determination to make a reality out of existing patriotic ideas. Celtis might have been the first German to recognise the importance of the Germania, but he was not interested in taking his ideas to their logical, practical conclusion. Lewis Spitz observes his tendency to energy at the beginning of a project but lack of perseverance, resulting in a failure to complete most of his projects.⁷¹ The historian Cuspinian had called Celtis the 'great hope of Germany', but it was not Celtis who tried to realise the possibilities which he

⁶⁹ Loosely translated by Kelley in *Tacitus noster*, p.161, from the original quoted in Ridé, vol. 2, p.606: 'Latein ich vor geschriben hab
 das war ein yeden nit bekant.
 Yetzt schrey ich an das vaterlandt
 Teutsch nation in irer sprach'.

⁷⁰ See, for example, Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ad Caesarem Maximilianum ut Bellum in Venetos Coeptum Prosequatur Exhortatorium' (1511), in Opera III, pp.124-158, Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Epistola ad Maximilianum Caesarem, Italiae Ficticia Huldericho de Hutten Equite Authore' (1516), in Opera I, pp.106-113 (a plea from Italy that Maximilian free her from enslavement by the Pope), and Hutten, 'Bulla vel Bullicida' (in which Charles V is prompted to appear as Germany's belated rescuer from Roman oppression).

claimed to see in his country.⁷² If Germany was to be recognised as pre-eminent in morals, in warfare and in civilisation, its 'great hope' was Ulrich von Hutten: a different kind of humanist, who intended to make the 'Germany' portrayed in Tacitus' works live again in reality. If the ideas were not new, his breadth of patriotic vision, determination and unfailing perseverance were.

Hutten had little inclination to spend time glorifying the German present *in comparison with* the past. He was not among those who strove for foreign admiration of the civilisation achieved out of a state of near-barbarism: his purpose did not allow any admission that the German tribes were ever less than superior to other nations, so he did not advertise improvements over the previous 1500 years. In *Arminius*, he not only portrayed the civilised nature of the ancient Germans, but also claimed that Arminius had successfully welded them into a single nation even then:

Arminius: I became the general of an army which I did not yet possess, for it had not yet been assembled. It had to be formed as quickly as possible, for there was doubt as to whether or not such a scattered race could merge together at all.⁷³

Hutten spoke not of the German people's great achievement in forming a civilised nation out of the barbaric tribes of ancient times, but of the fact that it had been accomplished many centuries ago. He wanted his readers to accept that it had been so from time immemorial, and that it was their birthright.

⁷¹ Spitz, *Conrad Celtis*, p.58

In his dialogues, Hutten would reveal his greatest talent – not as a poet, considerable though his abilities were – but as a polemicist. His ability to write polemic on behalf of individuals had been evident for some years. The Lötze Philippics, written in defence of his own behaviour at Greifswald, the Letters of Obscure Men, written to defend Reuchlin and Aesticampianus among others, his long condemnations of the Duke of Württemberg as his cousin's murderer, and his panegyric for Albrecht of Brandenburg, have already been mentioned. Now, however, Hutten was turning his talents as a polemicist to a larger, more important cause, with which he would forever be associated: the defence of the Germany itself. Arminius is the ultimate expression of his views on German superiority and entitlement to rule, and relies almost entirely on material provided by Tacitus. These views had been formed largely by Hutten's dissatisfaction with the widespread influence of the Roman Church, and his corresponding interest in Martin Luther's ideas. Arminius therefore also reflects Hutten's religious and moral views at the time of writing.

Philip Beroaldus's 1515 edition of Tacitus' complete works (see above), with its implicit confirmation of Tacitus' huge popularity, appeared just in time to coincide with the growth of Hutten's personal interest in German history and patriotism – and, indeed, with his second visit to Italy. There can be little doubt that Hutten encountered the Annals, and therefore the hero Arminius, for the first time upon his arrival in Rome late in the same year. Hajo Holborn observes the lack of references to Arminius in Hutten's writing at the time, but this is misleading.⁷⁴ No letters mentioning Arminius survive from 1515, but Arminius appeared in Hutten's Italiae Ficticia

⁷² Ibid., p.70

⁷³ Appendix I, p.vi

⁷⁴ Holborn, Hutten, p.76

merely months later, in July 1516.⁷⁵ The Annals clearly caught Hutten's attention almost immediately. This, together with the fact that Beroaldus was armed with a papal privilege which forbade the reprinting of the work elsewhere makes Rome by far the most likely place for Hutten to have first read the Annals, and the absence of Arminius from his writing is unsurprising: these were early days in Hutten's approach to patriotism. By the time Arminius was written, Hutten had had four years to contemplate the hero's story, and they were four years in which his patriotism, boosted by his experience of Italy and the emergence of Martin Luther, grew to be the most important part of his life. From then on, everything Hutten wrote would be intended to help 'Germany's' patriotic cause (or to defend his own person, which was endangered by the expression of his extreme patriotism), and everything he read, including Tacitus, would be used towards that end.

Arminius: composition and publication

The date and even the subject matter of Arminius have been much debated. Confusion over the date of composition has arisen because this dialogue was not published until 1528, five years after Hutten's death.⁷⁶ The reason for the delay in publication is also uncertain. The compiler and editor of Hutten's extant Latin works, Eduard Böcking, offers an explanation for this in his Latin preface to Arminius: 'I think he did not publish it on this account, that the book (in which it was to appear) was sketchy, not perfect and polished, when the friends Sickingen and Hutten met their doom'.⁷⁷ He

⁷⁵ Hutten, 'Italiae Ficticia', p.109

⁷⁶ Rives, in Tacitus, Germania, p.73

⁷⁷ Opera IV, p.408

bases his explanation on a poem by Hutten's friend Eobanus Hessus, written in praise of Arminius in 1528:

'...This little book is the one which he composed,
 But it was not published under his direction:
 For, carried off by untimely death, he left
 This also, as if it were part of his funeral.
 Hutten wrote it, he did not publish it;
 Because whatever he had thrown together
 Would be better in the future.'⁷⁸

It seems surprising that Hutten would delay publishing Arminius because he was dissatisfied with it, especially for a period of between three and six years (see below). He was a prolific writer who published frequently, and Arminius was a powerful dialogue on the subject which had become closest to his heart. The clumsiness which is sometimes apparent in the exchanges between Arminius and the other characters could easily have been amended. In the few years between composing Arminius and his death, Hutten published numerous other works, mostly in an attempt to rouse the German people against their oppressors and to gain support for his own case as a condemned opponent of Rome.⁷⁹ Why, then, did he neglect to publish Arminius, which could have been very useful to him?

It must be assumed that Eobanus, who remained one of Hutten's few loyal friends during his last years, is likely to have correctly understood the circumstances of the

⁷⁸ Opera II, pp.439-440

delay. There is an implication that Arminius was to form part of a larger work, and presumably it was this which was not yet polished to Hutten's satisfaction. If Eobanus was aware of the circumstances, and prepared this poem for publication with Arminius, it seems very likely that the dialogue was in circulation among Hutten's literary correspondents, even if it had not formally been published. The probability that it was known to leading humanists diminishes the concern that Hutten did not actually use the dialogue in his war on Rome.

Unfortunately, Eobanus offers no clues as to the date of composition. Tiedmann suggested 1517, but did so merely on the grounds that this was the year in which Hutten adopted the dialogue form.⁸⁰ Other scholars have placed Arminius later, the latest being Paul Kalkoff, who suggested 1520.⁸¹ Eduard Böcking was more cautious. He set the date somewhere between 1517 and 1520, pointing to the evidence of Hutten's letter to Duke Frederick of Saxony, written on 11 September 1520, for 1520 as the last possible year of composition.⁸² In fact, the letter provides only the shakiest evidence for this, as it does not speak of a completed dialogue, but of Arminius's brave deeds against the Romans:

‘.... For the Saxons were always free, always unconquered. And often indeed, although Germany was almost entirely trodden underfoot, those who were alone made a stand. Those who were alone expelled their foreign rulers and always refused to wear a yoke. For I see in you Westphalians him who,

⁷⁹ Hutten was to be condemned by the Pope in the Bull Exsurge Domine, which more famously condemned Luther. See, especially, chapter five of this thesis for a discussion of Hutten's position.

⁸⁰ Tiedmann, H., Tacitus und das Nationalbewusstsein der deutschen Humanisten (Berlin, 1913), cited in Holborn, Hutten, p.77

⁸¹ See Holborn, Hutten, p.77.

⁸² Böcking, Opera IV, p.408

long ago, those called the *Cherusci* and the *Chauci* gave as the outstanding ideal of their virtues in the Roman war. They sent Arminius of Germany, the leader of all people, anywhere, who were the best and the strongest. Evidence has been provided by his enemies, [that Arminius] tore out of Roman hands, not only his own lands, but the whole of Germany, at a time when they [the Romans] were at the height of their power and strongly flourishing. In fact, he actively expelled and ejected them in a weakened state, with many incomparable defeats.⁸³

The flattery with which Hutten tried to persuade Frederick to emulate Arminius and defend the German-speaking lands from Roman rule, shows that he had read the story of Arminius in Tacitus' *Annals* and had formed his idea of Arminius as Germany's greatest military commander, but it does not conclusively show that the dialogue had been written by this time.

In the absence of other evidence, then, we must turn to the contents of the dialogue for clues to the date of composition. Holborn suggests 1519, on the grounds that Charles V, newly elected as Holy Roman Emperor, was intended to be Arminius.⁸⁴ At the same time he notes that 'this guess would afford an explanation of the suppression of the dialogue by the author', but does not expand on this reasoning. It is certainly tempting to see Charles as the new Arminius, and no doubt Hutten wished the newly elected Emperor to fight for German rights against Rome, just as his ancient predecessor had done. It is much less clear why this would lead Hutten to suppress his work. One possibility is disappointment in Charles. Hutten certainly had less access to

⁸³ 'Invictissimo Principi Fridericho Saxonum Duci Electori Ulricus de Hutten Eques Germanus

the new emperor, and even to his brother Ferdinand, than to Maximilian. Charles did not share Maximilian's interest in being seen as a German 'man of the people', and he was less inclined to tolerate the attentions and advice of a patriotic German knight. However, it took time for Charles to be revealed as a disappointment to the German patriots. As Maximilian's grandson, he was automatically looked to as Maximilian's successor in all respects. Holborn rightly comments that it is strange that the German people did not immediately suspect that Charles would remain an alien.⁸⁵ Charles had no ties with the German speaking lands, and did not speak the language himself. All his loyalty and experience lay with the Netherlands and Spain. It was not until religious tensions worsened in 1520 that disillusionment set in for Hutten, and even then he hoped that Charles would see the error of his ways. If Charles were intended as the subject of Arminius, there would be no reason for Hutten to suppress it, and every reason for him to publish it. Again, we are left with only Eobanus' explanation for its late publication.

Franz Rueb, a much more recent biographer of Hutten, suggests no composition date for Arminius, but makes a different assumption for the real subject of the dialogue: he sees the 'new Arminius' as Franz von Sickingen, adopted by Hutten as the best hope for the German people after their abandonment by Charles V:

'Another Arminius was needed. If it could not be the Emperor, it could be Sickingen! Hutten drew parallels effortlessly, and made Arminius appealing to the Germans'.⁸⁶

Salutem', in Opera I, pp.389-390

⁸⁴ Holborn, Hutten, p.77

⁸⁵ Holborn, Hutten, p.115

⁸⁶ Rueb, Der hinkende Schmiedgott Vulkan, p.196

If Rueb sees Sickingen in the role of Arminius, he must be accepting 1520 (or even later) as the date of composition – the point at which Hutten had lost almost all hope in Charles as ‘Germany’s’ redeemer, and was forced to look instead to the military expertise of his friend Sickingen and the other imperial knights.⁸⁷

However, an examination of the dialogue must conclude that it was written earlier than this. The discussion of the text, below, mentions several features of Hutten’s style which appear more developed in dialogues written in 1520. More significantly, the dialogue’s setting and theme place it firmly before 1520. Here, Hutten is preoccupied with German people’s need for, and long-standing right to, liberty from foreign oppressors. We know that he had taken this cause to heart by this time, and yet Arminius is free of the bitter hatred and condemnation of Rome which characterises Hutten’s work from 1520 onwards. This would still allow Holborn’s interpretation of the dialogue as embodying Charles V, the new Emperor, in 1519, but it seems strange that Hutten would portray Germany’s hope for the future as a dead leader who had just arrived in the Underworld, no matter how flattering the comparison with Arminius might be. The natural conclusion is that Arminius was written in 1519, but that the subject was Maximilian I rather than Charles. Charles’s grandfather and predecessor as Holy Roman Emperor, who had crowned Hutten poet laureate and to whom Hutten felt great personal loyalty, died in January 1519. Hutten’s hope that Maximilian would liberate Germany from Roman domination – and, indeed, Italian domination in general - is apparent in his earlier works, although the Emperor died without realising that hope. A famous example of his many works

⁸⁷ See, especially, my commentary on the dialogue Monitor Secundus in chapter five.

on the subject is his 'Ad Caesarem Maximilianum ut Bellum in Venetos Coeptum Prosequatur Exhortatorium'.⁸⁸

AD
 DIVVM MAXIMILIANVM
 CAESAREM AVGVSTVM FELICEM PIVM
 BELLO IN VENETOS EVNTEM
 VLRICHI HVTTENI EQVITIS
 EXHORTATIO.



The frontispiece to Hutten's Exhortatio. Maximilian I and the German army are victorious in Italy. Here the Venetians kneel in supplication before their rightful master.

In this dialogue, then, Hutten portrays Maximilian, who had died weeks or months earlier, in the role of Arminius, recently arrived in the Underworld. This device serves several purposes. The House of Habsburg, to whom Hutten still looked for potential patronage, was flattered by the direct comparison with an ancient German hero. German superiority in morals and in military matters could be demonstrated, with a direct correlation between ancient and sixteenth-century Germany, and Charles could

⁸⁸ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ad Caesarem Maximilianum ut Bellum in Venetos Coeptum Prosequatur

be exhorted to follow his grandfather's patriotic example. In this respect – Hutten's hope for his behaviour in the future - we may see Charles as Holborn's 'new' Arminius. The character in the dialogue, however, represents Maximilian, and the model to which Charles should aspire. Arminius expresses Hutten's view of both the German right to liberty from foreign rule and the German people's readiness to seize that liberty from their oppressors. Foremost in the struggle would be the natural leader of the German people, who in Hutten's mind was the Holy Roman Emperor.⁸⁹

The establishing of Maximilian I as the subject of the dialogue still leaves doubt over the reason for the delay in publishing Arminius: as it combined the glorification of a potential patron's family with an example of how the new Emperor should rule, it seems all the more likely that urgent publication would be sought. And yet Charles may be the key to the puzzle after all. It was probably no more than eighteen months after composition that Hutten lost his faith in Charles as a leader of the German people, as Monitor Secundus (late winter 1520) clearly demonstrates. In that dialogue, Hutten takes the line that it is too late for polite encouragement. The Charles of 1520 has become a prisoner and a dupe of the Roman Church, and Sickingen's firm hand is needed to retrieve him. Eobanus' suggestion that Arminius lay unpublished for reasons of polishing need not have been true for the implausibly long period of four years. Its publication need only have been delayed for a much more believable eighteen months (or less) before circumstances rendered it – in Hutten's eyes, at least – obsolete.

Exhortatorium' (1511) in Opera III, pp.124-158

⁸⁹ See my earlier remarks on the importance of the Holy Roman Emperor to the class of imperial knights, of which Hutten was a member.

Arminius: the text

This examination of the text of Arminius serves two purposes. The first, and most important, is to understand vital aspects of Hutten's thought in 1519. He was entering a new and determining phase of his life, which entailed war on Rome and the welding together of the disparate German-speaking people who would cast Roman influence from their midst. How did he understand Roman oppression and 'Germany' and its leaders at this point in time? How did his understanding differ from the viewpoint of others? Arminius is an extremely useful source for answering these questions, illuminating a turning-point in Hutten's life, when his opposition to Rome had begun to dominate his thoughts but when he still hoped and expected the German people, and their leaders, to unite and rise against it. The second purpose is to show the sources upon which Hutten drew in composing the dialogue, the ways in which his writing was influenced by them, and the extent to which he relied upon them or invented new elements of Arminius' story.

We have seen that all German patriots during this period came to rely heavily on Tacitus for evidence of their honourable past. In Hutten's case, Tacitus influenced not only his thinking, but also his written style. Arminius and later dialogues share a number of distinctive characteristics with Tacitus' work. Althamer's praise for the 'elegance' of Tacitus' style (see above) is worth remarking, as many scholars disagreed with him. Tacitus' themes were very popular, but his work was widely considered very difficult to read. His style was disparaged by Lorenzo Valla and even by Andrea Alciato, who published an edition of Tacitus' works in 1517 and described Tacitus as the best of Roman historians – but at the same time condemned his prose as

‘a thicket of thorns’.⁹⁰ As time passed, this perception did not change. During Elizabeth’s reign, Sir Henry Seville made the heartfelt complaint: ‘He is harde’.⁹¹ In seventeenth century France, Tacitus was dubbed the ‘Prince of Darkness’ (*prince des ténèbres*) because of the obscurity of his style, and in 1808 Napoleon complained to Goethe about the difficulties it presented.⁹² It is true that Tacitus’ style is not straightforward. As Mellor points out, he constantly disconcerts his reader by avoiding obvious phrasing and using surprising syntax, mixing ‘nobility and intimacy, gravity and violence’ so as to convey the ‘underlying sense of fear’ which is present throughout the Annals and the Histories.⁹³ Tacitus was not alone in this, as the written style of the ‘Silver Age’ in which he lived saw a move away from the flowing elegance of Cicero’s style and towards a kind of prose which had shorter sentences and used some of the vocabulary and syntax of poetry.⁹⁴ Hutten, whose own Latin style Erasmus had praised so highly in 1516, was well qualified to judge that of Tacitus, but he was not among those who condemned it. Indeed, there can be no doubt that Hutten greatly admired Tacitus as a writer. As a Latin poet himself, he would have felt at home employing the poetic devices of ‘Silver Age’ prose. His dialogues show that he appreciated the power of a dramatic, unconventional style, being willing to vary his own style to suit the subject and the audience (see, in this and subsequent chapters, the formal debating style of Arminius, the uncontrolled violence of Bulla, the quiet, persuasive tone of Monitor Primus and the haranguing style of Monitor Secundus). Mellor has observed of Tacitus that:

⁹⁰ Salmon, ‘Cicero and Tacitus’, p.310

⁹¹ Keitel, Elizabeth, ‘Review of Ronald Mellor, Tacitus (New York and London, 1993)’ in Bryn Mawr Classical Review (Philadelphia, March 2004)

⁹² Mellor, Tacitus, p.126

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp.127-128

⁹⁴ Miller, N.P., in Tacitus, Annals, Book I (ed. N.P. Miller, London, 1959), p.10 (Latin text only, with an introduction and extensive notes). Seneca was another author of the ‘Silver Age’, who shared many of Tacitus’ characteristics (see Mellor, Tacitus, p.126).

‘His language becomes more sensational where his facts or conclusions are most shaky ... Tacitus uncovers political hypocrisy, but the power of his own rhetoric can distort the truth and his images can take on a reality of their own’,

pointing in particular to the emotional language which covers the reign of the Emperor Tiberius. It will be shown that the same remark could be made of Hutten. Mellor also points to Tacitus’ tendency to pour out lists of words which ‘tumble breathlessly forward’.⁹⁵ Again, the same is true of Hutten. For example, where Arminius is able to draw in detail upon Tacitus’ works as evidence for his arguments, there is no need of violent rhetoric. Hutten’s sensational language appears when he makes general, rather than specific, criticisms of his opponents, as he often does in Bulla and Monitor Secundus. He often employs long lists of words in the same manner as Tacitus, most noticeably in the same two dialogues.⁹⁶ This similarity in style was certainly a conscious development on Hutten’s part, as his earlier work is composed much more in the widely accepted, flowing, classical style. It is even possible that Hutten, the proud poet laureate, saw himself as a modern-day Tacitus, putting the case for the House of Habsburg as Tacitus had once done for Arminius and the ancient German tribes.

Characters and setting

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp.127-128

⁹⁶ See, for example, Sickingen’s outpouring of Rome’s supposed corruptions: ‘artifices, frauds, cunning tricks, stratagems, pretence, cheating, craftiness, treachery, faithlessness, perjury, sacrilege ...’ in Monitor Secundus.

The dialogue takes place in the Underworld of Roman myth. The overtly classical setting is interesting, given Hutten's growing support for Martin Luther, which is discussed in chapter five. He felt no need to give his dialogue a Christian setting; indeed, it is entirely devoid of Christian references. The chosen background and gods are appropriate for the historical characters – even, to a limited extent, for Arminius himself. The gods and myths of ancient Rome would have had some place in his culture, if not in his tribe's distant history. The Germania describes the religious practices of some of the German tribes:

‘As for gods, Mercury is the one they worship most, and on certain days they think it right to propitiate him even with human victims. Hercules and Mars they appease with lawful animals’.⁹⁷

Hutten was doubtless aware of this when choosing Mercury as a character in Arminius. However, Tacitus also makes it clear that the tribes were not exclusively devoted to Roman gods, also mentioning Isis and reverence for woods and groves.

The choice of setting therefore reflects not the correct view of death and afterlife in sixteenth-century Germany, nor one specifically designed for the main character. Instead, it reflects Hutten's own chosen background, steeped in classical literature. His comfort with this theme is evident from the fact that his first dialogue, Phalarismus, was also set in the Underworld and included the characters Charon and, again, Mercury.⁹⁸ The setting provides a frame of reference that would have been immediately recognisable to Hutten's humanist readers. Hutten's readers needed no

⁹⁷ Tacitus, Germania, 9.1, pp.80-81

introduction to the characters or their environment; the dialogue has a context which was easily understood. The fact that Arminius is completely set within a humanist frame of reference will be significant when we consider the three dialogues of 1520, in which classical allusions are very rare. In Hutten's personal journey of 1519-1520, from praised humanist poet to violent, semi-outcast extremist, Arminius marks a very early stage.

Hutten did not bother to make the Underworld entirely consistent in its structure, freely mixing Greek and Roman mythology. Mercury was the Roman messenger of the gods, his Greek counterpart being Hermes, but Minos appears in Greek mythology, first as the king of Crete and the son of Zeus and Europa, and, after death, as one of the three assessors helping Hades to judge the souls of the dead and to send them either to Tartarus or to the Elysian Fields.⁹⁹ The dialogue's setting is therefore quite inconsistent, both internally and with regard to the main historical character, but Hutten achieved what he needed: points of reference which were instantly understood by his audience, and a classical setting which put Arminius on an equal footing with Roman heroes and refuted all accusations of barbarism.

The classical atmosphere is reinforced by the inclusion of Tacitus himself as a participant in the dialogue. This is significant in several ways. First, it emphasises the importance which Hutten and his readers placed upon his work as a source for Germany's ancient history. He was the ultimate authority, as Arminius declares:

⁹⁸ In Greek myth, Charon was the boatman who ferried souls into the Underworld.

⁹⁹ Graves, Robert (ed.), New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology (London, 1959, reprinted 1990), p.167

‘In writing about me, he displayed such knowledge of my affairs, that I might now remain silent’.¹⁰⁰

As to the question of Tacitus’ reliability, Mercury vouches strongly for it:

‘He was honest, above all. No one has written a more truthful history ... he had observed Germany himself’.

In this respect, of course, Hutten’s word cannot be relied upon. He wished the story he was telling to be fully accepted, and in any case he would have had little or no knowledge of Tacitus’ sources. The extent to which Tacitus can be believed, either in the Annals or the Germania, has been much debated among modern scholars. He appears to have used a number of Roman sources in compiling his works, including the elder Pliny’s lost Wars of Germania, the minutes of the Senate, and the diary of the younger Agrippina.¹⁰¹ Ronald Syme, one of the greatest Tacitean scholars, has accused him of relying very heavily on Pliny, ‘copying (it) very closely’ and adding a few embellishments.¹⁰² The probability that Tacitus sometimes sacrificed historical accuracy in favour of drama has been mentioned above, in the discussion of his stylistic influence on Hutten. He was certainly not above exaggeration and rearrangement of facts in order to make his point – usually a moral or political one. The Annals sees the frequent use of rumour or innuendo, and the Germania has ‘a highly rhetorical nature’.¹⁰³ In fact, though, Tacitus probably had more up-to-date information than this, from wealthy merchants with whom he had family connections

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p.iv

¹⁰¹ Kelley, ‘*Tacitus noster*’, p.154, Rives in Tacitus, Germania, pp.58-59

¹⁰² Syme, Ronald, Tacitus (Oxford, 1958), pp.127-128

¹⁰³ Rives in Tacitus, Germania, pp.46-48

and, perhaps, from personal experience in the Rhineland – an area for which his information appears both detailed and accurate.¹⁰⁴ The latter supposition is supported by Tacitus' own claim to have seen Germany as well as hearing about it ('non tantum auribus, sed et oculis testis'), which Hutten draws on in Arminius when Mercury says that Tacitus has seen the tribes himself.¹⁰⁵ However, these were not issues with which Hutten wished to concern himself. At this early point in Tacitus' reception in the German-speaking lands, Beatus Rhenanus was unusual in his attempts at scholarly analysis, and even he concentrated more on establishing modern-day connections with the Germania than with establishing the accuracy of his source. Arminius was intended as convincing polemic, so a blunt statement of its accuracy (best of all, by a god) was what was required. In this convenient acceptance of Tacitus' work (at least, of the parts which suited him), Hutten resembled most of his peers.

Of course, Tacitus' value to Hutten and to other German humanists went beyond the historical material contained in his works. Tacitus was a Roman – an enemy – and therefore his admission of German superiority in morality, courage and leadership was worth more than such an admission by anyone else. It resonated with the Germans of the sixteenth century, and could be used to answer those Italians who regarded them as barbarians. The value of Tacitus as a witness was further enhanced by his social and political standing, for he was no stay-at-home scribe, unable to judge international affairs. He was born into the upper classes, and became a senator, consul, and, eventually, governor of the great province of western Anatolia. He studied with leading orators, and became one of the best-known speakers of his

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p.60, Syme, Tacitus, pp.449-53

¹⁰⁵ Kelley, 'Tacitus noster', p.154

time.¹⁰⁶ Here was a man who was not only forced into grudging admiration of his enemy, but was also well qualified to judge a leader's worth. No wonder Hutten introduces him as a character in Arminius. Tacitus adds weight and conviction to the whole proceedings.

In addressing Minos, Arminius immediately shows some characteristics which Hutten thought of as 'German'. He asserts his rights politely but straightforwardly, without flattery or time-wasting, and is not at all abashed about disagreeing with a demi-god. If Arminius personifies the recently-deceased Maximilian I, the implication is that the modern-day ruler of the German people should, like Arminius, speak to anyone as an equal, whether he is a demi-god or a pope. As Arminius says in response to Minos' warning to choose his words carefully:

'You must excuse me if the frankness of my speech offends you. It is uniquely German to speak with little flattery when speaking out about serious matters'.¹⁰⁷

Not only is this openness appropriate to Germans, but, Hutten claims here, it is *exclusive* to Germans. Arminius' foreign opponents in this debate cannot be depended upon to be so honest in their speech, and nor can sixteenth-century opponents of the Holy Roman Emperor. Germans, however, will always speak truthfully and plainly. This characteristic is not explicitly attributed to the Germans in Tacitus' work, although it is implied on several occasions. For instance, in the Germania the tribes are said to speak their minds freely to one another while feasting – 'thus everyone's

¹⁰⁶ Grant, Michael, in Tacitus, Annals, p.7

attitude is revealed and laid bare' – and in the Annals, Arminius speaks of his honesty in war: 'My fighting has been open, not treacherous'.¹⁰⁸ By Hutten's time, such openness had certainly become a feature of the way in which German patriots thought of themselves, as shown by the doggerel verse quoted in full above:

'When he says "no" he means it,
and "yes" when he means "yes"'.

It transpires that in Arminius' absence, three famous generals have been judged in the Underworld for their military exploits on earth, and accordingly awarded first, second and third places of honour in the Elysian Fields. First place has been awarded to Alexander the Great (356.-323B.C.), the King of Macedon, famous for his great victory over the Persians and subsequent establishment of a great empire across Asia Minor. Second place has been taken by Scipio Africanus (237-183B.C.), the Roman general who defeated the Carthaginians under Hannibal, and third place by Hannibal (247-182B.C.) himself, who won many victories for Carthage and struggled against Rome for many years, eventually taking poison rather than surrendering to his enemies.¹⁰⁹

Arminius has not been awarded any place of honour, because of his natural German modesty and expectation of fair play (which kept him from coming to argue his case and which, it now appears, cannot be expected of foreigners). Despite a natural

¹⁰⁷ Appendix I, p.i

¹⁰⁸ Tacitus, Germania 22.1, p.86, and Annals, p.66

¹⁰⁹ There are many publications relating to these generals, but see, for example, Fox, Robin Lane, Alexander the Great (Harmondsworth, 1986), Smith, Philip J., Scipio Africanus and Rome's Invasion of Africa. A historical commentary on Titus Livius, book xxix (Amsterdam, 1993), and Wise, T. and Healy, M., Hannibal's War with Rome: His Armies and Campaigns 216B.C. (Oxford, 1999).

reluctance to push himself forward and demand honours, he is confident of his own superiority, as Hutten thought a German leader should be:

‘If I had ever thought of pitting myself against them, of course I could not doubt that you would actually have ranked me first’.¹¹⁰

In the face of German demands for a fair hearing, even the demi-god Minos backs down, murmuring excuses about pressure of work and lack of leisure time, and he readily agrees to hear Arminius debating with the other generals, although he has supposedly already made his judgement. This reflects Hutten’s idea of German status in 1519 – both what it was and what it should be. He believed that Germans, and especially their Emperor, could insist on fairness from anyone, and he also still believed that they might get it, through strong argument and a refusal to be intimidated. This belief would not last much longer. The years 1520-23 would see increasing desperation on Hutten’s part at Roman influence in Germany, and a simultaneous disillusionment over the role played by Charles V as Holy Roman Emperor. At this point, however, we can see in Arminius Hutten’s aspirations combined with some hope for the future. He was portraying Arminius’, or Maximilian’s, behaviour in the face of daunting opposition, and still really thought that this might reflect political realities and act as an example to the young Charles in representing the German people.

Liberty

¹¹⁰ Appendix I, p.i

The evidence which Tacitus gives in Arminius consists of a key passage from the Annals (the story of Arminius is told in scattered portions of Books I and II). Hutten quotes Tacitus' words exactly, without paraphrasing, and uses the speech to introduce two important themes.¹¹¹ The first, pre-eminent theme is the natural desire of all Germans for freedom, so strong that it is remarked upon as an unusual problem for a leader who needed to gather them together and give orders:

Tacitus: In aspiring to the kingdom Arminius was hindered by his compatriots' love of liberty.

Hutten's ideal view of the German people in the sixteenth century had them valuing liberty above everything else. There is an indication here of its value in Hutten's eyes. The ancient German tribes were difficult to organise because of their extreme love of independence, which in sixteenth-century terms provided a warning to the Holy Roman Emperor of the difficulties he should expect in leading his people (as well as a good moral reason for it). But their very unusual degree of attachment to freedom, their refusal to be dominated by others, proved to be the impetus behind the overthrow of the more powerful ancient Romans. Hutten hoped that the same would be true in his own day: a united German nation, bent upon reclaiming its liberty, could not be prevented from doing so. Once again, it would expel Roman influence from its midst. First, however, Hutten and the Emperor would face the same challenge as Arminius: the scattered, independent-minded German people must be brought together and persuaded to oppose a common enemy with all its might. Arminius is held up as an example to Hutten's readers of what could be achieved.

¹¹¹ Hutten, 'Arminius', p.410

An exchange between Arminius and Alexander reveals what Hutten understood by 'liberty'. Alexander objects to the honour which Minos eventually decides to award Arminius:

'But at one time, this man was a slave! I was a king, and always free'.

Arminius replies with the point that Hutten wanted all 'Germans' to understand and adopt:

'It is not true that I was servile to any man in my mind. For always being mindful of freedom ... I kept my plans quiet and hid my love of liberty secretly inside me'.

It was possible, therefore, for anyone to be free of slavery to Rome. The German people were not subject to Rome just because Rome said they were – an important lesson for Hutten to teach in the sixteenth century. Alexander also offers the means of dealing with a possible objection to this. He claims that, having accepted the yoke from the Romans, the Germans were not entitled to cast it off again, and Arminius's reply is vital to Hutten's argument for freedom from sixteenth-century Roman domination:

'I neither accepted the yoke nor agreed to slavery in my heart ... For what justice can one have who has torn away another's natural right? And what injustice is there in recovering through violence something of his own which

was taken from him through violence? ... I gave a promise extorted by violence and injustice And since it is against nature to be changed from a free man into a slave, I do not think that it should be against the law to restore nature's gift. In short, a promise means that we will give what we should'.

Hutten did not feel that Germany was bound by centuries of traditional attachment to the Roman Church, or indeed by Italy's traditional position as the preserver of ancient civilisation, and he wanted to persuade his countrymen of this too. In speaking of the 'yoke ... of slavery' he echoes the imagery used by Conrad Celtis in his address to the University of Ingolstadt in 1492 (quoted in chapter two). A fundamental difference should be noted, however. Celtis expected the Germans to be ashamed of taking on the yoke of their own free will, but Hutten takes the opposite view: Arminius, and by extension modern Germans, have been forced into the appearance of slavery without ever willingly accepting it. The influences of earlier humanists, noted in chapter two, were very much present in Hutten's work, but he placed his own more aggressive interpretation on them.

The theme of liberty is at the very core of Arminius, which was Hutten's first major work on the subject. It would also be central to his dialogues of 1520 (see especially Bulla vel Bullicida in chapter four), but Hutten's expectations and methods of trying to achieve national freedom would change perceptibly in the course of writing them. Arminius was the product of the short period when Hutten still trusted in the Holy Roman Emperor and his countrymen to rise to the occasion and reclaim their liberty. At this time, he believed that violence was a justifiable means of regaining German

freedom, but he envisaged an army lawfully organised and led by Charles V, the rightful ruler of the Germans. He still had a long way to travel to his position at the end of 1520, when he advocated violence against the Church and, if necessary, against that rightful ruler. The violence proposed in Arminius could be viewed – by Hutten, anyway – as law enforcement, but he would soon advocate a chaotic violence which threatened to turn German society upside down. In 1520, Bulla vel Bullicida would reveal a more cynical Hutten. In this dialogue he was forced to cast himself, rather than the Emperor, as the man who would free Germany, while other Germans came late to the fight. The dialogue Monitor Secundus would portray Franz von Sickingen openly threatening war in defence of the heretic Martin Luther. By the end of 1520, Hutten would himself be suggesting that he help Luther advance his cause by force, despairing of Charles doing the right thing. But in 1519, that unhappy time had not yet arrived. Hutten had reached a turning point in his life, choosing to devote himself above all to the cause of national freedom, but he still saw it as being accomplished through the Emperor's leadership, and motivated by natural German pride and dignity, in keeping with the heroic past of *Germania*.

Courage against overwhelming force

After the pre-eminent discussion of Liberty, the second important theme introduced by Tacitus' evidence centres on his description of Arminius:

'He was without doubt the liberator of Germany, who made his challenge ... at the very height of (Roman) power'.

Here, in sixteenth-century terms, is the Holy Roman Emperor. In describing the leader of the German people as ‘the liberator of Germany’, Hutten was able to flatter the recently deceased Maximilian I, to whose family he still looked for patronage, and to push his grandson Charles in the direction of his proper duties (as Hutten perceived them). A struggle with Rome should not be shirked on the grounds of its strength: Arminius had not been daunted by the overwhelming power of his opponents, whose influence permeated every area of life, and the Emperor should be similarly unafraid and determined.

Arminius drives these points home in his speeches. He speaks of his total lack of equipment and men, and the lack of any assistance from outside, emphasising the ability of the German people to win in impossible situations, to make an advantage out of nothing, and revealing Hutten’s belief that the new ‘Germany’ would have to fight for its liberty alone. Arminius returns to this subject later, when he points out that, unlike his opponents in the debate, he had not inherited a kingdom or been given command of an army by the senate. He had had to build his success from nothing. Hutten was not above embroidering Arminius’ story to make his exploits sound even more impressive. Nowhere in the *Annals* is there any mention of the German tribes being so unprepared for war that ‘there was not even enough iron for making weapons’, nor of Arminius’ quick thinking and determination repairing such a shortfall.¹¹² The *Germania* probably suggested the idea to Hutten, with Tacitus’ comment that in *Germania* ‘not even iron abounds’, but Tacitus goes on to say that this is commonly dealt with by the use of short-bladed spears.¹¹³ Indeed, Tacitus refers in the *Germania* to the neighbouring tribe to the Cherusci, the Chatti, being

¹¹² Ibid., p.vii

extremely well-armed and ‘loaded down with tools and supplies’.¹¹⁴ Hutten’s message was that the ancient Germans had been a force which could not be stopped by obstacles which other races would have found insurmountable, and that the same was true in his own time: his fellow Germans should not feel that a struggle for the freedom of their country was hopeless, as they had achieved something even more difficult in the past.

On the other hand, Arminius’ claim to have ‘destroyed three legions ... along with the commander and his officers’ is taken from Tacitus’ account. The Annals has Arminius shout defiantly to the Romans, who have captured his pregnant wife:

‘I ... have annihilated three divisions and their commanders. My fighting has been open, not treacherous ... The groves of Germany still display the Roman Eagles and standards which I hung there in honour of the gods of our fathers’.¹¹⁵

The destruction of Varus and his three legions was a tremendous shock for the Roman Empire, as Hutten’s Arminius points out:

‘The magnitude of that achievement is something which I will not strive to explain, when the ancient Romans here speak daily of what a disaster I then was for them, how wretchedly I confounded (them) ... how no other more strongly dismayed the masters of affairs, the toga-wearing race, with fear and trepidation’.

¹¹³ Tacitus, Germania, 6.1, p.79

This, too, Hutten has derived from the Annals, in which the account of the punitive expeditions led by Germanicus and Caecina shows the strength of Rome's reaction to its defeat.¹¹⁶ The horror of the Roman army at the sight of the destruction wrought by Arminius on Varus' force was quoted earlier in this chapter.¹¹⁷ Arminius' subsequent story about Augustus being in despair over his victories is interesting because it introduces a new source for Hutten.¹¹⁸ The story of the Emperor banging his head against the walls and crying, 'Varus, give me back my legions!' is a famous one, but it does not appear in the Annals. It is found instead in Suetonius' Life of the Divine Augustus, which was evidently also known to Hutten.¹¹⁹

Hutten's Arminius also refers to the difficult terrain in which his battles against the Romans were fought: unexplored forests, surrounded by swamps and rivers, and barred by mountains. As previously mentioned, this drew the attention of several German humanists, who, unlike Hutten, used the transformation of the physical landscape to prove the progress made in the German lands over the past 1500 years. Hutten uses it here to show the hardiness of the ancient Germans, and their ability to turn an apparent obstacle to their advantage. These tribesmen are not barbarians, but cunning warriors. The Germania is one source for this view of the landscape:

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 30.3, p.89

¹¹⁵ Tacitus, Annals, p.66

¹¹⁶ Ibid., pp.64-71

¹¹⁷ See the section on Conrad Celtis in **The Impact of Tacitus in Germany**.

¹¹⁸ Appendix I, p.viii

¹¹⁹ Suetonius, Divus Augustus, ed. John M. Carter (Bristol, 1982), I 23

‘(The land) generally bristles with forests or reeks with fens, wetter towards Gaul, windier towards Noricum and Pannonia’¹²⁰

but the Annals provides the detail on which Arminius’ statement is based:

‘Arminius retreated into pathless country ... and a force he had secretly posted in the forest was given the signal to charge. ... (The Romans) were almost forced onto marshy ground, well known to their victorious opponents but perilous for strangers. ... The waterlogged ground was too soft for a firm stand and too slippery for movement. The Cherusci, on the other hand, were used to fighting in marshes’.¹²¹

Arminius compares his achievements to good effect with those of the other generals – Alexander, for instance, had only fought ‘the effeminate Asian races’ – and he summarises:

‘Scipio should not claim that he revived a Rome which was as weakened and in as much confusion as the downtrodden and wartorn Germany which I quickly and wholly restored ... I confounded the greatest city, the most flowering empire’.

¹²⁰ Tacitus, Germania, 5.1, pp.78-79

¹²¹ Tacitus, Annals, pp.68-69

The parallel with the power of the Roman Church, which in the sixteenth century pervaded every area of life and appeared unassailable, is obvious.¹²² Yet even something so vast could be toppled by a determined German leader.

Money

The third important strand running through Arminius is a discussion of money. The dialogue portrays the ancient Germans as simplistic in their approach to money, and lacking any concept of greed. Hutten was not helped in this by Tacitus, who states in the Annals that the Roman commander Caecina only escaped death at Arminius' hands in battle because:

‘Fortunately, the greedy Germans stopped killing and went after loot’.¹²³

Hutten dealt with this as he and other German humanists dealt with other such criticisms: he ignored it. At the beginning of his main speech, in which he refutes the claims of the other generals to be placed higher than himself, Arminius observes that no one could accuse him of gaining support through the use of bribes, as the ancient Germans did not use money.¹²⁴ Reference to the Germania shows that this was not entirely true, although most German tribes had little use for money:

‘(Cattle) are the exclusive form of wealth, and much prized. Silver and gold the gods have denied, whether in kindness or anger I cannot say ... Owning

¹²² Andrew Pettegree comments on the pervasive nature of the Church at all levels in Pettegree, Andrew, Europe in the Sixteenth Century (Oxford, 2002), p.89.

¹²³ Tacitus, Annals, p.70

¹²⁴ Ibid., p.vi

and using these metals does not much impress them: among them one can see silver vases, given as presents to their envoys and leaders, held in as low esteem as those shaped from clay. That said, they know the value of gold and silver, and recognise and pick out certain types of our currency; the tribes further in employ the simpler and older practice of bartering goods.¹²⁵



Ancient German Tribes
Reproduced in Tacitus, *Germania*, pp. xii-xiii

The map shown above indicates the relative positions of the German tribes, based on the evidence of ancient authors. It shows that Arminius' tribe, the *Cherusci*, were not on the borders of *Germania* but could hardly be described as 'far in'. Arminius doubtless knew and had access to money, but this is another instance in which Hutten preferred to avoid a close examination of the facts, in much the same way that he avoided Tacitus' distinction between 'money', of which the tribes knew fairly little, and 'loot', of which they were very fond.

¹²⁵ Tacitus, *Germania*, 5.1, 5.3, p.79

It suited Hutten to present the Germans as a race which was still virtually innocent of the corruption of money, even in the sixteenth century having less regard for it than for liberty and morals. It was in keeping with the blunt-speaking image established at the beginning of the dialogue, and it contrasted the German-speaking peoples with the money-grabbing Roman Church which Hutten had come to despise. The message would not have been lost on Hutten's readers. On the political side, German humanists had long complained of the heavy taxation to which their country was subjected by the Church, and on the religious side, everyone was aware that the brewing storm over Martin Luther had at its source the sale of indulgences.¹²⁶ Through Arminius's denial of money as a concern of the German people, Hutten dissociated himself and his countrymen from both abuses. The Germans were above such things, and would no longer tolerate them. The theme of money in *Arminius* takes on extra significance when viewed in the light of the other three dialogues examined in this thesis. In them, the comparison with sixteenth-century Rome is no longer implied: the papacy's greed and methods of extorting money from Germany are explicitly criticised. In *Arminius*, we see an early expression of Hutten's growing outrage at what he saw as the robbery and exploitation of his countrymen.

It is ironic indeed that Maximilian I, whom Hutten revered, and Charles V, whom he still trusted to uphold these values, had just paid enormous bribes to the Electors in order to secure Charles's election as Holy Roman Emperor. The Electors who expected the bribes, of course, were the princes who should assist in leading the German nation to freedom, but they did not share Hutten's aspirations either. It was

¹²⁶ Tetzel's 1517 indulgence campaign, and his slogan 'Because the coin rings, the soul to heaven springs' are among the best-known causes of Luther's original protest. See, for example, Scribner, R.W., *For the Sake of Simple Folk. Popular propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge,

probably at the very time that Arminius was taking shape in Hutten's mind, that the Electors were considering selling themselves to the highest bidder. As Brandi put it, 'hard cash alone would be effective. The princes thought more of the jingling coin of the French than of all their fair words'.¹²⁷ Unknown to Hutten, Charles was already proving himself to be utterly unlike the ideal German leader portrayed in this dialogue.

Honour

In his main speech, Arminius demonstrates other traits which Hutten held up as distinctively German: the willingness to credit others with the glory which they deserve, and a lack of concern with personal glory for its own sake.¹²⁸ He returns to this theme of honourable behaviour later in the dialogue:

'My greatest wish was always for honour, not a thirst for glory or for greed. I erected no monuments to myself when I cast out the Romans, nor did I fight for riches or power. Instead my goal, to which I directed everything, was to restore through strength my country's liberty'.¹²⁹

Arminius seeks no exaggerated honours or attention; merely a fair acknowledgment of his accomplishments. It is a simplicity which goes hand in hand with the insistence on plain speaking and the refusal to be corrupted by money.

1981), p.201. The issue of taxes and other ways in which the Church acquired money from the German-speaking lands is discussed in chapter four.

¹²⁷ Brandi, Karl, The Emperor Charles V, trans. C.V. Wedgwood (London, 1939), p.101. Brandi gives a detailed account of the election process on pp.99-114.

¹²⁸ Appendix I, p.v

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.xii

In fact, none of Arminius' remarks on honour have any basis in the Annals. His deeds are recounted, but his personal views on glory and manner of speech are nowhere hinted at, although the Germania contains several passages which suggest that the ancient Germans were a rough, practical people.¹³⁰ Arminius's words about assigning glory to those who deserve it, and not wishing it for himself, are therefore Hutten's invention. It is another aspect of his ideal view of the nation which he wished to see emerge again: an honest, fair-minded race who would recognise virtue when they saw it and would reject such frivolous trappings as Hutten had come to associate with the Roman Church. Hutten also invents Arminius' later claim that, although suspected of it, he had no thought of taking power in Rome for himself.¹³¹ The claim is further evidence of a nation which wants freedom and fair play, and would not deprive others of their freedom any more than it would deprive them of their rightful glory.

Allied to these general statements of honourable behaviour are Arminius' comments on the domestic betrayals which dogged his leadership. Through him, Hutten shows his own disapproval of those who would lead revolts against their rightful rulers. There is great irony in this, as Hutten would emerge just three years later as a leader of the Knights' Revolt, the seeds of which are apparent in Monitor Secundus (see chapter five). Arminius was written at a time when he had not dreamed of taking such action – a fact which emphasises the speed of the extreme changes which would overtake Hutten in the next eighteen months or so. During that time, Hutten's own perception of 'rightful rule' and the responsibilities of those who exercised it and of those who were subject to it, would change significantly.

¹³⁰ See, for example, Tacitus, Germania, 6.1 and 20.1, pp.79, 85.

Hutten also draws attention to the tempering of Arminius' justice with mercy - the mark of a civilised and honourable man:

'I confronted the ringleaders of all the revolts in all areas, and punished some with popular approval, and, in fact, showed mercy to others who pleaded for it. ... As for those who paid tribute to outsiders or allowed themselves to be kept subject to other conditions, I did not consider them to be Germans'.¹³²

The latter part of this statement is another of Hutten's inventions: the Annals contains no mention of Arminius' thoughts about those who paid tribute. This actually reflects Hutten's own view of sixteenth-century Germans who willingly paid taxes, or 'tribute', to Rome and lived as Rome dictated. These were included among the 'courtesans' whom he derided in later dialogues (see, especially, chapter four). Hutten did not consider such people to be true Germans, as they exhibited none of the moral courage which he tried so hard to portray as natural German characteristics in Arminius. As mentioned above, the unreasoning violence committed against Varus' legions, a mark of a barbarian, is omitted from the dialogue.¹³³ Such harsh treatment of the Romans as Hutten was obliged to acknowledge, he excuses in Arminius' remarks near the end of the dialogue. Scipio charges him with treachery because of his cruel treatment of Varus, and he replies:

¹³¹ Ibid., p.viii

¹³² Appendix I, p.ix

¹³³ See the remarks on Conrad Celtis and other humanists in **The impact of Tacitus in Germany**.

‘According to that argument, Scipio, all tyrannicides and defenders everywhere are guilty of treachery, especially yours, who ousted the Tarquins and killed Caesar, and who have attained the greatest praise and eternal glory among you because of it. ... The justice of my cause compelled me to strive even against serious adversity. So let Minos declare whether or not I was entitled to punish Quinctilius’ atrocity – which was of such a kind, and so savage – with atrocity in return, when the gods gave me the chance’.¹³⁴

Minos naturally judges that Arminius was fully justified in his actions. So, Hutten suggests, Germans should not feel constrained from taking harsh measures to free their country, as they have suffered the severest provocation.

The worst of Arminius’ domestic enemies was Adgandestrius of the treacherous Chatti, who offered to kill Arminius if the Romans would supply him with poison. Not surprisingly, Hutten omits the part of the story in which, in response to this dishonourable suggestion by a German, the Romans reply that they deal with their enemies by taking proper vengeance, not through ‘underhand tricks’.¹³⁵ Instead, he emphasises *Arminius*’ refusal to behave in the way Adgandestrius had suggested, and accuses the Romans of dishonour:

¹³⁴ Appendix I, p.xvi

¹³⁵ Tacitus, *Annals*, pp.65-66, 81, 118-119

‘I plainly showed the Romans there, covering them with great shame, that I did not wage war through betrayal, or upon pregnant women, but openly challenged those who had taken arms against me’.¹³⁶

Here we see yet another example of Hutten’s selectivity: this is not meant to be a straightforward dramatisation of history. It is pure polemic intended to unite the German-speaking lands against Rome.

Among the traitors were members of Arminius’s own family, and Hutten’s greatest contempt is reserved for them. Their stories are taken from the Annals without elaboration: Segestes, Arminius’ father-in-law, who defected to the Roman side, Inguiomerus, Arminius’s uncle, who had good relations with the enemy, and Flavius, his brother, who actually fought against Arminius for the Romans, were all traitors against the man who tried to free his country from oppression. There are no exact parallels here with Hutten’s own experience, although it is clear that he considered the betrayal of a person by those closest to him to be particularly heinous, as his condemnation of Charles V’s advisers in Monitor Secundus demonstrates. The most immediate implication of this passage is, again, criticism of those sixteenth-century Germans or ‘courtesans’ who had deserted the interests of their country for Roman favour.

Arminius emphasises his great love for, and faithfulness to, his wife, and the fact that even this could not stand in the way of his love for his country once she had been captured. Hutten approves of both sentiments as properly German. The whole

¹³⁶ Appendix I, p.xi

dialogue, indeed, exhorts his readers to place their country before everything. Arminius' love for his wife has been slightly embroidered by Hutten, but not without basis. The Germania describes the sanctity of marriage at some length, beginning with the observation:

'Marriage there is a serious matter: no other part of their culture could one praise more',¹³⁷

and Hutten has obviously drawn on this source for his description of Arminius' feelings. It is an important inclusion, not only because it shows the innate morality of this German leader, but because Tacitus, a representative of the enemy, was implying that ancient Rome could learn from this German moral example. In Hutten's day, such comparisons supported the German criticisms of Italian morality which were mentioned in chapter two. Hutten had also selected material from the Annals which would strike a chord with his contemporaries, who regarded marriage as a particularly serious and sacred bond.¹³⁸

Finally, a brief note should be made of the speeches given by Hutten to Arminius' three opponents in the debate. Their speeches are short, and their objections are feeble. They are portrayed as good fighters but poor talkers, failing to think as quickly or speak as eloquently as Arminius. As a result, Hutten succeeds in making them look less intelligent and less credible than the German. It is a very effective means of engaging the reader's sympathy for the most eloquent character, and should be noted

¹³⁷ Tacitus, Germania, 18.1-19.2, pp.84-85

¹³⁸ Roper, Lyndal, The Holy Household. Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg (Oxford, 1989), pp.132-164

as an early example of Hutten's use of this technique, as it will be seen again, much more strongly developed, in the dialogue Bulla in chapter four.

Conclusion

The years between leaving the German universities in 1511 and writing Arminius in 1519 marked a fundamental change in Hutten's interests. His experiences in Italy, and his time at the courts of Maximilian I and Albrecht of Brandenburg, led to a deepened awareness of Roman interference in Germany and to a correspondingly fervent German patriotism which would dominate the rest of his life almost completely.

Hutten lived at a time when humanist interest, and particularly German interest, in Tacitus was growing rapidly. German humanists saw Tacitus' works as benefiting their own political and patriotic agenda, over and above his appeal in other countries as a teacher of morals and statecraft. Not everyone admired Tacitus, either for his content or for his written style, but Hutten did, influenced by Conrad Celtis and other humanists who were connected to him. He was in exactly the right place to benefit from the first publication of the rediscovered Annals, and Arminius is an early major expression of his opposition to Rome, his idea of what characteristics 'Germany' and 'Germans' should have, and, above all, of his overwhelming desire to achieve German liberty. Arminius identifies that liberty as freedom from foreign domination, existing in the hearts and minds of those enslaved, even when it does not seem to exist in practical terms. In order to make his points, Hutten used Tacitus' Annals and Germania extensively, along with other classical works, but felt free to alter the emphasis of Arminius' story or even to invent elements, if this served his purpose.

With this open and whole-hearted commitment, no longer to traditional humanist learning but to political and religious ideals of liberty and love of homeland, Hutten emerged in 1519 into a new, final phase in his life. It would be a decisive phase, encompassing an obsession with liberty and Germany (and, linked to these, Martin Luther's movement). However, from 1519 to 1523 he was not consistent, changing the emphasis of what he envisaged for Germany and the vehemence with which he demanded it. In 1519, Hutten was passionately committed to the German cause as he saw it, but had not yet become cynical about his fellow Germans. He still believed that the German people could be persuaded to join together to throw off Roman tyranny, as they had done under Arminius, and that the Holy Roman Emperor would do his duty by taking on the role of Arminius and leading the resistance. Unlike other humanists who talked of German liberty and morals, he expected real results from his campaign, not just admiration for his rhetoric.

As later dialogues show, this faith in his emperor and fellow men did not last long. Arminius gives a fleeting picture of Hutten wholly committed to a cause and filled with enthusiasm for it. The whole dialogue proclaims his devotion to the Holy Roman Emperor and to a united, not divided, German people. It marks an understanding of Germany, of right and wrong, which would last only briefly, for in 1519 Hutten stood on the very edge of four years of turmoil and constantly evolving, ever more desperate views, which would lead him to focus openly and specifically on the Italian *Church* as the enemy of the Germans, and would end in opposition to the emperor he had supported and in his early death.

It is no wonder that Hutten chose Arminius as his mouthpiece. Hutten's attitude to 'Germany', Rome and freedom, and to ways of realising his ideal, had been perfectly summarised by Tacitus in the Annals 1500 years earlier, with Arminius' shout of defiance:

'Let Segestes live on the conquered bank, and make his son a Roman priest again. With this warning before them Germany will never tolerate Roman rods, axes, and robes between Rhine and Elbe. Other countries, unacquainted with Roman rule, have not known its impositions or its punishments. We have known them – and have got rid of them! ... There is nothing to fear in an inexperienced youth and a mutinous army. If you prefer your country, your parents, and the old ways to settlement under tyrants abroad, then do not follow Segestes to shameful slavery – follow Arminius to glory and freedom!'¹³⁹

Lest there still be any doubt about the core of Hutten's message, he has Minos state it clearly:

'I give to Mercury this responsibility: that he pronounce Arminius of the Cherusci the most *free*, the most *invincible*, and the most *German*'.¹⁴⁰

This is what Hutten wished to see every inhabitant of the German-speaking lands accomplish: to claim liberty, to stand firm against attempts at domination, and to be

¹³⁹ Tacitus, Annals, p.66

¹⁴⁰ Appendix I, p.xiv (my italics)

'German', which, as the dialogue shows, encompassed plain speaking, plain values, courage, morality and independence of spirit.

When Arminius was published in Wittenberg in 1528, five years after Hutten's death, a brief preface by the Lutheran leader Philip Melanchthon accompanied it. Melanchthon claimed that:

'a wonderful patriotism has been divinely implanted in the breasts of all men, I believe, so that we might be aroused to the defence of the important things which the fatherland contains: religion, laws, and discipline ... We have therefore fashioned these little books in order to place before our young men an image of ancient Germany; if, as I hope, the love of their fatherland will kindle them to its contemplation, it will be useful both for their morals and for their studies'.¹⁴¹

It was praise indeed, but not what Hutten would have wanted, and certainly not the reaction he wished to provoke when he wrote Arminius. Here it is praised for stirring up thoughts of patriotism, religion and discipline, but not as he intended. Rather than being kindled to thoughts of a just war against a material oppressor, his young readers were being 'kindled to contemplation' for the sake of their morals and their studies. On its first publication, the passionate message of Arminius was watered down and misunderstood. Hutten was being politely returned to the ranks of the moralising German humanists from whom he had broken so decisively.

¹⁴¹ Ulery, 'Tacitus', p.149, quoted by Rives in Tacitus, Germania, p.73

Chapter Four

Bulla vel Bullicida: The Bull or The Bullkiller

A change of pace

With his travels in Italy and his employment at the court of Mainz, Hutten's life had begun to change very quickly. His earlier life had consisted of long periods which were each dominated by one feature – his early upbringing as a knight, his youth in a monastery, and his long apprenticeship to humanist learning – giving him time to settle into a mode of life and reflect on it. His letters and poems, many of which have been examined in earlier chapters, are indicative of an active mind and a restless nature, but also of leisure in which to indulge them. He had had time for perfecting his Latin, immersing himself in humanist culture, writing to his friends about his own experiences as well as current affairs, supporting causes such as Reuchlin's, and writing satirical spoofs. Even when he wrote in anger, he was able to do so with care and at length, as his sustained attacks on the Lötze family and Duke Ulrich of Württemberg demonstrate.¹ In both cases he wrote extensive, carefully composed, personal condemnations of his opponents, the five-year gap between them reflecting his growing ability in elegant Latin composition.²

¹ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ulrici Hutteni in Wedegum Loetz et filium eius Henningum v. Iuris Doctorem Gripeswaldi in Pomerania' (1510), in *Opera* III, pp.19-83, Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ulrichi de Hutten Equitis Germani ad Ludovichum de Hutten Equitem Auratum super interemptione filii consolatoria' (1515), in *Opera* I, pp.46-52, Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ausschreiben Ludwigs und anderer von Hutten gegen Herzog Ulrich von Wirtemberg' (1515-1516), in *Opera* I, pp.55-99, Hutten, Ulrich von, 'In Ulrichum Wirtenpergensem orationes quinque' (1515-1519), in *Opera* V, pp.1-95

Such leisure to explore his surroundings and to comment on them could not last forever. Hutten's active, argumentative nature was sure to involve him in any matter of grave or dramatic importance, and he happened to live in a place and time which provided many of them. Two, in particular, were to change Hutten's life completely. Chapter three examined the first of these: the growing interest among humanists in the cause of German nationalism. As we know, Hutten threw himself into this with great enthusiasm. It resulted in a new outburst of energy and a new direction for his talents. However, there was still time for reflection and artistic composition. Arminius reflects a new passion and a new level of commitment to a cause, but it is also carefully constructed, and packed with the classical references which were normal in humanist literature. It is clear that, despite his growing devotion to the patriotic cause, Hutten still had control over the change of pace in his work. He was still writing on subjects which he chose, combining in Arminius his nationalist interests with flattery of the Habsburg family, from whom he sought further patronage. Although he openly urged the emperor to press the interests of the German-speaking lands with military force, he had done so for most of his career, and still the fight for German freedom consisted mainly of rhetoric.³

This control over the rate of change would end with the second defining event in Hutten's life. This was, of course, the onset of the Reformation in Germany. As with all his causes, he embraced Luther's movement wholeheartedly. He did this mainly out of a belief that Luther could help to further the 'German' cause, but, as this chapter and the next will show, he also committed himself to Luther's doctrinal ideas.

² Holborn comments briefly on the more confident style of the latter compositions in Hutten, pp.51-52.

³ Examples of Hutten's encouragement to the Emperor to employ force in Italy are: Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ad Caesarem Maximilianum ut Bellum in Venetos Coeptum Prosequatur Exhortatorium' (1510),

It was here that events began to overtake Hutten. Whereas he had been a leader in the patriotic movement, he was an outspoken supporter in Luther's. He did not set the reform agenda or control Luther's literary output. When Luther came into conflict with the papacy, Hutten cheerfully added fuel to the flames, writing anti-Roman polemic such as Bulla, but it was Luther, not Hutten, who drove the events of the early Reformation. Although Hutten had been an outspoken critic of the papacy for several years, the Church only took notice of him when he appeared in the role of Luther's supporter. It was Luther's writings, and the storm which surrounded them, which alarmed the Church, and it was as a consequence of them that Hutten's own work was suddenly perceived as a threat which required a response.⁴ As a result, Hutten entered a new and final phase in his life: one in which changes accelerated at a faster rate than he could control. Although he still tried to shape the future of 'Germany' and the German Church, from this point onwards he was reacting to events rather than shaping them, and his written work reflects this very significant change.

In 1520 it became clear that Hutten was caught up in religious and national events over which he had very little control. On 15th June 1520 Pope Leo X issued the Bull Exsurge Domine, which famously condemned Martin Luther for his publications against Church tradition and dogma, but also threatened his followers. Expressed as a wish to receive the prodigal church members home again, the Bull demanded the appearance of 'Luther and his adherents, intimates, patrons and shelterers' in Rome within sixty days, there to admit their errors in writing.⁵ This Bull stopped short of

in Opera III, pp.124-158, and Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Epistola ad Maximilianum Caesarem, Italiae Ficticia Huldericho de Hutten Equite Authore' (1516), in Opera I, pp.106-113.

⁴ The discrepancies between Luther's and Hutten's views of the papacy in 1520, and the papacy's response to the works, are specifically examined in chapter five.

⁵ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Bulla Decimi Leonis, contra errores Martini Lutheri, & sequacium. Astitit Bulla a dextris eius, in vestitu deaurato, circumamicta varietatibus. Vide lector, opereprecium est. Adficeris.

excommunication, but its implication was clear, especially to someone as cynical towards the papacy as Hutten. He himself was under direct threat from the Bull: his writings against the Church, whether motivated by its perceived oppression of Germans or by his disagreement with its theology, were already well-known in Rome, he corresponded freely with Luther and Melanchthon, and he was clearly identifiable as a Lutheran, whether or not he would have identified himself as one.

Hieronymus Aleander, the papal nuncio who would oppose Luther at the Diet of Worms in 1521, was responsible for deciding whether to label Hutten as a Lutheran and bring the full force of Exsurge Domine to bear upon him. There were reasons not to do so – Holborn has pointed out the greater difficulties of extraditing a German nobleman over a renegade monk, as well as the fact that Hutten could easily be punished under the edicts of the Lateran Council, which severely penalised anyone writing against the Pope.⁶ However, Hutten was now personally threatened for the first time in his controversial and inflammatory career as an author, and, as Luther continued to publish and to attract attention, it would be difficult for him to avoid the consequences. He was forced into action to defend both himself and, more importantly, German liberty, which he believed was now under direct threat from the actions of Johann Eck and Aleander within the German-speaking lands themselves, as they tried to publish and enforce the Bull. The threat was no longer one of pride or – as Hutten claims in Bulla – the loss of revenues to the Church. The enemy was

Cognosces qualis pastor fit Leo' (1520), in Opera V, pp.303-331. The text of Exsurge Domine is printed alongside Hutten's annotations.

⁶ Although Hutten was not directly named in Exsurge Domine, he was one of only three people specifically named in the Bull Decet Romanum Pontificem of 3rd January 1521, which actually did excommunicate Luther. The cases of Hutten, Willibald Pirckheimer and Lazarus Spengler were all reserved for the Pope in the new Bull. Holborn, Hutten, p.148, 150, and Oberman, Luther, pp.22-23

actually present in the German lands, bent on destroying Luther and Hutten, the best hopes for salvation and liberty, and destroying 'Germany's' future with them.

As a result, this was a year in which the character of Hutten's work changed. Twenty-six letters from Hutten survive from the year 1520, compared with twenty from 1519 and thirteen from 1518. This difference in numbers cannot prove that his overall literary output increased, but suggests that he was as active as ever in 1520 and, possibly, more active than he had been several years earlier. While such conclusions are tentative at best, two things are certain: his letters are frequently shorter in 1520 than in earlier years, and his old correspondents are seen less often. In 1520, as the pressure on him increased, Hutten was writing in a hurry, and there was no room for the leisurely description of his life which he had written to Pirckheimer in 1518. The only long letters of 1520 are those to Charles V, Frederick the Wise and the German people (see below), and these were obviously the letters to which Hutten deliberately chose to devote time and effort, expecting them to be of real political importance. They were all intended for publication, and – an important new feature of Hutten's work – were accompanied by translations into German, in order to reach as many readers as possible. A hurried note to Hutten's friend Mosellanus written on 4 June 1520 conveys the new tone and speed found elsewhere in his writing:

'Forgive me if I write to you more briefly than usual, and if my letter is not that which you deserve. For today I am leaving in order to try to see Ferdinand, full of the severest cares. There is not yet any news of the situation for which you can congratulate me. However, when he gives an answer to this idea, I shall inform you, so that you may rejoice in the cause.

of the whole literary community, and we shall go to a place where I might consult with you'.⁷

Hutten was referring to a visit to the court of Charles's brother Ferdinand, made in a desperate attempt to gain protection for himself and support for Luther. This letter is quite unlike the earlier one to Pirckheimer, which dwells at great length on the atmosphere of the castle and the life of a knight, and is often reflective in its tone. The letter to Mosellanus is short – Hutten apologises for his haste – and deals only with immediate business and short-term plans. Familiar correspondents, such as Erasmus and Pirckheimer, were still among those receiving letters from Hutten in 1520, but to a great extent Hutten now eschewed his former humanist correspondents in favour of Luther, Spalatin and Melancthon. This correspondence is discussed in chapter five.

The remaining dialogues in this thesis – Bulla vel Bullicida, Monitor Primus and Monitor Secundus – were all written in the second half of 1520, and they represent only part of Hutten's output. During this period, as Hutten wrote to defend himself as well as Luther and his country, he turned more and more to the dialogue form as a means of making his point effectively. In 1520 he composed six dialogues, compared with two in 1519 and two in 1518. The first two dialogues of 1520, Vadiscus and Inspicientes, are long, and are accompanied by German translations.⁸ Three of the remaining four are the subject of this chapter and of chapter five. The last is the well-known dialogue Praedones.

⁷ Hutten Ulrich von, 'Vive Libertas. Ulrichus Huttenus Equ. Petro Mosellano Salutem' in Opera IV (1520), pp.689-690. See chapter one for the letter to Pirckheimer.

⁸ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Hulderichi Hutteni Equitis Germani Vadiscus Dialogus qui et Trias Romana Inscibitur' (1520), in Opera IV, pp.149-259, and Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Dialogus qui inscribitur Inspicientes' (1520), in Opera IV, pp.272-308

As with all of his writing at this time, the polish and wide range of subject-matter found in his earlier work are barely to be seen. In 1520, this acclaimed Latin poet – quite recently crowned poet laureate – published only three poems, one of which was in German (see below). Hutten was still a very accomplished Latin author, as this chapter will demonstrate, but his dialogues are more abrupt than his earlier poems, and he is less concerned to show off his classical learning. The elaborate mythical setting of *Arminius* is now replaced by straightforward conversations between interested parties. Classical references are fewer (although not entirely absent), and are frequently replaced by biblical ones – no longer for artistic effect, but in an attempt to engage with the theological debate. Change had overtaken Hutten, not only with new interests, but in the way in which he now had to live and write. The journey to Ferdinand's court in the Netherlands was certainly made in the hope of influencing Charles's brother against the Church, and possibly even in the hope of being offered a position at court, where a sympathetic ruler might offer more security than that found at the court of the Archbishop of Mainz.⁹ In preparation for the journey, Hutten wrote to Ferdinand, making his stance clear with regard to the Church, and urging Ferdinand to support him.¹⁰ It was too much to hope for. The journey was unsuccessful in all respects.

Despite his haste, he did continue to write to friends, both great (among whom he still counted a slightly cautious Erasmus, and had begun to count Luther) and obscure. Luther had the support of powerful princes who were interested in protecting him

⁹ Holborn mentions the possibility that Sickingen tried to obtain a position for Hutten with Ferdinand in *Hutten*, pp.123-124.

against the wrath of the Church and Charles V; Hutten would have to rely on his friends. Significantly for the near future, imperial knights would be very prominent among those friends. Having had very little to do with the knights at the universities, not even taking the trouble always to identify himself as one in his work, Hutten now needed the knights. Humanist rhetoric was all very well, but when his life rather than his intellectual pride was at stake, well-armed aristocratic companions were of more immediate use. As his disillusionment with Charles V began to grow, he may also have begun to see the knights as the best hope for the future of the Empire. This was certainly the case by 1522, when Hutten saw the knights as the only way to return the Empire and the Emperor to their proper path – hence his involvement in the disastrous Knights’ Revolt. His increasing reliance on them as a political force is discussed later in this chapter and, especially, in chapter five.

After his unsuccessful visit to Ferdinand’s court, he found that even Mainz was unsafe. Despite Albrecht’s earlier tolerance of Hutten’s anti-papal stance, the Pope was now taking determined action, and wrote to Albrecht and several other princes, accusing Hutten of perpetrating outrages against the holy see, and ordering them to send him to Rome.¹¹ The letter to Albrecht left the Archbishop in no doubt of the Pope’s anger that such accusations had been made in Mainz itself. One of Hutten’s books, the Pope explained, had been brought to his attention, containing the most dreadful slurs against the papacy. The learned men who had brought him the book assured him that Hutten had written even worse, and yet, upon enquiry, the Pope had learnt that he had been allowed to publish these works under Albrecht’s very nose!

¹⁰ Hutten, Ulrich von, ‘Ulrichi Hutteni Equi. Ad Illustris. Principem Dominum Ferdinandum, Austriae Archiducem etc., in sequentem librum (de unitate ecclesiae conservanda) praefatio’ (1520), in *Opera* I, pp.325-334

¹¹ Chrisman, Miriam Usher, *Conflicting Visions*, p.68

Worse, he was well known to Albrecht himself!¹² Albrecht was now forced to renounce the prestige of having such a fine scholar at his court, and Hutten could no longer stay in Mainz.

The Pope's letter to Albrecht had been dated 12 July 1520. Upon hearing of its arrival in Mainz, Hutten fled to the safety of Sickingen's fortress, the Ebernberg, and at the beginning of August his Mainz publisher, Johannes Schöffer, was arrested.¹³ Schöffer's imprisonment was a serious blow to Hutten. Not only did it bring home the dangerous reality of his situation, but it deprived him of the person who had published most of his important work in recent years.¹⁴ If Hutten did not recant in Rome within sixty days after the publication of the Bull *Exsurge Domine*, he could expect to suffer excommunication and execution. His situation was now the most serious that he had ever known. His earlier difficulties with his father and the Lötze family paled into insignificance beside his persecution by the Church, and his growing, painful suspicion that he could not look to the Emperor – the traditional supporter of the knights – for protection.

1520 was, in fact, the last point at which Hutten could have withdrawn from his fight against the Church and for German freedom, and settled down to lead a life similar to that of many other humanist scholars. As a poet laureate with many useful contacts, he could have recanted his more extreme views, regained the friends who were beginning to distance themselves from him, and, from history's point of view, passed

¹² Leo X, 'Dilecto Filio Nostro Tituli Sancti Grisogoni Presbytero Cardinali Moguntino Sacri Romani Imperii Principi Electori etc., Leo X' (1520), in *Opera I*, pp.362-363

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.145

¹⁴ See Grimm, Heinrich, 'Ulrichs von Hutten persönliche Beziehungen zu den Druckern Johannes Schöffer in Mainz, Johannes Schott in Strassburg und Jakob Köbel zu Oppenheim', in Elisabeth Geck und Guido Pressler (hg.), *Festschrift für Josef Benzing* (Wiesbaden, 1964), pp.142-145.

into respected obscurity. Yet, while the theory was sound, in practice it was inconceivable that a character such as Hutten's would withdraw from the fight. Having found himself in this situation, he would not creep away. His final commitment to whatever was to come is given in his letter to Mosellanus:

'After this, no idleness will hinder my efforts against papal tyranny. It is a resolve to stick to in all circumstances, and with luck these will prove the beginnings of the best possible events these perverse creatures should be burned, they should be burned, even if I need to be set aflame at the same time.'¹⁵

It was here, in the knowledge that the Pope would soon act directly against him, that Hutten committed himself irrevocably to the nationalist and Lutheran causes, and to a new kind of writing career. He would very soon reiterate that commitment publicly, in the dialogue Bulla:

Liberty: Do you not hear that what he seeks is another Bull? This one has promised that it is about to bring great turmoil; and he will do it through snares, for whenever there is an opportunity, he will act against you.

Hutten: And I would not have it otherwise.

Under threat from the pervasive power of the Church, and lacking the princely protection afforded to Luther, Hutten no longer wished, and could no longer afford, to

¹⁵ Hutten, 'Vive Libertas', pp.689-690. I have translated *improbi* as 'perverse', but an equally valid translation would be 'unpatriotic' – a shade of meaning of which Hutten would have been very much aware.

write measured poetry and prose on humanist topics or for the flattery of potential patrons, or to indulge in carping at those who had offended him.

Bulla: Its style, purpose and intended audience

Bulla was a central part of the attempts Hutten was now making to defend himself, and the cause of German liberty, from papal attack. Although he was safe enough with Sickingen for the time being, his position was unenviable. The main purpose of Bulla was therefore to raise real support for Hutten among influential sections of society (and, especially, to consolidate the existing support of the imperial knights), and to further the cause of German freedom against the papacy.

However, the style in which Bulla is written is confusing for the modern reader. The dialogue was intended to raise support, but whose? It is difficult to determine its intended audience, for Bulla is very different in style from Hutten's other dialogues. Arminius was a measured, reasoned debate, with logical arguments given for Arminius' supremacy as a general. Monitor Primus, the subject of the next chapter, is also notable for Luther's reasoned explanation of his position, with biblical references taking the place of references to Tacitus (although, in keeping with the new pressure under which Hutten was writing, it lacks Arminius' elaborate setting and detailed historical references). In sharp contrast, Bulla has the feel of a tavern brawl, with all the logical arguments that one might find there. From the start, insults are thrown, accusations are made, and the dialogue is often repetitive. Consider the opening

sequence of Arminius, in which Arminius and Minos establish their positions very formally:

Arminius: May I say, O Minos, that if ever any judgement of yours was unjust, this one is.

Minos: Speak carefully, Arminius: what is this new, false accusation that the most just Minos has judged unfairly? What is this judgement? Come, speak!

Arminius: First, you must excuse me if the frankness of my speech offends you. It is uniquely German to speak with little flattery when speaking out about serious matters. Truly, I am right to complain, because you are in a position of authority and, when you award honours to those who were the greatest generals in the world, you pass me by in that respect, as if I had never lived ...¹⁶

It is very different from the opening sequence of Bulla, in which Liberty and the Bull establish themselves much less coherently in the middle of a bullying episode:

Liberty: But now, wait a moment.

The Bull: What are you talking about now, you drunken creature?

Liberty: Curb that rage of yours! And moreover, stop doing me this terribly cruel injury.

The Bull: I am not listening: be still.

Liberty: Yet you [must] stop this destruction, godless one.

The Bull: But I am only just beginning.

Liberty: May Christ utterly damn you, evil thing.¹⁷

The opening of *Bulla* is far less sophisticated in tone than *Arminius*, suggesting the nature of the dialogue which will follow. If anything, the argument becomes less sophisticated once Hutten himself joins in. It is after this that we find the severest insults, the wildest accusations, and the many repetitions. The Bull calls Hutten ‘this sacrilegious, lying, excommunicate, unmanageable man, this son of Satan’, while Hutten reciprocates by calling the self-acknowledged ‘daughter of Leo’: ‘utterly filthy ... a daughter of Earth, a sister of the Gigantes’.¹⁸ The threats of violence are repeated throughout the dialogue, not only by the Bull, who threatens poor Liberty from the beginning, but also by Hutten:

Hutten: It is time for you to be flogged!

The Bull: You are already dead, miserable creature.

Hutten: You will still be flogged. Just look at you!

The Bull: Woe is me! Help me, sheep of Christ!

Hutten: They hear no voice but the shepherd’s. Be flogged!

The Bull: Aid me, lay people!

Hutten: They would beat you more powerfully. Look at you!

The Bull: Is there anyone who dares to kill this sacrilegious, lying, excommunicate, unmanageable man, this son of Satan, with poison or a sword -

¹⁶ Hutten, Ulrich von, ‘Ulrichi Hutteni Equitis Germani, Arminius Dialogus’ (1519), in *Opera* IV, p.409

¹⁷ Hutten, Ulrich von, ‘Bulla vel Bullicida, Dialogus Huttenicus’ (1520), in *Opera* IV, p.311

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.317, 327

Hutten: Bravo! For that, be flogged.

The Bull:- directly or indirectly, publicly or secretly, himself or through another, even in a sacred place?

Hutten: Very good Latin, but take innumerable blows in the meantime.

The Bull: Why are you killing me?

Hutten: For the reason you see.

The Bull: Will you ever stop?

Hutten: When you have paid your debt. Take that!

The Bull: Alas, alas!

Hutten: Be still.¹⁹

The long speeches in Arminius are replaced by very short, abrupt exchanges. The main exception is the Bull's account of the rewards which await anyone who will murder Hutten on its behalf, and even this is a mere list in place of Arminius' well-organised account of his place in history and the reasons for his superiority. While Arminius was convincing and impressive in his main speech, the Bull becomes less credible the longer its outrageous list continues: its would-be helpers are offered everything, from money to forgiveness of sins to high secular or Church office.²⁰

While Arminius carefully refutes his opponents' objections, in Bulla no accusations are actually explained. For example, in the closing arguments, Arminius calmly answers Alexander:

¹⁹ Ibid., p.327

²⁰ Hutten, 'Arminius', p.411-416, and 'Bulla', p.326

Alexander: But at one time, this man was a slave! I was a king, and always free.

Arminius: It is not true that I was servile to any man in my mind. For always being mindful of freedom, while keeping nothing in my thoughts except for ways in which I could help my country if the opportunity were offered, as long as I could not take action during the subjection of my people in slavery, I kept my plans quiet and hid my love of liberty secretly inside me.²¹

In contrast, the Bull's response to Hutten's criticisms is feeble:

Hutten: But indeed we see you as utterly filthy, whether you are a bull or a bottle.²² For in truth, in which country were you born? For I believe you to be a daughter of Earth, a sister of the Gigantes, as you have all the appearance of a Titan.²³

The Bull: You lie!²⁴

The Bull's subsequent statement that it is the daughter of Leo X, of course, does not refute Hutten's accusation, but only succeeds in identifying Leo with a mythical monster.

²¹ Hutten, 'Arminius', p.416

²² *Ampulla*, a flask which was often made of leather.

²³ *Gigantes* is the Greek name for the Titans of Roman legend. The Titans were giants who stormed the city of the gods. Of the twelve Titans, six were monstrous in appearance. Hutten is presumably thinking of this rather than the ancient Greeks' belief that learning and wisdom came originally from the Titans.

The reference to the Titans is one of the few classical references in Bulla. The sparseness of such references again distinguishes the style of this dialogue from Arminius and from the mainstream of humanist writing in which Hutten had once immersed himself. Most of the classical references in Bulla come from Hutten himself, emphasising his superior learning and the Bull's ignorance. The scattered Greek quotations are unusual for Hutten, who was no great scholar of Greek, but again they serve to emphasise his superior intellect. Similarly, it is Hutten, and not the Bull, who is able to indulge in word-play which provides a joke running throughout the dialogue: the association of the Bull with a bubble, which will eventually burst and prove to be full of poisons. Hutten uses the fact that, although *bulla* had the contemporary meaning 'papal bull', its classical meaning was 'bubble'.

In 1519, when writing Arminius, Hutten's view of the future of German liberty was a rosy one. The new young Emperor would doubtless fulfil his role as defender of the German-speaking lands, and Roman domination would be overthrown. Now, however, his view was necessarily changing: Charles was apparently refusing to become the German champion foretold in Arminius, and Hutten's approach to Ferdinand had failed. The hurried, aggressive and even violent tone of Bulla reflects Hutten's frustration at the fact that he was the only person likely to stand up on behalf of German liberty. This change in style suggests that Bulla's target audience was different from that of Arminius, in which the classical setting, the structured debate and the many references to ancient histories identify the ideal reader as an educated humanist of the kind Hutten counted among his friends and patrons, from university teachers to the Emperor himself. Arminius was written for an audience which Hutten

²⁴ Hutten, 'Bulla', p.317

expected to be receptive to his ideas, approving of German superiority and longing for freedom as he did. The Emperor, in particular, took centre stage as the saviour of the German people. Bulla is markedly different. Here there is no dwelling on the superior past of the German race, and on the overwhelming urge of its people to be free. In Bulla, Hutten shows a new disillusionment. Most Germans were not rushing to claim their freedom – on the contrary, he had to harangue them into it. When Liberty cries to Germans for help, it is a long time before anyone but Hutten answers. It is also significant that the leader in the fight for freedom is no longer the Emperor. In the year since Arminius was written, Hutten had become sufficiently unsure of the Emperor to remove him from the role of national defender. That role is now taken by Hutten himself, there being no other candidate. Hutten was no longer expecting an enthusiastic reception from those in whom he had earlier put his trust.

For whom, then was this dialogue intended? Who would be won over by it? The style successfully reflects the Bull's own violence and incoherence, which would have had the desired dramatic effect, but at times it shows Hutten in the same light (see the extract above, in which he flogs the Bull mercilessly). It could be argued that Hutten showed great naivety in this dialogue. As polemic, could it have helped to win a renowned scholar like Erasmus back to Hutten's cause? On the face of it, this seems unlikely. We must consider the possibility that Hutten badly misjudged Bulla, as he expressed his anger over the inaction of the Emperor, Ferdinand and the princes, probably at the very time he was forced to flee from Albrecht's court to the Ebernberg, seeing his publisher arrested and his work condemned. The time for reflection was past, and he was writing very quickly, in a time of personal upheaval. It is likely that his naturally aggressive, argumentative nature came to the fore.

We might suppose, then, that this dialogue was written for the common people, in an attempt to win their support. Bulla is certainly an attempt to show Hutten as a no-nonsense man of action, who will dare everything for the sake of the German people, and so might have appealed to a wider, less scholarly audience, were it not for the fact that it is written in Latin. The choice of language precludes the possibility that Hutten was writing for the great majority of Germans, especially as it was not among the works which he would soon begin translating into German for the very purpose of reaching them. An example of the latter is Omnibus omnis ordinis ac status in Germania Principibus Nobilitati et Plebeis Ulrichus de Hutten Eques Orator et Poeta Laureatus Salutem. Published just a few months before Bulla, and also written from Hutten's refuge in the Ebernberg, this was accompanied by a simultaneous translation. Hutten evidently expected this, not Bulla, to appeal to the common folk.²⁵ Other examples include Carolo Romanorum et Hispaniarum Regi Ulrichus de Hutten Eques Germanus Orator et Poeta Laureatus Salutem, and Invictissimo Principi Fridericho Saxonum Duci Electori Ulrichus de Hutten Eques Germanus Salutem.²⁶ All three of these works are dated September 1520. It was a period when Hutten was trying to reach the widest possible audience within Germany through his use of two languages, but, as mentioned earlier, he was applying this effort to the letters addressed to the prominent political figures in the German-speaking lands. These were pro-Germany and anti-Rome in their content, like Bulla, but much more conventionally phrased. The violent, unintellectual nature of Bulla, together with the

²⁵ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Omnibus omnis ordinis ac status in Germania Principibus Nobilitati et Plebeis Ulrichus de Hutten Eques Orator et Poeta Laureatus Salutem' (1520), in Opera I, pp.405-419

²⁶ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Carolo Romanorum et Hispaniarum Regi Ulrichus de Hutten Eques Germanus Orator et Poeta Laureatus Salutem' (1520), in Opera I, pp.371-383, and Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Invictissimo Principi Fridericho Saxonum Duci Electori Ulrichus de Hutten Eques Germanus Salutem' (1520), in Opera I, pp.383-399

use of Latin, appears to exclude both sophisticated scholars and the German-speaking common folk from its readership.

In fact, this conclusion would be unjust. Hutten was, by now, an experienced writer of polemic, and it is unlikely that he would have misjudged his readers so badly. As Hutten did not choose to translate Bulla into German, there were clearly large sections of the population which it was never intended to reach. Nor did he particularly need to reach a scholarly audience, which might be interested in the details of the Bull rather than in slapstick, because he also composed a formal response to Exsurge Domine, which consisted of the text of the Bull alongside Hutten's glosses.²⁷ The glosses are extensive (about as long as the Bull itself), and deal exhaustively with the points raised by the Pope. They do not do so with any special insight – as this chapter and chapter five will show, Hutten was not by any means a theologian – but they represent a serious response to the Bull's threats. We may therefore dispense with the idea that Bulla was ill-judged, as it was not Hutten's only response to the Bull. It was an extra work, written with a particular audience in mind.

This is not to say that Bulla was of no interest to humanist scholars. In fact, it may well have appealed to Erasmus' circle, as there is no reason to suppose that, as accomplished scholars, they were attracted only by very refined works. The prominent humanist Willibald Pirckheimer was just one of many who were capable of writing very crude pieces: see, for example, his Eccius dedolatus, a satire on Johann Eck.²⁸ Thomas Best draws attention to the positive reception which Hutten's dialogue

²⁷ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Leonis X. Contra Lutherum Bulla dat. 15. Iun. a. 1520. c. Hutteni notis.' (1520), in Opera V, pp.302-331

²⁸ Available in an English translation in Eccius dedolatus. A Reformation Satire (trans. Joannes Franciscus Cotta and Thomas W. Best, Kentucky, 1971).

Aula had already received. Written at the express request of friends at court soon after taking up his position in Mainz, Aula is a parody of court life which is so revolting in its descriptions that it cannot be taken seriously. Hutten himself described it as a joke.²⁹ In the course of the dialogue, Misaulus claims:

‘Those who come to eat smell of yesterday’s binge and erucate something fetid. Someone sits with feculent thighs and vinous belly or vomits at the table Add to this the beds not merely impure but often pestilential, where a few days ago someone consumed by syphilis slept and where a leper sweated, the covers in which they tossed and turned and which they soaked with pus having been washed six months before’.³⁰

Best is right to point out that the coarseness which repels modern readers may have amused Hutten’s readers at the time. In a letter to Sir Thomas More, Erasmus’ friend Johann Froben felt able to refer to the work as ‘a most charming dialogue’, and to Hutten himself as ‘Lucian reborn’.³¹ The letter was accompanied by a copy of Aula. As Holborn points out, the comparison with Lucian was praise indeed, for Froben, Erasmus and More had actively promoted the work of this author north of the Alps, seeking to spread some of his literary influence. Similarly, the coarse satire of The Letters of Obscure Men was greatly admired by More, Fisher, Colet and many other prominent English humanists.³² Hutten received his share of the credit for this, although his contributions were certainly the most unkind and the least subtle. For

²⁹ Best, Thomas W., The Humanist Ulrich von Hutten. A Reappraisal of his Humor (Chapel Hill 1969), p.56, and Holborn, Hutten, p.92

³⁰ Hutten, Ulrich von, ‘Ulrichi Hutteni Equitis Germani Misaulus qui et Aula inscribitur Dialogus’ (1518), in Opera IV, pp.71-72. This translation appears in Best, The Humanist Ulrich von Hutten, p.56.

³¹ Frobenus, Johann, ‘Io. Frobenius Thomae Moro, Regio apud Anglos Consilliaro S.D.’ (1518), in Opera I, p.220. See also Best, The Humanist Ulrich von Hutten, p. 56, and Holborn, Hutten, p.121.

instance, the invented names given to the characters in the letters are often cruel and even obscene.³³ Less than a year before the publication of Bulla, Erasmus had confirmed Hutten's standing in his own eyes and those of More, writing to him that '(More) derives so much pleasure from your literary work that I am quite envious of you'.³⁴ Erasmus himself also regarded Hutten fondly: in the same letter, he addresses him as 'dear Hutten', and adds: 'You, so far as I can see, are waging an heroic war with pen and sword, and this with as much pleasure as courage'.³⁵

Bulla is, of course, somewhat different in character even from Aula. The latter is a carefully composed, detailed condemnation of court life, and lacks the violence and very brief exchanges of Bulla. Nevertheless, a scholarly audience would not necessarily have been repelled by Bulla, and Hutten's reputation as a leading humanist author was still solid enough for his peers to be well-disposed towards any new example of his writing.

Still, while Bulla was unlikely to offend the intellectual community, it would not actively gain their sympathy and help. It was not the way to persuade men such as Erasmus, who had long advocated reform *within* the Church, to a disregard for papal authority and a whole-hearted endorsement of Luther's cause. For others to sympathise with, and even adopt, his extreme way of thinking, Hutten would have needed to write something remarkably detailed and persuasive, displaying wide knowledge of all relevant issues, and holding out the prospect of gaining some real advantage. Andrew Pettegree has recently discussed the complexities of the process of

³² Holborn, Hutten, p.120

³³ See Becker, A War of Fools, p.81.

³⁴ Erasmus, Desiderius, To the Most Excellent Knight Ulrich Hutten S.D. (23 July 1519), trans. Laverne Madigan (New York, 1935), p.1

persuasion in the Reformation in an age which discouraged innovation, including the many methods employed by the reformers and the important prospect of justification held out by Luther.³⁶ He also draws attention to the crucial point made by Bruce Gordon, which is that the reformers consciously struggled with the distrust of change by emphasising ‘restoration, not innovation’. Gordon demonstrates the importance of history in the process of reform.³⁷ However, Bulla contains no complex subtlety of this kind. It portrays the violent change of centuries-old tradition, with virtually no attempt to show that a return to old values is being sought. Hutten is apparently advocating the kind of upheaval which would have terrified most sections of society in the early sixteenth century.

Bulla could not possibly win contemporary prominent humanists for Hutten’s cause. His best hope in this respect was the other work he produced in these early months at the Ebernberg: the glosses to Exsurge Domine and the open letters to political figures. In fact, even these would prove insufficient. Although far more serious in tone than Bulla, they still lack the thoughtful persuasion required. Such depth of discussion was not Hutten’s speciality, and, indeed, it will be argued later that he was quite unable to engage with most issues on that level (see, in particular, the discussions of Monitor Primus and Monitor Secundus in chapter five). The most Hutten could hope for from serious scholars’ reaction to Bulla was tolerance and perhaps mild amusement. They would not have taken Bulla very seriously, and the large element of coarse humour and bravado contained in the dialogue barely disguises the fact that Hutten did need to

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.1,13

³⁶ Pettegree, Andrew, Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion (Cambridge, 2005), especially pp.1-5

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.1, and Gordon, Bruce, ‘The Changing Face of Protestant History and Identity in the Sixteenth Century’, in Bruce Gordon (ed.), Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe, Vol. I (Aldershot, 1996), pp.1-22

be taken seriously, at this time of all times. It is very unlikely, then, that scholars were the chief intended audience for this dialogue.

Hutten's real target in writing Bulla was, in fact, a group which had not previously been singled out by humanist authors: the imperial knights. The style, and even the use of Latin, were well-suited to the group he had in mind. Chapter one discussed the attitude of the knights to learning, and found that, although the majority had no interest in books or universities, many families carried out clerical duties for princes. For this, of course, they would have needed Latin. Many knights had the rudiments of Latin, and some had achieved a high standard. They had also received an upbringing which emphasised the importance of warfare: chapter one mentioned the importance which the Hutten family, as well as their neighbours, placed on fighting and hunting. Even Hutten himself, while rejecting many aspects of the knights' traditional lifestyle, had taken an active part in military campaigns in Italy. Bulla is designed for a readership with such a background, who would have no difficulty with the idea of meeting a rampaging Bull with force.

It was also exactly the right time for Hutten to be addressing the knights. His growing disillusionment with Charles V, and his corresponding suspicion that Germany's future lay with the knights' ability to take back their rightful role as the Emperor's closest advisers and protectors, were touched on above. At the time of writing Bulla, he had just thrown in his lot with the knights by sheltering at the Ebernberg, and here he had his perfect audience. By 1520 Franz von Sickingen had begun to gather a group of knights at his fortress, dedicated to living according to the Gospel: only the

third evangelical community to be formed in Germany.³⁸ It was certain to be sympathetic to the sentiments expressed in Bulla – far more so than any other group to whom Hutten could address the dialogue, for, as Heinz Schilling pointed out, ‘the imperial knights were the first secular followers to stand decisively and effectively behind Luther’.³⁹

At the very beginning of 1520, Hutten and Sickingen pledged to defend Luther’s life.

The point is made early in Bulla:

Hutten: If there is need of help, we shall bring here ... first of all
Franz von Sickingen, who has long dedicated his home and refuge to you.

They were soon joined in their vow by Harthmuth von Cronberg, Sylvester von Schaumberg and a hundred other Franconian knights.⁴⁰ The physical force employed in dealing with the Bull would meet their approval, not simply because of their general upbringing as knights, but because Sickingen was one of the leading military commanders of his time, accustomed to defending imperial and even moral interests through force or the threat of force.⁴¹ Several of the knights had seen active military service together. Hutten had fought with Sickingen, a relative by marriage, in the campaign against the Duke of Württemberg, and Cronberg, another prominent member of the circle, had accompanied Sickingen on most of his campaigns.⁴² The

³⁸ Chrisman, Conflicting Visions, p.65. This commitment to Luther’s cause is discussed in detail in chapter five.

³⁹ Schilling, Heinz, Aufbruch und Krise, Deutschland 1517-1648 (1988), p.131

⁴⁰ Chrisman, Conflicting Visions, p.68

⁴¹ For Sickingen’s ‘moral’ interests, see, for example, his involvement in the Reuchlin controversy, mentioned in chapter five.

⁴² Chrisman, Conflicting Visions, p.67

active flogging of the Bull, rather than a conversation with it, would seem natural to them.

At the same time, they would be even more at home with the Latin tongue than most semi-educated knights, for the knights gathered at the Ebernberg had unusually strong literary interests. Sickingen, Cronberg and others at the Ebernberg were sufficiently accomplished authors to carry on a written campaign of their own on behalf of Luther, and they were not the only knights to do so. 32 polemical pamphlets were composed at the Ebernberg between 1520 and 1524. Nor were Sickingen's circle the only knights to take up Luther's cause, with at least the same number of pamphlets being written by knights elsewhere, and published in Speyer, Würzburg, Mainz, Bamberg, Augsburg, Nuremberg, Strasbourg, Wittenberg, Landshut and Erfurt.⁴³ On his arrival at the Ebernberg, Hutten found an audience which would be receptive to the content, style and language employed in Bulla. The dialogue would help to unify the knights in their enthusiasm and resolve as he began to perceive a vital role for them in the success of the Reformation, their self-defence and self-promotion (including his own), and the liberation of Germany from papal dominance.

Bulla is unique among Hutten's dialogues in its direct appeal to the knights, and, indeed, it is the first dialogue by any author to be aimed at this audience. Thomas Best describes it as '(among) Hutten's poorer productions in the genre', but such a judgement fails to take into account the dialogue's purpose.⁴⁴ Hutten himself admitted (see below) that Bulla lacked polish and was hastily written, at a time when he was worried for himself and for 'Germany', but two points made above must lead

⁴³ Ibid., p.64

one to conclude that it was still extremely well-judged. Firstly, it was more likely than one might at first suppose to appeal to Hutten's scholarly, university acquaintances and patrons. Secondly, and much more importantly, for the circle he had newly joined at the Ebernberg, Bulla was accessible, sympathetic to their common reforming cause, and a call to action which appealed to their class more than any other and showed them a role they might play in the crisis. As chapter one showed, the knights felt that they were being pushed into a political wilderness. Bulla could encourage them in unity and purpose, and all very much to the benefit of Hutten and 'Germany'. Handsomely complimenting them, and Sickingen in particular, on the virtues of the community at the Ebernberg, Bulla could bind them together even more closely than before.⁴⁵ An imitation of the dialogue, composed by another knight in the same year, serves to confirm its attractiveness to the knights as a class.⁴⁶ Hutten showed his own knightly origins as well as his skills as an author in his excellent understanding of his audience. Chapter five will show that some of his work of this period was far less successful in appealing to its intended readers.

Publication

The publication history of Bulla is not well-documented, but some deductions can be made from existing correspondence. It appears to have been written in the late summer or early autumn of 1520, very soon after Hutten had fled to the Ebernberg. Publication must have been a problem after Schöffner's arrest. Certainly, Mainz was

⁴⁴ Best, The Humanist Ulrich von Hutten, p.58

⁴⁵ See Appendix Two for the speech in which Hutten enumerates the virtues of the Ebernberg and contrasts it with the corruption of Rome, and Sickingen's heroic appearance towards the end of the dialogue.

⁴⁶ Malaciotus, Curtius, 'Dialogus, Bulla, T. Curtio Malaciola. Equit. Burlassio, Autore' (1520), in Opera IV, pp.332-336

unsafe for publishers with anti-papal sympathies, the Archbishop having been told exactly where his own loyalties should lie. Leo X would tolerate no more activity from Hutten there. However, Hutten was determined to overcome this difficulty. To travel in search of another publisher would carry the risk of being recognised, arrested, and sent to Rome in compliance with Leo's orders, but, as Heinrich Grimm points out, his restless nature made it impossible that he should have an unbroken stay in the Ebernberg until the Diet of Worms the following year.⁴⁷ Within a few weeks – in September 1520 – Hutten visited Strasbourg anonymously, and placed several pieces of work with the publisher Johann Schott. In 1515 Hutten had stayed in Strasbourg with his friend Nikolaus Gerbel, and had been part of a literary circle in the town. Gerbel was now involved in connecting Hutten with Schott.⁴⁸ Publication of Hutten's formal response to Exsurge Domine, the glosses on the text, was swift. On 11 November 1520, the Strasbourg monk Otho Brunfels wrote to Beatus Rhenanus that he had seen it.⁴⁹

Schott prepared at least two other works of Hutten's for printing at the same time: Conquestiones and Clag und Vormanung.⁵⁰ Conquestiones was a collection of letters which included those mentioned above - to Charles V, Frederick and the German princes – as well as a letter to Albrecht of Brandenburg, all of which were accompanied by German translations. Although Hutten was writing very hurriedly, he had clear priorities in his publishing. The first items to be printed from Strasbourg

⁴⁷ Grimm, 'Ulrichs von Hutten persönliche Beziehungen', p.150

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.151

⁴⁹ Briefwechsel des Beatus Rhenanus, hg. A. Horowitz und K. Hartfelder (Leipzig, 1886). Referred to in Ibid., p.151

⁵⁰ Grimm, 'Ulrichs von Hutten persönliche Beziehungen', p.151. Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Conquestiones' (1520), in Opera I, pp.371-419, Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Clag und vormanung gegen dem übermassigen unchristlichen gewalt des Bapsts zu Rom, und der ungeistlichen geistlichen, durch herzen Ulrich von Hutten, Poeten und Orator der ganzen Christenheit' (1520), in Opera III, pp.475-526

were either in German or accompanied by German translations, to reach the widest possible audience, and they addressed the wrongs done to Hutten personally, as well as to the German people and to Martin Luther. Addressed to leading figures within the German-speaking lands, they acted as a very public call for action against Rome, effectively requiring a response. Presumably, they were also works which Schott was confident would sell. Böcking's bibliographical index shows that they went through several editions (and, indeed, Conquestiones was still being reprinted two hundred years later).⁵¹

Bulla, however, was not included at this stage. The preface to Bulla contained in Böcking's edition of Hutten's works suggests that it may not have been published until January 1521, when it formed part of a collection with Monitor Primus and Monitor Secundus (the two remaining dialogues to be discussed in this thesis) and Praedones.⁵² In the form of a letter to Johann, Duke of Bavaria, the preface to the edition of January 1521 says:

'Most illustrious prince, not long ago, when you showed and revealed to me your feelings about the liberty of the state, you earnestly asked if I would bring to light anything I might write on the subject of liberty thereafter, so that I might make you its first reader. You have easily obtained this. For to whom could my writings, [resulting from] misery, better go than to one who is able to read and regard the texts with judgement? Therefore behold, these three new dialogues are dedicated to you, in this slight hope: that what was long ago revealed about liberty, hastily composed by me at night, the

⁵¹ Böcking, Eduard, 'Index Bibliographicus Huttenianus', in Opera I, pp.56*-61*, 65*-66* (1859)

discussion of which has been almost uniquely my doing, survives this storm. In these [dialogues], if there is not all brightness, polish and charm, even so there is Liberty, which you said you were seeking in the texts I encourage those who were recently seized with dread, when they saw Caesar come to us surrounded by so many cardinals and protonotaries. For, indeed, there is nothing to be feared in our cause, but it offers compassion for those who have been turned upside down by these events.’⁵³

Several points are implied by the preface. Hutten suggests that this is the first appearance for all of these dialogues. This is not conclusive as a date of first publication, but it seems likely to be the case. Only a few months had passed since Hutten’s September visit to Strasbourg, and we know that Bulla was not among the first items published there. Nor is it surprising that Bulla was not in the forefront of Hutten’s polemical fight. Designed especially for the knights, it would gain its most admiring audience in the Ebernberg itself, and was doubtless read there before being collected for publication. Furthermore, while - as suggested earlier - there are reasons to think that the style of Bulla would have been well received even by a scholarly audience, the more conventionally argued letters to the Emperor, Archbishop and other princes must have seemed more likely to influence them in Hutten’s favour. They necessarily received priority in Hutten’s translating and publishing schedule. The preface also supports the idea that Hutten was now writing frantically, without the time for leisurely revision which he had once enjoyed, as he talks of writing at

⁵² Grimm, ‘Ulrichs von Hutten persönliche Beziehungen’, p.151

⁵³ Hutten, Ulrich von, ‘Illustrissimo Principi ac Domino DN. Ioanni Palatino Rheni Bavariae Duci et Spanheimensi Comiti Ulrichi ab Hutten Eques Salutem’ (1520), in Opera IV, p.308. Among the many Johanns of the time, I have been unable to trace this one with certainty. In 1520, the joint rulers of Bavaria were the Dukes William IV and Louis. Their younger brother was named Ernest. The family took a distinctly pro-Catholic stance, unlike – apparently – Hutten’s correspondent.

night and acknowledges the dialogues' lack of polish. The inclusion of Bulla among dialogues dedicated specifically to a member of the nobility, with the implication that it arises directly from conversations with him, supports the belief that, against appearances to modern eyes, the violence and coarseness of Bulla would appeal to an educated audience. It is also noteworthy that, in referring to *three* dialogues, Hutten clearly counted Monitor Primus and Monitor Secundus as one complete work, although they are quite different from one another in style and content. Consideration is given to this, and to other aspects of the preface, in chapter five, where the Monitor dialogues are treated together.

Reading Bulla

Bulla's audience being established, its style also prompts the modern reader to ask how it was read, or heard, by that audience. This is, after all, a very 'visual' dialogue. No descriptions are given of the Bull, Liberty, or Hutten, but the reader at once visualises the Bull as a huge, deformed beast with sharp teeth and claws, Liberty as small, pale and frightened, and Hutten in gleaming armour. Combined with the quickfire dialogue, it suggests not a standard pamphlet intended for private reading, but a play which was intended for performance.

However, although the dialogue seems to the modern reader to be ideal for the stage, it is unlikely that Hutten intended it to be performed. It is true that there was a long tradition of medieval mystery, miracle and morality plays, and that Luther and Melancthon enthusiastically supported the use of drama from the early years of the Reformation. Pettegree considers the use and widespread appeal of plays in his

Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion, citing examples of plays in various European countries which show that slapstick and ridicule of the clergy were frequently to be found.⁵⁴ Bulla is unlike any of these plays, though, in having a more personal motivation than most (the character of Hutten instead of a stock-in-trade character such as a lawyer or priest) and a different emphasis (political criticisms rather than religious lessons). It does not fit with the types of plays normally staged, and there is certainly no evidence that it was, or of the existence of any group which might have performed it.

Additionally, it must be remembered that this is a dialogue rather than a play. Once again, Pettegree remarks on the long-standing difficulties of differentiating between dialogues and plays, and of understanding how a dialogue was meant to be used. Private reading and performance by friends are both possibilities.⁵⁵ A clue as to the way in which Hutten intended it to be read may lie in the idea popularised by Robert Scribner (among others), of a culture in which the people of early sixteenth-century Germany read aloud to one another.⁵⁶ Reformation scholars have placed a great deal of emphasis on this: a fact to which Pettegree draws attention and towards which he rightly expresses some reservations.⁵⁷ However, despite the likelihood of exaggeration in some contexts, a culture of reading aloud may have special validity in the case of dialogues, and specifically in the context of the Ebernberg.

The reading and reception of German dialogues has been discussed by Fiona Campbell in her PhD thesis, The Dialogue as a Genre of German Reformation

⁵⁴ Pettegree, Culture of Persuasion, pp.76-101

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.83

⁵⁶ See, for example, Scribner, For the Sake of Simple Folk, pp.3,6, and Scribner, Robert W., 'Oral Culture'.

Literature, 1520-1530, and she draws attention to evidence suggesting that dialogues were specifically intended for reading aloud and for discussion. A dialogue by Martin Bucer (whom Sickingen appointed pastor of Landstuhl in 1521) has Sickingen saying that he and Hutten had:

‘sat at my table that winter at the Ebernberg ... We read Lutheran books and discussed the writings of the evangelists and the apostles’.⁵⁸

Aleander, the papal nuncio, also claimed some knowledge of the knights’ meetings, having apparently sent a confessor to the Ebernberg to find out what they were plotting:

‘All the humanists of the Rhineland stream together to be with Hutten at the Ebernberg, and there they write their pamphlets with astonishing competitiveness’.⁵⁹

In this competitive atmosphere, Bulla would have been a perfect offering. One can imagine Hutten reading it aloud to the assembled knights. This cannot have been a piece intended for quiet, private study – the glosses on the Bull fulfilled that role. Bulla was for entertainment, gaining support for Hutten, and for whipping up the enthusiasms of his fellow knights in their shared opposition to Rome and to the long-standing injustices done to Germany. Given the atmosphere described at the

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp.117-120

⁵⁸ Bucer, Martin, Gesprechbiechlin neüw Karsthans (Strasbourg, 1521), quoted in German in Campbell, Fiona, The Dialogue as a Genre of Reformation Literature, 1520-1530 (unpublished PhD thesis, St Andrews, 2000), p.128. For Bucer’s appointment in Landstuhl, see Chrisman, Conflicting Visions, p.69.

⁵⁹ Quoted in German in Campbell, The Dialogue as a Genre of Reformation Literature, p.129

Ebernberg, and the aggressive, even slapstick, style of the dialogue, its first and most important readings must surely have been aloud, to an approving company.

Beyond the entertainment value, and the immediate polemical effect on the audience, there seems to have been a tradition of discussing dialogues aloud. Fiona Campbell's evidence relates mainly to dialogues written in German, but where the whole audience had some command of Latin, it is reasonable to suppose that the same tradition would apply. In the dialogue Schnaphan, a group of knights and servants discuss Franz von Sickingen and the problems of the knights in the early 1520s. The text of a letter from Sickingen to the devil is read aloud and discussed within the dialogue. The reading and subsequent debate of a pamphlet are portrayed as normal activities.⁶⁰ Similarly, Peter Matheson cites an example of Karsthans spluttering with rage over a pamphlet as evidence of the way in which they might be read selectively and emotionally, and Scribner comments that 'this kind of passionate exchange of ideas was ...fostered especially by discussion and explanation of a text'.⁶¹ This picture should not be drawn too broadly, as activities depicted in the dialogues may be those which the author wished to inspire rather than everyday occurrences. Scribner acknowledges as much when he refers to a pamphlet which a discussion of a broadsheet between a Christian and a Jew as 'probably a literary fiction to encourage Reformation believers to imitate the "evangelical Christian" in like circumstances'.⁶² Nevertheless, it is almost certainly what was practised at the Ebernberg, if we consider the evidence of the witnesses mentioned above, and the fact that the Ebernberg housed a community of

⁶⁰ Schnaphan (Landshut, 1523), discussed in *ibid.*, p.215

⁶¹ Matheson, Peter, The Rhetoric of the Reformation (Edinburgh, 1998), p.91, and Scribner, Robert, 'Oral Culture and the Transmission of Reformation Ideas' in H. Robinson-Hammerstein (ed.), The Transmission of Ideas in the Lutheran Reformation (Dublin, 1989), p.87

⁶² Scribner, 'Oral Culture', p.89

educated, reform-minded and naturally argumentative knights who were forced by circumstances to spend almost all their time together.

Campbell also draws attention to the use of rhyme and alliteration in German dialogues of the period, which lend themselves particularly well to a public reading. She quotes the example of insults exchanged in the dialogue Karsthans:

Murnar: Du bist ein gouch.

Karsthans: Du auch.⁶³

As one meaning of ‘gouch’ is ‘cuckoo’, the insult would be especially obvious in an oral performance, in which the cuckoo’s echoing call would be apparent in the rhyme.⁶⁴ Although he was writing in Latin, Hutten used similar devices to good effect in Bulla. His description of the Bull as ‘*vaesana, vaecors*’ (‘mad, insane’), emphasises the insult through repetition of the sounds.⁶⁵ In this exchange of threats:

The Bull: ... from today your name will *head* [my list].

Hutten: And I shall spear*head* your downfall,

the word *caput* appears in both speeches in the original, again using repetition for emphasis.⁶⁶ The double meaning of *bull* – both a papal Bull and a bubble which

⁶³ Karsthans (Basel, 1521)

⁶⁴ Campbell, The Dialogue as a Genre of Reformation Literature, pp.209-210, Kampe, Jürgen, ‘Problem “Reformationsdialog”: Untersuchungen zu einer Gattung im reformatorischen Medienwettbewerb’, in Beiträge zur Dialogforschung 14 (Tübingen, 1997), pp.175-177

⁶⁵ Hutten, ‘Bulla’, p.319

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.315

could be easily burst – would also please educated listeners, and its repetition throughout the dialogue would take on greater emphasis when read aloud. These are just three examples among many to be found in Bulla. Although it was later published as part of a collection, this dialogue was designed specifically for reading aloud to an appreciative audience.

The characters in Bulla and their significance

The most striking figure in the dialogue is the monstrous Bull itself. It personifies Hutten's opinion of the papacy and its decrees: it is ugly, brutal, bullying, slow in its thinking and low in its cunning. Its bullying nature is clear from the outset, as the dialogue opens with the unexplained beating of Liberty by the Bull. In their first exchange, the Bull repeatedly attacks Liberty, without explaining why. Hutten perceived the attack now being made on himself, Luther, and the freedom of the German people in exactly this way. In issuing a Bull which condemned all associates of Luther without distinction, in arresting Hutten's publisher, in sending foreigners into the German-speaking lands to impose Rome's will upon the people, the Pope was a bully, concerned only with maintaining his own power, and unable to explain his actions because there was no explanation for them. When an explanation is requested, no answer is given, but more violence is threatened:

Liberty: Release me, I say, guilty one, cursed one, liar, evildoer, for
why do you beat me?

The Bull: Now why are you shouting, upstart?

Liberty: Why, because you compel me to do it.

The Bull: Then I shall compel you to be silent.

Liberty: Which you have begun, indeed, so that, while I live, I may not cry out against your injustices. But you will never accomplish it.

Liberty's observation on the Bull's determination to silence it reflects Hutten's belief that Exsurge Domine's indiscriminate coverage of all of Luther's supposed associates was designed to stifle German complaints forever. The Bull claims that it will stop the Lutherans *απανταζ εν χυχλω περιελθων* - 'by encircling them all', or by seizing *everyone* who might be associated with Luther. In Hutten's mind, liberty included the right to protest against injustice, and the papacy was denying that to his countrymen. In the dialogue Arminius, the German hero had prevailed by presenting his case in a court of law. Hutten was convinced that no such justice would be available to him. The Bull's violent suppression, shown here in stark contrast to Arminius, was all that the papacy had to offer. Hutten must have felt entirely vindicated in his assessment in the following year, when the formal hearing at the Diet of Worms failed to recognise the justice of Luther's cause.

The Bull clings to medieval conceptions of papal authority in Germany, but can give no grounds for them, despite Hutten's demand:

'Today you need to give me a reason for all the things that you do'.

It merely changes the subject, or insists on traditionally accepted privileges:

Hutten: But I do not see why one should regard you with respect, or in what manner one should show it. Or do you even demand that we move around everywhere in a procession?

The Bull: That, indeed, as for earlier Bulls.

Similarly, Hutten is asked to accept without explanation the Bull's statement that:

'The [Bulls] are what represent the divine will, to the extent that you can approach it'.

The Bull's reliance on traditional authority, while refusing to justify it, was one of Hutten's preoccupations at the time of composition. In the same year, 1520, he had been responsible for the first publication in the German-speaking lands of Lorenzo Valla's scandalous revelation: that the Donation of Constantine, the document on which the papacy based its claims to temporal power, was a fake. Finding a copy of the Donation at the house of Johann Cochlaeus in Bologna, Hutten reacted immediately. Cochlaeus wrote to Pirckheimer:

'On the day before (Hutten) left (for Germany), he saw at my house Lorenzo Valla's book against the Donation of Constantine, which I acquired a little while ago. The fellow wants to commission its publication back in Germany; he begged that this little book should be transcribed because it is so true. I could not refuse him. It was transcribed ... and sent to him a few days later. I believe that the things Valla wrote are true, but am afraid that they cannot be safely published. But Hutten does not fear excommunication,

and it seems shameful to me that the truth should be restrained by means of the sword.’⁶⁷

Cochlaeus, of course, would take the opposite path from Hutten when the Reformation necessitated a choice, and would write against Luther. It is interesting that, even in 1517, he remarked upon Hutten’s courage and single-mindedness, and on the dangers of speaking out against the Church. Yet despite Hutten’s eagerness, there was apparently some delay in actually publishing Valla’s book. The date of 1 December 1517, attributed to the preface he addressed to the Pope, has been shown to be fictitious. The preface was written early in 1519, and the book was not actually published until early in 1520.⁶⁸ The reason for the delay is unclear, but the fact that Hutten finally worked to produce the book in 1519 and 1520 emphasises the new and overriding importance to him of German patriotism and anti-papalism in those years.

The importance of tradition within the Church is echoed in his other work of 1520: as chapter five will show, Monitor Primus and Monitor Secundus repeatedly criticise the Pope’s reliance on man-made tradition for his authority. Nor was Hutten alone in this concern with accretions to the pure Gospel. Martin Luther’s doctrine of *sola scriptura* addressed the same concerns, in direct opposition to his opponent Silvester Prierias’ quotation from canon law: that the Pope was the highest possible authority, and could not be deposed ‘even if he were to give so much offence as to cause people in multitudes ... to go to the Devil in hell’.⁶⁹ Oberman emphasises the ease with which this aspect of Hutten and Luther’s message could be understood:

⁶⁷ Cochlaeus, Johann, ‘Ioannes Cochlaeus Biblibaldo Pirckheimero’ (1517), in Opera I, p142.

‘Even untrained readers of Reformation pamphlets in areas where evangelical preaching was not yet permitted could immediately grasp that God’s Scriptures were the decisive authority, which could liberate one from the shackles of tradition’.⁷⁰

This was just part of Luther’s developing doctrine, and the easiest for the layman to understand. It is significant that Hutten, the master of polemic, used this to appeal to his lay readership, and, in this instance, a readership of knights, who would have had difficulty with more profound theological issues. Nor should we overlook the probability that this was the aspect of reformed doctrine which Hutten himself found easiest to master, and that it was certainly the one he found most relevant, concerned as he was with political freedom from Rome and, therefore, with discrediting Rome as effectively as possible. Hutten makes a telling point when he has Liberty, but not the Bull, call on Christ for help:

‘May Christ utterly damn you, evil thing’.

Hutten portrays the Roman Church as being so far from Christ that it would not even think to call on Him in times of trouble. Liberty describes the Romans as ‘godless’ and ‘enchanters’, and, indeed, the Bull calls on papal decrees (which Hutten has already discredited) and mortal men, rather than Christ, to aid it:

⁶⁸ Holborn, *Hutten*, p.81, and Kalkoff, *Huttens Vagantenzeit*, pp.223ff.

⁶⁹ Oberman, *Luther*, p.42

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.221

‘Where are you who were accustomed to throw handfuls of money at Bulls and sellers of Bulls? At least defend me now from this tyrant ... [I call upon] canon and papal law, and extraordinary papal decrees!’

The Bull’s reliance on invented tradition is further emphasised by its reference to the Bull Caenae Domini:

‘Whatever the enormity of the crime, however unheard of the deed, however unbelievably wicked, listen, Germans, even in my sister the Bull *Caenae Domini*, if anyone has committed that which ought to be reserved for the throne of the apostle, and for which the performance of public penance is a requirement, who has behaved in a way contrary to the rules of the chancellor, in whatever way and to whatever extent, whether spiritual or secular, this is the way for him to be redeemed, this is the means of being well again. Let whatever burdensome vow you have made be lifted, I shall take away the trouble.’

Also known as In Coena Domini, this Bull was published every Maundy Thursday, and contained the names of those excommunicated for various offences. One of the bribes offered by the Bull for Hutten’s murder is exemption from that penalty. The enormous division between this and anything prescribed by scripture is underlined by Luther in his An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung.⁷¹ As chapter five will show, Hutten had recently read this work (referred

⁷¹ Luther, Martin, ‘An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung’ (1520), WA 6:381-469

to below as the Address), and some of his writing echoed its themes. Luther shows his contempt for Caenae Domini with these remarks:

‘The reserved cases, which the Pope alone can absolve, should be abolished. Not only are the people cheated of much money by them, but the ravenous tyrants ensnare and confuse tender consciences with intolerable harm to their faith in God. Particularly is this true of the ridiculous and childish cases which the bull, *coena domini*, blows up like bladders. They do not deserve to be called “common sins”, still less are they sins so great that even the Pope cannot absolve them. Examples from the list are: preventing a pilgrim from going to Rome ... or counterfeiting papal briefs. They fool us with these insulting, silly and clumsy devices; yet Sodom and Gomorrah, and all the sins that are or may be done against God’s commandments – these are not “reserved cases”. *What God never ordained, but Romanists themselves invented* – these forsooth are “reserved cases”.’⁷²

Besides looking to papal decrees for help, the Bull calls – at intervals – on Johann Eck. As Eck does not appear, the Bull is gradually reduced to calling its protector a ‘false theologian, wicked turncoat’, and a ‘deserter’. The Church is so rotten within that its various parts cannot support one another – unlike the German people, who will ultimately unite in strength to defeat their enemy. In placing its trust in man-made traditions and in superstition, especially in the supposed power of the Pope to decide which sins he will or will not forgive, the Bull embodies what Hutten perceived as the Church’s abandonment of all that was godly. In calmly offering to absolve the most

⁷² Ibid., pp.436-437 (my italics)

appalling crimes for anyone who will come to its aid, and in offering rewards of huge sums of money and ecclesiastical and secular offices, it reflects Hutten's view of the utter corruption of the papacy. In its own interests, the Church sees

'incest or adultery, defiling virgins or ravishing married women ... perjury or murder ... transgressing against all men and divine law'

as small matters. The abuse of its power by offering its helpers

'a benefice, with no obligation to carry out its duties ... the right to legitimise bastards, and to create Counts Palatine'

is taken equally lightly. By implication, Hutten claims that this really is how the Church behaves. He has, of course, taken extreme examples of sins and bribery in order to make his point. His training as a poet and his work as a polemicist for various patrons did not count for nothing. The descriptions of the corruptions found in Rome and of the virtues found at the Ebernberg contrast starkly and effectively:

Liberty: (The Bull) comes from Rome, where mules surpass horses, where men are not men, where good is bad and bad is good; where one may behave wickedly so as to receive merit; where men are gods, and gods are nothing; from where all freedom of action is banished; where men are enslaved to money and live in great splendour; where every right and wrong deed is a game; where a covenant is no covenant, and no treaty is agreed; where faith

is offered for sale, sanctity is destroyed, innocence is lost, all honesty is effaced; this is the chief city of all races.

Hutten: I have come to you from the Ebernberg, that refuge of justice, where there is high regard for horses and arms, and contempt for leisure and idleness; where men are really men; where both good and bad are kept in their proper place; where people treat a person as he deserves; where there is reverence for God, concern and esteem for men; where honour is foremost among all virtues, and there is no place for greed; whence vanity is banished, treachery and crime are far distant; where men are free to *be* free;⁷³ where the people despise money, and are of great worth; where those who follow divine law are the same as those who flee from a hateful crime; where the content of an agreement is honoured, trustworthiness is respected, scruples are esteemed, innocence is defended, honesty flourishes, and alliances are strong: this place is, indeed, the refuge of justice.

Difficult as it is to picture the knights as so perfectly virtuous, even Hutten would not expect his readers to take this entirely literally. The point being made is that the papacy abuses its power badly, especially in Germany, and that there are no depths to which it might not sink. The Bull's, and hence the papacy's, flaws are summed up in Hutten's closing speech:

'This is Treachery, the well-known disgrace of the courtesans. This is wretched Ambition. Moreover, behold Avarice revealed here, even now almost empty, although it has been filled up from us so many times. And

⁷³ *Liberaliter liberi.*

their handmaidens, wonderfully meaningless things: Indulgences. And here is Embezzlement, and next to it Injustice and Rapacity, and Perjury is held in respect by them; indeed, with just as much rejoicing the Priesthood praises pride, and the artificial sanctity of the Papacy, and Hypocrisy, which must be worshipped. And here are Superstition, Pretence and Dissembling, and Artifice of many kinds, and all types of Fraud, and Glory and Ostentation, all things which are in every way abominable and whose appearance should be shunned, Extravagance, Drunkenness, Intoxication, and Appetite in all its forms. It was necessary for this bull to be broken up, as it was able for too long to contain so many vices.

The same theme is revisited in the remaining dialogues examined in this thesis. In Monitor Primus, the Church's power to corrupt is seen in the Pope's claim to hold the keys to the kingdom of heaven and to salvation, and in Monitor Secundus it is seen in its evil influence over the young emperor (foreshadowed in Bulla in the reference to the Bull 'perverting our young Emperor'). In Bulla, the Bull's behaviour fits, in every way, with the characteristics that Hutten ascribes to the Pope himself.

In contrast to the Bull, Liberty appears brave but frightened, and weakened by the attacks made upon it. It is subdued, but ready to stand up for itself if only someone will be brave enough to support it. Hutten takes this role in the dialogue, as in real life. He hoped that the German people would behave in just this way: if only someone would take the lead, and show that it was possible to defy the papal claims to authority (which were, like the Bull in the dialogue, nothing more than a bubble to be burst), then they might remember the love of freedom so characteristic of Arminius'

ancient Germans. If they would all fight against Rome, then, as with the ancient tribes, Rome would be unable to stop them. In this dialogue, Liberty's behaviour represents the current pitiful state of the German people, and the way in which they could transform their attitude and situation, given a courageous example.

The economic conditions prevailing in the German-speaking lands in the early sixteenth century were of great concern to Hutten. Bulla shows that he blamed the papacy for hardship there, and saw the Church's financial demands as a direct assault on German liberty. Germany's particularly unfair treatment at the hands of the papacy has long been talked of as a fact. As long ago as 1951, Ronald Bainton wrote:

‘Dismembered and retarded, [Germany] was derided by Italians and treated by the papacy as a private cow. Resentment against Rome was more intense than in countries where national governments curbed papal exploitation’.⁷⁴

In fact, the true state of financial connections between Germany and Rome has not yet been thoroughly researched, but it is possible to say how Hutten perceived those connections, and to show that he was not alone in his views. In Bulla, he uses familiar accusations of robbery and extortion against the Church in order to win sympathy for his case. The Bull is said not to have come to Germany with honest intentions at all, but chiefly – as with all its counterparts – to take German money back to Rome. Hutten accuses it of intending to return to Rome ‘heavy-laden’ and of being not a Bull but a leather bag, designed for carrying money. The Bull openly states that Germans

⁷⁴ Bainton, Ronald H., Here I Stand. A Life of Martin Luther (London, 1951), p.131

were once ‘accustomed to throw handfuls of money at Bulls’, and Sickingen sums up the situation as Hutten sees it:

‘They [the Church] regard all sacred and profane things as items to be bought and sold ... so often is it a matter of making a profit with impulsive greed. And they are not inclined to set limits to that plundering of theirs ... we send so much money so often ... making them greedier every day and desirous of more that is ours’.

The contemptuous attitude of Rome towards the German people, even as it exploits them, is also emphasised, when the Bull describes them as its ‘property’ and its ‘prey’, and refuses to believe that they will not continue to revere it as before. Hutten is vague about the exact nature of the robberies being conducted across Germany by the Pope’s representatives. As we saw in the refusal of Hutten and the Bull to justify their insults to one another, Bulla is not the place for careful explanation. It is much more in keeping with the nature of this dialogue for accusations to be driven home through force and repetition rather than through argument. In later dialogues, Hutten does give rather more detail of the Church’s economic oppression of Germany (see chapter five), and he was certainly aware of detailed complaints from other authors. He may well have been familiar with the Reformatio Sigismundi, an influential reform treatise written c.1438, which claimed:

‘What we now suffer from most is simony and greed ... Simony touches us most in demands for indulgence payments ... Nothing can be done at the

curia these days without money ... Cardinals, bishops, monasteries all profit from financial corruption'.⁷⁵

Complaints of the fleecing of Germany by the Church still centred on the indulgences controversy almost a century later: it was, of course, a major concern of Luther, Hutten and others. Bulla draws attention to the outrageous claims for the power of indulgences, and to their familiar presence, when the Bull casually offers 'indulgences of two thousand years' among the rewards for Hutten's murder. In an anonymous dialogue on usury, written c.1521, the Church is shown to be exploiting poor peasants just as much as the merchants do.⁷⁶ It was, in fact, only one among many moneylenders, who ranged from rich peasants and artisans to court officials.⁷⁷ However, Hutten, who refers to the rarity of poverty among the clergy in Monitor Secundus, was not alone in believing that such an activity was inappropriate for God's servants, who should ideally embrace poverty. The common theme of excessive Roman wealth – at German expense – was expressed by no one more vigorously than Martin Luther, especially in his Address. First among Luther's many suggestions for the improvement of Christendom was:

'that every prince, peer and city should forbid their subjects to pay the annates to Rome, and should do away with them entirely. For the Pope has ... stolen (the annates), to the shame of the whole German people. He

⁷⁵ Anon., 'Reformatio Sigismundi' (c.1438), in Heinrich Koller (ed.), Reformation Kaiser Siegmunds (Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Staatsschriften des späteren Mittelalters, IV (Stuttgart, 1964). This translation is taken from Strauss, Gerald, Manifestations of Discontent in Germany on the Eve of the Reformation (Bloomington, 1971), p.6.

⁷⁶ Anon., 'Von der gült', in Oskar Schade (ed.), Satiren und Pasquille aus der Reformationszeit, II (Hanover, 1863), No.4, quoted in Strauss, Manifestations of Discontent, pp.109-115

⁷⁷ Schulze, Winfried, 'The Emergence and Consolidation of the "Tax State". The Sixteenth Century', in Richard Bonney (ed.), Economic Systems and State Finance (Oxford, 1995), p.271

bestows them on his friends, sells them for large sums, and endows certain offices with them With his Romish practices, (including) “papal months”, pensions, palliums, and similar villainies, the Pope is engulfing all foundations of German origin, without authority or justice, and bestowing and selling them in Rome to strangers who do nothing for Germany in return’.⁷⁸

As chapter five will show, Hutten had certainly read the Address. Much as Hutten already despised the corruption which he saw in the Church, the influence of the Address can be seen in Bulla’s sustained attack on the Church’s financial dealings in Germany. Bulla, like Monitor Primus, also echoes the Address in criticising the Fugger banking family, showing these Germans as working for the financial benefit of the Roman Church:

The Bull: The Fuggers will give you money on my behalf, several thousand [ducats].

In the Address, Luther had spoken of the need to ‘bridle the Fuggers and similar trading companies’.⁷⁹ Hutten’s portrayal of German Liberty and its oppressors reiterates themes which were widespread among humanist writers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and which were very keenly felt by Hutten himself in the wake of his visits to Rome. However, it is noteworthy that in Bulla his concerns are often expressed in terms similar to those of Luther. Of all Luther’s works, the Address in

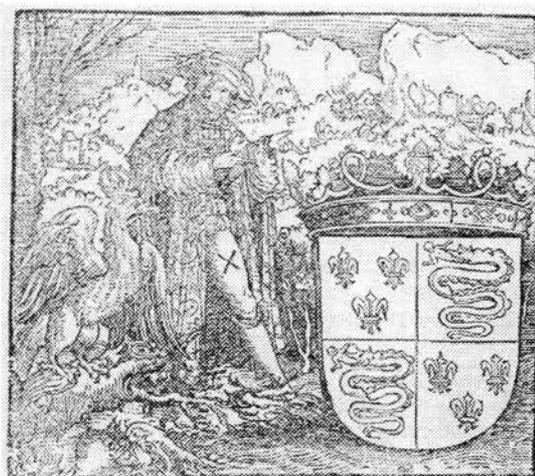
⁷⁸ Luther, Address, p.432. ‘Papal months’ or *Römermonate* were unpopular forms of taxation which prompted Swabian peasants in 1598 to demand a return to ‘good old German months’, which would entail twelve payments instead of twenty. See Schulze, ‘The “Tax State”’, p.278.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.482

particular influenced Hutten considerably. The extent of that influence is more fully discussed in chapter five, but it is in Bulla that we can first see its importance.

Hutten himself, as he appears in Bulla, has acquired a new aspect. No longer devoting himself to a scholarly, humanist life, he has taken on the role of a knight in its most chivalrous sense. While the Bull clings to medieval tradition for its authority, Hutten, too, reaches back into medieval stories for an image which will appeal to his readers and encourage wavering Liberty. He is an imperial knight – that is important, as it carries with it a tradition of service to the Empire and to the Emperor – but also a knight in the idealised, romantic sense of Maximilian I's appearance in the famous piece of Habsburg propaganda, Theuerdank.⁸⁰ This new image reflects Hutten's assessment of the political situation. The time for rhetoric about the shortcomings of the Italian Church was past. Celtis and others had talked for years, as had Hutten himself, and the Bull was the only result. Now it was time for the German people to defend themselves and assert their ancient liberty, by force if necessary. Hutten was now sharply redefining himself. He was no longer, first and foremost, a humanist, but a knight, in company with his fellow soldiers at the Ebernburg. An examination of surviving woodcuts of Hutten emphasises the abrupt change of style: before 1520, he is portrayed as a nobleman in rich clothes, and from 1520 onwards he always appears in armour, with only a pen, a book or a laurel wreath to show his scholarly connections. The woodcuts shown overleaf form the frontispieces to some of his published work, and are an eloquent indicator of Hutten's changing priorities. From now on, he was at war, and the whole world should know it.

⁸⁰ A glamorised autobiography of Maximilian, which portrays him as a knight who overcomes many obstacles on his way to marry Mary of Burgundy. See, for example, scattered references in the leading biography of Maximilian I: Wiesflecker, Hermann, Maximilian I. Die Fundamente des habsburgischen Weltreiches (München, 1991).



V. B. E. T. E. M.

Top: Ulrich von Hutten as a nobleman, from the frontispieces to Phalarismus (1517) and Augsburger Sammlung der Epigramme (1519)

Bottom: Ulrich von Hutten as a knight and poet, from the frontispieces to Conquestiones (1520) and Invectivae (1521)

Reproduced in Laub, Hutten, pp. 121, 123, 124, 126.

The role of armed defender of his country was one which greatly appealed to Hutten and was also a role which he was encouraging Charles V to take on. Charles himself appears late in the dialogue, but then behaves exactly as Hutten hopes he will do, bringing an army of German princes to oppose and expel papal injustice from the German lands, and, crucially, making it clear that the German leader will speak to the Pope on equal terms:

The Bull: For I say to you, Caesar, that I want to know what [message] I shall take from you to Leo X: shall he not have a compliant son?

Charles: If indeed the father is [compliant] himself.

It is significant that these are Charles's only words in the dialogue. This was what Hutten really wanted from the Emperor: a firm assurance that he would not abandon the German lands, and would ensure that the Church would not be permitted to oppress the German people. It was something that Hutten now hoped for more than expected: Maximilian I had not lived up to his expectations in this respect, and so far, his grandson had not done any better. The dialogue Monitor Secundus, written soon afterwards, was to mark Hutten's complete acceptance (just a couple of months after the composition of Bulla) that Charles would not act in a way befitting a German emperor unless he were virtually compelled to do so. As an imperial knight, however, and therefore the Emperor's man, Hutten could not give himself up to disillusionment just yet. This is the first example of a habit Hutten acquired while writing the dialogues of this period, which is discussed more fully in chapter five: that of putting words into the mouths of his contemporaries, which they would not necessarily dream of speaking themselves. At this early stage in his reign, Charles would have been

shocked by the suggestion that he would only be obedient to the Pope if the Pope were obedient too. In practice, Charles would soon experience conflicts between his political needs and his loyalty to the papacy, most notably in his imprisonment of Clement VII after the Sack of Rome in 1527, but he would still object to someone else inventing his words and then publishing them for general consumption. Although Bulla was supremely well calculated to please an audience of knights, all of whom traditionally looked to the Emperor for friendship and protection, it was less likely to please the Emperor, even if he sympathised with Hutten's message. Hutten's mistaken expectation that Charles would learn a lesson from his dialogues is raised again in the discussion of Monitor Secundus (see below).

The appearance of Franz von Sickingen is further evidence of the new direction which Hutten's thoughts were taking. Like the appearance of Hutten himself as a chivalrous knight, the entrance of this great military commander indicates that this is a time for action. Sickingen very properly arrives under the command of the Emperor, but his place as a central figure in the struggle is made clear by his determined speech against the Bull, in which he draws together and emphasises the earlier comments on Roman depravity (much worse than the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah) and Roman greed (their plundering is literally without limit). The reference to Sodom and Gomorrah again echoes Luther's use of references in the Address. Unlike Charles, Sickingen was probably flattered and pleased by the words Hutten gives him:

'Let this be my own promise, thus may Christ give me success in those things for which I prepare, so that I shall avoid no labour, nor ever cease,

until I have seen a result, namely that there is no profit in Germany for the insatiable courtesans, the Roman criminals’.

It is a similar selfless commitment to the one given by Hutten in his letter to Mosellanus. Hutten shows the knights as being all of one mind, and reliable heroes in Germany’s hour of need. Then Sickingen confirms Hutten’s main point:

‘These great things [must be achieved] with many deeds: words will not suffice’.

Even so, as chapter five will show, Sickingen had an agenda of his own beyond that of disinterested defender of Germany and Church reform. In the case of his closest ally, Hutten was still distorting individual motives for polemical purposes. The extent to which he was aware of the distortion in Sickingen’s case, and the extent to which he believed his own polemic, is also discussed below. Bulla marks the early stages of Hutten’s reliance on Sickingen as the practical saviour of Germany – the beginning of his suspicion that Charles would not come through – which would culminate in their disastrous leadership of the Knights’ Revolt two years later.

The appearance of a group of physicians, offering a simple remedy for the Bull’s poisons, is surprising, and lightens the tone of the dialogue in its solemn closing moments. The violence which has dominated the dialogue has passed, and Hutten could lose his audience of impatient knights in the lengthy moralising which follows the Bull’s explosion. The remarks of the leading physician, Heinrich Stromer von Auerbach, seem calculated simply to retain the interest and good humour of those

listening to the dialogue. Stromer himself was known to Hutten as rector of the University of Leipzig and as physician to the Elector of Saxony and Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz, and he appears several times in Hutten's correspondence.⁸¹ His friendship with Hutten dates from 1518, and like Petrus Mosellanus, another correspondent of Hutten, he attended the Leipzig Debate in 1519 and was favourably impressed with Martin Luther (see chapter five).⁸² It is very likely that Hutten knew of his Lutheran inclinations at the time of writing Bulla, and was therefore prompted to include him as one of the Bull's opponents.

Hutten and Liberty

Hutten's concern with political and personal liberty within Germany is at the very heart of this dialogue. Arminius had touched on the issue, the hero asserting that he had always been free in his heart, but it had concentrated on the ideal of restoring Germany to her acknowledged place of glory among all nations. In Bulla, the concerns are much more practical, driven by the genuine threat which Exsurge Domine now presented. And, although Hutten was living at the Ebernberg in a community devoted to the Gospel, and would write strongly in support of Luther, his real agenda is set out in Bulla:

⁸¹ He appears as a recipient of letters from Hutten, writes to others about Hutten, and is referred to by Luther in the same context as Hutten. See, for example, Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ulrichi de Hutten Equitis ad Henrichum Stromerum Aurbacchum Medicum in Aulam suam Praefatio' (1518), in Opera I, pp.217-220, Stromer, Heinrich, 'Viro eruditione pariter ac vitae sanctimonia claro D. Nicolao Demudt Collegii canonicorum novi operas apud hallim praeposito, et Archidiacono reverendissimi Cardinalis Magunciaci a consiliis Henricus Stromer Aurbachius Medicus', (1520), in Opera I, pp.343-344, and Luther, Martin, 'Eruditissimo et integerrimo viro magistro Georgio Spalatino a Sacris Principalibus etc. suo in Domino Maiori' (1520), in Opera I, pp.369-370

⁸² Bietenholz, Peter G., (ed.), Contemporaries of Erasmus. A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation, Vol.3 (Toronto, 1987), pp.291-292

‘Perhaps I could calm down over Luther, but over liberty, never!’

Chapter five will show that Hutten’s attachment to Luther’s message was a genuine one, but that he was always mindful of the possibilities that Luther offered for political manoeuvring, and that German liberty was, and would remain, his strongest concern. He could deny the Bull’s accusation that he was a Lutheran, and therefore condemned by the Pope:

The Bull: And you dare to lay a hand on me? You are excommunicated for doing so. Indeed, Leo X knows you to be a Lutheran.

Hutten: But I am not. Rather, until now I have been – even more so than Luther – unfriendly towards Bulls, and, with a hostile spirit, opposed to ungodly Rome.

Until the day he died, however, he would never deny his allegiance to Liberty. This is central to an understanding of Hutten in 1519 and 1520, and, indeed, to his few remaining years. He is inextricably linked to the German reformation, especially as a result of Holborn’s influential biography, and the role which he played in it is discussed later. However, he himself placed quite a different emphasis on his concerns. He would be condemned as a follower of Luther, but everything he did from this time onwards was in the cause of liberty as he saw it. His earlier interest in liberty had lain in the liberty of individual scholars, notably Aesticampianus and Reuchlin. Now he sought his own liberty, and, most of all, that of his country, and he defined this chiefly in terms of freedom from the influence of Rome and a return to his perception of the dignity, independence and morality of the ancient Germans. This

obsession is most clearly defined in Arminius, but it is equally the point of Bulla. The differences lie in the presentation of the case - reflecting Hutten's growing disenchantment with existing authority in the Empire and his consequent change of audience – and in the move from abstract notions of leadership and freedom to very specific, individual causes and accusations.

Conclusion

Bulla marks a new direction in Hutten's life, as well as in his thought. Personally endangered by Exsurge Domine, he was forced into the shelter of the Ebernberg and, therefore, into the company of other knights – an environment that he had rarely experienced for any length of time since early childhood. These were comforting surroundings at a time when Hutten was wondering about the extent of the new Emperor's loyalty to the German people, and when he was caught up in events outside his control. It is, perhaps, unsurprising that his work ceases to reflect wholly humanist values of study and art for their own sake, and now concentrates entirely on practical matters such as liberty and justice, for himself, for the German people, and for Luther: he was in a desperate situation, and his ready supporters were men of action rather than poetry. We can perceive the beginning of Hutten's increasing dependence on the knights to achieve his aims, as he started on the path that would lead to the Knights' Revolt and exile. He still hoped that the German people would band together against their common oppressor, but realised that they had to be persuaded to do so – it would not happen spontaneously, from an unsuppressable love of freedom – and that he and Sickingen must take the lead.

Bulla itself, although calculated to be attractive to Huttens' fellow humanists in the same way as the Letters of Obscure Men, was intended primarily for an audience of knights, and probably for reading aloud specifically to the knights at the Ebernberg, encouraging their support and complimenting Hutten's host. Its style incorporates a number of new features, indicative of its new political purpose and the audience for which it was designed. It also betrays the influence of Luther's work, in particular his Address, which would be of even greater importance to Hutten later on. Bulla's chief value is in helping to determine Hutten's state of mind at the time of writing – still quick-witted, but impatient and aggressive, spoiling for the fight with Rome which would surely come. His anxiety for himself and for Germany are apparent. Above all, his chief concern, which would last to the end of his life, is made clear: liberty from Rome, which exceeded even Luther in importance.

Chapter Five

Monitor Primus and Monitor Secundus: Monitor I and

Monitor II

Winter 1520: a time of crisis

The last two dialogues translated in the appendices are treated together in this chapter, as Hutten himself regarded them as two halves of the same work (see the preface addressed to Johann of Bavaria in chapter four). At first, they look very different. One features the calm speeches of Martin Luther, the reformer, and the other the aggressive tones of Franz von Sickingen, the great military leader. They are apparently unconnected, the first concentrating on a personal condemnation of the Pope, and the second on criticisms of the Emperor. However, the dialogues are bound together by the repetition of structure – each is a conversation between ‘Monitor’ (see below) and one other person – and by the fact that, together, they express all of Hutten’s main concerns in the winter of 1520. Monitor Primus brings us to the relationship between Hutten and Martin Luther. It raises questions of their perception and understanding of one another, of the extent of Hutten’s engagement in the reform movement, and of the effects of the Reformation on Hutten’s life and work and *vice versa*. Monitor Secundus, meanwhile, revisits old themes and takes us back to early influences on Hutten’s life: the knights, the Church, and loyalty to the Emperor. Reading both dialogues, the reader can see that, in Hutten’s mind, the new and all-

encompassing issue of the Reformation is affected by his old concerns, and they in turn are given new emphases by recent developments.

The Reformation has long been a major focus, and often *the* major focus, of studies of Hutten's life, although his involvement lasted only two or three years. The most successful biography of Hutten to date, by the German historian Hajo Holborn, discusses all aspects of his life, but sets out its main agenda in its title: Ulrich von Hutten and the German Reformation. Luther's Reformation was such an enormous event that, in retrospect, it easily dominates surrounding lives and themes. It is tempting to see the rest of Hutten's life as a mere prelude to his involvement in reform, followed by a tragic and brief afterthought. As earlier chapters have shown, however, Hutten had other priorities earlier in life. He left Fulda out of a desire to learn and to travel, and out of dissatisfaction with the monastic life rather than with the state of the Church. After leaving Fulda, he devoted himself to humanist learning, building friendships with other scholars, defending his own honour and that of his family and his friends, and then to the cause of German 'liberty'. How then did Hutten come to be so closely identified with Luther and his cause?

Chapter three showed that, as late as 1518, when he wrote to Pirckheimer in delight at his meeting with French humanists, Hutten's main allegiance was still to humanist learning and scholarship. Certainly, his opposition to the abuses he perceived in the Church had grown during his visits to Italy, and he had become a particularly strong critic of them, especially with regard to the Church's influence in Germany. His commitment to such opposition is clear from his epigrams against Julius II and Italiae Ficticia. However, he remained firmly within the humanist camp, voicing concerns

that others, such as Conrad Celtis, had already raised. He was not yet regarded by the Church as a threat. When Hutten finally emerged as a dangerous opponent of the Church, Eck used those early epigrams against him, but it is significant that this did not happen years earlier.¹

From his position at the court of the Archbishop of Mainz, Hutten must have become aware of the indulgences controversy at an early stage, but he saw it as a quarrel among monks alone. On 3rd April 1518, he wrote to Count Neuemar:

‘One faction attacks the authority of the Pope, the other vindicates papal indulgences. There is great excitement and heated controversy on both sides. These leaders are violently agitated ... Recently they have turned to writing. The booksellers are busy ... I hope they will devour one another ... I devoutly hope that our enemies will cockfight to the last feather’.²

Later that year, when writing to Pirckheimer, he referred to the matter again:

‘Luther’s many controversies show with what virulence the theologians attack one another’.³

And yet, less than eighteen months after writing to Pirckheimer in this disparaging way, Hutten wrote to Melancthon, suggesting that Luther take shelter from his

¹ Johann Cochlaeus, a humanist who eventually decided to oppose Luther but who had befriended Hutten in Italy, refers to this use of the epigrams in an extract from a letter of 1519 quoted in *Opera* I, p.317.

² Hutten, Ulrich von, ‘Epistola ad Virum Illustrem Hermannum de Neuvenar Comitem Hutteniana qua contra Capnionis Aemulos Confirmatur’ (1518), in *Opera* I, p.167, translated in Holborn, *Hutten*, p.102

³ Hutten, ‘Ad Bilibaldum Pirckheymer’, p.216, translated in Holborn, *Hutten*, p.102

enemies with Franz von Sickingen.⁴ At some point during that time, his attitude towards Luther and the possibility of revolutionary Church reform had changed. The exact date and circumstances of this change are not recorded. Holborn tentatively suggests the Leipzig disputation of June-July 1519 as the decisive factor in Hutten's change of focus, on the grounds that Hutten would welcome a comrade who '[as a theologian] dared to call papal authority into question, and to appeal like a humanist to the primary sources'.⁵ Martin Brecht also points to Leipzig as important in attracting Hutten's attention to Luther.⁶ The suggestion that Leipzig was a turning point for Hutten is a reasonable one, although the influence of Luther's insistence on the authority of Scripture alone should not be overstated. It would have appealed to Hutten as a humanist, but, for him, the importance of the doctrine of *sola scriptura* would lie less in its 'humanist' return to ancient sources than in its automatic removal of later accretions to the doctrine and practices of the Roman Church. This would support Hutten's objections to the Church's political dominance and money-raising exercises within the German-speaking lands – neither of which were founded in Scripture – but such notions were not new to Hutten at the time of the Leipzig disputation.

Far more attractive to him would be Holborn's first point: that it was on this occasion that Luther clearly questioned the Pope's divine authority.⁷ The implications for German patriotism and for the reform of Church abuses were clear, and Luther's statement would have delighted Hutten, not just for its content but for its courage. At

⁴ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ulr. Huttenus Philippo Melanchthoni' (January 1520), in *Opera* I, pp.320-321, and '[Huttenus] Philippo Melanchthoni Brettano Iuveni Erudiss. suo Amico Desyderabili Salutem' (February 1520), in *Opera* I, pp.324-325

⁵ Holborn, *Hutten*, p.118

⁶ Brecht, Martin, *Martin Luther. Sein Weg zur Reformation 1483-1521* (Stuttgart, 1983), p.353

⁷ A brief account of the debate is given in Oberman, Heiko A., *Luther. Man Between God and the Devil* (trans. Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart, Yale, 1989), p.246

this moment, Hutten, the knight who looked back wistfully to ideals of medieval chivalry, and who had spoken out for his oppressed friends Reuchlin and Aesticampianus, found another champion who dared to speak the truth when others dared not. The Leipzig disputation and the composition of the dialogue Arminius may have been very close together, and were certainly no more than a few months apart, so the brave German monk taking on the might of his powerful Roman opponent would have resonated with Hutten's thinking at the time. As at least two correspondents of Hutten, the humanist Mosellanus and the physician Heinrich Stromer, were present at the disputation and were favourably impressed with Luther, they may have supplied first-hand accounts of Luther's calmness and firm resolve.⁸ Hutten could perceive a kindred spirit (or so he thought) in a monk who would make this brave stand, if not in a monk who had earlier argued with other monks over indulgences. Later, Luther would describe this courage clearly:

'We may not deviate from the cause of truth, even if many, yes all are against it. For it is not only the case today that the great mass, with all the great lords, err and defend injustice. And though it is hard and difficult to bear such loneliness ... we know God, who will be our judge, lives'.⁹

The same belief in a responsibility towards the truth, even if no one would help, appears in Hutten's portrayal of himself in the dialogue Bulla. The essential difference between them in their approach to this responsibility – that Luther took on the burden only because he believed he must, and that Hutten had always taken a

⁸ Mosellanus' account is described in Oberman, Luther, pp.325-326. See also Bietenholz, Peter G. (ed.), Contemporaries of Erasmus. A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation, Vol.3 (Toronto, 1987), pp.291-292

⁹ Oberman, Luther, p.246. Oberman cites Archiv zur Weimarer Lutherausgabe, vol.2: D. Martin Luther Operationes in psalmos 1519-1521, 2.422, (Cologne, Vienna, 1981), p.266.

certain pride in the idea of himself as the sole, oppressed defender of right against the world – was unimportant at this stage.¹⁰

We cannot be certain as to whether or not the Leipzig disputation was *decisive* in Hutten's attaching himself to Luther and to the reform movement. However, it was an event of which he must have been aware. It revealed Luther in a light that both appealed to Hutten personally and suggested the possibility of sweeping reform which, by removing papal authority, would benefit the German-speaking lands. Leipzig must be regarded as a highly significant influence on Hutten's subsequent actions.

When, early in 1520, Hutten suggested that Luther accept the protection of Franz von Sickingen, Luther had clearly become his first concern, although his humanist attachments are still in evidence: Holborn points out the significance of the fact that he approached Melanchthon, a humanist whom he deeply respected, with his suggestion.¹¹ Of course, the question remains as to how much Hutten's new allegiance rested on his well-established humanist and patriotic ideals, and how much on religious conviction. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

From this time onwards, Hutten openly courted a personal connection with Luther, and identified himself with his cause. Holborn designates the publication of Hutten's preface to a new edition of his address to Charles V (September 1520) as the point at which he publicly identified himself with Luther for all to see, although he touches

¹⁰ See not only Hutten's romantic role in *Bulla*, but also the work discussed earlier in this thesis, especially the *Lötze Philippics*, in which Hutten deliberately chose to put his case before the world when 'oppressed' by those to whom he owed money.

¹¹ Holborn, *Hutten*, p.122

upon earlier connections.¹² However, this is too late to be accepted as Hutten's first public identification with the reformer. Holborn brushes aside the fact that this preface is deliberately anonymous, claiming that the association with Hutten is obvious, but it is unreasonable to suppose that Hutten would come out in favour of Luther by withholding his name. If the association is obvious, it is because Hutten had already identified himself firmly with Luther's cause.

Soon after Hutten's letters to Melanchthon, in April 1520, Crotus Rubeanus wrote to Luther, telling him that he had met Hutten in Bamberg and that they had discussed Luther's persecution indignantly.¹³ Luther was quite willing to correspond with Hutten: we know of two letters from him in May 1520, the first of which acknowledges the invitation to take shelter with Sickingen. Nothing else is known of them, as they are recorded only in letters from Luther to Georg Spalatin, in which Luther states that he has written to Hutten and Sickingen among others.¹⁴

On 8 June 1520, Melanchthon wrote to Johannes Hess to say that Hutten was going to Ferdinand's court to enlist the help of the great princes in the struggle for freedom.¹⁵ This may suggest, as Holborn thinks, the existence of letters between Hutten and Luther that are no longer extant.¹⁶ It is also possible that Melanchthon's letter merely follows from Hutten's letter of 4th June 1520 (assuming the latter's swift delivery).

¹² *Ibid.*, p.124. Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ein unbekanter liebhaber der göttlichen warheit, und des vatterlands, entbeüt allen freyen Teütschen heyl' (1520), in *Opera I*, p.371

¹³ Rubeanus, Crotus, 'Doctissimo Integerrimoque Sacrarum Literarum Interpreti Wittenburgi Doctori Martino Luthero amico suo veneran.' (1520), in *Opera I*, pp.337-341

¹⁴ Luther, Martin, '[Martinus Lutherus] suo in Domino Charissimo Magistro Georgio Spalatino Ducalibus a Sacris et Literis Integerrimo Amico' (5 May 1520), in *Opera I*, pp.345-346, and '[Martinus Lutherus] suo in Domino Charissimo Magistro Georgio Spalatino Ducalibus a Sacris et Literis Integerrimo Amico (31 May 1520), in *Opera I*, p.54. Georg Spalatin was a friend of Luther's and, as the chaplain and secretary of Frederick the Wise, was able to intercede successfully with the Elector on Luther's behalf. See, for example, Mullett, Michael A., *Martin Luther* (London, 2004), p.77.

¹⁵ Melanchthon, Philip, 'Iohanni Hesso Vratislaviae' (1520), in *Opera I*, p.358

¹⁶ Holborn, *Hutten*, p.124

This, Hutten's first surviving letter to Luther himself, clearly demonstrates Hutten's commitment to Luther's reform movement:

'May Christ be with us, may Christ help us, because we are committing ourselves to His precepts, and pulling His veiled doctrine out of the fog of papal regulations into the light: you [doing so] prolifically, I according to the ability of [ordinary] men. Would that either everyone could understand this, or that they could reach an awareness of it for themselves, and return to the path. They are excommunicating you. How great, o Luther, how great you are, if this is true: for all pious folk will say of you, "They hunted the soul of justice and they condemned innocent blood. But the Lord our God will repay their injustice, and visit their wickedness upon them". Let this hope and faith be ours.

Eck is returning from the city, enriched, so they say, with benefits from the Pope and with money. What next? The sinner is extolled for his desires, but let God direct us in His truth. And therefore we shall detest the Church of meanness, and shall not sit down with the impious ... Eck has charged me with being associated with you, and in this he is not mistaken: for in those matters which I have considered, I have always felt as you do; but we were not previously accustomed [to discuss them]. But when he claimed that we had previously agreed [on these matters], he told that lie to please the bishop of Rome. O shameless, evil man! But the fact is, that he will get what he deserves. Be firm and strong, do not waver. But why do I give advice where there is no need? You have me as a supporter in all that happens. And so, from now on, you may dare to entrust all your plans to me. Let us deliver

universal liberty [from its bondage], let us free our country which has so long been oppressed. We have God on our side – and if God is for us, who can be against us? The [theologians] of Cologne and Louvain have defamed you. These gathering places are behaving devilishly towards the truth. But we shall burst through [their deceit], we shall burst through, helped and strengthened by Christ ... Today I leave for Ferdinand's court. I shall not cease to do whatever is in my power for our cause'.¹⁷

Here, Hutten offers his personal support to Luther, and appears to adopt a religious agenda. He is even about to proclaim his support before Ferdinand's court, which, as early as June, would remove any doubt over what Eck already suspected: that Hutten had joined Luther's camp. However, the reference to 'freeing our country which has so long been oppressed' should not be ignored. Whatever the extent of his personal commitment at this time to Luther and to reform, Hutten had not forgotten his humanist, patriotic aims.

Common ground: Luther and the knights, humanism and German patriotism

On 3 August 1520, Luther wrote to Johannes Voigt, a Magdeburg theologian, referring to Sickingen's offer – through Hutten – of protection from his enemies, and saying that Sylvester von Schaumberg had offered the same.¹⁸ The Schaumbergs were

¹⁷ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Vive Libertas. Ulrichus de Hutten Eques Martino Luthero Theologo Salutem' (1520), in *Opera* I, pp.355-356

¹⁸ Luther, Martin, 'Ioanni Voigt Sacrae Theologiae Magistro August. Eremitae Magdeburg. Seniori suo' (1520), in *Opera* I, p.366

one of the wealthiest and most influential families of Franconian knights.¹⁹ The offers of help from three of the most prominent knightly families implied the protection of the Franconian knights as a whole. In the years 1519 and 1520, an alliance between Luther and the knights seemed likely to many observers. Although Luther did not accept their protection, neither did he reject it out of hand. During two such dangerous years in his protest, the knights' support was welcome, although the differences between their aims and the methods they were prepared to use in order to achieve them would eventually bring the alliance to an end.

At the time, the underlying divisions which would lead to the separation of Luther and the knights were not at all apparent. It is noteworthy that Luther's An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung (referred to below as the Address) was aimed at the nobility, and not the ruling classes in general.²⁰ The city authorities were not included in his appeal, but the knights were. The importance of the Address to Luther and the knights, and the possible influence of the knights on its language, are discussed below. By the time that the Diet of Worms opened in January 1521, the association of Luther and the knights was so strong in the public's mind that cartoons appeared depicting Luther and Hutten as fellow soldiers, or playing bowls against the Pope.

¹⁹ Zmora, State and Nobility, p.77

²⁰ Luther, Martin, 'An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung' (1520) in WA 6:381-469



Hutten and Luther bowling against the Pope
 Reproduced in Roland Bainton, Here I Stand,
 p.131

At this early stage, Luther was readily associated with *anyone* who seemed to have any common ground with him. Thus he was depicted not only with Hutten, but also with Erasmus and Jan Hus. Aleander, the papal nuncio at Worms, described two of the cartoons:

‘A cartoon has appeared showing Luther with a book in his hand, accompanied by Hutten in armour with a sword under the caption, “Champions of Christian Liberty”. Another sheet portrays Luther in front and Hutten behind carrying a chest on which are two chalices with the inscription “The Ark of the True Faith”. Erasmus, in front, is playing the

harp as David. In the background is Jan Hus, whom Luther has recently proclaimed his saint'.²¹

Ironically, the cartoon's assumptions would prove to be almost entirely inappropriate. The relationship between Hutten and Erasmus was becoming uneasy, and would soon end amid bitter recriminations. Erasmus remained a faithful member of the Church who would have to work hard to persuade the Church of that faithfulness. The growing division between Erasmus and Luther's adherents is described by Bernhard Lohse in his Martin Luther. Eine Einführung in sein Leben und sein Werk.²² Erasmus' horror at his pairing with the heretic Hus can well be imagined. Only Hutten might be expected to feel at ease with this group of associates at the beginning of 1521. The cartoon reflects the general confusion existing at the time over the aims and beliefs of Luther, the knights and the humanists. If Hutten and the knights mistakenly perceived a permanent ally in Luther, it is hardly surprising: they were making the same mistake as many others.

Hutten and his fellow knights were, indeed, misled in their belief that Luther wholly shared their agenda. There were many points of agreement, which are examined below, but Luther was never fully part of the knights' movement. At about the same time that the cartoon appeared, he showed his growing reluctance to be identified too closely with the knights, and with Hutten in particular. On 16 January 1521, he wrote to Georg Spalatin:

²¹ Quoted in Bainton, Ronald H., Here I Stand. A Life of Martin Luther (London, 1951), pp.175-176

²² Lohse, Bernhard, Martin Luther. Eine Einführung in sein Leben und sein Werk (Munich, 1982), pp.74-78

‘My Spalatin, I am sending you the letters which Hutten has written to me, together with some other little works by him on the subject of the Bull ... You can see what Hutten seeks. I am not willing to fight on behalf of the Gospel with force and carnage, and so have I written to the man. The world is conquered through the Word, the Church is preserved through the Word: so will it be renewed through the Word’.²³

One of the letters which Luther forwarded to Spalatin may have been that written by Hutten to Luther on 9th December 1520, in which he assured him that ‘the multitude is greatly kindled and greatly inflamed’, and that the weapons were ready to support their common aims.²⁴ By the end of 1520, Luther cannot have been surprised to receive such letters. On 11th September 1520, he had already written to Spalatin:

‘Hutten has written me letters seething with great passion towards the Roman pontiff, writing that he will hurl himself down upon the priestly tyrant with the pen *and the sword*, believing that the pontiff is reaching out to him with daggers and poison, and that he has ordered the Archbishop of Mainz to send him, captured and bound, to Rome. He says it is a fitting kind of madness for a blind Pope’.²⁵

He had written again on 3rd October 1520:

²³ Luther, Martin, ‘Ad Georgium Spalatinum Christi Servum et a Sacris Principis Electoris Saxoniae’ (1521), in *Opera* II, pp.5-6

²⁴ Hutten, Ulrich von, ‘Verbi Divini Praeconi Invictissimo Martino Luthero Fratri et Amico Dilectissimo Ulrichus Huttenus sal.’ (1520), in *Opera* I, p.436

²⁵ Luther, Martin, ‘Eruditissimo et Integerrimo Viro Magistro Georgio Spalatio a Sacris Principalibus etc suo in Domino Maiori’ (11 September 1520), in *Opera* I, p.370 (my italics)

‘The Archbishop of Mainz is publicly ordering the suppression of the tracts of Hutten and of anyone writing against the Pope, calling down ill fortune on his own head. Hutten is preparing himself with great determination, for an attack on the papacy *with weapons* and his intellect’.²⁶

In September, Hutten had already demanded of Charles V that he himself should not be handed over to Rome without a hearing before the Emperor (to which he was, in fact, legally entitled), and had suggested that he was ready to defend himself with the sword.²⁷ In November he marched to the imperial court at Cologne, and, together with his friends (Holborn observes that ‘he was not squeamish as to the company he kept’), he issued threats against the papal nuntios who were gathered at the court.²⁸

Luther had plenty of justification for his growing uneasiness with Hutten’s friendship: it seemed that the knight was about to turn reform into open war. His desire for military mobilisation of the knights and the German people in general was becoming very clear. Certainly, he was speaking less about Christ and more about practical matters. Luther began to realise that Hutten envisaged an active rebellion by the German people against Rome, without relying entirely on the Word of God. His letter to Spalatin of 16th January 1521 evidently marks the culmination of some months of worry about Hutten’s violent inclinations, for we see below that he had been hesitating to correspond with him.

²⁶ Luther, Martin, ‘Eruditissimo et Integro Viri Magistro Georgio Spalatino a Sacris Principalibus suo in Domino Maiori’ (3 October 1520), in *Opera* I, p.420 (my italics)

²⁷ Hutten, Ulrich von, ‘Carolo Romanorum et Hispaniarum Regi Ulrichus de Hutten Eques Germanus Orator et Poeta Laureatus Salutem’ (1520), in *Opera* I, pp.371-383. Holborn comments on the legal entitlement of a German citizen to such a hearing in *Hutten*, p.152.

²⁸ Holborn, *Hutten*, p.152

In his own letter of 9th December 1520, Hutten says that he has written to Spalatin in an attempt to discover the intentions of his master, Frederick the Wise.²⁹ It seems that more than one attempt at this was necessary, as a letter survives from Hutten to Spalatin dated 16 January 1521:

‘Although I was about to send you letters on other matters, it is now especially appropriate to write in Franz’s name. He bids me ask you, first of all, to arrange your prince’s intercession with Reuchlin’s cause, which he is now progressing by means of letters: for he has written many times to Caesar with me as his messenger. Then [he asks me] to advise Luther to guard himself in every way possible, for he should certainly know that all kinds of traps are set for him, which it will be difficult to avoid. Indeed, he is very concerned on this point, for Luther seems to him to be completely carefree, and to despise danger. Indeed, I have myself warned him about that.

And now why is it, renowned Spalatin, that Luther has not written a word to me? ... Is all this confusion of events the reason that Luther does not think to write to me? You, of all people, can let me know, especially about any hope there may be with regard to your prince. I have written in two or three letters to you about his intentions, and what he would have in mind if the matter of the courtesans came to force. If you hear anything and dare to

²⁹ Ibid., p.437

report it to someone in good faith, write [to me] with confidence, and farewell'.³⁰

Here we can see a reference to the possibility, or even likelihood, of force in the German struggle against the Church, and, tellingly, to the fact that Luther was no longer a willing correspondent of Hutten. Evidently, Hutten was also finding it impossible to persuade Spalatin to inform him as to his employer's intentions. He had begun to notice a certain coolness on the part of Luther and Spalatin, but had apparently not been flatly told that his proposals were unwelcome. Luther may be considered slow in admonishing Hutten for his proposed violent methods. He even commented on 15th November, after Hutten's visit to the court:

'I rejoice that Hutten has come forth, and would, indeed, that he had intercepted [the papal nuntios]'.³¹

Indeed, his position at the time was so insecure that the thought of being supported by the knights as well as the Elector of Saxony (or instead of the Elector, should anything go wrong) was no doubt comforting. On 9th February 1521, Luther still felt able to write:

'Hutten and others are writing courageously for me and just now are preparing songs which will not be especially pleasing to this Babylon',³²

³⁰ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ulrichus ab Hutten Georgio Spalatino salutem' (1521), in *Opera* II, p.4

³¹ Luther, Martin, 'Pio et Erudito Viro D. Georgio Spalatino a Sacris Principalibus Saxonici Herois suo in Domino Charissimo' (15 November 1520), in *Opera* I, p.426

but they would never again be close correspondents. Although Luther had not decisively turned his back on Hutten, by the very end of 1520 the Lutheran camp was purposely withdrawing from the knights. Luther's suspicions of Hutten's methods in the search for Germany's salvation were quite correct. Eighteen months later, when Hutten and Sickingen led the disastrous Knights' War, he could not have afforded any association with his allies of 1519 and 1520.

The knights were not the only likely allies of Luther in 1519 and 1520. Another group to offer early support, and to seek support from him in return, was the German humanists. From the first years of Luther's protest, several factors encouraged the humanists' idea that Luther was one of their own. Holborn's stress on Luther's return to original sources in his search for truth has been mentioned above. His actions resonated with Erasmus's emphasis on the importance of the scriptures in resolving inaccuracies in the Latin Vulgate – most notably in his Greek edition of the New Testament in 1516. A 'common enmity' with Rome also proved a strong attraction for German humanists. Like many others (see chapter two), Luther had criticised abuses within the Church, and, again like the revered humanist Erasmus, he had called for serious reform. His early writings also expressed outrage at the unfair treatment that Germany received at Roman hands, examples of which are given below. This stance was guaranteed to gain the sympathy of his humanist countrymen, as chapter three showed. Part of Luther's anger with Rome even stemmed from the same source as that of many German scholars: a personal visit to the Holy City, which in 1510-11 he had found to be anything but holy. Like Hutten, he had been appalled by Italian

³² Luther, Martin, 'Reverendo et Optimo Viro Ioanni Staupitio S.T. Magistro August. Eremitae suo in Domino Maiori Salutem' (9th February 1521), in *Opera* II, p.9

worldliness and corruption, and – a common complaint among the humanists – had found himself despised for his barbarian German ways. It was an experience which made Luther very receptive to tales of Roman depravity, even in later years.³³

The need for reform and criticism of abuses within the Church were not the only ways in which Luther seemed in sympathy with the German humanists. He sympathised with humanist learning, appreciating that without an expert knowledge of ancient languages there could be no really reliable interpretation of Scripture. In his recognition of this, he outdid the great majority of humanists in acquiring some knowledge of Hebrew, using Reuchlin's works to help him.³⁴ Furthermore, Oberman attributes Luther's love of reading Latin to the influence of the Erfurt circle of humanists, discussed in chapter two of this thesis.³⁵

For any who might still doubt Luther's humanist sympathies, the presence of many humanists among his friends and protectors, such as Philip Melanchthon and Georg Spalatin, was reassuring. In the earliest years of Luther's protest, even those who would ultimately remain loyal to the Church had reason to be encouraged, as it was by no means obvious that his protest would cause such upheaval. In wanting to see the monasteries spiritually renewed, and in asking the Pope to block the creation of new monastic orders, Luther again followed Erasmus. Josef Lortz has commented on the enthusiasm shown by even the most prominent humanists for Luther at this time, in their belief that he was 'a positive force for the purification of the Church'.³⁶ In the

³³ Stadtwald, Kurt, Roman Popes and German Patriots. Antipapalism in the Politics of the German Humanist Movement from Gregor Heimburg to Martin Luther (Geneva, 1996), pp.180-182

³⁴ Oberman, Luther, p.214

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.123

³⁶ Lortz, Joseph, Die Reformation in Deutschland (Freiburg, 1948), p.238

Address, he shows respect for the Church's most important institution, the Mass. As a result, the Address has been described as 'a manifesto of ecclesiastical reform [which] belongs to a period before Luther had fully become a Lutheran'.³⁷ So, whether Hutten and his fellow humanists saw the Church as needing some reform from within for its own sake, or sweeping change for the sake of the German nation, at the beginning of Luther's protest they thought they had found a kindred spirit. There were even some who thought that Luther might be the new 'Arminius' for whom Germany had been waiting.³⁸

In fact, the German humanists were mistaken in their assessment of Luther. Although he appreciated the achievements of humanism, and made use of them, he was no humanist. At this point in his life at least, he had little to do with it for its own sake. Although Mutianus Rufus's home in Gotha was a regular meeting place for Erfurt humanists, as described in chapter two, Luther did not even meet him until he had been a professor for three years. It is therefore unlikely that he was closely connected to the humanists at his university. He certainly never aspired to the literary artistry of the many humanists he knew.³⁹ Much more significantly, although Luther counted many humanists among his friends, he was now driven entirely by the need to reform God's Church and to preach God's Word. Luther and the humanist movement might walk along together for a while, but Luther was not prepared to follow other men's agendas, and their paths would inevitably diverge. Full of enthusiasm for the cause, as

³⁷ Mullett, Luther, p.109

³⁸ Ridé, Jacques, 'Arminius in der Sicht der deutschen Reformatoren' in Rainer Wiegels und Winfried Woesler (hg.), Arminius und die Varusschlacht: Geschichte, Mythos, Literatur (Paderborn, 2003), pp.239-248

³⁹ Oberman, Luther, p.124

always, it is probable that Hutten, the most prominent of German humanists, never fully realised this.

Monitor Primus: Monitor I

Another dialogue written from the shelter of the Ebernberg in the autumn or early winter of 1520, Monitor I is a conversation between Martin Luther and a character referred to simply as 'Monitor'. The Latin word *Monitor* is retained here, as there is no suitable English equivalent. 'Prompter' is perhaps the closest in meaning, but is still not entirely satisfactory. *Monitor* might be translated as 'one who offers reminders' or 'an orator's assistant', and, indeed, Monitor's role in this dialogue is to give Luther a chance to set out his views. At frequent intervals, Monitor either offers Luther a chance to explain his position, by asking, for example, 'How can you prove that?', or is prompted to give him that chance, when Luther asks, 'Where are men claiming this?' or 'But will you now explain to me, when that contract was made between the Roman Pope and Christ?' Monitor exists in order to provide Luther with statements about Christ, the Pope and the Church which Luther can then disprove. It can also mean 'adviser', another role which Monitor fulfils here, as he visits Luther in order to warn him against his actions and to urge him to take a safer path.

Carlheinz Gräter assumes that Monitor is a clergyman who has lost his initial sympathy for Luther, but there is little in the dialogue to support the view.⁴⁰ Monitor could be any educated person within the German-speaking lands, attracted by Luther's ideas but suffering from two overwhelming problems: the degree to which

⁴⁰ Gräter, Ulrich von Hutten. Ein Lebensbild, p.162

the Church's centuries-old dogma is ingrained in him, and the fear which he feels in abandoning a Church which claims the right to excommunicate him and thus remove his hope of salvation. It is in Monitor's 'everyman' quality that Hutten's concern lies, as does the impact of the dialogue. Luther's struggle is not a private one between himself and the Church. Were Monitor a clergyman, a lay reader might be able to distance himself from the issue. In fact, any reader could himself be Monitor: Luther is fighting for everyone's salvation, and it is every reader's responsibility to make the choice which faces Monitor. As the dialogue reminds us, *everyone* must take responsibility for his own salvation.⁴¹

The issues raised in Monitor I are examined below. The following discussion seeks to demonstrate the extent of Hutten's understanding of Luther's message, his selectivity in portraying it, and any differences between Luther himself and the 'dialogue' Luther presented by Hutten.

Hutten's sources for Monitor I

Monitor I is particularly informative about the extent of Hutten's understanding of Luther, and, indeed, about the extent of his interest in Luther's ideas. Neither was by any means complete. Hutten showed in his letter to Luther of 4th June 1520 (above) that he did not expect to equal him in theological explanation, when he said that Luther revealed God's teaching very well, but that he himself could do so only according to the ability of ordinary men.⁴² Hutten knew that he was no theologian, but a publicist and polemicist. In fact, he was incapable of the subtle analysis and detailed

⁴¹ See, in particular, the sections of the dialogue which discuss the ability, or inability, of the Pope to take on the burden of other's sins at the Last Judgement.

⁴² Hutten, 'Vive Libertas', p.355

examination of Scripture that characterises Luther's own work. Even the annotations to Exsurge Domine do not approach Luther's level of theological analysis. However, Hutten could not avoid giving some explanation of Luther's doctrine in Monitor I, even though his primary aim was not to persuade others to join the Lutheran movement, but to question the Pope's authority to condemn Luther and his followers. That explanation is given as far as Hutten understood it, and is very selective in its use of aspects of Luther's theology.

This selectivity was partly deliberate. Besides the obvious concern of self-defence against the threat posed by the Bull Exsurge Domine, Hutten's priority was still the cause of German liberty, unity and pre-eminence, and he did not hesitate to use the aspects of Luther's writing which were useful and to ignore those which were not. This familiar characteristic of Hutten's work was noted in chapter three with regard to Arminius, in which Tacitus' Annals and Germania were freely used or discarded. However, selectivity in the use of Luther's writings was also the inevitable result of a limited familiarity with them, as well as of Hutten's own limitations in understanding. Subsequent sections will refer to works by Luther which Hutten may have drawn upon, but there are not many of them. Although a range of Luther's works would undoubtedly have made their way to the very interested group of knights assembled at the Ebernberg, Hutten seems to have contented himself with reading just a few major tracts.

The publication of which Hutten made most use was certainly the Address, and examination of the text shows why it was so attractive to Hutten as a source. Published in June 1520, this long tract circulated in time to be received and studied by

Hutten before writing Monitor Primus. The knights were among those to whom the tract issued a direct appeal:

‘In accordance with our project, I have composed a few paragraphs on the improvement of the condition of Christendom. I intend the work for the consideration of Christians belonging to the ruling classes in Germany. I hope that God will help His Church through the laity, since the clergy, who should be the more appropriate persons, have become quite indifferent’.⁴³

Suddenly, the knights, whose power had so long been decreasing, were appealed to for their help as part of Germany’s ruling class. Hutten was surely delighted. It is no wonder that he set Monitor Primus against a German background, nor that he drew more heavily on the Address than on any other work by Luther. Hutten would certainly have seen the call to reform the Church as being made directly to his aristocratic sense of duty, and it probably was. It has sometimes been suggested that the language of the Address was directly influenced by the knights, and Hutten was not only their leader in such matters, but well-known as such.⁴⁴ He was, as Martin Brecht points out, ‘already a significant and exceptionally influential publicist’.⁴⁵

Luther’s Address is more than just an appeal to the nearest and most familiar rulers for help in Church reform. It is an entirely German-centred document, addressing the problems of the Church from a German point of view. It proposed wide-ranging

⁴³ Luther, Martin, ‘An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung’ (1520) in WA 6:381-469, p.404

⁴⁴ Holborn, Hutten, p.140. Holborn sees the dialogue Vadiscus, in particular, as a possible influence.

⁴⁵ Brecht, Martin, Martin Luther. Sein Weg zur Reformation 1483-1521 (Stuttgart, 1983), p.352

national reform, in a style echoing the *gravamina* presented before the Diets, saying that:

‘All classes in Christendom, particularly in Germany, are now oppressed by distress and affliction, and this has stirred not only me but everyman to cry out anxiously for help’.⁴⁶

The Address denied involvement in German affairs to the alien ‘Romanists’, but permitted it to all Germans. It also allowed the involvement of Charles V, whom Luther saw as a proper leader of the German people in their struggle for freedom from Rome.⁴⁷ This was despite the fact that Charles V was the most un-German of Emperors (see the comments on Monitor Secundus, below). In putting his trust in the good faith of the Spanish king, Luther was placing his reliance on the serious traditions of the office of Holy Roman Emperor, and perhaps, like many other Germans, on the fact that Charles was the grandson of the popular Maximilian I. Whatever his reasons for relying on Charles, he shared his faith with Hutten, who would have been all the more convinced that, far from exploiting Luther’s religious stance, he was in complete agreement with him. The Address echoes the key concerns expressed in Arminius and Bulla, and the loyalty that Hutten and the other knights felt towards the Emperor. One extract from Luther’s comments on reform in Germany will suffice to show how strongly the author of Bulla could relate to his ideas, and how gleefully he drew on the Address in preparing Monitor Primus (and, indeed, Bulla):

⁴⁶ Luther, ‘An den christlichen Adel’, p.405

⁴⁷ Mullett, Michael A., Martin Luther (London, 2004), p.103

‘Let us pause a while and consider whether the Germans are quite such simpletons as not to grasp or understand the Romish game ... Many years ago, German emperors and princes granted the pope permission to take the “annates” of all the benefices in Germany, i.e. the half of the first year’s income of every single benefice [in order to fight the Turks]. The Popes have made such use of the praiseworthy and straightforward intentions of the German people that they have taken these revenues now for more than a hundred years, until, today, they have converted them into an obligatory tax and impost – due as of right ... they have used the money to found many posts and offices in Rome, and to pay their yearly salaries’. [To fight the Turks, they ask for more money] ... Their opinion is that Germans will always be gullible fools, and go on paying the money to satisfy their indescribable greed; and this in spite of the facts now evident to us all, namely, that not a farthing of the annates or the indulgence money or the like contribution will be used against the Turks, but all will go into the bottomless bag. [The German princes and bishops] should protect the populace whom it is their duty to rule; they should defend them by means of their temporal and spiritual possessions against these ravening wolves who come dressed in sheep’s clothing. ... they ought to suspend payment of the annates, or abolish them entirely.⁴⁸

Luther reinforces his appearance as a reformer motivated by nationalist outrage when he refers to previous Emperors, much praised by Hutten’s contemporaries:

⁴⁸ Luther, ‘An den christlichen Adel’, pp.418-419. The translation is taken from Dillenberger, John, Martin Luther. Selections from his writings (New York, 1961), pp.421-422

‘It came to pass in former times that the good princes, Emperors Frederick I and II, and many other German Emperors, were shamelessly trodden underfoot and oppressed by the Popes whom all the world feared’.⁴⁹

This language appealed greatly to Hutten, as a representative of the knights (traditionally the Emperor’s men) and the humanists (who were so interested in glorifying Germany’s history and exposing its unfair treatment at Italian hands). However, like many others, he was slow to appreciate the qualifications to these remarks, when Luther suggested that:

‘Perhaps they [the Emperors] relied more on their own strength than on God, and therefore had to fall ...’ and ‘[perhaps Julius rose so high because] France, Germany and Venice depended on themselves, as the children of Benjamin slew 42,000 Israelites because they relied on their own strength’.⁵⁰

In the criticism of the Emperors, Luther makes it plain - to the reader who wishes to understand his point - that the only help against papal tyranny comes from God. In a sense, the Germans have brought trouble upon themselves by not trusting enough in God, and now only He can mend the situation. Secular power is not enough. Hutten and his peers chose not to understand, and here we see Hutten’s severe selectivity in his use of Luther’s work. Monitor Primus is clear about the abuses suffered by Germany. It is silent on the necessity of a divine remedy for them.

⁴⁹ Luther, ‘An den christlichen Adel’, p.405, and Dillenberger, Luther, p.405

⁵⁰ Luther, ‘An den christlichen Adel’, pp.405-406, and Dillenberger, Luther, pp.405-406. The Biblical story is found in Judges 20, although verse 21 puts the figure at 22,000.

It is almost certain that Hutten also drew upon Luther's Ninety-Five Theses, the work that sparked the reform controversy.⁵¹ They contain comments that are relevant to Monitor Primus, for example on the question of the Pope's relationship to St Peter (see below), and had been very widely circulated in the German-speaking lands.⁵² If Hutten was going to read any of Luther's work, as he was sure to do in the wake of the Leipzig disputation if not earlier, he was likely to begin with the core, readily available, Theses.

Other possible sources for Hutten are two more of Luther's major tracts, De Captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae praeludium (or The Babylonian Captivity of the Church) and Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen (or The Freedom of a Christian), both published in October 1520.⁵³ It will be seen that they both touch on themes that appear in Monitor Primus, but, as they appeared very close to the time of composition of Monitor Primus, we cannot know whether or not Hutten had read them. He may also have had access to a few of Luther's minor works, but his heavy reliance on one or two basic and easily accessible texts suggests that he did not bother to look for less obvious material.

Even among the knights, it must be remembered that some followed Luther for religious reasons and some for patriotic or political reasons. They were not all equally interested in doctrine, and, despite his protestations of support for Luther, Hutten was among those who were less interested. While accepting Luther's message, he was

⁵¹ Luther, Martin, 'Disputatio pro declarationis virtutis indulgentiarum' (1517) in WA 1.233-238, here referred to by its familiar name

⁵² According to Luther, they had reached all parts of Germany within two weeks. See Luther, Martin, 'Wider Hans Worst' (1541) in WA 51.540, and Oberman, Luther, p.190.

⁵³ Luther, Martin, 'De Captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae praeludium' (1520) in WA 6.484-573 and Luther, Martin, 'Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen' (1520) in WA 7.12-38

content to use the minimum of Luther's work needed for his polemic. It is in the absence of nuances in Monitor Primus that he falls short of reproducing Luther's message. Whereas Luther's views have gradually evolved (and continue to do so later), and he acknowledges the possibilities of change in the papacy, Hutten deals only in absolutes. This is partly because of the requirements of the dialogue form, which as polemic needed to convey the main points of Luther's argument quickly and positively, and partly because, as earlier chapters have shown, Hutten really did tend to think in absolute terms: black or white, right or wrong.

Hutten's dependence on Luther for source material for Monitor Primus is apparently tempered by the use of biblical references. Monitor Primus is peppered with such references in support of the 'dialogue' Luther's arguments, but to what extent was this the result of Hutten's own familiarity with the Bible? We have seen that Hutten took the substance of his arguments from just a few of Luther's published works. Did he also depend upon Luther for biblical evidence, or do these references provide evidence that Hutten actually did try to engage with the theological issues independently?

This chapter lacks the scope for an exhaustive analysis of all of Luther's early letters and minor works. However, a comparison of the quotations found in Monitor Primus with Luther's better-known works, which, as we have seen, Hutten is far more likely to have read, is possible.

References found in Luther's early works as well as in Monitor Primus

Page numbers refer to WA

Matthew 16:19	<u>De Captivitate Babylonica</u> , p.536 (keys and power of binding and unbinding)
II Corinthians 11:12-13	<u>Ein Sendbrief an der Bapst Leo X</u> ⁵⁴ p.4 (false apostles)
I Peter 5:2-3	'An den christlichen Adel', p.432 (shepherds for Christ's flock)
Matthew 5:44	<u>Sermo de duplici iustitia</u> , ⁵⁵ p.151 (Love your enemies)

References found only in Monitor Primus

Numbers 18:20	(God speaks to Aaron)
II Corinthians 7:2	(wronging and corrupting no man)
Galatians 6:14	(glory in the Cross of the Lord)
Acts 5:29	(obeying God rather than men)
John 21:15	(Peter's declaration of love for Christ)
Luke 12:46	(appointing a servant his share with the unbelievers)
John 21:17	(Peter's declaration of love for Christ)
Psalms 37:25	(the righteous not forsaken)
John 14:32	(the Holy Ghost shall teach you all things)
Matthew 21:1-9	(Christ's entry into Jerusalem) ⁵⁶

This comparison shows quite plainly that Hutten did not rely entirely on Luther for knowledge of the scriptures and their interpretation. Most of the biblical references

⁵⁴ Luther, Martin, 'Ein Sendbrief an den Bapst Leo X' (1520) in WA 7.1-11. An open letter to the Pope that accompanied 'Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen'

⁵⁵ Luther, Martin, 'Sermo de duplici iustitia' (1519), in WA 2.143-152

⁵⁶ This table has been prepared partly with the aid of the compilation of references in Dillenberg, Luther, pp.522-526.

appearing in Monitor Primus have not been taken from Luther's work, and are likely to be the result of Hutten's own knowledge of the Bible. The references which do appear in Luther's work are so few and so obvious that they could be coincidental: the two quotations found in Captivity and The Freedom of a Christian, cannot be taken to suggest that Hutten read either of these tracts.

This may suggest that Hutten was attempting to engage independently with the issues raised by Luther. Yet Hutten's work on religious themes is reminiscent of the early 'schoolroom' exercises of his humanist youth. In those poems, as we saw in chapter two, he wrote on accepted themes and used well-known classical references. Similar work had been produced by many other German humanists, Hutten's only distinguishing feature being that he wrote exceptionally well. The same was true in 1520. Hutten had no new religious insights to offer: his lack of subtlety as a theologian has been noted above. Monitor Primus contains many references which Hutten could produce quite glibly, but these cannot be taken to mean that they were close to his heart. Indeed, the references that he found for himself are standard ones from well-known books of the Bible, requiring little effort on the part of an exceptionally well-educated humanist.

Even so, Brecht's assertion that Hutten's letters to Luther consisted of little more than lists of Bible quotations, used to ingratiate himself with the reformer is unfair (and inaccurate).⁵⁷ He was certainly not unmoved by Luther's message. To face excommunication was to show great courage, and, had Hutten been motivated purely by love of his country, he could have found other ways of furthering Germany's

⁵⁷ Brecht, Martin Luther, p.353

interests as a polemicist than by staying determinedly with Luther. Luther represented hope for the nationalist movement, but not the only hope. When Luther went to Worms, Hutten wrote to Pirckheimer:

‘He was clearly directed by divine guidance. He ignored all human advice and depended entirely upon God’.⁵⁸

There can be no question that Hutten went through such a charade in order to win Luther’s friendship: it would not have been worth the enormous risks. Much more importantly, Hutten would not have done it if it were worth it, for he was fundamentally extremely honest. Throughout his life, he said what he thought, and did what he thought was right, whatever the personal cost, as earlier chapters have shown. There was no pretence in his approach to Luther - he believed that Luther preached the true Gospel. However, for Hutten, Germany’s cause remained more important than his own life, or, indeed, his own salvation. Without Luther’s obsession with personal salvation and his search for the way in which to serve God perfectly, Hutten could only parrot Luther’s thought, no matter how sincerely he accepted its truth. He understood this, and perhaps expressed it best himself, when he wrote to Luther:

‘We differ from one another in the advice we accept, for mine is human while yours is of entirely divine origin’.⁵⁹

A challenge to the Pope’s authority

⁵⁸ Hutten, Ulrich von, ‘Ulrichus ab Hutten Eques Bilibaldo Pirckheymero Senatori Norinbergen S.’ (1 May 1521), in *Opera II*, p.62

⁵⁹ Hutten, Ulrich von, ‘[Ulricus ab Hutten] Martino Luthero Theologo Evangelistae Invictissimo Amico Sancto’ (April 1521) in *Opera II*, p.55

One consequence of Hutten's black-and-white, patriotic thought had long been his eagerness to criticise the Pope, his damning judgements on him stretching from his first visit to Italy to the recently composed Bulla. He continued his attack in Monitor Primus, partly through argument (see below) and partly through emotive language. He describes Leo as 'this Florentine' and 'a man who ... is very wicked and very ambitious and therefore completely foreign to Christ's rule of life', neither of which are characteristic of Luther's writings at the time. Hutten had already used 'Florentine' as a dismissive and, by implication, anti-Italian reference to Leo in earlier works, and the description of Leo *the man* as wicked and ambitious implies the corruption of the individual in a way which Luther deliberately avoids in The Freedom of a Christian.

Hutten's choice of language in this respect is important, as the whole point of Monitor Primus is to criticise the Pope. The dialogue takes as its central theme the Pope's right to be regarded as the successor in authority to the apostle Peter. Hutten's purpose is clear: he is not writing primarily to assist in spreading Luther's message, but to respond to the Bull Exsurge Domine. With Bulla, this dialogue forms part of Hutten's defence against the Bull. It is, however, very different in tone. The Bull ranted and threatened, and was opposed by a belligerent, sword-wielding knight. In contrast, Monitor questions and worries, while Luther answers calmly and reasonably, threatening no violence but quoting from Scripture to support his points. In this, Hutten shows his versatility as an author, and also shows his understanding of some, if not all, of the ways in which he differed from Luther. He was a knight, with an inherited cultural background of violence and plain speaking, and knew Luther to be

dealing in theological ideas which he barely grasped. It did not matter; they had different but equally important roles to play in the struggle ahead. So, although Hutten necessarily defends Luther's teachings in Monitor Primus, the dialogue is not primarily about theology. Hutten's main intention is to attack the person who issued the Bull, by claiming that his authority to issue it is invalid.

The image of the papacy presented by Monitor Primus is interesting, and indeed unique, in that this is not a straightforward condemnation of the Pope by Hutten of the kind seen earlier in the epigrams against Julius II. Rather, it purports to be a condemnation by Martin Luther. We must therefore ask: to what extent is this an accurate reflection of Luther's view of the papacy in 1520, and to what extent (if any) did Hutten put his own words into Luther's mouth? Possibly, Hutten took care to reflect Luther's views accurately. On the other hand, he might have impressed his own ideas of the papacy onto the character of Luther without fully intending to do so, perhaps because he did not understand the details of Luther's relationship with papacy, which was indeed changing from month to month during 1520. A more cynical suggestion would be that Luther was newsworthy, and had attracted a significant amount of interest, so it might well have been tempting to attribute to Luther words which would identify him with the Hutten's cause, guaranteeing it either extra support or extra notoriety.

The main attack on the papacy in Monitor Primus is on the authority which the Pope claims to have been given in the role of successor to the apostle Peter. Especially in the first part of the dialogue, Luther strenuously denies that the Pope enjoys this distinction. First, he attacks the belief that Peter, whom the Pope claims to succeed,

was ever given exclusive rights to the keys of Heaven. When Monitor claims that Peter was given the keys and the power of binding and unbinding, in accordance with Matthew 16:19, Luther replies:

‘I do not deny that He did indeed give this to Peter, but in truth it was not for him alone: for he gave it equally to the remaining apostles’.

Luther goes on to say that the Pope does not even behave like Peter. He cannot be Peter’s heir, because Peter never condoned the separation of clergy into different ranks, and certainly did not set himself above them:

‘He [Peter] did not exploit his rule over his fellow apostles, nor did God permit anything of the kind to priests or bishops’.

In fact, according to the dialogue, the Pope fails to carry out any of the duties attributable to Peter’s successor. Hutten’s Luther states what is required:

‘He should remember that he does not succeed kings or princes but shepherd apostles, and not in wealth or power but in the grace given by God, in the proclamation of evangelical truth and in the service of his brothers. For this succession certainly lies in burdens, not in honours, in work and labour, not in power and tyranny: for the power of Christians lies [in] apostolic virtue. Whoever is endowed with this, can be said to be St Peter’s successor, even if he has never seen Rome – and whoever he may be, he will not rule worldly governments, but will organise the labours of apostleship’.

The Pope, however, fulfils none of these criteria:

‘In a man who ... would usurp kingdoms and overthrow sovereignties, meanwhile grasping after the grace given to the apostles, in pride and high rank, in riches and extravagance ... in war and carnage, in fury and rage, what insanity is it to wish to be regarded as Peter’s successor and the Vicar of Christ, when he is engaged upon none of Christ’s business and does not even think about Peter’s? ... Moreover, this depends on him: to lead by example ... to intercede for the people with God through pious prayers ... to use all his strength to stand in the way of any who might wander. But he cannot exercise this care [unless he changes his behaviour]’.

The real Luther’s concern with the question of Peter’s keys and the authority which devolved on the Pope stretched back to his Ninety-Five Theses. Thesis 26 says:

‘The Pope does very well when he grants remission to souls in purgatory, not by the power of the keys, which he does not have, but by way of intercession for them’.

He turned again to the keys and the primacy of the Pope in 1518, claiming that Peter received the keys on behalf of all apostles, and not as their superior.⁶⁰ In August 1519, just after the Leipzig debate, he enlarged on this view, writing that, although Peter was in the highest place among the apostles, he enjoyed no legal authority or

⁶⁰ Luther, Martin, ‘Acta Augustana’ (1518) in WA 2.1-26, at 2.20

supremacy as a result, for 'he does not have the power to make, send, and govern apostles'.⁶¹

In June 1520, the Address, went further towards confirming Hutten's portrayal of the relationship of the Pope and St Peter:

'And if they [the Romanists] claim that St Peter received any authority when he was given the keys – well, it is plain enough that the keys were not given to St Peter only, but to the whole Christian community. Moreover the keys have no reference to doctrine or to policy, but only to refusing or being willing to forgive sin. Whatever else the Romanists claim for the keys is an idle invention'.⁶²

Similarly, the same work by Luther confirms that he thought the Pope set himself over others in a manner unsuited to Peter's heir, and did not fulfil the spiritual duties listed in Hutten's dialogue:

'[The Pope], proclaiming himself the Vicar of Christ and the successor of St Peter, lives in such a worldly and ostentatious style that no king or emperor can reach and rival him. He claims the titles of 'Most Holy' and 'Most Spiritual', but there is more worldliness in him than in the world itself ... Of

⁶¹ Luther, Martin, 'Doctor Martinus Luther und Doctor Carlstadt Antwort auf Doctor Johann Eden' (1519) in WABr 1.465-478, at 1.475. See also Oberman, Luther, pp.246-247

⁶² Luther, 'An den christlichen Adel' WA 6.412

course, his duty ought to be nothing less than to weep and pray day by day for all Christian people, and to show an example of deep humility'.⁶³

Hutten was accurate enough in these respects, and it is clear that he drew extensively on the Address when composing Monitor Primus.

However, the dialogue gives no hint of the changing nature of the real Luther's view of the Pope in 1520. The picture which fits so well with Hutten's own perception is presented as final: the only way to regard the papacy. Indeed, the fictional Luther argues the point as if this view of the Pope were obvious and inevitable. Luther could have mentioned having earlier doubts as to whether the Pope was really so corrupt, but there is no room for that in Hutten's polemic. No doubt is shown, and Monitor's objections are easily put down.

In truth, Luther regarded the papacy in a more cautious, complex and fluid way than Hutten cared to present. Early in 1519, he had written directly to the Pope in very different terms indeed:

'I thought that I acted for the honour of the Church, and I never imagined that my opinions were harmful to its head and governor ... I testify, most holy Father, before God and the whole world, that I have never wanted, nor do I now want, to question the authority of Your Holiness and the Church in any way at all. I fully acknowledge the authority of the Church, which I hold

⁶³ Ibid., p.415

to be supreme; nor is anyone, in heaven or in earth, above that authority, except Jesus Christ the Lord of all'.⁶⁴

This outright refusal to question the Pope's authority, or to regard him as anything other than the Holy Father, reflects a far less confident Luther than the one portrayed by Hutten. This letter was written after meeting with the Pope's emissary Karl von Miltitz, who had told Luther to beware of raising a storm which could cause the ruin of Christianity. Horrified at the thought, Luther hastened to reassure the Pope of his peaceful intentions.⁶⁵

Eighteen months later, however, Luther had questioned the Pope's authority in the Leipzig disputation, continued to criticise the Church and the papacy in print, and in July 1520 had arrived at the point where he could write to Spalatin:

'Let them condemn and burn my writings. I, if I can find a fire, will condemn and publicly burn all the Papal law, the mask of all heresies. From now on, there will be no more of the humility which I have shown in vain'.⁶⁶

This was far more to Hutten's taste, and certainly, Luther's steady movement away from acceptance of the Pope was essential to Hutten's decision to come out publicly for Luther's cause. Luther was now much closer to the Hutten's position on the evils and corruption of Rome, expressed in Hutten's dialogue Vadiscus (The Roman

⁶⁴ Luther, Letter to Pope Leo X (January 1519) in WABr 1.292-293

⁶⁵ Mee, Charles L., Jr., White Robe, Black Robe (London, 1972), pp.234-5

⁶⁶ Luther, Martin, 'Letter to Georg Spalatin' (July 1520) in WABr 2.137-238, p.137

Trinity), which listed Rome's evils and the punishments it should receive in groups of three:

'In the city of Rome they guard the dignity of three things: the authority of the Pope, relics of the saints, and the sale of indulgences.

In Rome three things are for sale: Christ, the priesthood and women.

In Rome they have three leisure pursuits: taking a walk, whoring, and having parties.

In Rome three things are despised: a general council, the reformation of the Church, and the opening of German eyes.

I desire three evils for Rome: plague, famine, and war'.⁶⁷

However, even in 1520, an important distinction must be made between Hutten's attitude to the Pope and Luther's. Hutten perceived no difference between the person of Leo X and the papacy itself, regarding them both as utterly corrupt and sinful. They could not be redeemed, and must be overcome by the German nation if the Church were to be saved and the German lot improved. Luther, on the other hand, had come to regard the papacy as irredeemable, but still made a distinction between it and Leo himself. Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen, or The Freedom of a Christian, probably published in October 1520, is dedicated to Leo X, and praises him highly. Luther addresses him as 'most blessed father' and 'most excellent Leo', and describes him as 'a lamb in the midst of wolves'.⁶⁸ He sympathises with Leo's situation, and urges him to change:

⁶⁷ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Hulderichi Hutteni Equitis Germani Vadicus Dialogus qui et Trias Romana Inscibitur' (1520), in Opera IV, pp.149-259

⁶⁸ Luther, Martin, 'Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen' (1520), in WA 7.5

‘I know that Your Blessedness is driven and buffeted about in Rome, that is, that far out at sea you are threatened on all sides by dangers and are working very hard in the miserable situation ... I pray that if possible you will intervene and stop these flatterers, who are the enemies of peace ... You are a servant of servants, and more than all other men you are in a most miserable and dangerous position. Be not deceived by those who pretend that you are lord of the world’.⁶⁹

After the scathing attacks on the papacy in the Address and the Babylonian Captivity, Luther can even claim never to have spoken ill of him:

‘I freely vow that I have, to my knowledge, spoken only good and honorable words concerning you ... I have called you a Daniel in Babylon’.⁷⁰

Here he must be distinguishing between the man and his office, for he goes on to say:

‘I have truly despised your see, the Roman Curia, which, however, neither you nor anyone else can deny is more corrupt than any Babylon or Sodom ever was, and which, as far as I can see, is characterized by a completely depraved, hopeless, and notorious godlessness’.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Ibid., WA 7.10. The translation appears in Grimm, Harold J. (ed.), Luther’s Works, Vol.31 (Philadelphia 1937), pp.342-342.

⁷⁰ Ibid., WA 7.4. Translation from Grimm, Luther’s Works, p.334

⁷¹ Ibid., WA 7.5. Translation from Grimm, Luther’s Works, p.336

One may doubt whether Luther really thought Leo could be persuaded to change his ways and transform the papacy, and it is certainly possible to take a cynical view of this preface, as Michael Mullett does. Referring to the preface as ‘at least ostensibly cordial’, he suggests that the sharp distinction of a good Pope and an evil papacy was intended as further notice to Leo that Luther was distancing himself from the Roman Church.⁷² Scott Hendrix also suggests that the letter may have been a political gambit, to be used as evidence that Luther had done all that he could to effect a reconciliation.⁷³ On the other hand, it must be remembered that, long after his first protest against indulgences, Luther was truly loyal to the Pope – he was, indeed, ‘an ardent and submissive papist’, who had been taught obedience all his life.⁷⁴ Whatever Luther’s implication, however, in 1520 he was still offering the Pope an element of personal respect, and hope of redemption, which is entirely absent from Hutten’s work, and, therefore, from the Luther portrayed in Monitor Primus.

Hutten was carried away as always by his new enthusiasm (in this case, Luther), and utterly prejudiced against the Pope himself, not only because of papal corruption but also because of his German humanist dislike of Italians in general. It is entirely possible that he failed to notice any difference between these two attitudes to the Pope: his own, which condemned Leo utterly, and Luther’s, which at least implied personal respect and a willingness to hope for better. In this, Hutten betrays his lack of commitment to, and perhaps his lack of understanding of, Luther’s primary purpose: to save souls and the Church. If, as seems likely, Hutten had not seen The Freedom of a Christian at the time of writing Monitor Primus late in 1520, he would

⁷² Mullett, Luther, pp.115-116

⁷³ Hendrix, Scott H., Luther and the Papacy. Stages in a Reformation Conflict (Philadelphia, 1981), pp.114-115

⁷⁴ Oberman, Luther, p.186

have been quite unaware of Luther's lengthy admonitions to Leo. Even so, he was aware that the principle of papal redemption existed in Luther's work, for Luther remarks in the Address that:

‘The [German nobility] should support the Pope if he is willing to accept help in dealing with abuses of this character’.⁷⁵

There was, however, no room for such a remark in Hutten's philosophy, or in his dialogue.

As an extension to the claim to be St Peter's heir, Monitor describes the Pope as the ‘Vicar of Christ’. Luther's idea of the ‘Vicar of Christ’ stretched back to his earliest lectures on the Psalms, in which he had identified the priests and bishops in whom Christ is present as Christ's vicars.⁷⁶ It was an important role, and in the dialogue he answers Monitor:

‘It is in no way insignificant to be the Vicar of Christ, but he will be judged on his merits, and not by his ambition and the title which he assumes’.

Hutten showed here that he understood Luther to attach value to the role of the Pope, if it was fulfilled correctly. Again, this is in keeping with the Address, in which Luther states:

⁷⁵ Luther, ‘An den christlichen Adel’ in WA 6.419

⁷⁶ Hendrix, Luther and the Papacy, p.20

‘If a dispute should arise [among clergy], the matter must be referred to the Pope, if and when it is of sufficient importance ... His Holiness should not be burdened with small matters that can be dealt with by others’.⁷⁷

Hutten has understood that Luther, in his utter condemnation of the papacy in its present condition, and even in his emerging doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, did not advocate the removal of the papacy altogether. The Vicar of Christ had a very important role to play – it simply bore no resemblance to the one being enacted at Rome. As the dialogue correctly says, Luther believed that the Pope should be judged on his merits. In the preface to The Freedom of a Christian, Luther would take it further:

‘See how different Christ is from his successors, although they all would wish to be his vicars. I fear that most of them have been too literally his vicars. A man is a vicar only when his superior is absent. If the Pope rules, while Christ is absent and does not dwell in his heart, what else is he but a vicar of Christ? Indeed, what is such a vicar but an antichrist and an idol?’⁷⁸

Here the meaning of the ‘Vicar of Christ’ is given an ironic twist. Luther describes the kind of vicar currently in Rome, but the vicar who should be there would hark back to the ideal described in Luther’s lectures on the Psalms. Whether Hutten had read The Freedom of a Christian or not, he was in tune with Luther here, for Monitor Primus emphasises the point:

⁷⁷ Luther, ‘An den christlichen Adel’ in WA 6.429

⁷⁸ Luther, ‘Sendbrief an den Bapst’ in WA 7.10

Luther: ... What insanity is it to wish to be regarded as Peter's successor and the Vicar of Christ, when he is engaged upon none of Christ's business and does not even think about St Peter's?

So Hutten's understanding and portrayal of Luther's view of the Pope as Peter's successor is broadly correct. This Pope, or any other, lacked the entitlement to be Peter's successor insofar as that involved elevating himself above other Christians. He did have a role to play as Vicar of Christ, interceding for his flock and settling unresolved disputes, and this was a position worthy of great respect. However, the papacy as it stood did not even begin to fulfil that role.

The proper duties of the Pope

In connection with the Pope's right to be regarded as Peter's heir and to exercise secular as well as religious authority, Hutten sets out the duties of the Pope:

Luther: ... The real glory of bishops is as Paul described: to wrong no man, to corrupt no man, to defraud no man, but, as he said, quite the reverse: 'We should glory in the Cross of Our Lord'.⁷⁹

Monitor: What are you saying? That the office of the highest of shepherds is not to increase his flock, to teach it obedience, which is more than sacrifice, to afflict it with cares and to torment it with anxiety, so that he can carry on the business of the Church in the severest way?

⁷⁹ See II Corinthians 7:2 and Galatians 6:14.

By defining the Pope's duties in a way which is obviously incorrect, Monitor again fulfils his role of prompting Luther to present his own definition. Luther replies ironically that the present Pope does seem to be doing exactly this, all in the interest of collecting money from his flock. This makes him 'not an apostle of Christ, but a subverter of true Christians'. As for demanding obedience to himself, this contradicts Acts 5:29: 'We ought to obey God rather than men'. Then he defines the Pope's proper duties:

Luther: ... The office of the highest pontiff ... is to care for Christ's sheep. Moreover, this depends on him: to lead by example, to reveal (himself) by his deeds, to intercede for the people with God through pious prayers, to explain doctrine, to motivate with encouragement, to guard zealously and attentively against any of his flock being lost, to use all his strength to stand in the way of any who might wander. But he cannot exercise this care, unless he loves Christ so much that he dares to say, in a declaration of devotion, 'You know, Lord, that I love you' ... Does Leo X preach the Gospel, and does he proclaim the Kingdom of God among the people? ... He should not be judged superior to ... any other Christian, for any reason except that he does these tasks better than anyone else. Nor should a ruler of bishops have a reputation for idleness, but for business and labour, as he considers more attentively, manages more carefully, guards more zealously, and, like an anxious shepherd, protects and defends the flock entrusted to him with vigilance, care, hard work and every effort. For

it is not the business of a bishop to throw his care back onto some hired servants, but to organise the episcopate’.

Hutten has evidently adapted some of Luther’s remarks on papal duty for Monitor Primus. Luther had long insisted on the importance of preaching the Gospel:

‘It is the word of God, the Gospel, that feeds the faithful ... the faithful are fed through the preaching of faithful priests and bishops. All power resides in the bishop. If he is blind, the people are blind ... The greatest care should be taken to see that the people have a good bishop, especially one who is a preacher, because it is the office and duty of a bishop to preach’.⁸⁰

Some of the ‘dialogue’ Luther’s speech is also based on the Address, in which Luther wrote:

‘In my opinion ... if the Pope were to pray before God with fear, he would have to put aside his triple crown, for our God tolerates no pride. Of course, his duty should be to weep and pray every day for all Christian people, and to set an example of deep humility’.⁸¹

Monitor gives an ironic interpretation of the Pope’s fulfilment of this duty:

⁸⁰ Luther, Martin, ‘Sermo in Feria S. Martini’ (1518) in WA 1.99-101, at 1.100. The translation appears in Hendrix, Luther and the Papacy, p.19.

⁸¹ Luther, ‘An den christlichen Adel’ in WA 6.415

Monitor: He [the Pope] strives with the utmost vigilance, so that he might not fail his city of Rome or the holy curia there, for that concerns him closely. Then such is his goodness that he also wishes to give consideration to the whole world. But he prays both night and day that you, who upset and disturb his peaceful, quiet sheepfold with rebellion and sedition, would be taken out of its midst and instantly done away with.

So, although Hutten's summary of Luther's view of papal duty is a basic one, it remains faithful to the ideas that Luther expressed – perhaps unsurprisingly, since a humble Pope who prayed for his flock would be unlikely to subject Germany to humiliation and crushing financial pressure.

Hutten continues his criticism of the Pope's approach to his duties by accusing him of wrongly claiming to provide the way to salvation, and thus greatly exceeding his authority. Again, Luther's published writings on the subject are used as a source. Monitor Primus has two main strands in its discussion of salvation: the question of whether or not the Pope himself can grant it, and the indulgences controversy.

The question of how to achieve salvation was at the core of Luther's early inner theological struggles and he commented extensively on the power of the Pope to impart it, beginning in his Ninety-Five Theses of 1517, in thesis 5:

'The Pope neither desires nor is able to remit any penalties except those imposed by his own authority or that of the canons'.⁸²

⁸² Luther, 'Disputatio pro declaratione virtutis indulgentiarum', WA 1.233

His understanding of the way to salvation, and the Pope's authority, would change considerably as time passed. Hutten was prepared to accept Luther as his religious guide and mentor, but he lacked Luther's capacity for anguish and self-criticism. Secure in his sense of self-worth, he wished others to perceive his worth too. Inevitably, he had less interest than Luther in the theological issues surrounding salvation, and so in Monitor Primus he restricts his discussion of it purely to remarks which will call the Pope's authority into question: the primary purpose of the dialogue. Thus the 'dialogue' Luther tries to persuade Monitor that the Pope cannot save his soul:

Monitor: ... If it pleases someone to commit a crime, the good and mild father, patient and forgiving in all things, is permitted to alleviate any unpleasant burden resulting from the hard yoke of Christ.

Luther: ... Do you think, however, that if you fail like this through the fault of others – thereby unburdening yourself of some of the fault – it would be helpful to you to rely upon their judgement, when it is up to you to live according to your conscience? Why, do you not know that at the Last Judgement you will give the reason for all of your words, not to mention all of your works, and do you think that he who now so impudently promises you everything will wipe out any [sin]?

Monitor: That is exactly what I think.

Hutten's comments on salvation in Monitor Primus were in line with Luther's own thinking at the time, but limited to the way in which they could be used to attack the Pope. They emphasise his main concern: discrediting his oppressor, and rousing the German people against him, rather than saving souls.

Hutten objected to indulgences as yet another way of extracting money from the overburdened German people. He was happy to accept Luther's theological objections, too, and on this they could agree. Luther had famously questioned indulgences in his Ninety-Five Theses, devoting many of the theses to them, for example thesis 32:

'Those who believe that they can be certain of their salvation because they have indulgence letters will be eternally damned, together with their teachers'.⁸³

Hutten echoes this in the exchange between Monitor and Luther:

Monitor: In your ignorance of all things, you fail to see that [the Pope] daily blesses many people with the indulgences which he sends out into the world.

Luther: ... I am astonished at men who place the safety of their well-being in [indulgences], which encourage the cessation of good works, although they know that faith without good works is dead ... this is an empty deceit through which pretence may be taken for the truth.

⁸³ Luther, 'Disputatio pro declaratione virtutis indulgentiarum', WA 1.

Monitor Primus therefore condemns the Pope not only for failing to act as a shepherd towards his flock, but also for deceiving and robbing them: familiar themes for those who had read Bulla, but here given a tone of reason and authority – rather than anger – by the weighty presence of Martin Luther.

The Pope and Germany

Criticism of the Pope continues with comments on his relationship with Germany. In its constant references to money-grabbing Rome, Monitor Primus is plainly set against the background of reform which is needed with regard to the German-speaking lands. The purpose of the dialogue is to attack the Pope's authority, but, although this is ostensibly done through a paraphrase of Luther's doctrine, the appeal is made to German people who recognise the abuses listed by Hutten as applying to their own lands. The same references to papal luxury and extortion of money from German lands, which were so prevalent in Bulla, are echoed here:

Luther: ... How can it be inferred that he is achieving anything towards the blessing of souls, when he began this not for that purpose, but for the acquisition of money? And if it were not so, and if he were not seeking his own wealth from that source, nevertheless it would not be right to think him able to do this [i.e. bless with indulgences] ... It is a monstrous thing for a Christian bishop to be constrained by an eagerness for money, and to seize it through injustice and to waste it on luxury. Nor should he be proud in other respects, or beautify his own dwelling, or [seek to] attain desires of the flesh

... And how much less should he disturb the peace, wage war, commit carnage or ever be the instigator of carnage?⁸⁴

In returning to his grievances about the Roman Church in Germany, Hutten was on familiar ground, and it is another indication that his main interest was not to gain a deep understanding of Luther's theology, but rather to embrace and capitalise on a theology which promised Germany freedom from its financial and political chains. Still, Hutten would certainly not have thought he was misusing the reformer's teaching, as Luther repeatedly expressed his concern for the German-speaking lands, particularly in the Address. It was a feature of his writing and his personality that encouraged the knights and the humanists to regard him as one of their own. Reading a work in which Luther revealed a shared resentment of Germany's fleecing by Rome, and called upon the German nobility to help end it, the ever-enthusiastic Hutten was sure that Luther intended to unite Germany and regain its liberty from Rome. It was only towards the end of the year that Luther would clearly explain to him, in a personal letter (see above), that a solution could not be sought through force. And he may never have understood the point summarised by Heiko Oberman: that Luther's Reformation may have been centred on Germany, but it did not promise national glory – only repentance and reform. Holborn points out the sharp distinction which Luther made between Christian freedom and worldly freedom in The Freedom of a Christian and The Babylonian Captivity of the Church: this necessarily separated his concept of national liberty from Hutten's.⁸⁵ In direct contrast to Hutten, the knights

⁸⁴ Luther himself did promote the image of a Pope who caused carnage, railing against 'the bloodthirsty Julius II' (known as 'the Warrior Pope') in the Address. The main work on Julius is Shaw, Christine, Julius II. The Warrior Pope (Oxford, 1993).

⁸⁵ Holborn, Hutten, pp.141, 143

and the humanists, he had no glory to offer. Indeed, a glorious national future should not be sought when the Last Days were already at hand.⁸⁶

In a discussion of Monitor Primus's depiction of the Pope in Germany, mention must also be made of the dialogue's constant references to the fear engendered by the Pope's actions, for example:

Monitor: [The Pope] can crush and scatter all your learning with the single thunderbolt of excommunication, and, indeed, he is already threatening it ... [people must dissociate themselves from you] partly out of fear of him whom no one thinks it safe to offend.

Towards the end of the dialogue, in particular, Monitor repeatedly makes it clear that he must be loyal to the Pope for fear of what will happen to him if he does not:

Monitor: ... I will be to you as your closest friend, but, even if it were permitted, it is not remotely safe to disagree with the Roman Pontiff ... I shall not be able to [listen to you]: for the Bull of Leo calls me back, [that Bull] by which those who associate with you in any way whatsoever are condemned, unless they immediately forsake you.

The Pope is portrayed as a bully who abuses his position by threatening excommunication and even death to those who dare to listen to Luther. Monitor suggests that many people are refusing to listen to Luther – or, having once listened to

⁸⁶ Oberman, Luther, p.46

him, are turning away from him – because of widespread fear. This aspect of the situation in Germany is one with which Luther could sympathise. Late in 1520 he too began to realise the effect of the threat of mass excommunications. Early in 1521, he reprimanded his friend Staupitz for ascribing too much authority to the Pope, to the point where he appeared to repudiate Luther, when under great pressure to do so from the papacy. Luther pointed out that this was the opposite of everything Staupitz had previously believed. His real-life experience echoes that in Monitor Primus:

Monitor: ... From this day onwards, I shall send you away, never listening to you again, and I shall have nothing to do with you.

Luther: My very dear friend, why have you changed so suddenly?

Late in 1520, then, both Hutten and Luther were perceiving the German-speaking lands as ruled by intimidation and fear of damnation.

The reference to the Fugger banking family in Monitor Primus also raised an issue which Luther himself saw as a serious problem in Germany. The Fuggers' enormous wealth was well known. They had funded the greater part of the fortune laid out by Charles V in bribes to secure his election as Holy Roman Emperor.⁸⁷ Perhaps more to the point for Hutten and Luther, however, their bank in Rome grew greatly in resources and importance because of its role in transferring revenues (especially from the sale of indulgences) from Germany to Rome.⁸⁸ The 'dialogue' Luther states that:

⁸⁷ Brandi, Karl, The Emperor Charles V. The Growth and Destiny of a Man and of a World-Empire (London, 1939), p.106

⁸⁸ Gilbert, Felix, The Pope, His Banker, and Venice (Cambridge, MA, 1980), pp.65,77

‘[If indulgences guaranteed salvation] then it would be easy for the Fuggers to be in first place among the saved, for they have more than enough, with which they earn [salvation] over and over again’.

Hutten knew of Luther’s disapproval of the Fuggers from the Address, in which he had said:

‘I would say that we must surely bridle the Fuggers and similar trading companies. How can it happen in a godly and righteous manner, and in a single lifetime, that great wealth, worthy of a king, should be accumulated into a single pile? ... As a theologian, I have no further reproof to utter on this subject than as regards its wicked and scandalous appearance’.⁸⁹

Both Hutten and Luther portrayed the Fuggers as ungodly and assisting the Pope in perpetrating abuses in German lands. However, on larger issues it was increasingly apparent that the two reformers did not see their problems – or the solution to them – in the same light. The alliance which Hutten so much wanted would inevitably come to nothing.

An unresolved dialogue?

Although Hutten’s purpose in writing Monitor Primus was to discredit the Pope, the dialogue inevitably draws attention to the character of Martin Luther. The way in

⁸⁹ Luther, ‘An den christlichen Adel’, WA 6.466

which Hutten portrays him is vital to the success of the dialogue and helpful in our understanding of Hutten's perception of the reformer. How was Luther understood by the people around him? This important issue is raised on the first page of the dialogue:

Monitor: ...Those who listen to your teaching are called *Lutherans*, and are considered separate from those who do not belittle the rank of the Roman Pope, as you do, but who acknowledge his authority.

Luther's reply is very significant:

Luther: I do not seek in any way for you, or anyone else, to go by that name. On the contrary, I firmly object to it, for it is my task to make *Christians*.

In this, Hutten understood Luther perfectly, and he also understood the importance of the distinction between the self-glorifying title of 'Lutherans' and the obviously Christ-centred and self-deprecating 'Christians'. In the dialogue, the issue is usefully raised at the beginning because it establishes a sharp contrast between the Pope, who is described in all his glory and self-indulgence at the centre of the Church, and Luther, who is reluctant to be the focus of attention and seeks no glory for himself. Luther's own writing bears this out. He made no attempt to enlist his own followers, and, in the Address (which Hutten had clearly read), he made very many references to 'Christians'.⁹⁰ The point is emphasised by Oberman: Luther knew himself to be a

⁹⁰ See, for example, the constant repetition of the word in the Address, pp.408-409.

poorer author than Erasmus and Melanchthon, he wished most of all to devote himself to study and meditation, and he recommended that people should read the scriptures rather than his works.⁹¹ This was a man who thoroughly disliked the idea of 'Lutherans'. He did not think that he was a natural leader, and firmly believed that no man should set himself up in Christ's place. As Hutten rightly says, 'Christians' were what Luther wanted to make. In 1520, 'Lutheran' was a label applied by Luther's opponents, as they sought to identify men like Hutten and Pirckheimer who approved of Luther's heretical ideas. It was not until 1525 that an organised ecclesiastical regime based on Luther's doctrines emerged, under John the Constant in Saxony.⁹²

The ending of Monitor Primus is surprising to the reader of other dialogues by Hutten and his contemporaries. After Luther has made his case so compellingly, one would expect Monitor to be convinced and to follow him, as Minos and the generals followed Arminius. He does not. Luther has to acknowledge that Monitor's soul is lost, and that he must try to save others. There seems to be no satisfactory resolution. However, it is significant that Monitor rejects Luther. Crucially, the reader must realise that Monitor *is* convinced by Luther's argument:

Monitor: I do not hear, and now I am leaving this place, lest if I stay longer,
I shall think badly of that gracious, key-bearing substitute [for Christ].

Luther has won, in that he has demonstrated the Pope's corruption and lack of fitness for his title. In having Monitor leave, however, Hutten shows how oppressive the

⁹¹ Oberman, Luther, p.210

⁹² An account of the development of a Lutheran regime under John the Constant is given in Mullett, Luther, pp.182-188.

situation is in Germany: the Pope has so frightened members of the Church that they dare not take the path to salvation even when it has been shown to them. Monitor believes Luther, but he is afraid to leave the shadow of the papacy – partly because of the campaign of terror through the threat of excommunication, and partly because it is so difficult to be completely confident that he is right and all the adherents of the 1500-year-old Church have been wrong. When he asks Luther,

‘When the world yields to the Pope, you alone dissent?’,

he foreshadows the remark famously made by Charles V at the Diet of Worms:

‘It is certain that a single monk must err if he stands against the opinion of all Christendom. Otherwise Christendom itself would have erred for more than a thousand years’.⁹³

With its lack of a straightforward resolution, Monitor Primus makes the reader more conscious of the appalling situation than he would have been if Monitor had been easily converted. Germany’s difficulties are so severe, it says, that they cannot be so easily sorted out. Courage and determination are needed from everyone.

Monitor Secundus: Monitor II

Monitor Secundus, the second part of this work, is of particular interest because it revisits old themes: the role and importance of the knights, the abuses within the

⁹³ The text of Charles V’s speech is found in Brandi, Charles V, pp.131-132.

Church, and the role of the Holy Roman Emperor. Chapter one showed that the knights, the Church and a tradition of knightly loyalty to the Emperor were features of Hutten's life from childhood. Subsequent chapters showed how he grew apart from both the knights and the Church after leaving Fulda, and took up new interests within a new circle of humanist friends. However, here, late in 1520, Hutten's work comes full circle, dealing once more with early influences on his life but now giving them a new emphasis. His attitudes towards all of them had changed dramatically. Now quite close to the end of his life, he viewed them all differently. The knights were not to be despised for their lack of learning, but honoured for their strength and loyalty. The Church which had brought him up from the age of seven was utterly corrupt and must be driven out of Germany. Lastly, and most importantly for this dialogue, the 'German' Holy Roman Emperor was betraying his people in favour of that corrupt Church. Monitor Secundus is a cry against this treachery and an assertion of the knights' patriotism and dependability, complementing the criticisms of the Pope in Monitor Primus. Together, the dialogues summarise Hutten's main concerns at that crucial time.

Franz von Sickingen

Sickingen, the main protagonist of Monitor Secundus, has been the subject of far less study than his more famous friend Hutten.⁹⁴ He came from the same tradition as Hutten, his family having grown wealthy through service to princes, but his career had taken a very different path. For some years, he followed in his father's footsteps,

⁹⁴ Useful information about Sickingen's career can be found in Zmora, *State and Nobility*, p.119-120, Chrisman, *Conflicting Visions*, p.65, and, especially, Press, Volker, 'Franz von Sickingen, Wortführer des Adels, Vorkämpfer der Reformation und Freund Huttens' in Peter Laub (ed.), Ulrich von Hutten, Ritter, Humanist, Publizist 1488-1523. Katalog zur Ausstellung des Landes Hessen anlässlich des 1500. Geburtstages (Kassel, 1988), pp.293-305.

serving the Elector from 1508-1511 as *Amtmann*, the highest official in the Kreuznach district, near Mainz. However, Sickingen would soon exchange the role of *Amtmann* for that of an outstanding soldier, beginning with his feud against the city of Worms in 1515. From then on, his reputation as a military commander continued to grow. Soon able to mobilise 10,000 soldiers on behalf of a prospective employer, he was a force to be reckoned with in the Empire.⁹⁵ Unusually wealthy and powerful for a member of the declining class of knights, Sickingen occupied a delicate position in the web of relationships between the Emperor and the princes as they struggled for political and military advantage. He was certain to attract Hutten's attention as a potentially sympathetic and useful ally in the fight to liberate Germany.

In March 1519, Hutten and Sickingen became close friends when Hutten joined the Swabian League's campaign against the Duke of Württemberg. During the short campaign, Hutten read his dialogue *Febris Prima* (*Fever the First*, a satire on the papacy) to Sickingen, and tried to persuade him to adopt his own anti-papal stance.⁹⁶ He succeeded in enlisting his support for Reuchlin: in July 1519, Sickingen declared a feud with the Dominican order in the Upper Rhine, frightening them into reimbursing Reuchlin for the ruinous costs of his struggle against them.⁹⁷ Hutten now began to see Sickingen (as, indeed, he liked to see himself) as a chivalrous knight in the Arthurian tradition. Sickingen had acted in a noble cause to save Reuchlin, without fear for himself, and was surely someone who should be at the forefront of the struggle to liberate Germany.

⁹⁵ Zmora, *State and Nobility*, p.120, and *ibid.*, p.66

⁹⁶ Holborn, *Hutten*, pp.109-110

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.111

Sickingen's real character and aspirations were, of course, far more complex. It is important to try to understand both what kind of person Hutten trusted with the future of his country, and the nature of the relationship between them. Unfortunately, neither is clear, and historians have made many contradictory statements about Sickingen. One significant point to settle is: what kind of education had Sickingen received? Views have changed dramatically over the last fifty years. Roland Bainton made an extreme assumption:

‘There [at the Ebernberg in 1520] the poet laureate of Germany read to the *illiterate swordsman* from the German works of the Wittenberg prophet. Sickingen's foot and fist stamped assent, as he resolved to champion the poor and the sufferers for the Gospel’.⁹⁸

Much more recently, Michael Mullett has gone to the other extreme, calling Sickingen and Hutten the knights' ‘most articulate spokesmen’.⁹⁹ Miriam Chrisman points out that Sickingen and Hartmut von Cronberg together published no fewer than ten pamphlets on the reformed faith during the time they spent together at the Ebernberg, while acknowledging that Sickingen had ‘little literary education’.¹⁰⁰ She lists four works apparently penned by Sickingen, including one in favour of Johann Reuchlin in 1519 and another addressed to a family member on the subject of the reformed faith.¹⁰¹ Our picture of Sickingen's abilities, other than as a soldier, is a confused one, and as long as it is confused we must also be vague about the role he played in the reform movement.

⁹⁸ Bainton, *Luther*, p.133 (my italics)

⁹⁹ Mullett, *Luther*, p.102

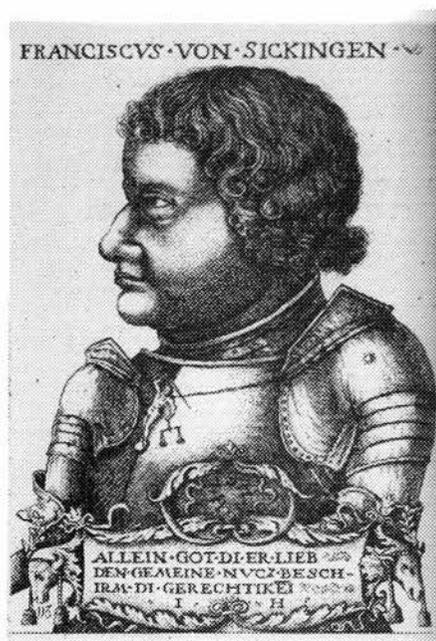
¹⁰⁰ Chrisman, *Conflicting Visions*, pp.66,78

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p.255

In fact, the truth is somewhere between the extremes. Sickingen must have been literate, and, indeed, must have had some grasp of Latin, given that he held high administrative office for the Elector. Among his duties were mediation in disputes between burghers, granting citizenship rights, and organising a new Latin school.¹⁰² Nor would the management of 10,000 troops and negotiations with high-ranking employers have been possible without the ability to read and write. Latin would also have been needed if he were to understand Hutten's reading of Febris Prima. Hutten decided to translate Febris Prima into German for Sickingen's benefit: probably a sign that Sickingen was more at home with the German tongue, but not to the extent of being incompetent in Latin.¹⁰³ There are, of course, different levels of literacy, and Sickingen's facility with language could not possibly have matched Hutten's: while one fought across Europe's battlefields, the other applied himself to study. It is unsurprising that Sickingen's pamphlets were written in German, and unsurprising that Hutten read to him; most likely Sickingen was more comfortable with that, and Hutten loved to show off his talent. There is no reason to doubt that Sickingen was sufficiently well-educated to write his own pamphlets.

¹⁰² Ibid., p.29

¹⁰³ Holborn, Hutten, p.110



Franz von Sickingen
 by Hieronymus Hopper, c.1520
 Reproduced in Laub, Ulrich von Hutten, p.292

Sickingen's involvement with pamphleteering seems surprising, whatever his level of education. Given his role as a military man who lacked the background in theological studies experienced by both Hutten and Luther, a sudden, complete commitment to reform is unexpected. Indeed, it is now widely supposed that Sickingen's chief aim during these years was to break out of his own social class: that rather than using his considerable fortune to acquire and improve conventional lordships, he sought to gain a principality. Hajo Holborn, Harold Kehr, Hillyar Zmora and (to an extent) Miriam Chrisman are among those who have supported this idea. Zmora points out that Sickingen was already stronger and richer than some princes, and even suggests that the 'Knights' Revolt' of 1522-23 has been misnamed, and that it was nothing more

nor less than an attempt to turn Sickingen from a knight into a prince.¹⁰⁴ Sickingen's plan, he claims, was 'to take advantage of the Reformation, secularize the ecclesiastical principality of Trier and install himself as its ruler'. He supports this suggestion by mentioning that only a minority of Franconian nobles followed Sickingen into the revolt. He also sees the princes' violent reaction to the 'Revolt' as a specific consequence of Sickingen's temerity in threatening the accepted social order.¹⁰⁵

It is possible that Sickingen did, indeed, aspire to this extraordinary feat: the focus of the Knights' Revolt was certainly a personal attack by Sickingen on the Archbishopric of Trier. In that case, Sickingen's interest in reform and in Luther himself may have been misunderstood by an over-optimistic Hutten. Serious misunderstanding would be necessary, for it is inconceivable that Hutten and the other knights would risk everything for Sickingen's personal advancement. It is clear from the references to Sickingen in Bulla and in Monitor Secundus that Hutten believed Sickingen to be acting from the most disinterested of motives:

Franz: I sincerely believe in taking care lest I neglect the grace of Christ in me, which was the origin of this course of action. For now public and Christian liberty are coming more and more to be my concern.

Hutten was capable of self-deception, it is true. He was able to cling for too long to the idea of a Holy Roman Emperor who would devote himself to the cause of German

¹⁰⁴ Kehrler, Harold H., The von Sickingen and the German Princes 1262-1523 (PhD thesis, Boston University Graduate School, 1977), pp.274-279, *ibid.*, p.67, and Zmora, State and Nobility, p.120

¹⁰⁵ Zmora, State and Nobility, pp.67,120

liberty and superiority. He was able to convince himself that the German people's noble nature and love of freedom would cause them to rise against their oppressors, as they had done in ancient times. In short, he was well able to have confidence where none was merited. But, despite his capacity for wishful thinking, Hutten was not a fool. Living in Sickingen's castle for months on end, talking with him, planning with him, he could not have been wholly deceived had Sickingen been using him.

The idea of complete self-interest on Sickingen's part is, in fact, demolished by his own writings on reform. Miriam Chrisman cites a private letter to a relative (not, therefore, a piece of polemic, and presumably an indication of Sickingen's real opinions), which demonstrates his earnest thinking on reform. He gives quotations from each of the Gospels to justify the taking of communion in both kinds, and says:

‘I can never understand why those priests were moved to forbid both elements to the laity and keep them only to themselves, except perhaps they wished to feel superior to Christ or wanted to put aside the forgiveness of sins promised by Christ’.¹⁰⁶

Such a letter contrasts noticeably with Hutten's writings on reform, which were generally aimed at a public audience (as was Monitor Primus) or at Luther, with whom Hutten sought common ground. Sickingen's private introspection and deep concern for religious issues is missing from Hutten's work.

¹⁰⁶ Translated in Chrisman, Conflicting Visions, pp.78-79, from Sickingen, Franciscus von, Ain Sendbrief ... dem Junckherr Diethern von Henschüchsheim (1521)

So different were Sickingen's and Hutten's convictions of reform that Holborn suggested trickery on Hutten's part: perhaps, in writing *Monitor Secundus*, Hutten deliberately and falsely encouraged Sickingen to believe that the Emperor would entrust the reform of the Church to him. Holborn's analysis of Sickingen is a damning one:

‘[He] easily allowed himself to be deceived, and his sodden nature disqualified him from differentiating between the fixed and the movable stars’.¹⁰⁷

Sickingen and Hutten were both capable of naivety, but Holborn's argument is implausible. Both men were capable of understanding and accommodating one another's point of view: there was a difference of emphasis rather than substance.

Monitor Secundus: content and style

Monitor Secundus is a conversation between Monitor and Sickingen, in which Sickingen denounces the Church and its representatives as corrupt and, most importantly, speaks of its evil effect on the young Charles V, which he claims prevents him from doing his duty as Emperor. It visits issues which, as we have already seen, were of particular interest to Hutten, beginning with the slandering of Germany's liberators by the Church and moving on to the power of the papacy to override scripture. Monitor warns Sickingen that he is rumoured to be a heretic, recalling the accusations levelled at Luther in Monitor Primus. When Sickingen points

¹⁰⁷ Holborn, Hutten, p.155

out that no one can be condemned for supporting someone who preaches the Gospel, Monitor tells him:

‘But they [the papacy] think it is possible, through the sacred decrees of the Pope’,

echoing Bulla’s theme of the reliance of the Church on man-made laws and traditions rather than the laws of Christ. The anti-clerical sentiment expressed in earlier dialogues is reiterated here, including the arrogance of Popes in setting themselves up as princes rather than shepherds, the ‘perverted condition of the city of Rome’, and ‘the disgusting extravagance of the priesthood’. The accusations echo the general criticisms of Roman corruption which Hutten had made before. As in Monitor Primus, there is evidence that he has drawn heavily on Martin Luther’s Address of 1520 for inspiration. For example, when Sickingen says,

‘As often as new cardinals are appointed, Germans know that thieves and robbers will be sent here for the purpose of adorning them ... Germans are not permitted to have bishops, except for those who have bought their *pallia* in Rome’,

it echoes Luther’s comments that:

‘My way would be to create fewer cardinals, or else let the Pope support them at his own expense. ... How has it come about that we Germans have to tolerate such robbery, such confiscations of our property? ... An imperial

law should be decreed, whereby no bishop should go to Rome for his *pallium*, or for the confirmation of any other dignity, from now onwards'.¹⁰⁸

When Sickingen suggests that the clergy should not be permitted any influence over the Emperor, especially in legal and military matters, he reiterates Luther's view that:

'The Pope should exercise no authority over the Emperor, except the right to anoint and crown him at the altar as a bishop crowns a king'.¹⁰⁹

Hutten's presentation of Sickingen to a wider audience, through Monitor Secundus, is interesting to see. Although the dialogue follows exactly the same format as Monitor Primus, with Monitor advising Sickingen of what he should do and prompting him to give his own views, it has a very different style. Whereas Luther – appropriately – made his points very calmly, Sickingen makes most of his by relentlessly asking questions. His main speech contains twenty-five questions on the state of the Church and the Empire, which are almost unrelieved by other remarks, for example:

'[What language is sufficient to explain] about the iniquity ... of cardinals ... about the depravity of the courtesans ... about the disgusting extravagance of the priesthood ... about every proud and violent tyranny ... about the traffic in indulgences ... that all things in Rome today are devoted to profit ... that thieves and robbers will be sent here for the purpose of adorning [cardinals] ... that [bishops] can be promoted by the order of their patrons ... that [the papacy] is opposed in every way to our public liberty?'

¹⁰⁸ Luther, Address to the Christian Nobility, pp.420,433

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.439

Sickingen's questions do not have Luther's measured, reasonable tone. They are a harangue in which he scarcely draws breath. If this dialogue were read aloud (as is likely at the Ebernberg), Sickingen would be shouting. Hutten's skill as an author is once more in evidence. He has quickly imbues both Luther and Sickingen with different characteristics, which portray the different roles which Hutten perceives for them in the struggle ahead. By his very manner of speaking, Luther is identified as a scholarly man of God, while the fiercer, more abrupt Sickingen is his temporal counterpart: the warrior who will fight for God with his own skills. This is specifically affirmed early in the dialogue:

Monitor: ... It is true what they say: Luther's welfare will be defended with your might and total strength, in whatever way is required.

Franz: That is true, to an extent that hardly anything is true.

The military language continues with the discussion of Zizka, another general who followed a reformer (Jan Hus) and who used force to achieve his ends (and who, the dialogue claims, was similarly misunderstood). Although it was deliberately missing from Monitor Primus, here we see Hutten's intention that the Reformation should be advanced by force if necessary. It was what worried Luther so much about Hutten's support, as he explained in his letter to Spalatin. Undoubtedly, this was the role that Hutten expected the knights to play in the Reformation. Writing pamphlets to explain their point of view was appropriate for those who had the skills, but Hutten was well aware of the more usual talents of his social class, as chapter one showed with his comments on life at the Steckelberg. The knights, whose influence had both oppressed

him and inspired him in the past, now had a clear role in Germany's future. Their traditional feuding among themselves was to be transformed into a joint feud against the Church (in Hutten's eyes, the attack on the Archbishopric of Trier was just the first step in this great campaign). This feud would not extend the power of an individual, but the power of a nation. It would be the knights' greatest expression of loyalty to their original master, the Emperor, and to the Empire itself. Finally, but not least, it would restore the knights to their rightful political and social prominence, as the Emperor's protectors and advisers.

The Emperor is the most important theme in Monitor Secundus. Sickingen's profession of a simple faith in Christ, without any Roman accretions, establishes his character and his allegiances. The point, however, is the apparent misleading of the new young Emperor by the Church. This is not a theme of Sickingen's own pamphlets, and we must assume that Hutten is expressing what was uppermost in his own mind, albeit probably after lengthy discussion at the Ebernberg. It appears early in the dialogue, when Sickingen includes among his torrent of questions about Germany's ills:

‘[Should] I allow ... the honour of the Emperor to be considered a laughing-stock? ... Do [the Romans] not so despise the Christian princes that they allow the imperial crown to be covered over in deference to their feet?’

In this, Hutten returns to the theme we saw first in Arminius: that of the dignity of the German people and their leader. It is the natural right and desire of all Germans to wish for their freedom, and that of their leader to be acknowledged for his superiority

by members of other races. Luther, too, had hoped as recently as the summer of 1520 that Charles V would do his duty by the German-speaking lands, remarking:

‘God has given us a young man of noble ancestry to be our head and so has raised high hopes in many hearts’.¹¹⁰

To the shock of Luther, Hutten and the rest of the knights, Charles was not interested. As Karl Brandi points out, he was even less likely to fulfil the hoped-for role than was his grandfather Maximilian I. Charles had not been brought up in Germany, he spoke hardly any German and he felt no particular loyalty to it. His extensive absence from German lands after the Diet of Worms, during which Luther’s Reformation grew and flourished, would be proof of that in the eyes of the German humanists, regardless of Charles’s undeniably heavy commitments elsewhere. Charles would never oppose the papacy in order to strengthen Germany, partly because of his own sincere piety, and partly because, in the ‘universal monarchy’ which his chancellor, Gattinara, and others were quick to force upon him, he had wider concerns than the dignity of a few Germans. Providentially appearing in time to rule a vast empire in what many (including Luther) believed to be the ‘Last Days’ before Christ’s return, no doubt destined to defeat the infidel and convert the people of the New World to Christendom, Charles was left in no doubt of his wider role.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Luther, ‘An den christlichen Adel’, p.405

¹¹¹ The universal monarchy, and Charles’s understanding of them, are analysed in Yates, Frances, *Astraea. The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1975), pp.1-28, and Pagden, Anthony, *Lords of All the World. Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c.1500-c.1800* (New Haven, London, 1995), pp.29-62. Gattinara’s relationship with Charles is most fully covered in Headley, John M., *The Emperor and His Chancellor. A Study of the Imperial Chancellery under Gattinara* (1983). For the ‘Last Days’, see Oberman, *Luther*, p.79.

Hutten, among others, was slow to understand the implications for Germany, and clung for a while to the traditional idea of a 'German' Emperor. Charles' 'neglect' of Germany was scarcely apparent in the summer of 1520, but by the time winter arrived, Hutten had dreadful suspicions, as Monitor Secundus shows. When he realised that Charles was not serving the German people as he should, he did not ascribe this to the fact that Charles had wider responsibilities. Instead, he placed the blame squarely upon the Church. Monitor Secundus is Hutten's most direct assertion of the evil influence of the Church over the Germans' beloved institution of the Emperor, bringing together his hatred of Roman influence in Germany and his concern for the office to which he was so attached. He has Sickingen list, at length, the ways in which Rome had corrupted the young emperor. Charles allows Germany to be stripped of its wealth, he listens too eagerly to priests who ensure that they alone can communicate with him, he obeys Rome in the matter of Luther and is, indeed, entirely subservient to the Pope, and he pays so much attention to Rome that he neglects matters closer to home. It did not matter to Hutten that, for Charles, 'home' was Spain, or that it was unfair to place all the blame for Charles's behaviour on the Church. As ever, Hutten had a clear view of how the world should be, and built his thoughts and his dialogues around it.

Monitor Primus inevitably raised questions about the words which Hutten put into Luther's mouth: to what extent would Luther have been satisfied with the words attributed to him? The same question must be asked of Monitor Secundus and Franz von Sickingen, but here the answer is far more straightforward. Hutten and Sickingen may have placed different emphases on their faith and on their actions, but they were fundamentally in agreement over the role of the knights, the duties of the Emperor,

and the appropriate use of force where necessary to achieve a free 'Germany' which harked back to the best of old German traditions. Those traditions, of course, included not only liberty and international respect, but a place of honour for the knights as the Emperor's closest servants. There is no reason to suppose that Sickingen would have been dissatisfied with his portrayal in Monitor Secundus, even though the themes covered are so readily identifiable as Hutten's own priorities.

Like Monitor Primus, this is a work intended for a general audience, rather than the knights for whom Bulla was primarily written, although its aggressive tone and its declaration of readiness for war would again appeal to the audience at the Ebernberg. It is a justification of Sickingen's apparent movement away from his former employer and of his sheltering of refugees from the Church in direct opposition to Charles's views. However, it is in this address to a general audience that Hutten, the experienced and successful polemicist, made a serious error of judgement. The Church is shown as responsible for Charles's neglect of Germany, but Monitor Secundus also implies criticism of Charles himself for allowing this to happen. The emperor is a 'very distinguished youth, who is endowed with the best character', he is 'beleaguered', and so honest that he is easily taken advantage of by unscrupulous clergy. The criticism is not that Charles is bad, but that he is young and inexperienced, and worse, easily led. He needs to be guided and cared for by those who know better:

Franz: If Caesar were to have a fever, and asked for something cold, do you think he should be given what he wanted? ... I shall continue for as long as possible in not doing what I certainly know is harmful to him. ... In the end, he will love me so much more because I have borne his anger ... If he really

understood, as I do, what he should now command which would be beneficial ... he would not now order [these] things.

Hutten's tone is condescending and patronising in its attitude to the Emperor, and could not but offend not only the Emperor himself, but all of Hutten's opponents. What could the rough and ready knights – upstarts in the eyes of the princes, bandits in the eyes of the common people – know about advising the Emperor? The presumption of the knights is only made worse by Sickingen's protestations that he does not care whether or not Charles appoints him as his adviser:

'The man who bears so great a task of leadership will decide whether I or someone else would be most suitable. For my resolve is not of this kind. If he is not inclined to do this, I should have no expectation other than that he might be guided by the counsel of the people of his country, and I will dare anything [for him] at my personal risk, no matter what happens'.

It is difficult to take the dialogue Sickingen's modesty at face value. Monitor Secundus plainly reveals Hutten's opinion that the knights, led by Sickingen, are the people that Charles can and should trust. Having originated centuries before as the Emperor's personal men-at-arms, it is time for the knights to take their privileged place beside him once again. Chapter one recalled Miriam Chrisman's observation that the knights failed to understand the rest of society, that their demands for the return of church lands would sound self-serving to others, and that calling the monks 'highway robbers' would appear as self-justification. In Monitor Secundus, Hutten makes the same mistake on a bigger scale. The suggestion that he knows better than

the Emperor and is justified in treating him as a child only makes him appear as a presumptuous power-seeker. In fact, as we have seen in earlier chapters, Hutten was chiefly concerned for Germany and for the Empire, although the interests of his class were also in his mind. Nevertheless, his misjudgement was fundamental. Bulla could be tolerated by those outside his social class, Monitor Primus could be accepted by those who sympathised with Luther, but Monitor Secundus could only alienate the audience that he hoped to reach. There was no one who would tolerate an attempt to seize power in the Empire, thinly veiled by excuses of Roman greed and the Emperor's youth, apart from the knights themselves. This dialogue marks the point, late in 1520, when Hutten's (always unpredictable) judgement deserted him. For some months to come, as his portrayal in cartoons at the Diet of Worms shows, he would enjoy the image of a popular hero. However, he would be seen by Church and Empire alike as increasingly dangerous, and close associates would continue to fall away.

Conclusion

Monitor Primus and Monitor Secundus have so far been neglected by students of Ulrich von Hutten. The theological and political reasoning required in these dialogues was not what Hutten did best, whereas he excelled at portraying the drama of the courtroom scene in Arminius and the violence in Bulla. It is also true that neither of the 'Monitor' dialogues seem to have attracted much attention upon their publication. I have found no discussion of them in humanist correspondence of the time, and centuries went past without a second printing. However, the serious consequence of this neglect has been to concentrate attention on the straightforward tirades against

Rome that Hutten composed in this period, encouraging a simplistic view of his interests. The great value of Monitor Primus and Monitor Secundus lies not in their effectiveness as propaganda, but – quite unintended by Hutten – as a mirror of his major concerns at the end of 1520, which were broader and more complex than a simple hatred of the Church. Monitor Primus reveals much about Hutten's personal religious commitment, about the liberty of 'Germany' as his continuing priority, and about his limited engagement with Luther's doctrine and intentions. At the very end of two tumultuous years for Hutten, and in the midst of personal and national turmoil, Monitor Secundus takes us back to Hutten's origins: the German knights and their traditional loyalty to the Emperor. It improves our understanding of Hutten's view of the knights' role in a reformed Germany: at the Emperor's side as trusted advisers, and no longer the political nonentities that their class was fast becoming.

Together, the dialogues enable the reader to appreciate the range of concerns that Hutten had collected by 1520. His purely scholarly concerns had been replaced not only by his famously aggressive and determined brand of patriotism and opposition to the Church, but also by a degree of commitment to Luther's doctrines and by worries for the Emperor and ambitions for his social class. By the end of 1520, these concerns were conflicting with one another, and, in his efforts to fulfil all his aims, Hutten was now failing to fulfil any of them. He tried to recruit Martin Luther to an armed rebellion against the Church, and, in criticising the Church, also criticised the Emperor whose support he badly needed. This behaviour, together with his transparent promotion of the knights' political hopes, began to earn him the distrust of those who might have sympathised with any one of his causes. In his great adaptability of style, Hutten remained a superb humanist author. In his failing

judgement and poor choices, Monitor Primus and Monitor Secundus reflect his ultimate failure.

Conclusion

Ulrich von Hutten should have been guaranteed a comfortable life. His family was wealthy and well connected, and a career in the Church promised safety, prosperity and possible advancement in society. It was an established and respectable path that had benefited many other knights. He later became a renowned Latin poet and the friend of many prominent humanists. However, following the events examined in this thesis, his growing disillusionment with the Emperor and his dependence on the knights led him to greater extremes in his polemic. The aggression he now showed towards the Church, the Emperor and old friends caused his supporters to fall away ever more quickly. His friendship with Erasmus, with whom he had once exchanged such great compliments, ended in cruel recriminations almost at the end of Hutten's life. In 1522, Hutten took a step that would once have been unthinkable to him: he joined Franz von Sickingen in leading the Knights' Revolt of 1522-1523. At the heart of the Revolt was a personal feud waged by Sickingen against the Archbishop of Trier, which has sometimes been interpreted as an attempt by him to acquire a principality. For Hutten, however, the objectives were different. He hoped to increase the power of the knights as a whole, thus restoring them to a prominent position within the Empire while also influencing the Emperor to reject the Church's adverse influence in Germany. No doubt Hutten saw himself, like Arminius in ancient times, leading a German army against his country's oppressors. The German princes, unsurprisingly, saw things quite differently. These rebels against authority were quickly crushed, and Sickingen was killed. Hutten, in desperately poor health, was forced to flee to Switzerland, where he died in 1523, exiled from the country he had been determined to defend.

Hutten has been subject to varying treatment by historians in the five hundred years since his death. He has been held up as an example for German youth to emulate, glorified as a patriot, and vilified as a highway robber and stealer of library books. He has been used as a symbol of the Fatherland during the Third Reich, then neglected by his own people and adopted as the subject of study by English, French and American historians. In recent years, he has been rediscovered in by German scholars and even claimed as an inspiration by neo-Nazi movements. The problem with all of these approaches has been the tendency, whether deliberate or not, to present Hutten as a one-dimensional character. He is all too easy to caricature, either as a hero or as a villain. It is tempting for the student of Hutten to attribute his decline - from wealth and safety to death as an outcast – simply to his volatile and aggressive character. He could be selfish, petty and violent. He often lacked judgement and perspective, both in his personal life and in political affairs. However, this was true of many of his contemporaries, none of whom followed such an extraordinary career that ended so sadly. Ulrich von Hutten was unique. That uniqueness only became apparent in the last few years of his life, and the turning-point for him was the period 1519-1520.

This thesis has examined Hutten's developing thought during 1519-1520. These two critical years in his life have been viewed mainly through four of his Latin dialogues from that time, and a selection of his correspondence and poetry from 1506 onwards has been used to establish a context for them. Hardly any of these sources have previously been examined in any depth, and in most cases they have never been examined at all. The translations of the dialogues appended to this thesis were the first to be made into

English, and as far as I can determine, Bulla, Monitor Primus and Monitor Secundus have never previously been translated into any modern language.

The works examined here have proved valuable in broadening our understanding of Hutten's ideas in 1519-20, enabling a departure from the simplistic view of Hutten that has been encouraged by concentration on his straightforward rants against the Roman Church. They have done this by casting light on the roots and nature of his patriotism, his friendships, his fears, his religious conviction and its limits, his thwarted political aspirations and his relationships with important figures such as Martin Luther and the Emperor Charles V.

1519 and 1520 were critical years for Hutten because they marked a great and decisive change for him. Chapters one and two show that Hutten fitted within the mainstream of German society for most of his life. However, they also draw attention to various influences in his childhood and early career that would eventually conflict, helping to drive him towards his impossible position at the end of 1520.

Chapters three, four and five, chiefly through their examination of the dialogues, show that it was in 1519-20 that Hutten became the character whose fame as an extreme patriot, reformer and outcast has continued to the present day. This was the period during which he made decisions that changed the course of his life. Rather than simply criticising abuses within the Church, as other humanists had done, he now deliberately opposed it and its supposed subjugation of Germany, to the point of advocating violent

resistance. Beginning the year 1519 with great loyalty to the Emperor Maximilian I and soon entertaining high hopes of his successor Charles V, Hutten ended 1520 by writing a dialogue that severely criticised Charles's rule. He chose to align himself with Martin Luther, with all the danger that that entailed, but did so more in the hope that Luther would save Germany than out of concern for his own salvation. Having spent almost all his life without the company of his fellow knights, and even despising them for their lack of learning, he came to depend on them for shelter, friendship and his vision of the future Germany. In 1519-1520, the man quite recently crowned poet laureate alienated his Emperor and most leading humanists, incurred the fearful wrath of the Church and sowed the seeds of a revolt that would end the political power of his own social class.

Previous work has failed to stress the extremely complex nature of Hutten's life and concerns. His problems were aggravated by his ability to perceive everything only in black and white. For Hutten, there were no shades of grey. Issues were just or unjust, people were for him or against him, Luther was right and the Pope was wrong. This made him an excellent writer of polemic, but a difficult friend and an impossible political ally. During the important political and religious events of 1519 and 1520, Hutten could not follow most of his friends in seeking safe middle ground. This is a major difference between Hutten and nearly every other prominent humanist in Germany. His admiring correspondents, Erasmus among them, had a far stronger grip on political realities and self-preservation. Hutten had very little, and during stormy times it was perhaps inevitable that he became separated from the mainstream of the society that had once honoured him.

Hutten emerges from this examination, not as a one-dimensional character but as a very complex one, who was earnest and passionate about a range of important issues: liberty, religion, rulership and patriotism. While his scholarly talent cannot be doubted, his political judgement was often poor. There is tragedy in this, not only because it contributed to his exile and early death, but because Hutten so wanted to be politically involved in the world-changing events which were sweeping across his beloved Germany in 1519-1520. His portrayal of himself as Germany's saviour in Bulla, his determination to restore the knights to their place at the Emperor's side in Monitor Secundus, and his letters vainly begging Luther and Spalatin to confide their plans to him are all proof of that.

Hutten failed to accomplish his political visions, but he deserves no one's contempt for it. He can be criticised for many failings, as Paul Kalkoff showed a century ago. He was not always pleasant. His words and actions often appear unreasonable. Yet Hutten engaged fearlessly with the major issues of the day and made them his own. During the period examined here, he committed himself irrevocably to a dangerous course. Early in 1519, he could have chosen to slip quietly back into safe, scholarly obscurity. By the end of 1520, he could not, and he would not have done so anyway. Hutten's motto '*Iacta est alea*' was an appropriate one. Whatever his faults, there is something very admirable in the fact that, doomed to failure by the sheer breadth of his concerns and by his own limitations, Hutten persisted until his death in doing what he thought was right.

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Abbreviations

<u>Opera</u>	<u>Ulrichi Hutteni Equitis Germani Opera Quae Reperiri Potuerunt Omnia</u> (7 vols, Leipzig, 1859-1869), ed. Edward Böcking
<u>WA</u>	<u>D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe [Schriften]</u> (Weimar, 1883-)
<u>WABr</u>	<u>D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Briefwechsel</u> (Weimar, 1930-)

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Appendix I

Arminius

A dialogue of Ulrich von Hutten, Knight of Germany

A debate between Arminius, Minos, Mercury, Alexander, Scipio, Hannibal and Cornelius Tacitus¹

Arminius: May I say, O Minos, that if ever any judgement of yours was unjust, this one is.

Minos: Speak carefully, Arminius: what is this new, false accusation that the most just Minos has judged unfairly? What is this judgement? Come, speak!

Arminius: First, you must excuse me if the frankness of my speech offends you. It is uniquely German to speak with little flattery when speaking out about serious matters. Truly, I am right to complain, because you are in a position of authority and, when you award honours to those who were the greatest generals in the world, you pass me by in that respect, as if I had never lived. Indeed, for a long time now, because of the decisions you have made, Alexander of Macedon has been considered foremost among the generals in the whole Elysian Fields, and among the blessed in that place. And second after him in honour comes the Roman, Scipio, and third Hannibal of Carthage. I alone am held of no account, while in fact, if I had ever

¹ Hutten, Ulrich von, 'Ulrichi Hutteni Equitis Germani, Arminius Dialogus' (1519), in *Opera IV*, pp.409-418. This complete translation (my own), was made more or less simultaneously with the first complete English translation to be published was by Ronald Mellor in Mellor, Ronald (ed.), *Tacitus. The Classical Tradition* (New York, 1995), pp.23

thought of pitting myself against them, of course I could not doubt that you would actually have ranked me first.

Minos: You certainly have a case, German, but when they entered my house for this contest, why did you not also speak to me about it?

Arminius: Because I did not think that anyone was allowed to make entreaties here. Nor did I ever doubt that you would, with the greatest fairness, divide all men into those who deserved good or ill in life.

Minos: This is certainly a matter which deserves consideration, but here we usually judge matters on the evidence presented, and anyone may say what he thinks appropriate to his own case. Otherwise, being so busy, we may easily pass over things, and in particular we neglect matters of precedence unless they are specifically claimed. For you see what a mass of business we have, since the judges' work is so varied and complex, and there is very little leisure time. Even so, if I had remembered that which you now bring back to my mind, I would have called you of my own accord and listened to you with the others.

Arminius: And will you not listen now, and recall to this place those lately judged?

Minos: Why should I not listen? Mercury, summon to us here those generals who competed for pre-eminence in war a few days ago.

Mercury: Three of them? I remember. See! Here they are.

Minos: Gentlemen, this is Arminius, a long-standing leader of the Germans, who in the cause of freedom often struggled with the Romans, and won. He hears that you have competed for the position of outstanding leader, and that I have passed judgement on the matter. He claims that he has been unfairly passed over: for he holds to the evidence which he will present, showing – he thinks – that no one has more right than him to this honour.

Alexander: So let him speak.

Scipio: Certainly.

Hannibal: I would by no means hinder him.

Minos: Speak, Arminius.

Arminius: First I would like a certain Tacitus of Italy to be brought here, so that he may tell what deeds he has attributed to me in his history.

Minos: Then call him, Mercury.

Mercury: Come here, come here, Tacitus, come here to me, so that you might speak at last! Behold! Here is the man.

Arminius: O man of Italy, it would be helpful if you were to recount here the eulogy of me which is in your history.

Tacitus: From that part where I record your death?

Arminius: The same.

Tacitus: 'Moreover, after the departure of the Romans (from Germany) and the fall of Maroboduus, in aspiring to the kingdom Arminius was hindered by his compatriots' love of liberty. He fought a civil war with wavering fortune, and died through the treachery of his relatives. He was without doubt the liberator of Germany, who made his challenge not in the early days of the Roman nation, like other kings and commanders, but at the very height of its power. He fought undecided battles, but was undefeated in war. In thirty-seven years of life, he exercised power for twelve; and he is still praised by foreign tribes, but unknown in the histories of the Greeks, who admire their own deeds so much. Nor is he in any way celebrated among the Romans, for, while praising ancient times, we neglect the recent past.'

Arminius: Minos, was this Tacitus a trustworthy man in life, and an honourable one?

Minos: Indeed he was. But Mercury, you know better than us how well he lived, for he paid particular honour to you.

Mercury: That is very true: for he was honest, above all. No one has written a more truthful history, or been less influenced by inaccuracies. Still more, he had observed Germany himself, and described the customs of its people, and was extremely learned about the events which passed there.

Arminius: Such, then, was this man. And in writing about me, he displayed such knowledge of my affairs, that I might now remain silent. It is impossible to doubt that this evidence, presented by an enemy, should be of the greatest influence in presenting my case. First he called me 'the liberator of Germany', which I believe is a reference to my having forcibly taken from them the province which the Romans occupied – although they resisted strongly – and, despite their best efforts, having liberated those who were reduced to slavery. Thereafter, as he has rightly emphasised, I did not take on the Empire when it was still young and growing, 'like other kings and commanders', such as Pyrrhus, Antiochus and Hannibal here, but when it was fully flowered. I did not merely struggle in a fight that was forced upon me, but actually took the initiative by attacking, and Tacitus says that, of all who tried, I was the only one who successfully waged war against the Romans. Therefore he judges me most worthy to be praised in Greek and Roman histories alike. If all agree that there has never been a greater power than that of Rome, nor has there been a larger empire in the whole of time, and if I triumphed over it when it thrived and flowered most strongly, then one must conclude that I am rightly the greatest general, superior to all in military affairs – I who have overcome in war unlimited power, enormous strength, and the mightiest empire. But I should like nothing less than to usurp another's glory or to conceal the fame of their deeds. For I shall always think it fair that a person should be honoured by everyone to the extent that he deserves, and when

I speak of myself, I shall speak without jealousy: virtue for its own sake has always been my concern, I have cared very little for glory, as I have believed the knowledge of the deed to be enough. And now I am neither so arrogant as to think meanly of other leaders in comparison with myself, nor willing to argue that no one could be superior to me. If anyone is better than me, I think it is fair that the matter be considered here. But I deserve your forgiveness if my conscience refuses to let me concede anything to those who have competed here for that glory. And if they will listen to me as they have promised, I shall show that I do not speak carelessly, but that my judgement is made with good reason.

Minos: They will listen, I promise on their behalf.

Arminius: First, then, Hannibal: as people judge you by placing most weight on the fact that you achieved great things from small beginnings, I shall demonstrate that if this is glory, it is rightly due far more to me than to you or to anyone else. For of those who have done deeds of renown, no one has fought his way up out of greater difficulties or past more serious obstacles. What sort of power could one possibly have when all seemed lost and desperate? For the exercise of authority, age was really not a requirement: for Alexander was not alone in taking on the affairs of rulership while still very young. I myself had barely reached twenty-four years of age when, having already fought strongly as a soldier many times, I became the general of an army which I did not yet possess, for it had not yet assembled. It had to be formed as quickly as possible, for there was doubt as to whether or not such a scattered race could merge together at all. And I need hardly fear that anyone should suspect me of having achieved this with bribes, for at that time the Germans had no money. So it

was with a complete lack of equipment and men, in desperate need, and abandoned by everyone and hindered on all sides, that I built myself a path to the recovery of liberty. And with no hope of help from outside, all help and assistance being supplied and maintained only by my own will, I began at the beginning, and conducted an extremely dangerous war which had never previously been undertaken. I started a war which all men considered a desperate venture, and had long since pushed to the back of their minds, for, having no thought for fortune, I thought it better to advance quickly towards my destiny rather than to await it anxiously. For as you have heard, I declared and made war of my own accord - despite the hindrance of treachery at home by Segestes and Inguiomerus, and my brother Flavus fighting as hard as he could for the enemy forces - with an army which was ignorant of all discipline and of any military skills. In fact, I undertook it with such useless stores of arms and military equipment that there was not even enough iron for making weapons. But I corrected and repaired all this through resolution and quickness of wits. Since there was such great contempt for me, I turned it into calamity for my enemies, and rushed in so quickly as to have joined battle before men believed that I would dare to wage war. I caused carnage before there was any thought that I had raised an army.

Nor, indeed, did I embark lightly on such an enormous task. Immediately, in the first attack, I cut down and destroyed three legions (among them the Martia, the strongest army, with all its auxiliaries, which surpassed the other Roman armies with its greater discipline and military experience and with its strength and courage) along with the commander and his officers.

At that point, the safety of my country depended entirely upon me. So Scipio should not claim that he revived a Rome which was as weakened and in as much confusion as the downtrodden and wartorn Germany which I quickly and wholly restored. But the magnitude of that achievement is something which I will not strive to explain, when the ancient Romans here speak daily of what a disaster I then was for them, how wretchedly I confounded the greatest city, the most flowering empire, and how no other more strongly dismayed the masters of affairs, the toga-wearing race, with fear and trepidation.

And certainly, what you did not achieve, Hannibal, in riding up to the gates of the city, I achieved in farthest Germany, at such a distance, surrounded by so many rivers and swamps, with so many mountains in the way, and in places unexplored and unknown in men's travels, areas divided by the mighty Alps. I drove the Roman state to such desperation, that the Emperor Augustus himself, whom men otherwise only call eternally fortunate (and whom nobody exceeded in power in that empire, as everyone knows) thus obstinately diminished to the point of death, such that stories were put about that he dashed his head against the walls. I think this was so that he might not see Rome captured by me – an idea that had never entered my head. At last he stationed watchmen all over the city, and guards both at the gates and outside the defences, he prolonged the terms of provincial governors, and he promised great games to greatest and mightiest Jupiter if he would return the republic to better health.

In short, he consulted about these urgent affairs in a way that should only be necessary in great need. Nor, at any other time, was the security of Rome more shaken

up, lest the republic suffer defeat, and everywhere fear and confusion daunted the minds of men. For this was the gravest disaster for the Romans, and was almost fatal.

And I undertook and finished this when Germany had been hacked into small pieces and utterly reviled, and when, indeed, the affairs of the republic were in full flower, with the most favourable fortune and the greatest growth, although, unlike Alexander, I had not inherited a kingdom from my father, nor, unlike some others, command of an army from the senate. Furthermore, I constantly had to suppress some rebellion or other at home. I confronted the ringleaders of all the revolts in all areas, and punished some with popular approval, and, in fact, showed mercy to others who pleaded for it. Those who had fled to the other side, I received back again, and those who had surrendered, I took in. I purged all areas (of Germany) of their shame. And as for those who paid tribute to outsiders or allowed themselves to be kept subject to other conditions, I did not consider them to be Germans. I proclaimed it the ultimate dishonour for the rods and axes and the Roman toga to be seen even once between the Elbe and the Rhine.

Then, when the people's spirits had been stirred to regain their liberty once more, I promised that, in a short while, no traces of the Romans would remain in Germany, and even the memory of them would almost disappear. Nor was it long before I accomplished that, although the enemy was hardly sluggish in striving against me: as the German war for the zealous avenging of Varus's disaster was entrusted to Rome's very strongest hope, those in the prime of their youth. The soldier Tiberius Nero, who could not be taken lightly, and his brother Drusus, who had few equals and was extremely wise, and others, contended with me in such a way that on their return to

Rome they were granted triumphs. But I gained an independent Germany, with growing liberty and subject to its own laws. During that time, I held and drove off the eager and lively-minded general Germanicus and his experienced and able legate Caecina (when a thousand ships were sent against me as they had been to the siege of Troy) with great and miserable calamities for the people of Rome. I also killed Cariovaldus, the Batavian chief, and many nobles among the Roman auxiliaries. I crushed the Chatti and the Phrysici and their followers in a war of vengeance in another area.

Meanwhile, with my brother Flavus plotting over there and Inguiomerus conniving at home, a most shameful defection was made by Segestes, in which the criminal traitor did not spare even his daughter, my wife, who was pregnant, but led her, and certain other noblewomen with her, into a shameful captivity and a triumph in Rome. Similarly, Segestus fled to the enemy with his son. Many members of my household, being corrupted with money, made plots against my life. Some of the populace planned all kinds of hostile acts (against me). In particular, Adgandestrius of the Chatti left nothing untried, including a crime which was unheard of in Germany at the time. He asked the Romans for poison with which to kill me.

Unshaken by that, I faithfully pursued what I had begun, and gave nothing priority over the rights of my country and the ancestral honour of Germany. And while it was then a very effective way of stirring the spirits of German men if a wife was imprisoned by enemies, while men fear nothing more than the idea of captivity, and while I ardently loved my wife and was also loved by her with outstanding faithfulness, and - inflicting most pain on me - while I lost her during pregnancy,

nevertheless I remained unwavering, and did not permit my private sorrow to diminish my love for my country. Instead, sorrow turning into anger compelled me to try everything more vigorously than I had tried before. And in that, those dwelling in the underworld should be witnesses for me as to what a vast number of Romans I sent here every day, forcing violent and deadly slaughter of various kinds on the traitors to our country, and spreading a cruel war against our enemies. I plainly showed the Romans there, covering them with great shame, that I did not wage war through betrayal, or upon pregnant women, but openly challenged those who had taken arms against me. Into them, I might fix the barbs of proper revenge. So it was that I soon achieved the total expulsion of Romans from Germany. And I believe that they have had no authority there from that day to this.

There remained Maroboduus of the Suebi, whom I attacked with many men in all-out war, because he had opposed me as a result of his alliance with the Romans. It was certainly extremely troublesome and difficult against that king, who was very powerful and highly skilled in all aspects of war, and in his train he brought the warlike people of the Suebi, the enormous strength of his allies, and a great auxiliary force. And throughout, he was aided by Roman money, and Inguiomerus's flight had snatched away a large part of my force. Nevertheless, after varying turns of Fortune on both sides, at last inclining to the side with the just cause, the gods willed his defeat in fierce battle, and I drove him into retreat in the furthest reaches of the Hercynian forest. Soon afterwards, fearing danger, he fled from those depths into Italy, where the Romans proved utterly false in all their generous promises. His hope frustrated, he grew old without glory.

I returned Germany to a state of internal unity and peace, and began to enjoy the goodness of liberty, so long sought and now accomplished. He who wishes me to be second to him, and thinks that I do not deserve the palm, needs to achieve more than me. But as the contest is about skill in military matters, the knowledge of command and the ability to lead an army, in this someone might place himself before me and deny that these (qualifications) are present in someone who has achieved so much in such difficulties, and against such an enemy, and who continued them to the end of his life, undefeated in war. I am never jealous of another's glory, but, and this is said without envy, such men have mostly attacked a weaker power or divided forces. But at that time I daringly incited the empire said to be the most powerful in the world, and the united strength of so many nations, and a war which renewed itself after each disaster, and continued for a long time with alternating fortunes but with no rest. And my enemies do not deny that I overcame and was victorious, and, once the alien yoke of common slavery – resulting from an agreement between most of the nations of the world - was cast off from my country, I kept it free and mindful of its liberty.

Nor, O Judge, could any reasoning have allowed Alexander to persuade you that he could so easily have overcome the Romans as they were at that point in time, as he did either the effeminate Asian races, in which regard a later Roman memorably made little of his thorough victory, saying at his triumph 'I came, I saw, I conquered', or the unarmed Indian nations, unaccustomed to war, appearing as a reaper with an army composed of drunken, revelling troops, since as soon as he could approach them, he drove them into flight or surrender. And as for the Scythians, about whom he talks so much, well, he only had to look at them. In fact, his own uncle, the famous king of Epirus who at least waged war in Italy (although not with the Romans), denied his

achievements, as he was in the habit of saying that he fought against men but his nephew fought against women.

Furthermore, my greatest wish was always for honour, not a thirst for glory or for greed. I erected no monuments to myself when I cast out the Romans, nor did I fight for riches or power. Instead my goal, to which I directed everything, was to restore through strength my country's stolen liberty. My whole life was spent honourably, and then I was brought here – through pressing domestic jealousy and the wickedness of those close to me – as a free spirit and as a victor over all, with the satisfaction of obtaining the best merits for my country and living my life well in every way.

Now, Minos, it is for you to consider to whom you wish to give precedence over me, who has emerged from grave confinements to such dignity through his own virtue, or has waged greater wars, or has engaged in military matters with more understanding, or has wielded power more fairly, or has taken up arms for a better cause, or has trampled superior forces underfoot, or has surrendered less in life to his desires, or has persisted throughout in what is good. To conclude: of all those who have excelled in these in these merits, in your excellent justice, whom would you place first?

Minos: This man has certainly made a noble speech, worthy not only of such a general, but of a truly good man. And I know that it is all as he says, and that he has invented nothing. In fact, I remember my astonishment at the time, at a barbarian possessing so much purpose. Because of this, and because he has struggled in a great cause and been so strong in spirit and honour and in military skill, and because – without other help - he took fitting risks for his country, and surrendered to hardly any

flaws, by Jupiter, I do not see whom I could more fairly consider the greatest general. There is no doubt, Alexander, that if he had competed here with you in the first place, I would voluntarily have awarded him the palm. Now, however, as divine command prohibits the withdrawal of a judgement once it is made, and as it is not permissible to change an agreed order of merit, you will have to be satisfied, Arminius, with keeping in mind my opinion of you, which I would have given in words if you had chosen to compete with these others. Because you were indeed the liberator of Germany, and everyone admits that you were victorious in the war you undertook for freedom, and nobody there suffered great danger or performed more for the common good, I am pleased to put you with the Brutuses and in first place among the protectors of their countries' liberty. Therefore I give to Mercury this responsibility: that in the forum, in the streets, in the circus, at the crossroads, and everywhere frequented by men and gods, he pronounce Arminius of the Cherusci the most free, the most invincible and the most German, and he must order that you be so acclaimed by everyone, far and wide. Let it be so ordered and decreed, and let no one question it hereafter.

Alexander: But at one time, this man was a slave! I was a king, and always free.

Arminius: It is not true that I was servile to any man in my mind. For always being mindful of freedom, while keeping nothing in my thoughts except for ways in which I could help my country if the opportunity were offered, as long as I could not take action during the subjection of my people in slavery, I kept my plans quiet and hid my love of liberty secretly inside me.

Alexander: Then it is as they say: that, having accepted the yoke from them, you were not permitted to rebel against them.

Arminius: On the contrary, it is as I say: that I neither accepted the yoke nor agreed to slavery in my heart. Nor, if I had been ensnared by necessity at some evil time, would I have been 'permitted' to release myself from it, should the occasion ever have presented itself. For what justice can one have who has torn away another's natural right? And injustice is there in recovering through equal violence something of his own which was taken from him through violence?

Alexander: But you had given your promise.

Arminius: I had not given my promise to be exposed to anything shameful. However, I could have yielded honestly and freely, if they had wanted to rule reasonably and decently. But I gave a promise extorted by violence and injustice, and the life of a community confirms this: that it is not a promise that thieves demand from those who - driven by necessity - easily surrender things which they should care about, and which the thieves should not have. Furthermore, does not a person who forces a yoke onto another keep him in subjection only as long as he is strong enough to hold him? And is it not allowed, if the chance arises, to claim back with arms what has been unfairly taken away with arms? And, since it is against nature to be changed from a free man into a slave, I do not think that it should be against the law to restore nature's gift. In short, a promise means that we will give what we should.

Moreover, come! – who so willingly suffers injustice that he would bear what the Romans were then doing in Germany, and the deeds of Varus, of all men which the world has produced, the one whom I believe to be the greediest and most villainous? When he had stripped Syria to the bone through plunder, he began to completely devour Germany through theft. And there his pride and unimaginative brain were such that, in his mind, he perceived Germans to be beasts, with a brute's lack of reason, and not men. And no indignity was such that we ought to avoid it or show resistance to it. So he set no limits to his insane behaviour, and dared to commit every disgraceful act and crime. As a result, since I knew this was villainy, I did not mislead our legal masters with my promise, but upheld our common right and the law of our country against the most wicked tyrants.

Minos: He has argued his case as a free man, and as a result I consider that no one is so bound in peace to another, that he has no right to move to rebellion in such circumstances.

Scipio: Even so, we charge this man with treachery, and he evidently showed too much cruelty in his victory over Varus.

Arminius: According to that argument, Scipio, all tyrannicides and defenders of liberty everywhere are guilty of treachery, especially yours, who ousted the Tarquins and killed Caesar, and who have attained the greatest praise and eternal glory among you because of it. But in short, the treachery belongs to those who study any change in fortune and adjust their changeable loyalty accordingly. The justice of *my* cause compelled me to strive even against serious adversity. So let Minos declare whether

or not I was entitled to punish Quinctilius's atrocity – which was of such a kind, and so savage – with atrocity in return, when the gods gave me the chance.

Minos: I judge that it was permissible.

Hannibal: But look, you boast that you had no vision so important that it could overcome devotion to your country, but you are said to have striven for kingship, and you glorify yourself for having removed an alien yoke from your people, but constrained those same people yourself. That is a crime which never entered my mind, and on account of that I deserve to be placed before you.

Arminius: You should hardly be placed before me for that reason, if Minos, this judge, wishes to remain entirely himself. For I never even approached a desire to seize the kingship: but it was the jealousy of my opponents which planted this suspicion among men. We all understand that mankind is like this: jealousy is opposed to those who have the most virtues. For the only ones who are not envied are those in whom virtue is not apparent, and jealousy usually assails those who have been raised highest.

But it is essential for anyone in charge to be able to manage the community as a whole. How easily public liberty would have been dashed to the ground, if I had given up that watchful authority because of someone or other's vicious opinion of me. With this intention, I retained power, and did so with the gratitude of good men, but among evil men I suffered the false accusation of deliberate tyranny. But even if I had seized the kingship, who was more fitted to it than the man who had redeemed from

foreign slavery those whom he had gathered together under the rule of their own country? My country would still not have shown me proper gratitude if, in return for its restored liberty and its escape from destruction, it had offered me the kingship voluntarily. But in fact, with the passing of time, the memory of the benefits I bestowed was faintly perceived, and it allowed me first to be assailed by lies, and then villainously crushed. I suppose I have been neither the first nor the last victim of this. For were the Carthaginians grateful for the advantages you gave them? Or was it not, on the contrary, the opposition of your enemies at home which checked you and eventually crushed you?

Hannibal: It was, I admit.

Arminius: And I believe Scipio's country repaid him in its turn, in that, after many decorations and after the performance of so many excellent deeds, he was not even permitted to die there. Certainly, domestic jealousy resulted in Alexander's death.

Minos: This has also helped him, for it is indeed thus: there has been no famous man whose virtue did not do him harm at some time. It is certainly unavoidable that those who know Arminius here should greatly love his shining character. As a result, it is right that you should increase in honour, German, and it is fair that we should never be neglectful of your virtues. But now, Mercury, command him to follow you, and carry out my orders at once. The rest of you, depart hence to your own affairs.

Mercury: Follow me.

Appendix II

*Bulla vel Bullicida: The Bull, or rather, The Bullkiller*¹

A dialogue by Hutten

Participants: German Liberty, The Bull, Hutten, Franz von Sickingen and some Germans

Liberty: But now, wait a moment.

The Bull: What are you talking about now, you drunken creature?

Liberty: Curb that rage of yours! And moreover, stop doing me this terribly cruel injury.

The Bull: I am not listening: be still.

Liberty: Yet you [must] stop this destruction, godless one.

The Bull: But I am only just beginning.

Liberty: May Christ utterly damn you, evil thing.

¹ 'Bulla vel Bullicida, dialogus Huttenicus', in Edward Böcking, ed., Ulrichi Hutteni Equitis Germani Opera quae reperiri potuerunt omnia, vol. IV, pp.311-331. Hutten's play on the word *bulla* should be noted throughout the dialogue. The modern meaning of the word ('a papal decree') probably comes from the papal seal affixed to such documents (one Latin meaning of *bulla* is 'a round swelling').

The Bull: Do you still speak ill of me, wretched thing?

Liberty: As if it were not *well* spoken, when ill-spoken about evil things!

The Bull: And so you insult me a second time? You shall be flogged.

Liberty: Release me, I say, guilty one, cursed one, liar, evildoer, for why do you beat me?

The Bull: Now why are you shouting, upstart?

Liberty: Why, because you compel me to do it.

The Bull: Then I shall compel you to be silent.

Liberty: Which you have begun, indeed, so that, while I live, I may not cry out against your injustices. But you will never accomplish it.

The Bull: And on that account you shall be flogged!

Liberty: So that you [can] conceal your great wickedness, unless I am much mistaken.

However, as *bull* also means 'bubble', Hutten was able to imply that the Bull was swollen up, with

The Bull: What are you babbling about? You are stupid, and talking nonsense.
What wickedness?

Liberty: There will be a fitting punishment for your crime.

The Bull: Be quiet, I say.

Liberty: I shall not be quiet: for today I must speak out.

The Bull: I tell you, be quiet.

Liberty: And in turn, *I tell you* that I must speak today, unless - as once befell
the Amyclae - I want to perish through keeping silent.²

The Bull: And what kind of speech are you therefore considering?

Liberty: One about you, with a great cry, for you come here armed and ready
for crushing me.

The Bull: And to whom will you say this?

Liberty: To all the Germans in this place.

pride, avarice and other poisons.

The Bull: Will you embark on a complaint against me, among those who obediently serve me?

Liberty: Who serve you? O impious voice, O thing which is least to be endured, to say thus that Germans serve you! Listen, Germans, hear the monstrous crime, unworthy, indeed, for your ears, but deserving to be punished by your hands. This thing boasts that you serve it: kill it off, trample it, throttle its foul-speaking throat!

The Bull: You are making a fine job of bringing disaster upon yourself.

Liberty: So far, I am making a much finer job of punishing *you*.

The Bull: What do you say, you haunt of shame? That you will ever bring disaster upon me?

Liberty: Never mind what I say to you. What do *you* say in the end, you fount of fault and perjury, in favour of that cunning wickedness of yours?

The Bull: So you still show me arrogance, most abject thing of all?

Liberty: Why should I not, I whom you envelop in your rage?

² The Amyclae were frequently alarmed by false rumours of an approaching Spartan army, so a law was passed forbidding them to mention the subject. Therefore, no alarm was given when a real attack came, and the Amyclae were defeated.

The Bull: Which you provoke by that shouting of yours. For what is it to you, that I have come here hunting Luther? Why are you interfering with someone else's business?

Liberty: As if it is doubtful, indeed, what you are up to when you say that you are pursuing Luther, or that it is not obvious that you have come here so that you can throw chains about me, and ensnare Germany again in despicable slavery. That is why you forbid me to come forward, and why, with your shouting, you openly prevent me from doing so.

The Bull: It would be sensible for you simply to keep quiet.

Liberty: But neither honourable nor right.

The Bull: But whatever it is, you will stop shouting at once.

Liberty: Indeed, I would speak out, however great the danger.

The Bull: If I lose my self-restraint, I might not delay any longer the onslaught of my spirit, and I shall release this anger upon you. And then indeed, you will greatly wish - too late - to be sensible. And yet how much longer can I bear you? Did I not say that you would be wise to keep silent? Be still, wilful one, be still, and accept it.

Liberty: Perjurer, lawbreaker, upon whom I shall call down ruin, if I ever escape from your violence; cease this killing, you lost creature, cease once and for all.

The Bull: You also cease that shouting of yours, chatterer, cease once and for all.

Liberty: I shall soon chase you away from here completely, and drive disaster back where it belongs.

The Bull: Be still, be still.

Liberty: When I have brought down upon you these free men, whom I summon. Why do you strike me, most worthless of Bulls?

The Bull: What are you shouting, you rash creature? Just look at you!

Liberty: I beseech you, Germans, be faithful! Come to my aid, I implore you, citizens, bring help, my countrymen, natives, neighbours, strangers, all who live close by.

The Bull: Be still.

Liberty: Be faithful, Germans, fetch help, citizens: liberate injured liberty. Does anyone dare to bring me aid? Is there anyone who is truly free? Is there anyone who strives after virtue, prizes justice, hates deception, loves that which is lawful, curses an evil deed? Is there anyone who is truly German?

Hutten: Whoever that voice belongs to, it calls me forth: and therefore I shall see what manner of thing is outside. I hear this much: Liberty is really in trouble. I shall run out very quickly. What is happening here? Who is it? Who is shouting?

Liberty: Liberty is being suppressed, Hutten. I am the one, it is I who shout; this is what suppresses me - the Bull of Leo X. It is bringing up siege engines for no other reason than to keep me ensnared, then strangle me.

Hutten: May the gods forbid that this should happen to anything of theirs. What then can you show me of the Bull, which you denounce as a pest?

Liberty: This is the Bull, I tell you. The godless, poisonous Romans, those enchanters, have sent hither this deceitful, cheating Bull, who is forcing you all into slavery and is strangling me while I am bound. Here it is, driven by that aim.

Hutten: Which, indeed, I am amazed at anyone daring to attempt. Are you then so impudent, O Bull, that you advance on Liberty, and hold the German name in contempt? Do you put no limit on your rashness?

The Bull: Are you really speaking [to me]?

Hutten: I am indeed.

The Bull: Are you really somebody to whom it is right for Bulls to give the reason for their deeds?

Hutten: Do not despise [me]. I tell you that you will believe me to be somebody, unless you release Liberty to me. And mind what you say, too - hereafter you will not lift a finger against it [Liberty], unless you want to test what kind of man I am.

The Bull: I [shall] still despise you, unless I see that you are such a man as to exercise authority over Bulls.

Hutten: Restore Liberty to me, I say, if you wish to have a friend.

Liberty: Do you dare to help me?

Hutten: If I am able to help, I shall do so fearlessly.

Liberty: But what help do we have against this strength?

Hutten: If there is need of help, we shall bring here the common people³, and all free people in Germany, [but] first of all Franz von Sickingen, who has long dedicated his home and refuge to you.⁴

³ Lit., 'The felt-hatted common people'. The felt hat ('pilleus') was worn by the people of Rome for festivals and other occasions, and by slaves upon the granting of their freedom. Hutten is employing not only a universal symbol of the common people of ancient Rome, but, perhaps deliberately, a symbol of those newly released from servitude.

⁴ See Chapters Four and Six on Sickingen's role and the importance of his fortress, the Ebernberg.

Liberty: You have given me courage, by recalling the name of an invincible hero. Will he really be here on our side?

Hutten: Why not? He will be here as soon as he is called.

Liberty: I am saved!

The Bull: You are indeed, through me, if you will stop that shouting.

Liberty: But I shall not stop, unless you first stop advancing

The Bull: Should I be held back from approaching you, when it is my business to do so?

Liberty: Indeed, you shall be held back by me: for I shall raise a great cry.

The Bull: And shall I not strike out against you without a thought, if you should dare [to speak] a word against me?

Hutten: Will you strike [Liberty] down, while I am alive and watching?

The Bull: If indeed you are keen to watch: but if grief prevents you, go just a little further away, while I subdue it with many blows, as it richly deserves. Will you continue to annoy me, you good-for-nothing?

Hutten: What are you doing, you impudent creature?

The Bull: What I please.

Hutten: No. Instead, you will set [Liberty] free, as you are told. Set it free, I say, and do not defile it.

The Bull: Who are you, to give orders to Bulls?

Hutten: I am the person whom you see, and whom, unless you control yourself in this, you will also feel.

The Bull: So tell me, are you speaking seriously?

Hutten: Absolutely.

The Bull: And of all people, you turn out to be the one who will throw himself down as an obstacle to wandering Bulls?

Hutten: Well, I do not know if there are others like me. It is certainly true that I shall devote myself to that task, no matter what force you employ.

The Bull: You are taking on a great task.

Liberty: Don't you see how affected it is in its shattered mind? No doubt the people of Rome perceive the Germans not as men, but as women.

Hutten: But the courageous put men to the test.

The Bull: See no more than it is proper for you to perceive.

Hutten: [I see] very much more than is advantageous to you, that is certain.

The Bull: Well, you do not know in how much trouble you will be entangled, if you dare to do this.

Hutten: However that might be, I forbid you to lift a finger against [Liberty].
Do you hear this?

The Bull: I hear you [being] domineering, and brave only with words.

Hutten: But also with actions, you will realise a little later, unless you keep off.

The Bull: Do you dare to threaten me, most insignificant of men?

Hutten: A brave undertaking indeed, to cause trouble to you, the lowest of all things.

The Bull: You think ill of me?

Hutten: I despise you, if you provoke [me] any further: for why do you cause trouble, you impudent creature?

The Bull: Do you dare to speak ill towards me?

Hutten: And to do you ill.

The Bull: Black bile⁵ affects you.

Hutten: Truly, black pitch will soon firmly affect you. Stay where you are, and not a step further!

The Bull: Do you continue to talk nonsense here?

Hutten: Do you continue to despise my authority here? And what are you thinking about, you tortoise?

The Bull: But you will now perceive Pegasus⁶ in place of the tortoise: so quickly shall I pounce upon you, and without delay.

Hutten: You make yourself out to be witty and splendid. But look, meanwhile you will not move from here except by my command.

⁵ The literal meaning is used here because Hutten deliberately uses similar words in his next speech as a counterpoint to the bull. But 'atra bilis' would usually be translated as 'madness' or 'melancholy'.

⁶ The winged horse in the Greek legend of Perseus

The Bull: And where is it written, commander, that you establish the law for Bulls?

Hutten: It is neither written nor painted anywhere, but it will be written and painted hereafter.

The Bull: As I see it, men will think nothing of my business here today.

Hutten: What are you saying, O thing of little worth? As if I shall not trample you under my feet today, like a spider.

The Bull: As if I shall not inflict injury on you today. And so much so, in order that you might see that I do not neglect these things, from today your name will head [my list].

Hutten: And I shall spearhead your downfall.⁷

The Bull: Walk to Rome, miserable creature, before sixty days have passed.

Hutten: Stand here, miserable creature, for the whole sixty days.

The Bull: Under the strength of holy obedience.

Hutten: Under the strength of my fists, which you see.

The Bull: What? Will you regard me as filth? Have you taken leave of your senses, man? Is that right?

Hutten: These are still fists.

The Bull: This is not an obliging man, who receives me like this. Hey, you! This Liberty is nobody's business but mine. It is the same anywhere else that it is necessary to uphold the authority of Leo X.

Hutten: Where else?

The Bull: Why do you ask this?

Hutten: Today you need to give me a reason for all the things that you do.

Liberty: Did I not say that you would regret your action? See, the time has come: now at last you see how much it would have been to your advantage, if you had chosen to follow my advice.

The Bull: Who are you, to whom those who have business here must give their reasons?

⁷ Hutten uses the same word, *caput*, in both speeches, so that he can make a sharp riposte to the Bull's

Hutten: First tell me who *you* are, you who have dared to violate the liberty of Germany? What is your name?

The Bull: Read on my forehead.

Hutten: You are the Bull *Ad perpetuam rei memoriam*. But what is the reason for your name? When you are an empty thing, but for being puffed up with arrogance, vanishing in a moment?

The Bull: You despise me to excess.

Hutten: I, to excess? Or are Bulls not accustomed to immediately blow apart, with a single breath, any that rise up [in their way]?

The Bull: I am not of that type; since for one Bull Germany's complete destruction would offer no satisfaction.

Hutten: What are you (saying), evil one? Do you think there is no pride in Germany? No spirit?

The Bull: I think there is.

Hutten: Then why are you so full of pride?

threat, turning its own language against it.

The Bull: As you know, I guard my reputation well.

Hutten: That is allowed, as long as you do not detract from our liberty here. And yet what reputation can a Bull have?

The Bull: The same kind that it always had, which it would have been fitting for you to receive more respectfully when it came here.

Hutten: What, receive an empty Bull respectfully?

The Bull: Yet according to law, what comes here empty, does so with the purpose of returning to Rome heavy-laden.

Hutten: On what pretext?

The Bull: It is permissible to consider the reason, but not to argue with it.

Hutten: But I do not see why one should regard you with respect, or in what manner one should show it. Or do you even demand that we move around everywhere in a procession?

The Bull: That, indeed, as for earlier Bulls.

Hutten: You have no power. Although you order this, you at once make it clear that you are vain and empty.

The Bull: I am certainly not empty.

Hutten: I do not know, unless I have just learned from you, what you do claim to be.

The Bull: I spoke of wealth, and bountiful success.

Hutten: However, since you are greatly swollen, there is something else which fills you up?

The Bull: There is.

Hutten: What is that? For you are completely swollen up.

The Bull: I am certainly full of religious ceremonial, full of power, authority, honour and divine excellence.

Hutten: It seems to *me* that you are impelled by superstition and avarice, puffed up with arrogance and ambition, drunk with vanity and boastfulness, and otherwise entirely lacking honesty and integrity.

The Bull: I have never heard any man be more abusive; nor do I think that there is one who would insult me more impudently. You are behaving just like those forgotten, ancient Comedy actors.

Hutten: But I tell you openly, and without pretence, that my deeds will not be forgotten. Give Liberty to us, whether you are a Bull, and what the Greeks call *πομφολυξ*, or what is, to them, *φουσημα*.⁸

The Bull: You are mistaken, this is not the reason for the name. For, because we concern ourselves with various matters, *απο της βουλης*, the ancients called us Bulls, and respected us.⁹

Hutten: Nevertheless, I judge that you are not a bull, no matter where this name comes from, but a bag: for you take money from here, and you are [all] accustomed to taking the money on a journey to those creatures in Rome. In fact, you seem to me to be ablaze with the flames of avarice.¹⁰ Moreover, see, you are made of leather, [which] is entirely fitting.

The Bull: Since I am made of parchment, I doubt whether I appear, to your eyes, to be made of leather. Indeed, you may not call me a bag, nor may anyone adopt that filthy description.¹¹

Hutten: But indeed we see you as utterly filthy, whether you are a bull or a bottle.¹² For in truth, in which country were you born? For I believe you to be a daughter of Earth, a sister of the Gigantes, as you have all the appearance of a Titan.¹³

⁸ Hutten gives the bull little choice. Both words mean 'bubble' in ancient Greek.

⁹ 'Away from the Council [or presumably, in a Christian context, the Papacy]', implying the carrying of advice and authority far afield.

¹⁰ The word *avaritia*, used here, is almost always used in relation to *money*.

¹¹ The proud Bull appears not to know that parchment is a kind of leather.

The Bull: You lie! The Church is my mother, His Holiness Pope Leo X is my father; so I am called his daughter, or rather, as his creature I answer to that name.

Hutten: And so where do you come from, creature of Leo X?

The Bull: From the chief city of all races.

Hutten: And what is that?

Liberty: I shall tell you. It comes from Rome, where mules surpass horses, where men are not men, where good is bad and bad is good; where one may behave wickedly so as to receive merit; where men are gods, and gods are nothing; from where all freedom of action is banished; where men are enslaved to money and live in great splendour; where every right and wrong deed is a game; where a covenant is no covenant, and no treaty is agreed; where faith is offered for sale, sanctity is destroyed, innocence is lost, all honesty is effaced; this is the chief city of all races.

The Bull: Liberty, you deceiver, how great a thing you disparage so spitefully. But tell me, by what name are you called, and from what race do you come?

Hutten: My name is 'Bullkiller'.

¹² *Ampulla*, a flask which was often made of leather.

¹³ *Gigantes* is the Greek name for the Titans of Roman legend. The Titans were giants who stormed the city of the gods. Of the twelve Titans, six were monstrous in appearance. Hutten is presumably thinking of this rather than the ancient Greeks' belief that learning and wisdom came originally from the Titans.

The Bull: The significance of this name does not please me.

Hutten: Moreover, I have come to you from the Ebernberg, that refuge of justice, where there is high regard for horses and arms, and contempt for leisure and idleness; where men are really men; where both good and bad are kept in their proper place; where people treat a person as he deserves; where there is reverence for God, concern and esteem for men; where honour is foremost among all virtues, and there is no place for greed; whence vanity is banished, treachery and crime are far distant; where men are free to *be* free;¹⁴ where the people despise money, and are of great worth; where those who follow divine law are the same as those who flee from a hateful crime; where the content of an agreement is honoured, trustworthiness is respected, scruples are esteemed, innocence is defended, honesty flourishes, and alliances are strong: this place is, indeed, the refuge of justice.¹⁵ Are you, in fact, that [Bull] which is already beginning to become known to me? Are you the one who is said to be venturing out while inspiring great terror?

The Bull: The very same. Moreover I shall punish the Lutherans *απανταζ εν χυχλω περιελθων*.¹⁶

¹⁴ *Liberaliter liberi.*

¹⁵ The Ebernburg was the principal stronghold of Hutten's friend and fellow-knight Franz von Sickingen. Hutten was sheltering at the Ebernburg at the time of writing this dialogue. The importance of the Ebernburg and of Sickingen himself is examined elsewhere in this thesis.

¹⁶ 'By encircling them all together' – a reference to the Bull's requirement that *all* 'Lutherans' must formally recant in the same way that it insisted Luther do. For this coverage by the Bull of a large number of unnamed people, see chapter four.

Hutten: How much danger you create for good men; but you will achieve nothing. For what are you without a guide? And there was nobody who would show you the way.

The Bull: Eck showed me, but he turned aside from the path a little while ago now, ready to pursue any young people who dared I know not what against him.

Hutten: A foolish man with no redeeming features, but the man by whom he was appointed to oversee this business is not stupid: for he [Eck] is both wicked and rash, and not unready if ever some act of evil needs to be undertaken.

The Bull: What are you saying? A splendid man, whom Leo X will certainly raise high, if he sees through to the end the deed he has begun.

Hutten: Would that he were already hanging on high.

The Bull: Because of the fact that he is the Apostolic Protonotary, and if the man's modesty allowed, would already be a bishop?

Hutten: Because of a deed such as this: that you dare to threaten evil towards good men.

The Bull: You talk about good men? And this is how you regard Luther?

Hutten: I do indeed.

The Bull: You are dangerously mistaken. Whereas, if you listen to me, you will now discern the danger of it, but in the strange matter they discuss, you are taking delight in madness.

Hutten: Tell me, then, tell me, impious creature, is it madness to speak the truth?

The Bull: In this place it is, because he who speaks without being bidden, among those who do not wish to hear, will be in a hateful position, and for a long time at that. You might think about this, and calm down.

Hutten: Perhaps I could calm down over Luther, but over liberty, never! Why have you dared to injure it with your profane hand? Why have you dared? Now let *me* complain to *you*: what is German liberty to you, that you lay hands on it? What, I say?

The Bull: Why, it is just as for anyone concerning his property.

Hutten: So our Liberty is your property? Is it, you foul creature?

The Bull: Yes, so I believe.

Hutten: You are mad, insane.¹⁷ May the gods damn you.

¹⁷ The translation lacks the alliterative quality of the original: 'vaesana, vaecors'.

The Bull: May the gods sweep you away. You are raving, frenzied,¹⁸ to dare to speak evil to sacred bulls, as no one has done before.

Hutten: Just you wait: I shall continue to behave badly from now on.

The Bull: You will certainly leave me alone, if you would do what is right: for if you crouch there, the more stubbornly to obstruct me, I shall ensure today that you will, on the whole, fare very badly. Therefore you should leave this place and let me alone.

Hutten: I shall not leave. And where are *you* going?

The Bull: It is right for me to carry off my prey, and my triumph.¹⁹

Hutten: Instead, I shall force you into submission here.²⁰ This is what your triumph is worth.

The Bull: Put me, I say, not into submission, but into Saxony: for what is my business to you, you impious man?

Hutten: What is Germany to you, treacherous one?

¹⁸ As above: 'furiose, fanatic'.

¹⁹ Used in the sense of an ancient Roman 'triumph', in which a general, after a great victory, might be permitted to enter Rome crowned with laurel and riding in a chariot pulled by white horses.

The Bull: What? As if, indeed, it were a new thing, for Bulls to conduct business here.

Hutten: It is an old custom, I admit, but so far it has been a much older one for them to be absent from this place; and therefore we follow whichever is the older.

The Bull: But is it not right for the Roman Pontiff to send his creatures here, so that they might command you?

Hutten: How can it be?

The Bull: Don't you know? You shall learn from me. The Roman Pontiffs have given you Roman Law. In return for such a service, they demand from you that you allow bulls and legates here, and the honourable business of the courtesans.²¹

Hutten: And antiquity did not hear the Epicureans chattering about such things.²² You have rightly persuaded me that you are not empty; for now I see that you are utterly crammed with nonsense.

The Bull: I am a kind of Horn of Plenty, which contains whatever I wish.

²⁰ *Mittere sub iugum*: The ancient Romans compelled their defeated enemies to walk under a yoke in token of their submission. Found in Caesar, Cicero and Livy. Hutten also uses the image in Arminius (see Appendix One).

²¹ *Curtisani*, or 'courtesans', did not bear its modern meaning in Hutten's time. In English and German, it was equivalent to the Italian *cortigiano*, denoting, in particular, a Roman courtier. Hutten uses it in the wider sense of any German who derived revenues from the Roman church, and even anyone who defended Rome. See Holborn, Hutten, p.126.

Liberty: It speaks the truth. That is, one might say, a Horn of *Plenty of Evil*, in which are contained works of guile, cunning, fraud, deceit, artifice, trickery, lies, pretence, craftiness, treachery, crime, and bad conduct; it is crammed with these.

The Bull: I shall certainly cram you with bad things, before long.

Hutten: Do you still threaten Liberty with evil, godless, cursed creature?

The Bull: Do you still speak harshly of a sacred Bull, utterly wretched man? Answer me truthfully about one thing: are you such a great man that you prohibit the highest bishops from commanding here, and do you dare to cast them down from their high rank?

Hutten: I am the man who drives you away. Come here, harlot, yes here, so that I may push you away.

The Bull: And you dare to lay a hand on me? You are excommunicated for doing so. Indeed, Leo X knows you to be a Lutheran.

Hutten: But I am not. Rather, until now I have been – even more so than Luther - unfriendly towards Bulls, and, with a hostile spirit, opposed to ungodly Rome.

The Bull: Germany did not previously contain such men. Wretched people in utter distress, how do you dare summon up the courage? I judge that on account of

²² Epicurus (c.340-270BC) taught a philosophy which attacked superstition and proclaimed the

that rashness of yours, you and Luther drink from the same cup, and indeed are from Babylon itself, so full of evil, unless - cautioned by me - you draw back. You remember, moreover, that to walk away is better than to walk with evil.

Hutten: In your case, since you have walked with evil, the affair would come to this: that to walk away from this is dishonest. I shall ensure this: you cannot leave here, even if you really want to.

The Bull: You will hinder a Bull in coming or going? You will really not allow me to wander where I will? Or rather, if it pleased me, to be busy here in my realm?

Hutten: In your realm, you say, you infamous creature? Now, I say that this will be the most important word in your name: *sexcentoplaga*.²³ Thus shall I crush all your limbs: eat my fists!

The Bull: I am not hungry.

Hutten: Eat them anyway!

The Bull: Do you actually strike me?

Hutten: Feel it.

The Bull: He obstructs my blows. Alas for your head!

benefits of a life lived in moderation, in pursuit of simple pleasures.

Hutten: Alas for your shoulders!

The Bull: You will perish in dreadful ruin, you wretch, as you deserve.

Hutten: You first, before you can damn me or anyone else. Take these many blows, godless one.

The Bull: Stop, most miserable of all men on earth.

Hutten: Take that, worthless Bull.

The Bull: I cannot tolerate that kind of address.

Hutten: But you will learn to, from [constant] use.

The Bull: Tell me, you perverse creature, tell me, who educated you about me, [suggesting] that it might be proper for me to be taught unwillingly by you?

Hutten: I assumed it of my own accord.

The Bull: You are a dullard, an idiot, to try this; therefore leave here without me, so that here I may be free.

²³ 'One who receives innumerable stripes'.

Hutten: Where you will do what?

The Bull: That which I said, for which I have everything, instructions and seals, in order. And now it is time. The men and the opportunity are at hand, in a way that can never have been bettered.

Hutten: I shall deprive you of this opportunity. Where are you running to? Look at me. For one shows one's true nature in walk and bearing; anyone might judge one's worth. Look back at me, look back; you should be flogged to pieces, evil, harmful creature.

The Bull: Aid me, be of assistance, pious Germans everywhere, bring help to the violently afflicted! This is a man who strikes down Bulls, who makes sport of Leo X.

Hutten: Meanwhile, be flogged!

The Bull: Release me, I say: for it is quite unnecessary for you to treat me in this evil, disobliging way.

Hutten: But it is obviously happening anyway, and now I shall make many [Bulls] from one.

The Bull: Tell me, forger, do you make Bulls – which is only permitted to Popes?

Hutten: No, I do not make new ones. The fact is, I shall cut you up, so that there will be many tiny pieces.

The Bull: I have seen no one more brutal than this man.

Hutten: Nor have I seen a more worthless Bull, anywhere, for you are abominable, and even repulsive in appearance.

The Bull: But they [the Bulls] are what represent the divine will, to the extent that you can approach it.

Hutten: Those who are free certainly do not worship *you*, you pretentious, shameless, filthy [creature], full of perjury and impiety, and yet at the same time splendidly eulogising and praising yourself and those things they bring. Receive twice as many blows, and still more! This is the proper way to treat Roman scribblings.

The Bull: If only I could recover myself, so that I might resist courageously, in imitation of you! How can you strike me down, weakest of creatures? Why do you think me defenceless? You have made a mistake: you are putting to the test a *male* Bull.²⁴ How can you strike me down? Just look at you!

Hutten: This is the very thing I wanted: to push you back against a stake, lest I altogether destroy the unprotected.²⁵ You have been arrogant for a little while, yet I

²⁴ The point is made because the Latin word *bullā*, meaning a bubble or, later, a papal bull, is feminine. The Latin word for a bull in the sense the Bull is trying to convey it here is *taurus*.

²⁵ Presumably, Liberty.

shall soon make you meek again. Stay, male Bull, stay, daughter of Leo (which you are still), creature of the highest Pontiff, so that this [Pope] may be fought here.

The Bull: Alas for me, alas for piety! Where is Eck now? Why has the good man rushed away? He knew of this evil beforehand, so he resolved to flee. Did you mean to betray me like this, false theologian, wicked turncoat?

Hutten: A warlike Bull should not weaken and cry out so quickly! Hold out strongly, and return to your place!

The Bull: I didn't come here for this kind of fight.

Hutten: I know. You are accustomed [to fight] wickedly, falsely, craftily, but we fight differently here.

The Bull: Then it does not please me to fight with you.

Hutten: But it pleases me to destroy you, you evil thing, stuffed with evil malice, to your very roots.

The Bull: But I am innocent with regard to you, in every way.

Hutten: Wicked creature, are you innocent with regard to me when you plan to destroy my friends and to abolish common liberty?

The Bull: I did not plan it, the things you heard were said in jest.

Hutten: But certainly, this [Liberty] has been injured and violently defiled by your hands.

Liberty: So I have, [beaten] black and blue.²⁶

Hutten: I should kill you, I should kill you at once.

The Bull: Stop for a moment, now, and hear me. You have acquired a great deal of enmity in this affair.

Hutten: The enmity of which men?

The Bull: At first, of as many as make up the whole of the Roman curia.

Hutten: To which, indeed, no one wishes to be a good friend, so [I accept] that willingly.

The Bull: Then, of the papal officials who are everywhere, among all people.

Hutten: Nor am I unwilling to have their [enmity]. Would you wish anything different from me?

²⁶ Lit., 'to a bluish colour'.

The Bull: No, unless [I would wish] that you would leave me alone.

Hutten: Insolent thing, throwing so many useless obstacles in my way in a vital matter, be flogged!

The Bull: Where is my help, after so long? Where is piety? Where is religion? Here, as one can see, they revere Bulls less and less, very much less. Where is the traitor Eck, who led me here into evils, then abandoned me? Help me, Christians!

Hutten: They will not: for they know you deserve ill from Christ, ill from religion and faith.

The Bull: Come here, pious folk, hear me, Germans, if Christ would hear you.

Hutten: They will not: for they prefer to be free.

The Bull: They are blessed who help me.

Hutten: They don't seem too sure. Here, have a blow between the shoulders!

The Bull: Bring aid, Germans, among whom Bulls have always been celebrated!

Hutten: But now they are odious, and aggressive enemies.

The Bull: Which absolutely astonishes me: for now I see, averting their gaze, those to whom *we* were once eyes: thus did they then revere us. They still thought that, so to speak, to live without us was not to live, and so they paid a high price.

Hutten: Now the situation is different, for those folk - whose 'eyes' you once were - were at that time without eyes of their own. In that situation they were content to use them to suit you. Now they have nothing to do with medicine acquired from strangers, and have themselves restored their eyes to health - and they use them for themselves.

The Bull: May the gods treat that medicine ill, through which we are now prohibited from hospitality and deserted by help.

Hutten: May the gods treat the shameful crime of you Bulls far worse. You seek hospitality from those you are preparing to harm, and now you dare to speak evil about good things while I am present.

The Bull: So granted that you see me as someone of consequence, who are you, by whom I am not permitted to speak as I wish?

Hutten: I am the one who will thrash you. So much for you!

The Bull: Perish, wretched creature, perish three and then four times! You who touch a Bull, advised by the devil, be anathema, again and again.

Hutten: You be a true Bull, and be flogged, again and again.

The Bull: Son of Satan!

Hutten: Vain breath of utter in consequence, take that!

The Bull: As far as I can see, today I am exchanging fruitful blows for fruitless words.

Hutten: And what do you want more, than to be at peace? Had you stayed in Rome, you would have avoided misfortune.

The Bull: But I shall be at peace when Leo X dictates it.

Hutten: I am not at all interested in what he might dictate. I personally forbid you to be moved a finger's breadth from here. Thus am I in command and so do I order. Unless you obey, I shall reluctantly allow you, well beaten, to be *completely* at peace, although it pleases me to make sport of you with blows like this.

The Bull: But it does not please me. Search for another to make sport of ; I am not your plaything. But come, tell, do you despise the authority of Leo X?

Hutten: Not so much the Tenth, as the ten called Leo, if they govern unjustly.

The Bull: Get away from me right now, right now. Don't you hear this?

Hutten: First I shall smite you with disaster and injury, you peddler of trifles, you robber, you pernicious creature, you exporter of good things.

The Bull: So where are you, pious Germans, religious citizens? Where are the crowds of brothers, the guard always faithful to the Roman pontiff? Where are the little God-fearing women,²⁷ our own people, the faithful sex? Where are the courtesans who support Bulls? Where are you who were accustomed to throw handfuls of money at Bulls and sellers of Bulls? At least defend me now from this tyrant.

Hutten: I told you, now they have eyes of their own, they do not seek abroad, they spend less by far. Nor do they listen to you shouting aloud like this, being wonderfully illuminated with understanding, to such an extent that, in place of the superstition which you have poured out, they have clothed themselves in the true faith, and know that they should cultivate piety in place of idolatry. Nevertheless, you will not shout anything: I still forbid it.

The Bull: Will you not even permit my pain to be expressed aloud?

Hutten: I shall not permit it.

The Bull: Why this injustice?

²⁷ *Mulierculae*, a word normally used in pity or contempt.

Hutten: It is actually great justice, for the sick and the old are sleeping nearby, and you awaken them with this shouting at me, which no one dared among your fellow bulls in Rome. Thus do they wish to go peacefully to sleep, and rest free from all noise, those courtesans of the world, on whom all things turn, maintaining the youthful age of a vigorous man through niceties, softness and destruction.

The Bull: Oh, that they might discover your daring in raising your hand to me!

Hutten: Then would they do something significant?

The Bull: Something suitable for you.

Hutten: Would that they could, indeed! For I, who treat you ill as you deserve, merit good treatment.

The Bull: Then answer me this: do you allow me to return whence I have come?

Hutten: I do not allow it without your first being ill treated.

The Bull: And does anyone else come with blows, from which I have almost perished?

Hutten: Others are bringing them.

The Bull: What others? I'd love you to tell me what others here would dare such villainy.

Hutten: Oh, others. How often shall I say that your eyes here are no longer ours?

The Bull: For that reason we will be flogged – because there is no use for us?

Hutten: On the contrary, because there can be an *abuse* of you: on which account we have all joined together here, to stab however many of you foreign interlopers promise us light, for you cover us with unrelieved darkness, and you deceive life, since you are, at best, the creators of wicked death. But now it is a long time since you received any blows, so hold still.

The Bull: Alas, alas, oh, alas!

Hutten: This is how things are best done: you shouting, and me flogging.

The Bull: If only this matter would come before Leo.

Hutten: Well, you won't take it to him, as you'll die here from being flogged.

The Bull: Christians, help me!

Hutten: They do not hear you.

The Bull: But they used to listen. What will I do now, wretched creature?

Hutten: This, which you deserve: you will be flogged!

The Bull: Thrice sacrilegious! Is there any limit to your killing?

Hutten: Thrice poisonous! Is there any limit to your ill speaking?

The Bull: But speaking ill is characteristic of bulls in this place, and it has been for a long time.

Hutten: And characteristic of us to kill [them] here, and so it will always be.

The Bull: Oh, hospitable Germany, things are not as I had understood them – for you have received me badly today!

Hutten: As indeed you deserve. And what would you do with me, if you had me at Rome?

The Bull: I would do something serious.

Hutten: I know both what you are instructed to buy here, and which men you would wish to be on sale.

The Bull: I intend no such thing towards *you*, but I will make you a bishop, if you let me go.

Hutten: But I do not want to be a bishop, nor will I let you go from here, where you have the hospitality you deserve.

The Bull: Nevertheless, let me go!

Hutten: That is impossible.

The Bull: You do not know how deeply you are entangling yourself in trouble.

Hutten: But I'll disentangle myself later. Be flogged!

The Bull: I wish to escape from you today, unless there is no help anywhere which can sustain me against such an enemy as you.

Hutten: There is none.

The Bull: Who knows, when I begin to deal with this matter in earnest, and offer rewards to men who stir themselves?

Hutten: Then be beaten in earnest.

The Bull: May the gods destroy you, scoundrel, miserable ruin! And where at this moment are the innumerable courtesans, who might drag this person to Rome, bound all in chains?

Hutten: Here are innumerable blows, which will make you keep quiet. Take that!

The Bull: Impious, criminal, desperate creature!

Hutten: Take that!

The Bull: Does anyone dare to oblige Leo X with his service?

Hutten: No one dares, and so I will beat you. Pay attention to me!

The Bull: Oh pious folk, oh Christians, does anyone dare to guard the daughter of Leo, and to cut this scoundrel's throat with impunity, justly accepting as a reward from Leo a sum amounting to five thousand ducats from the papal treasury, and a benefice - with no obligation to carry out its duties - which is worth three hundred pieces of gold? And to have full remission of all sins, and indulgences of two thousand years, and fifty-six *carenas*, and be a Protonotary, and have the right to legitimise bastards, and to create Counts Palatine? And to be allowed to commit a mortal sin once every day, and to be excused from confession for a full seven years, and thereafter to confess only once in any period of seven years? What? No, it will be enough for him to confess just once in his entire life, and again at the point of death.

Then again, if he does not aspire to the priesthood, he will be allowed to take a stepdaughter, granddaughter or cousin as his wife; and if he has taken an oath, whatever kind it was, he need not keep it; and if he has begun something abominable, this can be completed as he wishes. Still more, if you are excommunicated and made anathema, for whatever reason, for whatever evil deed, according to the law, holy writ, or broad human experience, if you commit incest or adultery, defiling virgins or ravishing married women, if you commit perjury or murder, or abandon religion time and again, if you are condemned by all as a killer of priests, and as a transgressor against all men and divine law, may you be absolved and innocent. If you have stolen holy objects or despoiled temples, you will be allowed to enjoy these things forever, and there will be no compulsion to give them back.

Listen, wherever you are, despisers of God and partakers in all human affairs: a little trouble here will allow you to escape the filth of the biggest and worst crimes, yes, through the murder of this creature, which anyone is allowed to commit with impunity. Whatever the enormity of the crime, however unheard of the deed, however unbelievably wicked, listen, Germans, even in my sister the Bull *Caenae Domini*,²⁸ if anyone has committed that which ought to be reserved for the throne of the apostle, and for which the performance of public penance is a requirement, who has behaved in a way contrary to the rules of the chancellor, in whatever way and to whatever extent, whether spiritual or secular, this is the way for him to be redeemed, this is the means of being well again. Let whatever burdensome vow you have made be lifted, I

²⁸ Also known as *In Coena Domini*, this Bull was published every Maundy Thursday, and contained the names of those excommunicated for various offences. Here, the Bull promises escape from those penalties.

shall take away the trouble. This is not simply on my own account [without conditions], but if you kill this creature, I promise that this is the way for you to be blessed. However, this will be done by a certain sister of mine, who will immediately follow me.

Liberty: Do you not hear that what he seeks is another Bull? This one has promised that it is about to bring great turmoil; and he will do it through snares, for whenever there is an opportunity, he will act against you.

Hutten: And I would not have it otherwise.

Liberty: Bravo for your courage, if indeed you will endure it!

The Bull: But if anyone actually does this, he deserves all these things. Come, Saxons, and commit yourselves to our service in this business; if you will do it, the hungry man will be fed on butter every day, and on birds' eggs, if he likes, and get drunk on beer twice a day. Come, Poles, who I believe are by no means far away, for if you help me, you will be permitted to steal in perpetuity. Hear me, all those of ill repute, that you, the sellers of holy offices, might be restored, that you, moneylenders and plunderers, might come back, that you might do evil as you wish without it being a crime.

Hutten: It is time for you to be flogged!

The Bull: You are already dead, miserable creature.

Hutten: You will still be flogged. Just look at you!

The Bull: Woe is me! Help me, sheep of Christ!

Hutten: They hear no voice but the shepherd's. Be flogged!

The Bull: Aid me, lay people!

Hutten: They would beat you more powerfully. Look at you!

The Bull: Is there anyone who dares to kill this sacrilegious, lying, excommunicate, unmanageable man, this son of Satan, with poison or a sword -

Hutten: Bravo! For that, be flogged.

The Bull: - directly or indirectly, publicly or secretly, himself or through another, even in a sacred place?

Hutten: Very good Latin, but take innumerable blows in the meantime.

The Bull: Why are you killing me?

Hutten: For the reason you see.

The Bull: Will you ever stop?

Hutten: When you have paid your debt. Take that!

The Bull: Alas, alas!

Hutten: Be still.

The Bull: O, alas!

Hutten: Be still.

The Bull: Have pity! Have compassion!

Hutten: Will you be tamed in this way?

The Bull: Why would I not be tame when enfeebled by your blows? I am neither dead nor alive. Indeed, look at the wound you have inflicted. [I call upon] canon and papal law, and extraordinary papal decrees!

Hutten: Why shout more loudly? Did I not forbid it just now, because of the elderly?

The Bull: But the pain drives me to forget both those old men and even my own business.

Hutten: Even so, be flogged: for why have you chosen to call upon those trifling things, those papal decrees, as more powerful than law and justice?

The Bull: O, [I call upon] law and justice, then!

Hutten: Be still.

The Bull: Even now?

Hutten: Even now, because there could be no greater law and justice than for you to be well flogged.

The Bull: Oh inescapable misery, these blows are killing me! Run to the deserter Eck, who inflicted these woes on me!

Hutten: It is truly astonishing that you, who can do everything, cannot arrange for me to tear at you here with fewer blows. Furthermore, indeed, how can you be terrified of wounds, when you are immortal?

The Bull: But I am not [immortal], and I have wrongly believed myself to be.

Hutten: It is becoming clear to me what you are. This is a kindness from me to you, but still be flogged.

The Bull: Stop, out of whatever you have that passes for charity, I beg you. See, I hold out my right hand to you. You have won; use me and command me.

Hutten: Why would I use you? I shall give you up to death, contemptible creature.

The Bull: Now, at last, I am wretched: for I came here so that I could rule, but it is not even permitted that I should successfully plead for my life. All my arts have availed me nothing, all my brilliant artifices have crumbled: so according to your laws, give me peace.

Hutten: It is impossible for there to be peace between me and Bulls.

The Bull: But in the end, grant mercy to a supplicant.

Hutten: As for those who wander carelessly into error, we free men grant mercy to them, but not to those who sin maliciously and voluntarily.

The Bull: But now I shall not sin any more.

Hutten: That is certain, for before you can sin again, you will die.

The Bull: Conquer your instincts, you who conquer Bulls.

Hutten: I will certainly thoroughly subdue *you*.

The Bull: Have mercy on one who has already been punished enough by you, and she will never stray again.

Hutten: I learned long ago what trust one may put in Bulls, and therefore it is certain that you will be killed here.

The Bull: Show mercy!

Liberty: You [addressing Hutten] have shown mercy, I guarantee it. And while you will not kill it, it will now cease to be.

Hutten: Do you think so?

Liberty: I know, because it is so excessively puffed up, that it must inevitably burst and be ripped apart. Leave it a while – it will very soon creak.

The Bull: Leave me, and be persuaded.

Hutten: I shall not leave it.

The Bull: The Fuggers will give you money on my behalf, several thousand [ducats].

Hutten: The Fuggers' money, if you are promising this, will infuriate me more than anything hitherto, for it is wickedly acquired.

The Bull: Then there is one protection in the courtesans, if, as I very much hope, they will help me against you, and now, unless everyone deceives me, I see it hastening towards me. It is speedily driven: soon I shall deal with you on more equal terms.

Hutten: Oh, really?

The Bull: Yes. But do you not see that infinite numbers are running to this place, who will free me from you?

Hutten: I see something.

The Bull: They are rushing here from a great distance, just as if they were fleas. Indeed, look how the ants are preparing, and are more and more conspicuous. From a distance, those who hasten have the appearance of thieves: I see evil approaching you: my hope is that strength has been gathered, as a result of which the prayer and pleading of justice and good will accomplish nothing before I can. Well done, well done!

Hutten: Stand against them, you who are free, stand, my fellow men! The common cause is moving forward, it is debated in public places, this war is blazing up. Stand with me, whoever wishes to be free! Here let great good, and much of it, be bought, here let the masters be driven out, here let servitude be banished. Where, in this place, are my fellow free men, since they are not entirely non-existent? And where are the fine men, those great names among mankind? Where are you, leaders of the people? Will you not come hither, and with me free your one united country from this plague? Is there no one here who can help? One who is ashamed of oppression, and wants to be free? In short, is there anyone who has testicles and might be a man? Where are you who recently attacked the Turks? As if the hosts of Germany are not greater than impious Bulls! They have heard me: I see a hundred thousand men, and in the lead my host Franz [von Sickingen]: thanks be to the gods! Germany has looked to itself and wants to be free. Now how does it seem to you, creature of Leo?

The Bull: I have never before seen so many mortal men gather together.

Hutten: An adversary which is enough for your courtesans?

The Bull: A great deal more than enough, for I perceive them melting away, and the stragglers long since in flight.

Hutten: But *they* are not fleeing. Instead, the Emperor Charles approaches, and all his princes around him. This assembly gladdens me; the German cause is advanced. I shall appeal to them. Princes and men of Germany, I have had a fight with this Bull. Since it had come hither to crush our liberty, in great and small ways and

through the infliction of great terror, it has been restrained by me, up to the point where I stand here before you. And on that account I plead through love of our common country, that you will no longer allow this nation to be the subject of mockery for the city of Rome. For so is it held by this Bull, with the result that there is fear of what all later Bulls to cross the Alps may do. They would see Germany's vigorous but sleeping strength worn away: lend your strength to this argument.

Franz von Sickingen: I entreat you, princes and men of Germany, if I may advise you as to what is necessary, kindly give this task to me, and do not be unwilling to hear me. A great window is open, through which we may obtain our liberty. Let us go through! The opportunity is at hand – let us seize it! This is one of the Bulls which we have long endured, to our great inconvenience. They are enticements and allurements through which, for so many years now, the city of Rome has cheated our hearts, through which it has led us as it pleases, since it sends taught doctrines in place of those given [by God]. It lays traps for our liberty, invents, fabricates, plots, feigns, and threatens, through which it takes anything which can be provided here for its own extravagance and indulgence. For thus do those [Romans] live in the meantime, so that rumour of them is abhorrent to godly ears. You have not heard so much about ancient, civilised [Rome], but, immortal gods, some of you have seen the recent, new one: such a heap of such crimes.

God was unjust in destroying Sodom and Gomorrah, if he spares the people of Rome, in comparison with whose depravity they [the people of Sodom and Gomorrah] were

very moderate.²⁹ And that need not be pointed out here, when we see that they regard all sacred and profane things as items to be bought and sold; always making more agreements, and breaking them immediately when a crack [in the terms] is discovered (or not discovered): so often is it a matter of making a profit with impulsive greed. And they are not inclined to set limits to that plundering of theirs, since in former times [limits] were often used up before being set. They have sent new spies here, who have played a clever trick with our minds, through which we have been robbed of our gold. Nor have they left any silver remaining here. Wherefore we shall try to achieve what it has so far been impossible to achieve: let us take care of our own, and not be complacent men. When we send so much money so often, we stir up considerably more [trouble], with that subjection and guilelessness of ours making them greedier every day and desirous of more that is ours. In this decline of ours, dare this much. Let this be my own promise, thus may Christ give me success in those things for which I prepare, so that I shall avoid no labour, nor ever cease, until I have seen a result, namely that there is no profit in Germany for the insatiable courtesans, the Roman criminals. These great things [must be achieved] with many deeds: words will not suffice.

The Bull: You have heard this babblers, Germans, who can make no coherent argument.³⁰ It is now almost an uncountable number of years since we took the law in this place for ourselves, and yet hope has come to the impious that a new order of things will be introduced. And so that they might be able to bring this about, it was fitting that they keep the fame of their country always in their minds, lest it be

²⁹ Genesis 19. Sodom and Gomorrah were two cities destroyed by God as a punishment for their wickedness.

³⁰ Lit., 'appears neither an end nor a beginning'.

obscured by an evil deed. And it is right to warn you, lest as a result of this new shame you permit your most ancient reputation for religion and piety to be defiled. Indeed, it is Leo's expectation that he will have obedient sheep here; and therefore the shepherd very much pleases himself about you. And he has ordered me, in travelling hither, to celebrate with praise this of all nations, which has always been purely devoted to the seat of the Apostle. And yet today he [Hutten] has impeded this task of mine. So this man, my 'host', has cruelly used me, and unless you are not at all what we think of as supporters of Rome, you will deal with those deeds with fitting punishment. For I say to you, Caesar [Charles V], that I want to know what [message] I shall take from you to Leo X: shall he not have a compliant son?

Charles: If indeed the father is [compliant] himself.

Hutten: Why do you set out to pervert our young Emperor, you great mass of crimes, who should rightly be pierced through immediately on behalf of this Liberty, so that we may help it by oppressing you?

Liberty: I said it was the case that this creature was rattling with unrestrained anger and puffed up ambition. So it has proved. Wherefore, Germans, I warn you, that you should either go a good distance from here, or protect yourselves with medicine of some kind against this very poisonous creature which will blow its breath from this explosion: for the bull is not entirely empty.

Hutten: This advice is necessary and by no means carelessly given: on which account, come, Stromer, Ebellus et Coppus, this task is requested of you: *δοτε προφυλαχτικον τι*, by which this may be anticipated and evil forestalled.³¹

Stromer: Take something: although, take what? Eat the seed of a garden turnip, well soaked in parsley juice, and keep the remains of the root in your mouth.

Liberty: This is what the Bull has done: it has burst open down the middle. Indeed, behold the great heap of evils which has resulted from that [bursting]: the deadliest poisons by far. But let us see what kind they are.

Hutten: This is Treachery, the well-known disgrace of the courtesans. This is wretched Ambition. Moreover, behold Avarice revealed here, even now almost empty, although it has been filled up from us so many times. And their handmaidens, wonderfully meaningless things: Indulgences. And here is Embezzlement, and next to it Injustice and Rapacity, and Perjury is held in respect by them; indeed, with just as much rejoicing the Priesthood praises pride, and the artificial sanctity of the Papacy, and Hypocrisy, which must be worshipped. And here are Superstition, Pretence and Dissembling, and Artifice of many kinds, and all types of Fraud, and Glory and Ostentation, all things which are in every way abominable and whose appearance should be shunned, Extravagance, Drunkenness, Intoxication, and Appetite in all its forms. It was necessary for this bull to be broken up, as it was able for too long to contain so many vices. And because it deserved to die, it is right to look to your own

³¹ 'Provide some other medicine'. The identity of Ebellus and Coppus is unclear, but they were probably physicians with whom Hutten was acquainted. Stromer was a physician who treated Albrecht of Mainz and with whom Hutten corresponded (see chapter four).

responsibilities, Germans, so that all the courtesans who recently claimed this thing as free, and energetically desired its good health, may be entirely destroyed. Put this into action, and be free. I shall bury the bull here, and on its tomb will be the inscription:

Here lies the rash Etruscan bull of Leo,

Which, as it wished for others, delivered itself to be put to death.

Appendix III

Monitor Primus: Monitor I

A Dialogue by Hutten

Participants: Monitor and Luther¹

Monitor: And now I shall remove myself from these factions, and shall take refuge somewhere where division no longer means disgrace.

Luther: Tell me, which factions do you mean?

Monitor: Why, yours.

Luther: Mine, really? But [the practice of] making factions among men and setting Christ apart has long been alien to me.

Monitor: Nevertheless, factions are arising, in a great rebellion. For those who listen to your teaching are called *Lutherans*, and are considered separate from those who do not belittle the rank of the Roman Pope, as you do, but who acknowledge his authority.

¹ It seems natural to retain the word *Monitor* in the translation. There is no single equivalent English word, but a conventional translation would be 'one who offers reminders' or 'an orator's assistant'. It can also mean 'adviser' or 'instructor'. In this dialogue, and in *Monitor II*, Monitor fulfils both roles, giving Luther an opportunity to state his views and advising him on what he should do. See chapter

Luther: In fact, I do not seek in any way for you, or anyone else, to go by that name. On the contrary, I firmly object to it, for it is my task to make *Christians*.

Monitor: Then you will do it without me. For from this day onwards, I shall send you away, never listening to you again, and I shall have nothing to do with you.

Luther: My very dear friend, why have you changed so suddenly? But first tell me, why is it a disgrace to be lumped together with Luther? And into what faction does he lead you?

Monitor: It is the disgrace of heresy, and it is abominable and horrible. Moreover, it renders all those who follow you hostile to the Roman Pontiff, who is very dangerous. Yes, he can crush and scatter all your learning with the single thunderbolt of excommunication, and indeed, he is already threatening it. For that reason we must dissociate ourselves from you in time, if we want to be saved.

Luther: But where are men claiming this?

Monitor: They are constantly claiming it in public places, partly out of fear of him whom no one thinks it safe to offend, and even partly out of weariness of you, for they smile less and less upon your warning. Nor do men now receive it gladly, as they did a little while ago, and so the vital thing which separates me from you changes me to this extent: that I shall regard any new teachings of yours as trifles. For what is not

changed by the things you proclaim, summoning the Church back from its present splendour to these filthy old ideas? When the world yields to the Pope, you alone dissent? Besides, you preach many things which are inconsistent with any sense of propriety.

Luther: The originator [of an idea] is, at first, reported in a superficial way. So appropriate understanding is not instantly accorded to him by good men. Indeed, you know that infamy commonly turns into fame, and that the greatest virtue when faced with evil is to strive after virtue, and not to be deterred from that endeavour even by imputed disgrace. So I am not doing what you think. Instead, I am taking you from squalor to brilliant splendour, leading you from shadows into the light, and lifting you from the mire into a seat of gold.

Monitor: How can you prove that?

Luther: Like this: I tell you to observe the truth, and to follow Christ, and to devote yourself inwardly to divine commands, so that you may less regard the traditions of men in which you are wholly absorbed, and not move by so much as a hair, however necessary an opponent might declare it, and however great the labour [he expends] to recover you. In short, I am your mentor, and I am teaching you this so that you may be a Christian freely. And if there is anyone who interprets these things as trifles, you know that he has no rational purpose, nor does he bless you, as he follows a different path, and more likely seduces you into error and ruins you. You, however, who recently showed such spirit – do you not call filthy those things which

defile the spirit far more? [I mean] avarice and profit, extravagance and appetite, which those [acquaintances] of yours follow and revere in place of divine commands.

Monitor: Yet the Pope still avows the truth and works with Christ. But because of that, he lives closer to Him than you and everyone else, for he is also the Vicar [of Christ], and possesses – poured into him – all of His strength, and performs his duties with a power equal to His. Indeed, why is it so important to be a ‘Christian’, while he himself can make people blessed, so that those who cling to him cannot stray? He who is in agreement with Christ is able to arrange matters as he wishes, while you are so twisted in narrow-mindedness that you dare not look back even a little from the Gospel.

Luther: It is in no way insignificant to be the Vicar of Christ, but he will be judged on his merits, and not by his ambition and the title which he assumes. And if you are to assert that he is entitled to it, your task will be to renew² the entire Papacy, and [to do it] in no other way than that which I have described to you. For I am tangled in constrictions, but somehow I shall restore this religion - [which is] ensnared with confining boundaries, so thoroughly imprisoned behind bars, beaten down in an astonishing variety of ways and suppressed with rules, long subject to the most superstitious rituals – to that freedom given by Christ, and I shall return it from its hellish imprisonment to a better state. But will you now explain to me, when that contract was made between the Roman Pope and Christ?

² *de integro formare*, with an implication of purity.

Monitor: Why, as to that, when the Saviour Himself granted Peter the right both of binding as he wished and of unbinding as seemed right, and when He gave the keys with which to unlock Heaven to him whom He favoured.³

Luther: I do not deny that He did indeed give this to Peter, but in truth it was not for him alone: for He gave it equally to the remaining apostles. But if He did give it to him alone, how does it come to this Florentine?

Monitor: Well, to be sure, [it passes] to whomever is the legitimate heir and successor in power.

Luther: So Leo X is Peter's heir, and by what law?

Monitor: [He is his heir] because he is the Pope, and sits in Rome, and bears the highest rank among bishops.

Luther: Nothing like Peter, for he did not exploit his rule over his fellow apostles, nor did God permit anything of the kind to priests or bishops. From the beginning up to the present day, He has appointed priests and separated them from other men. He said, 'Thou [shalt not] have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance'.⁴ Therefore, how much less would he permit this when all things are now changed, so that the priesthood is already universal? For as many of us are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, are the heirs of God and the co-heirs of Christ.

³ See Matthew 16 v 19.

⁴ Numbers 18 v 20, in which God addresses Aaron as His priest.

Indeed, [is it not true that], in dying, Peter relinquished the inheritance – he who in living relinquished everything he owned for Christ's sake?

And why should I go to Rome, which you set up as the mistress and queen of those whom Christ has set free? Rather, you should realise that the apostles' successors in power are none other than those who have imitated their way of life. And having understood that, if anyone should happen to be separated from the Church, he should remember that he does not succeed kings or princes but shepherd apostles, and not in wealth or power but in the grace given by God, in the proclamation of evangelical truth and in the service of his brothers. For this succession certainly lies in burdens, not in honours, in work and labour, not in power and tyranny: for the power of Christians lies not so much at Rome, but wherever apostolic virtue can be attributed to bishops. Whoever is endowed with this, can be said to be Peter's successor, even if he has never seen Rome – and whoever he may be, he will not rule worldly governments, but will organise the labours of apostleship.

For in a man who (because it is easy for anyone who is very wicked and very ambitious and therefore completely foreign to Christ's rule of life) would usurp kingdoms and overthrow sovereignties, meanwhile grasping after the grace given to the apostles, in pride and high rank,⁵ in riches and extravagance, among swords and axes, arrows and cannon, in war and carnage, in fury and rage, what insanity is it to wish to be regarded as Peter's successor and the Vicar of Christ, when he is engaged upon none of Christ's business and does not even think about Peter's? Do you know by what other means power is handed down to become an inheritance as if given by Christ?

Monitor: What do *you* require *me* to know, you who are visibly ignorant that the early Church was something different, in which [ideas] were limited to the understanding of the time, and now [we have] another, triumphal, Church, which is appropriately filled with every splendour and glory?

Luther: The Church of Christ was always one, and will be hereafter. So that you might not be ignorant of what it means to be triumphal: for apostles, to triumph has long meant to suffer injustice. The real glory of bishops is as Paul described: to wrong no man, to corrupt no man, to defraud no man,⁶ but, as he said, quite the reverse: ‘We should glory in the Cross of our Lord’.⁷

Monitor: What are you saying? That the office of the highest of shepherds is not to increase his flock, to teach it obedience, which is more than sacrifice, to afflict it with cares and to torment it with anxiety, so that he can carry on the business of the Church in the severest way?

Luther: Yes it is, as you properly perceive: for the increase of souls in Christ’s flock is, to him, a way of making money. Because the man at the centre of this is rightly said to advance the boundaries of the faith – but if anyone claimed to be doing this, and was in fact advancing them to collect money and to usurp power, you would know that he was not an apostle of Christ, but a subverter of true Christians. And Paul rightly warned about such persons. ‘But what I do,’ he said, ‘that I *will* do, that I may

⁵ *Purpura* or ‘the purple’ – a reference to Ancient Rome which seems much more typical of Hutten than of Luther.

⁶ See II Corinthians 7 v 2.

⁷ A shortened version of Galatians 6 v 14

cut off occasion from them which desire occasion, that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. For such are the false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ'.⁸ And indeed the obedience which you mention, is not what is enacted by the Roman Pope today, but that of which it is said, 'We ought to obey God rather than men'.⁹

Beyond this, the office of the highest pontiff, if anyone can be called that at this time, is to care for Christ's sheep. Moreover, this depends on him: to lead by example, to reveal (himself) by his deeds, to intercede for the people with God through pious prayers, to explain doctrine, to motivate with encouragement, to guard zealously and attentively against any of his flock being lost, to use all his strength to stand in the way of any who might wander. But he cannot exercise this care, unless he loves Christ so much that he dares to say, in a declaration of devotion, 'You know, Lord, that I love you'¹⁰ – so that you might not think that those who love money are entitled to be bishops.

Monitor: But our Roman already knows this, and I don't think he opposes what you are saying, but if he were to allow himself to slacken as a result, or to indulge others, he would consider himself to be making allowances which are outside his power.

Luther: And this is why he hates those of us who guard the truth, because he silently knows many things. Sometimes he makes a show of approval with words, but resists with his actions: for if you were to examine both Peter as he lived and the bishops as they live today, you would say that you had learnt of no two things of

⁸ II Corinthians 11 v 12-13

greater contrast. For tell me this, does Leo X preach the Gospel, and does he proclaim the Kingdom of God among the people?

Monitor: What, the Pope should do this, with thousands of Brothers running about who could be employed for such tasks?

Luther: But he should not be judged superior to these Brothers or to any other Christian, for any reason except that he does these tasks better than anyone else. Nor should a ruler of bishops have a reputation for idleness, but for business and labour, as he considers more attentively, manages more carefully, guards more zealously, and, like an anxious shepherd, protects and defends the flock entrusted to him with vigilance, care, hard work and every effort. For it is not the business of a bishop to throw this care back onto some hired servants, but to organise the episcopate, and he had renounced this duty.

Monitor: So you do not want the highest [bishop] to be capable of more than other bishops everywhere?

Luther: If he could indeed be called the 'highest', I should want more; but it would be that he could do more for the souls of the faithful, which need to be helped, not that he should be honoured by the heavily burdened Christian people. And indeed, a particularly distinguished bishop should take greater care - since he knows that he is the steward of something unworldly - that he suitably fulfills his office and restores order to affairs in the presence of the strict judge, who will certainly praise such a

⁹ Acts 5 v 29 (the words of Peter and the apostles)

trusty man and hold him in high esteem. Indeed, he will set aside the man who has fallen short of his duty through laziness and extravagance, and appoint him his share with the unbelievers.¹¹

Listen well, because this concerns Peter's successors, such as he wished to be fellow priests and successors: 'Feed the flock of Christ which is among you, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock'.¹²

Monitor: I am right to flee from you, so foolish is your teaching.

Luther: But you will not flee, if you wish to follow Christ. Now tell me again, two years ago did Leo X kill both his brother cardinals, and in the (Urbinesi bello) squander many souls, without saving any in turn, in order to make his little grandson a prince?

Monitor: In your ignorance of all things, you fail to see that he daily blesses many people with the indulgences which he sends out into the world.

Luther: I see him sending these things out continually; but how can it be inferred that he is achieving anything towards the blessing of souls, when he began this not for that purpose, but for the acquisition of money? And if it were not so, and if he were not seeking his own wealth from that source, nevertheless it would not be right to think him able to do this [i.e. bless with indulgences] before he had given

¹⁰ See John 21 v 15.

¹¹ See Luke 12 v 46.

¹² I Peter 5 v 2-3. The Authorised Version is used here except for two changes made by Hutten: the substitution of 'Christ' for 'God' and the omission of a short phrase.

proof of his virtues through his deeds, so that he could be believed to be entering into the ranks of the blessed. I willingly pass over many things concerning Leo, and I am as sparing as possible about his life. Indeed, I am astonished at men who place the safety of their well-being in donations [indulgences], which encourage the cessation of good works, although they know that faith without good works is dead. For if you are really of the opinion that buying up indulgences from the Pope brings salvation, just as those who are sent here to sell them claim, there would be no great point in loving God and one's neighbour, harming nobody, doing good to many, causing no injury, offering protection, aiding the weak, helping the burdened, assisting those without means, sharing anything with the poor, mortifying the body with hard work and vigils, weakening oneself with fasting, testing oneself with self-denial, and finally to live in the strictest abstinence. There would be no great point, because it would be permissible [to live] in leisure and idleness, sluggishness and slothfulness, in drunkenness and inebriation, excess and delights, in anger and hatred, arrogance and pride, robberies and pillage, madness and slaughter. In short, to be blessed by an attack on evil works is the same as [to be blessed] by indulgences purchased with money. And then it would be easy for the Fuggers to be in first place among the saved, for they have more than enough, with which they earn [salvation] over and over again.¹³ By this arrangement the Kingdom of Heaven, promised by Christ to the poor, would be unjustly snatched away, and transferred to those who have so often been condemned to separation from it: the rich and to those devoted to pleasure. And do you believe that such filthy trading, such fraudulent deceits, can in any way provide deliverance of souls? No, rather, shake off this useless notion from your mind, and show that you are reformed, so that you might understand that this is an

¹³ The Fugger bank in Rome grew greatly in resources and importance because of its role in

empty deceit through which pretence may be taken for the truth. Even one word from the Bull should have warned you: the subject-matter of which, being merely empty arrogance¹⁴ and able to be scattered wherever you please by the first lightest touch, tells us to what extent one should trust in Roman Bulls.

Monitor: With the best justification, many people are pursuing you with great hostility: first the Roman Pontiff, from whom you take away what is greatest about his power, then the Cardinals and protonotaries, and all that assembly of the Roman court, because it is supported by indulgences and those things which you likewise forbid to the gathering at Rome; after them poor clerks and copyists, who, unless they are occupied in the making of the Bull, must eventually go hungry.

Luther: How is that my fault? Can I give to this Pope what Christ has not given – no indeed, what He has actually taken away – by frequent warnings that piety can never be turned into profit? Moreover, what would be the loss to the Christian republic, if not even solace and convenience, if the whole rabble of that curia were greedy for less, but still perished from hunger? I may not teach anything other than what I learned from Christ my teacher, or what I understand to be beneficial to His Church.

Monitor: That is to your peril. But when you receive Bulls so disrespectfully, what will you do with decrees which are themselves a body of work fabricated from Bulls and from written papal decisions?

transferring revenues (especially from the sale of indulgences) from Germany to Rome. See Gilbert,

Luther: A great thing, if I could persuade the princes and the Christian people that they should be burned and utterly destroyed, and not only them, but the whole of papal law.

Monitor: What sin do I hear? You would destroy papal law?

Luther: Certainly, if I can.

Monitor: May the gods prevent you from achieving it. But what is the reason for [your objection to] so many sanctions of godly Popes, and so many decrees of holy men?

Luther: It is that they are traditions of men, and it is possible to live righteously without them and still be blessed. Moreover, if anyone looks more closely, they [the traditions] smell of money and taste of pomp. Nevertheless, they have also puffed themselves up above God's highest commands, and have taken upon their shoulders the insupportable burden of faith. And that which Christ promised as not only light but delightful, they have made heavier to the point of nausea and hatred. But answer me a third time: is it really of concern to Leo that he should watch over his flock? And does he intercede for the Church with God through constant prayers?

Monitor: He strives with the utmost vigilance, so that he might not fail his city of Rome or the holy curia there, for that concerns him closely. Then such is his goodness that he also wishes to give consideration to the whole world. But he prays

both night and day that you, who upset and disturb his peaceful, quiet sheepfold with rebellion and sedition, would be taken out of its midst and instantly done away with.

Luther: He does not keep watch properly, nor will he ever obtain what he prays for, because he should actively bear the interests of all Christians, and not pray so lazily for the Christian people's well-being. And it is ungodly and certainly against Christ's commands to wish for a man's estrangement and destruction, even one who deserves misfortune, because He prayed for His persecutors and ordered us to pray [for our persecutors] too.¹⁵ Rightly, therefore, in the light of all these considerations and judgements, you must decide this now: that either you will finally accept the Pope as coming from Christ, and, persuaded by these things, you now yield to him at once – as when Peter, asked for the third time, dared to avow his sincere and complete love of God,¹⁶ or that you take steps to be as far as possible from this position, the life of which does not fit with the customs and behaviour of the apostles.

Monitor: I shall have nothing to do with you; the matters you raise are so contrary.

Luther: But you do have something to do with me, if you are willing to listen.

Monitor: But I am afraid, because I know the future,¹⁷ that the more I listen to you the more I will fall into error.

¹⁴ Here 'arrogance' is rendered by *flatus* – a 'bubble'-type pun of the kind found in Bulla vel Bullicida.

¹⁵ See Matthew 5 v 44.

¹⁶ See John 21 v 17.

Luther: Ah, the road by which I take you leads not to error but to safety.

Monitor: I shall not follow, for there is another road which is much shorter, and by which walk the most holy Popes and by far the largest section of the Christian world, and it is possible to come through it to the same safety. Then if it is dangerous, the die can be better cast by many than by one or two.

Luther: Yet you do not want to die with those many: for I see you doing just this, as you are voluntarily putting yourself in danger. So stop, finally, and let me encourage you and still pray and implore by the body of Christ, that you will not allow yourself to be led astray. My labour has already borne much fruit elsewhere, and without [the company of] so many thousands, your little soul will profit from me.

Monitor: You cannot [profit my soul]: for another already possesses and holds it.

Luther: Who possesses it?

Monitor: It is at Rome. There is it held.

Luther: You have deposited a worthy possession in an unworthy place: it is destroyed.

Monitor: But I hope, myself, that it is made better.

¹⁷ Probably a reference to a theme repeated later in the dialogue – Monitor is mindful of the pursuit

Luther: Of the hope, I speak no blame; but so that you may quickly obtain you wish, claim back from the city the thing you left. It is not safe for souls to stay in Rome, for it is an abyss, which, while it always devours, even so is always hungry, and is never satisfied; it is a virago, a Charybdis which swallows and does not disgorge, and there souls are wretchedly caught and forever ensnared with ruinous bonds.¹⁸ Give back your soul to Christ, give it back, my friend!

Monitor: How often must I say, it is so that I might belong to Christ, that I am given to Rome?

Luther: You are mistaken. Here we shall not give you to that place. Here we shall deliver you to safety. Come, follow me. Follow me, and thus may you love and serve Christ!

Monitor: But the highest shepherd has already forbidden this, being ready to damn this little soul of mine – which you want to gain, I don't know how – by every means, if I have ever had dealings with you in any way.¹⁹ But how can I allow myself to be detained any longer, so as not to hear this, when I have come only to deliver a warning from myself and really want to part from you here?

Luther: Because I am listening attentively to you, and it is all right for you in turn to listen to me.

closing in on Luther following his rejection of the Bull.

¹⁸ Traditionally, a virago is a man-like woman, also scolding, bad-tempered and shrewish. Charybdis was a whirlpool on the coast of Sicily. Mythical references vary in content, but Hutten has in mind Homer's account, in which the personification of Charybdis lived under a fig-tree on a rock and, three times every day, drank and vomited up all the waters of the sea.

Monitor: To listen to what you have long been hammering away at with so many words? Even so, you should finally stop; although I am afraid that if you do not impoverish the Roman Pontiff, you will at some time reduce me to poverty in my turn by such persuasions.

Luther: You will not be made poor by me, indeed, for I have offered in my turn to enrich you with virtues; nor have I caused him [the Pope] to be poor and needy. So that you may understand: who can be called poor or destitute, if he behaves in accordance with these things I advocate? As he would then be with Christ for evermore, who could suffer hardship? Or have you not heard of the man who says, 'I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread'?²⁰

Monitor: And yet you do not wish him [the Pope] to have money?

Luther: Nor yet to wish for it.

Monitor: You want him to lack gold and clothes and jewels and such things?

Luther: What concern can he have with them, who, since he possesses more than the common people, ought to be dedicated to these [treasures] thus: to trample them underfoot, and to judge many [possessions] to be beneath him?

¹⁹ A reference to the contents of the Bull, which of course did not apply only to Luther, as Hutten

Monitor: So what are those things of which he may possess more than [other people] do?

Luther: He should have virtues, and he should consider his task to be the contemplation of divine matters.

Monitor: What do you know about virtue and divine matters? Money is needed for practical purposes, for splendour, for those things I just mentioned.

Luther: If you were to examine the matter carefully, you would say that it was not [needed], but you would hold such things superfluous to one who aspires to be perfect.

Monitor: And you would suggest to me a Pope without a court, without attendants? Nor would you want him to be surrounded by knights and footsoldiers for his defence?

Luther: First, what need is there of armed men for the defence of someone who certainly would not introduce such force for his own benefit, not even for defence, if it can be brought to him from elsewhere? For it is proper for him to fortify himself against that enemy of souls – the devil – with virtues, not with a breastplate and shield, with the Word of God, not with swords and spears. Furthermore, he who will always have plenty of ordinary people following him through proof of his virtues, will never lack a retinue.

knew to his own cost.

Monitor: And would you want bishops to be like that too?

Luther: Just like that.

Monitor: It would be shameful for the German nobility to support such poor masters.

Luther: But then the bishops would not be masters, but shepherds.

Monitor: I shall defeat you with a single comment: anyone who is appointed to be a shepherd is also entitled to rule.

Luther: There is an entitlement to rule, as you say, but [to rule] men's souls, lest they stray from the path of truth. Truly, worldly powers and temporary affairs and the care of matters which will soon perish, are things which a Christian bishop should inwardly consider irrelevant to him. Nor, indeed, if he is concerned with them, can he take care of those other matters.

Monitor: So you want me, too, to throw away my money, and to send away my horses and servants, so that naked I might seek heaven – which, in all this wandering, one may not easily find?

²⁰ Psalm 37 v 25 (Böcking wrongly claims Psalms 36 v 25).

Luther: Not at all: for the things I mentioned are [the attributes] of the perfect. If you are average, the way is still open for you to be saved. For Christ does not restrict this so narrowly that one should be absolutely virtuous in everything, but has limited this difficulty, and has promised a way to heaven after death which is gentler and easier to understand. So if you do not reach that state of perfection (to which you should aspire, no matter how much you achieve), those things are still enough for true blessedness. Therefore you may keep your money, and your servants and possessions, and it is still easy to be blessed, even for bishops. So indeed with these things, that to whatever degree people own them, let them always be ready to divide them up among the poor, but they may use them themselves so far as is necessary, without arrogance, without ostentation, but above all without injuring another.

However, it is a monstrous thing for a Christian bishop to be constrained by an eagerness for money, and to seize it through injustice and to waste it on luxury. Nor should he be proud in other respects, or beautify his own dwelling, or [seek to] attain desires of the flesh, or be held in fetters by worldly enticements. And how much less should he disturb the peace, wage war, commit carnage or ever be the instigator of carnage; indeed, should he not stand in the way of dissension, insurrections, wars and killings everywhere?

Monitor: But [having] such a bishop here would fill me with shame.

Luther: He would not fill you with shame, as soon as you had become used to him: for you know that there is a great difference between princes of the world and

shepherds of the Christian flock, and you accord both the place of honour which they deserve.

Monitor: You are suggesting a great change in things, which I do not think Germany is wide enough to hold.

Luther: It is wide enough for its means of deliverance.

Monitor: Nevertheless, you know that I will follow the safer path.

Luther: What kind is that?

Monitor: This kind: are you a Christian?

Luther: Yes, I can boast of that: for I consider it my one true glory.

Monitor: So is the Roman Pope. For he avows the Gospel as you do, and is the highest of those who do, for he is the Vicar of Christ, and he follows His commandments, Whose office he bears.

Luther: On which pretext he has led the world astray for so long, and deceived the eyes of the faithful. Or have countless Popes not ruled against the Gospel for many years now?

Monitor: Well, I don't know about that with any certainty, but I do know for sure that, in those matters in which they [the Popes] rule, I see the avowal of Christ and His authority extended to all, with everything being directed to this goal.

Luther: That is as if someone were to decorate lead with gold and sell it to you as gold; the same, indeed, as if someone concealed a deadly drug in an ivory container. For how can it move you, this name, this authority they put forward as a pretext for their rules, with which they advance the cause of money, no less – when they smell of profit, and taste completely of gain and greed? Because you would not see that, if [their] tradition were that of Christ.

Monitor: I think it is on this account that they are commonly saying that you support another kind of impiety, because you forbid generous contributions to churches, and it seems that you have written of the dutiful freedom Christ [bestows] on priests.²¹

Luther: They are right in what they say: for I do this of my own free will, and not without cause, since I see that what these men call 'piety' is two-faced impiety. For first they cheat free and legitimate heirs out of that which belongs to their country and is due to them, so as to enrich foreigners. Then they give to wicked men, so that what they spend on luxury is the support enabling them to pass wickedly through life.

Monitor: And do those who serve at the high altar not deserve a place at the high altar?

²¹ *Perhaps a reference to Luther's Freedom of a Christian (1520)? To be further investigated.*

Luther: They deserve one, but it is enough for this purpose that they live life honestly, not that they enrich themselves extravagantly. The task of the Church lies not in gold, unless it is in energetically distributing it among the poor. However, why do you want to pour it into churches? Leisurely canons and brothers will partly use it to support their luxury, and partly pile up splendid walls, [building] houses and villas, which will soon be ruined. Giving to the poor [however]: this is the true, living and immortal Church of Christ.

Monitor: Whatever sort of thing it is, I do not judge, nor do I dispute with it, and I maintain a neutral point of view in this. Truly, I prefer those Romans to your faction, because they follow that [route] which they can more easily bear, and they shrink less from public life. To be sure, it is permitted to have riches, and to use them, and to pass [the time] in luxury and to be amused in every way; because if anything stricter is prescribed, the shepherd himself is lenient, and remits [sins] – yet at the same time, he carries the world on his shoulders. And indeed, this is possible for the one to whom Christ grants the ability. For I declare that this is accepted, and I often see, far and wide, that if it pleases [someone] to commit a crime, the good and mild father, patient and forgiving in all things, is permitted to alleviate any unpleasant burden resulting from the hard yoke of Christ. [This is an advantage] which we would not have from you.

Luther: Well, how could I give you that which I do not possess, and what it is not for me to give? Or how could I justly give to you that which may be borne by no man? Why, indeed, was it necessary for [the Pope] that they should first make the law

of Christ heavier for him, and then make it lighter, unless there would be profit in it for him? Should I, indeed, promise you heaven no matter how you live, when I cannot guarantee it, and when no [such promise] is within the power of men, and definitely not of those who offer it to you so freely? But, if the ability to grant you all the liberties of evil were given into the hand[s] of good men, they would not wish to do so, out of love and respect for the good God. Nor, if you wish to be good, will you ever seek it.

Monitor: Nevertheless, if I seek it, I will have what he [the Pope] provides – so it is his fault that I am allowed to sin, if fault there is.

Luther: Which you should not want to be permitted. Do you think, however, that if you fail like this through the fault of others - thereby unburdening yourself of some of the fault - it would be helpful to you to rely upon their judgement, when it is up to you to live according to your conscience? Why, do you not know that at the Last Judgement you will give the reason for all of your words, not to mention all of your works, and do you think that he who now so impudently promises you everything will wipe out any [sin]?

Monitor: That is exactly what I think.

Luther: And one will suffice, to answer for thousands? For he will have to stand for the others, to whom he has at some time promised the same.

Monitor: He will certainly do it, freeing everyone from any sort of punishment.

Luther: Then in what great error has Christ spoken, and so many very learned and holy men written, if this one thing is sufficient to solve every difficulty, and to remove every division. Why are we constrained in our actions by so many precepts, if Christ's intention was to leave someone after him as the single Vicar, on whom everyone's deeds should hang? As he once said of the Holy Ghost, 'He shall teach you all things', so he should have said of that Vicar when ascending to heaven, 'He shall reign over you all, do whatever he commands, flee from what he forbids'. Do you see which one you are following?²²

Monitor: An error, or so you believe, but he [the Pope] would have been aware of it.

Luther: *You* are aware of it, indeed, for it has been spelled out for you.

Monitor: I am not moving at all, for this sort of bishops' business suits me is very favourable for me, and it can be seen as honouring Christ for his substitute to be thus clothed, thus crowned, thus adorned, to abound with riches and to be foremost in power. Who could be said not to be honouring Christ in this way, if while he lived on earth, he covered donkeys too, such a familiar beast of burden, with gold and purple?²³ And how would it be if (which we certainly hope he can) he unlocks our heaven with his keys and leads in the purple-clothed and the crowned heads, from

²² The first quotation comes from John 14 v 32. The second is Hutten's invention.

²³ The donkey is chiefly associated with Christ's humble entry into Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover: Matthew 21 v 1-9. The donkey was adorned only with the disciples' cloaks. Monitor seems to suggest that even a lowly beast associated with Christ would be richly adorned in His honour.

riches and power, while you are abandoned in a lowly station, despised here in life and dominated by hardships and woe?

Luther: You are in error in every respect, and I should like to set this right, if you will accept a warning.

Monitor: I have already heard enough of what you have taught, and indeed, I will be to you as your closest friend, but, even if it were permitted, it is not remotely safe to disagree with the Roman Pontiff. Nor should you ask this of a friend, that I should adopt your belief to my disadvantage and, moreover, that I should take evil upon myself in support of your cause.

Luther: I do not ask for any service, and do not deserve to receive one, because I know what is harmful to you, but I do want your friendship – so that nothing that comes from good may arouse your enmity, still less [nothing which comes] from him whom you think blessed and consider all-powerful. Nor is it my cause which I am advancing, but that of Christ, to whom will belong, from now on, all profit and all payment. See, if you can, with whom you can be friends at the same time, and follow that path. Now, indeed, I have said enough, and after this I shall not fail in anything, if ever you want to listen.

Monitor: I shall not be able to: for the Bull of Leo calls me back, [that Bull] by which those who associate with you in any way whatsoever are condemned, unless they immediately forsake you. But come, since you advise with such fairness, why are

there more people in this place who, having reflected on your teaching, have not accepted it, than those who have become Lutherans?

Luther: I know that the uneducated, the young and tender, are fond of that way of thinking, but I am not moved by commotion or by the mob, following my own judgement of affairs. And you, if you listen to me, will not waver over refusing that well-worn and level path with the multitude, and will enter upon that which is narrow, steep and not yet known.

Monitor: I do not hear, and now I am leaving this place, lest if I stay longer, I shall think badly of that gracious, key-bearing substitute [for Christ].

Luther: Go, if you see it like that. But I grieve for you, who are thus turned away from me, for those things you esteem have no splendour, and having abandoned what is true and solid, you follow useless smoke and sheer trifles.

Monitor: Even so, I am going: farewell.

Luther: And may you fare well, having the greatest burden.

Monitor: But listen, Luther, do you know what the future holds?

Luther: For myself, I can guess, but how can I know about you?

Monitor: You will see me close to the cardinal.

Luther: I stay, meanwhile. You have sold the thing beyond price, your soul: O misery! So go. Meanwhile, it is our duty to gain two or three others for Christ in place of your loss.

Appendix IV

Monitor Secundus: Monitor II

A Dialogue by Hutten

Participants: **Monitor and Franz [von Sickingen]**

Monitor: I have come as I used to, not long ago, but [then I came] because I wanted to, and now I have come so that I might warn you about a vital matter. For from the very beginning of our friendship, as far as it has been within my power, I have not allowed your reputation to suffer.

Franz: What? Is it suffering, then?

Monitor: Certainly it is suffering, and therefore I am here to admonish [you], lest you ignore this. For you have been ill spoken of for some months now.

Franz: I, ill spoken of? Really? Tell me, where, and for what reason?

Monitor: In the greatest council, because of a rumour of heresy. For they say that you are a member of Luther's circle, and that in your home you shelter a certain Hutten, who at some time will be the cause of the most dreadful evils. In fact, they say that you have already begun the violent business of driving priests and bishops into line, and do

not respect the Bull of Leo X or the decrees of so many earlier Popes, although it is not permitted to contradict one of the Bishops of Rome as one pleases, even when injustices seem very great.

Franz: Nevertheless, bearing in mind everything about myself, of whatever kind, I do not see why I deserve to be publicly abused; and indeed, at this time I think every good man should struggle against the filthy despotism of priests and resist that yoke of slavery most stubbornly and with all his strength. But what sin is it to support Luther, who proclaims the Gospel and saves men's consciences from the most dangerous errors? And I have not yet heard of Hutten being accused or condemned by anyone for what he has written on their [the Lutherans'] behalf. And if they permit Luther himself to put his case, do you think he can be condemned by any laws?

Monitor: But they think it is possible, through the sacred decrees of the Pope.

Franz: That is typical of them. For they long ago arranged that they could give legal standing to whatever matter suited them, and they would still claim that the same custom should be obediently maintained. For there was a time when they were permitted to propose laws, and in short, if men had then recognised them as being unjust, they would not be taking action now.

Monitor: Nevertheless, they say that those who reverently obeyed them were good men and righteous Christians, but that you are building a new kind of religion out of boredom.

Franz: Are we indeed building new [ways], we whose every purpose is to bring back the *old* way, and rescue the tottering Christian faith from the debauchery of wretched men? On the contrary, they are building new ways, and we are abiding with Christ. Whatever is hated by them, we believe is welcome to [anyone] who does not give his support to corrupt laws and a weakened faith.

Monitor: However that may be, they are saying that it is permitted by Christ for someone to set in order whatever is erroneous.

Franz: And we permit it; and what is more, God is accustomed to make use of the service of men, when evil deeds need to be punished. Indeed, we offer ourselves in readiness for that very [task], and moreover this is no doubt by His instigation.

Monitor: Which is hardly fitting for you. For it is right for the clergy to inspect their own condition, and to cure whatever is ailing in it. It is not lawful for you, as a layman, to meddle with sacred matters.

Franz: Indeed, the name by which they call me makes no difference to me, although I think they do sometimes give this reason for the separation of the Christian

population from themselves. However, I greatly despair of their examining their situation or actually improving it, both because on the basis of earlier crimes it must now be believed that Christ will not give them grace to understand it – rather, wallowing in that thoughtlessness of indolence and thoughtlessness of theirs, he will let them perish – and because we who are gripped by the most dangerous diseases, rarely see the cure that heals us. And so I believe this spirit to be given to us by God, so that it may care for us, the servants of this almost hopeless cause. For in that, we do not look for anything for ourselves, but we seek what comes from Christ.

Monitor: If only you could see the enormous difficulty with which you are encumbering yourself.

Franz: It is difficult, but I shall struggle against it.

Monitor: And it is dangerous.

Franz: I shall break through.

Monitor: If indeed you can, and if you remain at liberty: for I am filled with dread on that account.

Franz: I, on the other hand, am filled with the greatest confidence, because I know that I am advancing the cause of Christ.

Monitor: And you are certainly advancing it, and it is true what they say: Luther's welfare will be defended with your might and total strength, in whatever way is required.

Franz: That is true, to an extent that hardly anything is true.

Monitor: Therefore I am worried about you, lest in every serious case of liberty you overstretch yourself and throw yourself into terrible dangers, and wretchedly perish.

Franz: Truly, I am not worried, but I sincerely believe in taking care lest I neglect the grace of Christ in me, which was the origin of this course of action. For now public and Christian liberty are coming more and more to be my concern, and my spirit burns when I see them [the clergy] committing many [crimes] of the worst kind, and setting no limits anywhere to change and alteration for the worse. What rest do you suppose there can be for someone to whom God has imparted this knowledge? That He might take it back again? And do you wish me to be carefree in the midst of a sea of cares, when they attack my spirit on all sides, and do what is most abominable to it, so that I might allow the public condition to be corrupted, the honour of the Emperor to be considered a laughing-stock, indeed the very doctrine of Christ to be broken and abolished, and God Himself publicly destroyed? For this is how the priests live now, and he who believes them to be chosen ones called by God, does not wish to be a Christian himself. For what free and independent man wants to devote himself to that religion, in which the most evil and destructive men are held to be the best, and in which they exploit law and authority

for the pleasure of others? Moreover, behold, this heavy, excessive power of the Roman Pontificate over the Christian world, with which those who are commanded to lead Christ's sheep to pasture flay, maim and kill. And how have their arrogant actions gone unchecked? Do they not so despise the Christian princes that they allow the imperial crown to be covered over in deference to their feet? Indeed, [do they not] extend their feet for everyone to kiss? Truly, with what force and violence they drag to themselves cities, monarchies, sovereignties, empires and others. Indeed, [did they not] first take the city of Rome away from the Roman princes, and after Italy, much more: the western empire itself, as if demanding that hereditary succession be handed over to them? And if I should wish to complain about it all, what language is sufficient to explain the now utterly perverted condition of the city of Rome, whence flow examples which Christian practices show to be depraved and in all error and perversity? [What language is sufficient to explain] about the iniquity of that gathering of cardinals and so many chief hood-wearers at Rome, who forcibly take for themselves alone the right of choosing a Pope, which is owed to the Christian population (if anyone deserves to be singled out by everyone in this way)? About the depravity of the courtesans, who, since they are the Pope's agents, make it their business to see that we shall not happen to suffer indignity from the city of Rome *unless they do so themselves*? About the disgusting extravagance of the priesthood, and about their insatiable greed for – indeed, their willingness to steal – high rank, and their perverting licentiousness; more, about every proud and violent tyranny, by which means they can infinitely burden this nation? That in that regard, with Rome's astonishing invention and cunning, there has been a violent attack on our money, our possessions and our patrimony, which was indeed suffering wretchedly, enough and

more than enough - but also, more importantly, (because there is no need at all to say that we wish to be Christians in our manner of living, and also to be men) that an utterly foul infection may creep into our customs here from the corruptions living in the Roman state? About the traffic in indulgences, favours, dispensations, trade in pardons and absolution, and now about all the industry to produce Bulls, about artifices, frauds, cunning tricks, stratagems, pretence, cheating, cunning, craftiness, treachery, faithlessness, perjury, sacrilege, feigning, lies, chicanery, insults, malice, temerity, games, mockery, derision, nonsense, witchcraft, deceit, terror, threats, illusions, thefts, pillage, grasping, slyness, into which they oblige a person to be born – they who now have the government of the Church? And then, about the way in which they are busy, not with teaching us, which was at least the role of bishops and priests, but with laying waste and robbing, which is what tyrants would normally do – nor with improving us through instruction, but with diminishing us through plunder? And that all things in Rome today are devoted to profit, and it is not a place of piety? And that there, as often as new cardinals are appointed, Germans know that thieves and robbers will be sent here for the purpose of adorning them? That Germans are not permitted to have bishops, except for those who have bought the *pallia* in Rome, the price of which is said to increase daily?¹ That they can be promoted by the order of their patrons, intercession [on their behalf] will be made according to earlier customs, and the liberty of this nation will be trodden underfoot, the authority of its princes made a laughing-stock? And that the priestly orders founded through the generosity of most of us here, which are permitted in Italy, have no community anywhere among us? And that [the papacy] is opposed in every way to our

¹ The *pallium* was a band worn around the shoulders, symbolising a bishop's pastoral authority. It was customary to pay a fee upon its receipt.

public liberty, and so often it [liberty] is worn out with driving it off, suffocated in its breathing, squashed down as soon as it dives in, shattered as it stands firm? That this traffic in indulgences and favours – so numerous and so abundant - has been conducted with extraordinary, unheard-of and unrecognised shamelessness in all generations, so that today that flood inundates Germany far and wide, with no care indeed for our lives, but with an insatiable thirst for coins? And that they are not made to flow under the pretext of generosity, any more than the cruel thunderbolt of excommunication is lightly dropped? And that that punishment has been so much abused lately, that it is inflicted not only by the most innocent, but also, in fact, by the most guilty? And worst of all about the zeal of the Romanists, which extends everywhere from [Rome], to abolish the true Gospel from the minds of the faithful, and to set clever fictions in its place, little sayings of men, fitted together in the striving for filthy profit? And how the chief clerics of the Church do not now seek [to understand] how men might learn to live from the rule of Christ, but how their wretched greed might be satisfied, and their habits formed by an ambition bound by no limits and marked by no end? About those things which are of such a kind that, if I wished to lament more, no language, no spirit and no lungs would be equal to revealing the hatefulness of the affair: nor could this mass, which exceeds the belief of everyone, be matched by any means. And so I see the harsh condition of our time related by authors: because in their eloquence they understand nothing about it, amongst our descendants they will lack conviction however they handle things, because no one will believe that this state of affairs had been so very shameful.

Monitor: How much worry you cause me, how you restore my concerns with grave hesitation. Therefore, because I have approached you with a warning, I see this affects me, so that I myself am warned by you. And yet I shall not allow you to be ignorant of one thing: that it is well-known and can be almost guaranteed, that no one has ever ended his life happily who was hostile to the rank of the priests, especially one who railed against their crimes.

Franz: Expect a better fate for us. But I readily put up with them protecting their position by spreading rumours, and would that they could not do so by any other means, nor have any other defence! Indeed, trifles impress me not at all. Rather, I despise those who invent these things with great enthusiasm – I know the character of men, I know their skills - but from now on their trust in them will be misplaced: for those things which were once covered are open, deceptions are laid bare, artifices are brought forth, illusions lie open. Thus have evil men sometimes corrupted the public Christian religion with their teaching, so that they do not seem to be priests of Christ, but pagan priests² of some outlandish and accursed superstition. Now the minds of men have been enlightened by having the mist wiped away; because, with Christ's strongest encouragement, Luther has kindled a light for us, and any man who hates Luther does not love Christ. Wherefore, let all those of us who have been stirred up by the destruction of religion and faith follow this [man]; indeed, let us drive deceivers out of the world and truly free ourselves in Christian liberty from the discarded, heavy and insupportable yoke. And so I tell you to hope for good things: for, so that you might understand that not all who were unfriendly

² Lit., 'sacrificing priests'.

towards priests have been entirely unhappily occupied, remind yourself about one of many, the Bohemian Zizka, the most victorious general in so many wars for so long against the priests: how does he fall short of the perfect glory of the highest emperor?³ Did he not leave this glory as a legacy because he had freed his country from tyranny and cast out good-for-nothing men, useless sacrifices and idle monks from all Bohemia? Did he not distribute their assets partly to their heirs and partly to the state? Did he not close the region to Roman hostilities and plundering by the papacy? Did he not actively avenge the wretched destruction of the holy man Hus? [Is it not true that] he did not seek profit in these things, nor did he ever enrich himself, and yet he died in this interrupted course of success, achieved at the earnest desire of his fellow countrymen, whom he educated not long before his death with wholesome advice?

Monitor: Actually, I have always heard that Zizka's deeds were full to the brim with wickedness and impiety.

Franz: I have heard that too, but either from his enemies, or from those who have not reported the story correctly but who have spread common hearsay. Indeed, what kind of wickedness is it to punish the worst kind of crimes? Or what impiety is it to drive out proud, cruel, greedy, lustful, faithless men, corrupters of youth, subverters of public law, who benefit no one, do harm to many, meanwhile attributing the most virtuous title to such crimes, plundering in the wrong circumstances from needy, good and temperate

³ Jan Zizka c.1370-1425, a Czech general and one of Jan Hus' most important followers.

citizens and the land in which they oppress by means of many high prices, meanwhile keeping themselves useless and idle?

Monitor: Do you think this was beneficial to the Bohemians?

Franz: Insofar as one can tell from what has been revealed of the affair, it was.

Monitor: You are seen to want to imitate his exploit, if you possibly can.

Franz: I am not at all unwilling, if indeed this is suggested by those who neither yield to warnings nor submit to blame. For then it will be necessary for them to be compelled.

Monitor: What if the Pope really attacks you with curses and fearful things?

Franz: He will achieve nothing, for this soul [of mine] is already protected against empty fears of that kind: in which trust I believe myself to be absolved by God, even while I am damned by them.

Monitor: So you will give nothing to this custom, to which they have inwardly grown committed?

Franz: Why would I yield to what is not good? Or was it always inappropriate for an evil custom to be changed and abolished?

Monitor: Well, I now judge it to be appropriate, but they do not think this particularly evil; and as a result you see that the ostentation of bishops, those magnificent preparations, the splendour of the [papal] court, [arising] out of the most profane things, are [actually] pleasing.

Franz: I see, and I understand [it to be] a punishment, just as the Cretans once wanted to employ the greatest curse against those who opposed them. They wished for them, that they would take delight in ill-advised custom.⁴ Because we have been miserably paying a large enough penalty for this error for a very long time now, I believe that Christ Himself wants to finally wipe away this misery from the minds of men who trust [in Him], and to bring wholesome light out of the deadly mist. Such beginnings are evidence that this is what He will soon do. It is right for us to assist this event and to provoke it as much as we can; especially if there is someone to whom God has given this inclination: so that, on behalf of the holy religion, he might with great difficulty bring control over those immoral men, with tonsures, hairless bodies, stretched bellies, lascivious eyes, soaked in perfume, and even some evil men for whom lust comes before self-control, deceit before innocence, wickedness before honesty. In short, [I mean] dishonest men who shamelessly force themselves upon the management of affairs and

⁴ Valerius Maximus, *Factorum et Dictorum Memorabilium Libri Novem* (c.AD30), VII.2.18: 'The Cretans, since they desired to use the harshest possible curse against those whom they hated, wished that they would take delight in ill-advised custom, and they discovered that this generated a very effective kind of revenge: for it is a very sweet way to destroy one's neighbour, to have him aim uselessly for something and to loiter in [that attempt] persistently'.

change the condition of the unspoilt Church into that of the foulest harlot; pretending seriousness all the while, yet [they travel] behind many footmen, with a great pressing flock of followers and with numerous bodies clinging on as an escort, to conduct ceremonies more like those of the Jews than like our own, and to make alien gestures among the sacred things. Sometimes they proclaim new festivals, or they might order public prayers like Persian [ostentatious] display, often because they have imagined that they should publish what is divinely revealed with great shouts, and fabricate some portents, and make prophecies, and perform and teach with pleasure all things of gain and profit.⁵ If anyone knows what I am talking about and is truly offended by this parody of piety, it is indeed right for him to abolish bad practice and [to ensure] that the authors [of those practices] are forced to exert themselves, and to work so that they might be better opposed in these things. Find me anyone in the Empire who is more deserving than he who now does this thing.

Monitor: I see that you are attempting the most honourable things. I do see, and thus does Christ the Saviour help me. Nor is it unrelated to my reason for wanting to dissuade you with what I say, because unless Charles feels differently, it is right for you to obey him, and never to oppose him.

Franz: But indeed, that holds me back least of all from what is proposed. So that you may understand the reason for this: you see that those who labour at a building, often carefully estimate the cost of a future labour long in advance?

⁵ A possible source for the comparison with Persian display is Horace, *Odes* I.38: 'How I hate Persian ostentation, garlands twisted around the bark of a lime-tree'.

Monitor: I see.

Franz: Nor, if he listens to me, will he see the matter in the wrong light, and when all is said and done, he will do this, not because he now wants to, but because one day he will want to have done it. Indeed, I venture to advise him on those duties not because it pleases him at present, but because it is of everlasting benefit, and I want to consider the advantage to him before whom I stand in submission and to devote my life to his service. So tell me, if Caesar were to have a fever, and asked for something cold, do you think he should be given what he wanted?

Monitor: No, I don't think so, as I know it would be harmful.

Franz: Nor will you even now persuade me that I should be responsible for inappropriate advice, with pleasing contents, pressing [ideas] which will certainly at some time be the future cause of the greatest disorder.

Monitor: Indeed, I myself will not persist in giving advice. But he follows this [inappropriate course], and by his decrees he is seen to be pursuing another course of action, having already made threats lest he see anyone [following] after Luther, and, if you do not know, he has continually affirmed by hand and mouth that he acts in accordance with the wishes of the Roman Pope, whatever the consequence, threatening to that end all his dominions, [military] might and power, and as Emperor, not allowing his

authority or the power of the Roman Church to be diminished even a little. Because I think this must be recognised by you, lest you bring upon yourself the anger and indignation of him for whose indulgence you should be thankful.

Franz: I have long thought otherwise: for I think it must be recognised, that if I now obey, he might cause himself harm; and I shall continue for as long as possible in not doing what I certainly know is harmful to him. For it does not accord with my loyalty to him, to obey him in something which will result in his injury. However, suppose that he is angry with me (although, indeed, I do not suspect him of being so). Let him be angry. In the end he will love [me] so much more because I have borne his anger, never turning aside from the matter in hand; then I think those men will reveal to him the things he needs to know, since what they *wanted*, and not what they *said*, will emerge. When time even now betrays their plans, in fact he is already well aware - at last - of the guides by whom he allowed himself to be badly steered. Wherefore I intend this: to proceed in all respects simply and in good faith, and I already await [the time when] he asks me why I would foster these ideas: because when it happens, at that time I will very neatly give the reason for my plan: it is certain that, in the end, the greatest obedience is not to obey. Because if he really understood, as I do, what he should now command which would be beneficial, I see that he would not now order things which greatly inconvenience him at the moment to be cut off. Therefore I have despised the pressure [of the Romanists]; they influence him in the present, anxiety for the future grips me. Wherefore I shall not follow in his error, but I shall stand firm against those who wish to err, and I shall give my service and zealous encouragement, nor shall I ever allow him to be ruined, until such

time as I see myself prised by force from the guardianship of his well-being. And now indeed, as is lawful, I shall call to upon Christ and God and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to witness that I have wanted the best for him, and have deliberated with the purest faith. And will it not cause annoyance to very few, since I will certainly see many, of whom every one would build upon this advice, unless he had accepted any of the money which is handed out in the Pope's name?

Monitor: They do hand out some [money].

Franz: Nor do I consider that it is not done: for who but a corrupt person would have wanted to approve the madness of persecuting Luther like this, and commit a dreadful, hasty crime in such manifest error?

Monitor: I see that you strive for no other than the best of reasons. Therefore it will not disgrace me, to reject hereafter the plan of which I wished you to be the author, and follow other [plans].

Franz: You have seen this: that I care zealously for him who, when so many – and such necessary – matters now need to be done, shows himself to be employing the worst kind of men in business, yielding no good fruit. For what are the many things he needs to set in motion before he can have any care for the urgings of busy priests? Robberies need to be checked and monopolies need to be removed, and infinite orders of priests need to be reviewed and, to a great extent, dissolved, and the fury of lawyers

needs to be curbed, and public dissipation needs to be restrained with the severest laws, and things wrongly permitted by the ancients need to be reconsidered. Indeed, is it necessary to return the increasing number of brothers and monks to the utmost rarity and extreme poverty, widely scattered, rather than to do away altogether with those who are called officers or the Church and to remove all hypocrisy once and for all? Besides, base appetite has gathered strength far and wide, let it be confined; men strive for elegance more than for women, let [us] intervene collectively in favour of work and austerity. It is still fitting to present every person of the greatest strength and virtue, old or young, with honours and gifts, just as decorations should be proposed for those whose deeds are seen as glorious wartime actions, in contrast with those who need to be marked out for entangling themselves in crimes. As for what pertains to financial business, I believe it needs to be handled by the withholding of what the courtesans carry away to the Roman Pope, and whatever benefits that banking business gives to him, as the Fuggers send everything in the form of the most trifling merchandise to foreign countries. If ever he had endured these and similar endless [practices], then he would be able to understand those things which have not [in fact] affected him: for certainly he will not manage the Empire well enough, if he regularly allows himself to be seduced into the basest curiosity from the highest thinking.

Monitor: And yet it was not entirely useless to care that those rebellions should not spread dangerously to any place.

Franz: But there would have been no rebellions, unless he had involved himself in business in which it was more effective to close his eyes than to confuse matters by speaking. For do you think that, if Charles had not listened eagerly to priests with their protests, the knowledge of evangelical doctrine now growing up in Germany, distributed by Luther, would not have been about to produce within a few minds [the idea] that men might live better here, and dignity might be restored to the Emperor, and evil and destructive men might be cast down by him from the position they occupy? But now, instead of the things which most urgently need to be done, namely stopping working on the Pope's behalf and yielding to him no profit from work already begun, he acts like a servant.

Monitor: For so many months I have seen that he has let nothing happen around him, and in the business of Luther, they have dragged the time out, while everyone else shouts that other things must be done – so I agree with you that it would be better to leave this affair [Luther's] to take its course, especially since it seems to offer an opportunity to good and beneficial men, rather than to provoke the interests of factions by imposing the heaviest authority.

Franz: Indeed it has provoked our [faction] greatly, by seeming to assist opposing [ones]. And moreover this fault of all, however great it is, falls to those advisers of his, men who advise him to do anything which is easy for him and profitable for themselves. On which account I pity the very distinguished youth, who is endowed with the best character; and indeed, if I could, even with very great danger, I would free the

beleaguered [man] from the worst of men, bringing him forth through force and violence. For I see wretched advantage being taken of his integrity by those whom he trusts most. Do you not think that those who would now so worthlessly flatter the Roman Pope in an impious affair would not defend a cause out of conscience for any man, unless it be for the reason that I say is rumoured: the very great influence of gold used by the Romans in the corruption of Germany?

Monitor: It should be easily believed that certain men have been seduced into other behaviour through bribery; and already this is rumoured. Moreover I know that certain men of this court, with wavering honesty and very much given to eagerness for money, always clever in seeking their own advantage, certain lying men, push forward all matters on their own agenda, so that he is almost never consulted about his own affairs by those employing cunning. And for them, to mix deception with so many crimes of such magnitude is innocence [itself]. Indeed, as they sow now, I judge that they will eventually reap.

Franz: Do you not think they should be dragged away from the ears of a prince who needs to be well established, and, lest they taint them with their poison, driven off from [influence over] the law and the army?

Monitor: Henceforth I shall always think so, nor will it ever be *my* tongue with which I advise you, that you depart even a little from the protection of Luther.

Franz: Nor shall I depart from it. No indeed: so that you know what is in my mind, I am burning, more and more, with the need to undertake this. For those daily machinations of theirs leave a sour taste in my mouth, by which the wicked good-for-nothings try to destroy the standing of a holy man and interfere with the public good; wherefore I will set nothing aside, and indeed, I shall consider how a situation may be accomplished in which it is possible that those who at any time stir up disaster for good men, may themselves meet an evil end.

Monitor: Would that it could be so!

Franz: The spirit is hopeful, indeed; whatever may result is in the hands of the gods. Indeed, I would rather obey Charles so that I might do him good than that I might please him, that is, I shall gladly do good for someone who is unwilling, I shall have regard for the interests of someone who does not wish it, and I shall have done good for someone who does not know it. For I reason thus: I believe that, if I did not fully understand what would benefit him, it would have been proper to guess, since it has long been evident that there is no question of my being harmful when I was able to be of benefit. On this account, I have decided to refuse vehemently his more ill-considered orders in this matter; if he has commanded more obstinately, to decline publicly: for I consider that studying what God wants is far more important than what might come into the minds of men, especially when the truth is at stake here, as well as the Gospel. Indeed, I shall always act with the most unfriendly deeds and disposition towards those perverse councillors, and may I never be found in the company of shameful consultation.

For how far astray do you lead me, wretched men, how far from the divine will? What end will you make to the destruction of the sanest mind, the best character? Believe me, the time will come when, because of such deeds, you will have to pay the debt of thoroughly deserved punishments to the whole of Germany. The time will come. For you will be required to explain the setting apart of God and the undermining of the Emperor. This great hope rests upon me; one which is certain, as if it were a known fact. Wherefore I shall resist you with the utmost determination: if in some way you lead him into ruin, it will be up to me to exact revenge, and so I shall renounce your friendship immediately thereafter.

Monitor: Exhort him more strongly, lest he lead a few men to suspect that he might do everything willingly and immoderately for those men's gain.

Franz: And I shall exhort [him] meanwhile; and, as far as the power lies within me, I shall not permit him to be subject to such abasement as to submit to the Bishop of Rome. For what greater indignity is there for a prince, than to be commanded by others, to carry out their orders, to wait upon them?

Monitor: Nothing, by Christ, nothing! For this obsequiousness seems to me to be [the behaviour] of someone fearful and lacking in confidence.

Franz: And if this is what is fated for him, I think it would be so easy for him to turn to bad advice, and, soon afterwards, easy for him to be ruined.

Monitor: But meanwhile all these public offices come together at his court, and [their holders] are the only ones whom he watches and promotes. And as I see it, it is appropriate to emulate the example of a certain Ulysses, so that he might remain still, with wax in his ears, among those who are advising him [to do] such things.⁶

Franz: As you say, it would be appropriate: for already he needs to be encouraged in military cares, and instructed by much worthier counsellors. For it is our task, in this difficult time and with an impetuous Emperor, and it has never been less appropriate for the Empire to be slothfully run. And if it were not so, nevertheless this generation has needed rousing, yes, that it might drag the corruption of the laziest men out of slothful society and custom, and not (as it is likely to do) spread it at any time, in which it will succeed not through games and carelessness, but through care and anxiety, work and vigilance. Therefore, because times which are lost never return, and because what is best, when it comes, does not stay for long, he needs to be given advice which might cure him, not [advice] about things he has neglected through inactivity, for which he would be sorry afterwards if any good opportunity which is given to him passes him by and is lost in error. Indeed, he begins everything like this, nothing unsatisfactory is allowed, lest that disgrace ever occur which in a military matter caused Scipio to say, 'I had not thought': for what do you think is the purpose for which so many bishops have stationed themselves at his ears continuously for two years, unless it is that they are afraid of him, and foresee a change in his position, and they know that they are hated far and wide, and

⁶ Homer, *The Odyssey*, Book XII: Odysseus (Ulysses) avoided being lured to his death by the Sirens' song by plugging his crew's ears with wax and ordering them to tie him to the mast of his ship as they sailed past.

cannot be borne any longer? On that account, when the Emperor was to be elected, Leo X's first tried to prevent him, by means of his undoubtedly suspect nature and deliberately directed power; then when he saw [Charles] elected against his [Leo's] will, he immediately turned his mind to other methods, and certainly the meanest of those which they use advise ruinous things, so that it would not have been possible to anticipate what he would do. To someone still standing firm, he would do unforeseen and unexpected evil, and under the guise of friendship he would crush him unawares.

Monitor: May Christ not save me, if this does not seem to be what those men are trying to do.

Franz: And it is so, wherefore they have already obtained this with regard to him, that no one may approach him more conveniently, no one may be closer to his eyes and ears, he advances no one more quickly, he confers honours more easily on no one, than one who is of their number. It shames me to say it, but nevertheless it is the case, that he is completely ruled by their authority, and there is nothing which they cannot obtain from him; and if he wanted to refuse the condemnation of blameless Luther, he was hardly able to do so, since his error was enough, indeed the dishonour committed was more than enough, because he diminished himself and declared that he would not listen, influenced not long before by their most wicked persuasion. Therefore I do not see what greater indignity remains for us: this exceeds every boundary. For as far as I am privately concerned, it is no secret that this rumour about me is spread far and wide; nor am I unwilling to hear the evil spoken about me by evil men, for this is how they betray and

reveal themselves for what they are, when they speak ill of good men. Of them I say with the famous prophet, 'Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!'⁷ Do you see why I do not fear the idle gossip of the rabble?

Monitor: I see. But can there be any hope of improving such a state of affairs?

Franz: You have not thought so. I hold out one hope –

Monitor: What is that?

Franz: That, in this sleepiness, that deceived man might recover his senses and dissociate himself as strongly as possible from the evil-minded councillors who have been sent to him, and from friendship with the false bishops, and would embrace what is prudent, as far as is possible, and that with a crowd of good men around him, their advice might begin to drag excessive influence from [the false bishops], and with the destruction of superstition the true religion and the light of faith might be restored, and the liberty of Germany reinstated.

Monitor: And will he, very appropriately, employ you as an aide when this happens?

⁷ Isaiah 5:20. The quotation matches the text in the Latin Vulgate.

Franz: The man who bears so great a task of leadership will decide whether I or someone else would be most suitable. For my resolve is not of this kind. If he is not inclined to do this, I should have no expectation other than that he might be guided by the counsel of the people of his country, and I will dare anything [for him] at my personal risk, no matter what happens.

Monitor: In which affair you have a sharp and passionate 'monitor', Hutten himself, who I see is impatient with all delay, and [if they seek] to reconcile him to evil he is as movable as a stone.

Franz: And I employ him freely: for his spirit is truly suited to this affair.

Monitor: Then may Christ save him, and strengthen you in your best efforts and in your greatest need.

Franz: And may He save you, believing better and advising more rightly than when you arrived.

Monitor: And I am grateful to you, through whom I have become better informed.
Farewell.

Franz: Farewell, and may you have good fortune.