

THOMAS MORE, ERASMUS AND JULIUS II :

A Case of Advocacy

Moreana, no. 24 (Nov. 1969): 81-99

It is now generally accepted that Erasmus was the author of the outrageous and widely circulated satiric tract against Pope Julius II, called *Julius exclusus*.¹ It is also generally accepted that Erasmus' long anticipated journey to Italy, from 1506 to 1509, marked an epoch in his life and that one of his most lasting impressions of Italy was the vivid presence of Julius II.² The brutal Julian secularism that he had seen with his own eyes in Bologna and throughout the north of Italy,³ his contacts with the violent anti-papal propaganda of Venice,⁴ his visit to Rome and the papal court,⁵ and his own personal experience of the pope⁶ — all these had opened a new and shocking world to Erasmus. He would never be quite the same man again! Margaret Mann Phillips has observed that "it was Julius II who turned Erasmus into a pacifist".⁷ It may be further argued that it was Julius and the whole jarring experience of Italy that turned him decisively to the cause of church reform to which he devoted his life.

Both the epochal trip to Italy and the *Julius exclusus* have a basic connection with England and with the circle of Erasmus' friends and patrons there, including Thomas More, the dearest and closest friend Erasmus was ever to know. This English connection holds also for two earlier contacts of a very different sort that Erasmus had had with Julius II. One of these involved the valuable dispensation he received in 1505 or 1506 from Pope Julius absolving him of the disabilities of his illegitimate birth as regarded the holding of church benefices and relieving him from the "statutes and customs" of his monastery.⁸ The other was the matter of the doctorate in theology that he was to be awarded by the University of Torino shortly after reaching Italy.⁹

It is almost certain that both the dispensation and the doctorate were arranged with the curia by the influence of Italians attached to the English court.¹⁰ Even the trip to Italy Erasmus owed to the benefaction of his Italian friends. He was invited to accompany the two young sons of Giovanni Baptista Boerio of Genoa, the king's physician, to Italy and furthermore, under conditions so favorable and undemanding as to constitute for Erasmus a virtual traveling sinecure.¹¹ It is equally certain that

Erasmus' English friends knew of these important favors and approved of them. For the circle of the Italian community of London overlapped both the circle of the court and that of the English intelligensia.¹²

We have no direct evidence regarding the reaction of Thomas More to these affairs.¹³ We know that at this time he was well acquainted with several influential members of the Italian community¹⁴ and that he was an intimate of the principal English humanists and patrons of the New Learning, many of whom were close to the court.¹⁵ It is likely that Erasmus even stayed at More's house during part of his brief second visit to England in 1505-1506 before leaving for Italy.¹⁶ We can only assume that More knew every detail of his friend's tortuous negotiations and that he rejoiced at their fortunate outcome. Added credence is given to this assumption by the much more positive and well documented position of More in the entire matter of the *Julius exclusus*.

When Erasmus returned to England from Italy in the summer of 1509 he brought with him a very different picture of the pope who had earlier been his distant and impersonal benefactor. For Julius had taken on the flesh and substance of the "warrior pope", "papa terribile", and had become to Erasmus the very anti-Christ, the antithesis of those Christian virtues that ought to be exemplified in the vicar of Christ on earth. Once again Erasmus stayed at More's house and there wrote his famous *Praise of Folly*.¹⁷ One of the most important threads running through this book is the criticism of the papacy and of Julius II.¹⁸ As the book took shape the two friends must often have talked of Italy, of the Italian wars, of papal secularism.¹⁹ It is, I believe, certain that in these months and in the several years following Erasmus' return from Italy — during his longest stay in England and the richest and most intimate period of his friendship with Thomas More — More came to share the almost fanatic anti-Julian sentiments that were a preoccupation of Erasmus in these same years, a preoccupation which was to culminate in the *Julius exclusus*.

One of the most important and positive links between Erasmus and the Julius was a vicious and stinging epigram against the pope, written in the summer or fall of 1511, and clearly anticipating the later work in theme, treatment, and vocabulary. The epigram (like the *Julius exclusus*, never claimed by Erasmus) exists in two manuscript copies, both in Erasmus' own hand, and on the back of each, also in Erasmus' hand, the name of Thomas More is noted.²⁰ It is hard to escape the inference that Erasmus confidently expected his friend to approve the content of the epigram.

At about the time the Julius epigram was written Erasmus reluctantly accepted a Cambridge lectureship offered him by his friend Bishop Fisher.²¹ Erasmus thoroughly disliked Cambridge. As the months drag-

ged by in the remote, provincial university, he missed the city and the company of his friends and the talk, the gossip, and the news from London and abroad. Through those months and in the midst of other projects he continued to be preoccupied with his hatred of Julius. From his highly placed Italian friend Andrea Ammonio — his most faithful correspondent during his stay at Cambridge — he begged every scrap of news Ammonio got from Italy and exulted over every anti-Julian verbal brickbat in the dispatches.²² Since Ammonio was also a close friend of More and indeed lived at More's house for much of this time,²³ he must have shared the news he sent on to Erasmus and Erasmus' frequent letters to him.

Then the news reached Erasmus that in the night of February 20-21, 1513, the pope had died. The result was the *Julius exclusus*, the trenchant and bitter little playlet that cast the dead pope at the gates of heaven demanding admittance of St. Peter, and ultimately being denied.

Finally, the only extant piece of contemporary evidence tying the *Julius exclusus* to Erasmus is a letter of Thomas More. In the summer of 1514, when Erasmus left England once more after his long stay in Cambridge and London,²⁴ he left behind a manuscript copy of the *Julius*. He was anxious about it and young Thomas Lupset, his secretary at Cambridge, turned it over with some other materials to More²⁵ who wrote to Erasmus on December 15, 1516 :

Lupset has returned to me several of your manuscripts which he's had. Among them is "Iulii Genius", and two declamations... ; all of them in your hand, but the former is little more than a scribble, a fragment.²⁶

This could be nothing but a rough draft of the *Julius exclusus*.²⁷ Two or three months later, on March 1, 1517, in another letter to More, Erasmus ended with these instructions, "Send me back copies of the letters I am sending you now as well as the things that Lupset returned — but in the hands of a safe man".²⁸

It is almost certain that Erasmus never intended to publish the *Julius* but already, as he recovered the manuscript from More, the early printed editions had begun to appear, cheaply and hastily printed, and anonymous.²⁹ There were apparently other manuscript copies and one or more of these had found its way into the hands of the printers. Within months the book was known all over Europe³⁰ and the charge that Erasmus had written it was already being made.

The whole affair was something of an embarrassment and more than a little inconvenience to Erasmus. A great many people knew of the favors he had received from Pope Julius, including many officials of the curia, and the *Julius* could only appear as the basest piece of ingratitude. Moreover, at this very time Erasmus was carrying on a complicated negotia-

tion with Leo X to have the terms of his dispensation from Pope Julius confirmed and extended. Finally, Erasmus had just published his Greek New Testament, dedicated to Leo X, and he anticipated the need for the pope's support in the defence of this important work that was sure to be sharply criticized. In all it was an awkward time for him to admit to the authorship of such a strident personal attack upon Leo's predecessor and such a ringing condemnation of the contemporary papacy.³¹

Those of Erasmus' friends who were in on the secret agreed with him and joined him in suggesting likely authors for the piece and discrediting the charge that he had written it. One of these was Thomas More. In March of 1518, Erasmus wrote to More, we presume with a perfectly straight face :

They write to me from Cologne, that some sort of pamphlet has been printed there, about Julius disputing with St. Peter at the gate of Paradise. The name of the author is not given.³²

And in January of the following year :

Will these slanderers never stop ? They leave no stone unturned to do harm to Erasmus ! They've convinced many people in Cologne that that outrageous little book... was written by me ; and they would have convinced many more if I had not promptly blunted the edge of their treacherous lies.³³

More joined with a good will in the game his friend was playing : for there were larger things at stake, nothing less than what More regarded as the integrity of sacred scholarship.

His involvement in this more important game had already started. In 1514-15 Erasmus had been savagely attacked for his *Praise of Folly* and for his announced proposal to publish an annotated Greek New Testament – even before it had been published – by a former friend and admirer, Martin van Dorp, a theologian of Louvain. Dorp represented the position of his own theological faculty, and tended to speak for the whole body of religious and theological conservatism which was already girding for battle on the eve of the Reformation. In a letter to Dorp (which was actually a substantial little treatise in letter form), in the fall of 1515, Thomas More had taken his position squarely in support of Erasmus, his work, his methodology, and the new scholarship ; and squarely against the narrow, destructive, know-nothing conservatism represented by Dorp. Dorp had argued, for example, that the Greek language need not be studied and the Greek texts of the New Testament should not be used to emend the Latin because the Greeks had lapsed into heresy !³⁴

In the spring of 1518, More had written another treatise-letter in defence of the study of Greek "To the Reverend Fathers, the Commissary,

Proctors, and Others of the Guild of Masters of the University of Oxford", where a substantial body of religious conservatives calling themselves "the Trojans" opposed "the Greeks" and their dangerous meddling in theology.³⁵

Then in 1519 or 1520 More wrote another long letter in defence of liberal studies, the new theology, Erasmus' Greek New Testament, and Erasmus himself, in response to "the angry and abusive charges of a certain monk", otherwise unidentified except that his "ignorance was equalled by his pride".³⁶ Many of the same defences are repeated and with a withering contempt for his adversary. In the course of this letter More paid the following tribute to Erasmus :

...outstanding scholars the world over are vigorously competing with one another in their attempts, which some day will succeed, to win for him an appreciation even among those now *blear-eyed* with envy and so blinded by his brilliance they cannot face him... If one reflects upon Erasmus' constant preoccupation with study and upon the size and number of volumes he alone has published, the mere writing of which would seem too great a task for one person, I believe he will quickly conclude that, even if Erasmus were not absorbed in the pursuit of virtue, he would have very little time to spend on vice. Then, if one, with impartial eyes, takes a closer view of his works and studies their value and, in that light, considers the testimony of those whose own intellectual life has been illumined or whose spirit has been fired by those works, such a man will surely understand that a heart from which leaps up a flame that ignites the souls of other men is not very likely to be cold-blooded itself.³⁷

It was in this same letter that More defended Erasmus from the charge of having written the *Julius exclusus* : his arguments are worth looking at.

More says, "Concerning the *Dialogue of Julius*, I have never been very interested in discovering the name of the author or the type of work it is". He refers to a play on the same theme that was presented in Paris immediately after Julius' death and attributed to Erasmus' disreputable friend Fausto Andrelini. Erasmus had mentioned the same work in one of his own defences and indeed there had been such a play. More then ridicules the monk's argument that the style is Erasmus' since, in the first place, his own ignorance of "all the niceties of speech" renders him incompetent to make such a judgment and, in the second, since "a huge throng of writers are doing their best to imitate Erasmus' manner of writing".³⁸ And then, most interestingly,

Well, suppose the book is his ; suppose that the man is opposed to

wars, and that he was angered at the troublesome times, and under the impulse of strong emotions he went further than he wished he had. First of all, the charge should have been made not against him but against those responsible for the untimely publication of a timely book. Second, tell me, was it proper for a monk to ferret out a brother's mistake... However, if the work has offended any people, I think you will find yourself in great disfavor with them for assigning the satire to Erasmus, since it would be more to their advantage for the work to remain anonymous than to have it valued from an appraisal of its author.³⁹

The charge against Erasmus remained, of course, although he was to go on insisting the *Julius* was not his : and his enemies never proved satisfactorily that it was. More's advocacy of Erasmus' position had been helpful if not crucial.

In conclusion to the narrative and arguments presented to this point, let me pose and suggest answers to two obvious questions : 1) Why did Thomas More, the future saint and martyr, the man who dwelt without vows for four years in the Charterhouse and wore beneath the chancellor's gold chain the hair shirt of the ascetic – why did this Thomas More apparently support and approve Erasmus' resort to manipulation and the most flagrant use of influence to gain papal favors, seemingly examples of those very abuses in the church that More and Erasmus and other Christian humanists were seeking to reform ? 2) Why did Thomas More, the defender of papal supremacy, approve and deliberately falsify his knowledge of a vicious attack upon a pope ?

A part of the answer to both questions lies in the incredible capacity for loyalty and friendship that was one of the most salient features of More's character. In his biographical letter to Ulrich von Hutten Erasmus says of More, "he seems to be born and made for friendship, of which he is the sincerest and most persistent devotee".⁴⁰ Erasmus was his dearest friend – his "derling Erasmus" Tyndale was to call him⁴¹ – and More was convinced that the value of the man and his work was so great that every means should be employed to protect the man and facilitate his work.⁴² But before we accuse our saint simply of the Machiavellian view that the end justifies the means, we must look again. More was never a simple man nor did he, any more than his humanist friends, take a simple view of the church : indeed, he dryly remarked, in his letter to Dorp, that most heretics oversimplified things.⁴³ The church was a vast and complex government, more complex and far-reaching than any civil government of the time, and centuries older. Its age and complexity had brought corruption in procedures and reprehensible practices that all good men disapproved. But its procedures remained and had to be used to conduct the business

of the church, for there were no others. More was a practical man of affairs, a lawyer used to dealing with procedures and practices. Moreover, he was a loyal and knowledgeable son of the church who accepted the canonical validity of ecclesiastical practices, at the same time deploring the corruption into which many practices had fallen.⁴⁴ Thus he could support and be pleased to see the procedures and practices of papal government render valuable advantages for a friend in need, especially for a friend whom he approved as thoroughly as he did Erasmus.

In the same vein, on the matter of the *Julius exclusus*, it is clear that More approved and surely enjoyed the substance of the book. Remember that he called it a timely book untimely published. More had no difficulty – nor did his friends and contemporaries – in separating the man from the office when considering the papacy. To hold the contrary is much too crude and simplistic a view and too often refuted in More's own writings. It is completely consistent with his view of the church that he could approve such a witty, timely, and even devastating book on a bad man who happened also to be pope. Moreover, it is possible to suggest that at this time More even shared Erasmus' views, so strongly set forth in the *Julius exclusus*, about necessary constraints upon papal supremacy, views that reflected the arguments of a century of conciliar theorizing. In a long and important letter to Thomas Cromwell in 1534 More recalled, "As touching... the primacy of the Pope... I was myself sometime not of the mind that the primacy of that see should be begun by the institution of God, until that I read in that matter those things that the King's Highness had written in his most famous book against the heresies of Martin Luther".⁴⁵ Somewhat further on in the same letter he says, "Yet never thought I the Pope above the general council". In other words, in 1521, when More was involved with Henry's book against Luther, he held views on papal supremacy totally in accord with those expressed in the *Julius exclusus*.⁴⁶

Another obvious theme, perhaps the dominant one, in the *Julius* is Erasmus' almost fanatic hatred of war, a theme that runs through the whole body of his work and is most clearly expressed in the *Julius*, the *Querela pacis*, and the adage-essay *Dulce bellum inexpertis*. It would overstate the case to argue that More completely endorsed these views. He was not quite the same sort of absolute, no-exception, classical pacifist that Erasmus was. On the other hand there was an obvious strand of anti-war sentiment in More which had been colored by his broader experience in the world of affairs, and was to become more pronounced as he became more deeply involved in that world. However, I do think it is possible to assert that More completely endorsed Erasmus' criticism of the pope's involvement in war as that criticism was expressed not only in the *Julius* dialogue

and the anti-Julian epigram, but in the flood of Erasmus' correspondence to which More was privy. He clearly endorsed these views when, in 1523, in his *Responsio ad Lutherum*, he wrote :

Certainly, as far as the Pope is concerned, what evil has been absent is known only to God, who made him head of the Church, but I do not think it desirable that the Christian commonwealth be destroyed because of this test... It is far more to be wished that God may raise up such Popes as befit the Christian cause and the dignity of the apostolic office : men who, despising riches and honors, will promote the piety of the people, will bring about peace, and exercise the authority they have received from God against the 'satraps and mighty hunters of the world', excommunicating and giving over to Satan both those who invade the territories of others and those who oppress their own.⁴⁷

There are even enthusiasts for the view that Thomas More and his friends were the preeminent spokesmen for peace in their time and that the most compelling critics of war on the continent "...show nothing comparable to the sustained social criticism on war that is a characteristic of the early English humanists of More's circle".⁴⁸

A related matter is worth looking at in considering More's agreement with the substance of the *Julius exclusus*, the matter of his own great interest in politics. By the time the *Julius* appeared he was already a member of Henry VIII's intimate advisory circle and clearly marked for preferment. He had already undertaken that famous embassy to the Low Countries where he met Erasmus' friend Pieter Gillis and where *Utopia* had been conceived and partially written.⁴⁹ Indeed, the letter to Dorp in which he defended Erasmus so warmly was written on this mission.⁵⁰ During the years that the *Julius exclusus* was being prepared, when Erasmus was at Cambridge, we have already surmised that More shared his friend's "impatient interest in Italian affairs"⁵¹ and listened as eagerly as did Erasmus to the reports that Ammonio received from the continent. Perhaps More listened with an even greater interest.⁵² In one of his letters to Erasmus, Ammonio observed, "Spain is nearly at the point of open war with France and, if it comes, the English will not be merely spectators".⁵³ It was clear to such a perceptive spectator as More, and one so close to the center of political decision, that England was headed for involvement in the affairs of the continent. The letter of Ammonio just noted was dated October 27, 1511. In November 1511 Henry VIII allied himself with Julius II's Holy League. In the summer of 1513 Henry accompanied his forces to France : Ammonio went along as his secretary and chaplain.⁵⁴ It is possible that More did not entirely accept the conclusion of the *Julius* that the pope was uniquely responsible for the course of

European political events. But to the extent that the *Julius* was an archly political book, touching matters of deep personal concern to Thomas More as man and councilor, he was intensely interested in it.

Remember also that probably as early as 1513 More was already at work on his *History of Richard III*.⁵⁵ I submit that it is even possible that the harsh invective portrait of Julius II which Erasmus had created may have had some influence in shaping More's treatment of Richard.

It is equally possible that *Utopia* bears some traces of this influence. For to More as to Erasmus, the career of Julius II was surely among those "things that occasion mischief in commonwealths"⁵⁶

Further, I think More was being completely candid in his "Letter to a Monk" when he observed that the author of the *Julius*, "under the impulse of strong emotions [had gone] further than he wished he had"⁵⁷. Like Erasmus, he might wish the book could be called back : but it could not be. All that was left was to try to protect Erasmus from the tumult his indiscretion had made, for the sake of the work he had done and was to do in the cause of Christian reform.

There is one final point, More's love of a joke, which again Erasmus mentioned in his letter to Hutten : "From boyhood he was always so pleased with a joke, that it might seem that jesting was the main object of his life..."⁵⁸ This jesting of More's could take very extreme forms and appear at times to delicate modern taste as both crude and cruel. In these terms I think it again thoroughly consistent with More's personality that he would have been vastly amused by even the most harsh, vulgar, and personal gibes at Julius II that abound in the *Julius* epigram and the *Julius exclusus*.⁵⁹ This love of jesting was, fully as much as the sentiment for church reform or the love of good letters, a quality that bound More and Erasmus together in friendship. It is one of the underlying themes of their relationship from the very beginning.

Part of this mutual spirit of fun always had to do with what is nowadays called role-playing. Both men were fond of the form of the dialogue in which they could assume other masks and characters : the *Julius exclusus* was such a book as were the *Praise of Folly* and some of More's most important writings — the book against Luther which he wrote under the name of William Ross, or *The Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation*, or even the *Utopia*. It seems hardly necessary to mention the endless controversy over whether or to what extent More was Hythlodaye !

Thus I suggest that the guessing game of "author, author, who is the author ?" with reference to the *Julius* appealed as deliciously to More as it did to Erasmus. For the quality of mind that Renaissance letters often called *duplex* was rather admired than criticized and it was possessed fully as much by More as by Erasmus.⁶⁰

NOTES :

- 1) See the review of the evidence in *The Julius exclusus of Erasmus*, tr. Paul Pascal, intro. and notes J. K. Sowards (Bloomington and London : Indiana University Press, 1968), pp. 7-14. The standard Latin text is in Wallace K. Ferguson (ed.), *Erasmi Opuscula, A Supplement to the Opera Omnia* (The Hague : Nijhoff, 1933), pp. 38-124.
- 2) Margaret M. Phillips, *Erasmus and the Northern Renaissance* (London : The English Universities Press, Ltd., 1959), p. 61 ; Pierre de Nolhac, *Erasme en Italie* (Paris : Les Cahiers de Paris, 1925), pp. 16-17, 63 ; Augustin Renaudet, *Erasme et l'Italie* (Geneva : Droz, 1954), p. xi ; Deno J. Geanakoplos, *Greek Scholars in Venice* (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 256-78, and Roland H. Bainton, *Erasmus of Christendom* (New York : Scribners, 1969), pp. 87-90.
- 3) That Erasmus actually saw the pope's triumphal entry into the conquered city of Bologna — as well as a later Julian triumph in Rome — is attested by a statement some years later in his notes to the New Testament, *Erasmi Opera Omnia...* ed. LeClerc (Leyden : Petrus Vander Aa, 1704), VI, 455 F. and IX, 361 B, as well as P. S. and H. M. Allen, *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami...* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1906-1958), I, Ep. 200, pp. 431-32 ; Ep. 203, p. 433 ; Ep. 212-13, pp. 447-49 ; and Ep. 215, p. 450, hereafter cited as EE.
- 4) *Ibid.*, I, Ep. 207, pp. 437-39 ; Ep. 209, pp. 440-42 ; Ep. 210, p. 443 ; Ep. 211, pp. 443-47 ; and Ep. 212, pp. 447-48. See also Margaret M. Phillips, *The 'Adages' of Erasmus, A Study with Translations* (Cambridge : the University Press, 1964), pp. 62-95, and Roger Aubenas and Robert Ricard, *L'Eglise et la Renaissance (1449-1517)*, vol. XV of *Histoire de l'Eglise depuis les origines jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris, Bloud & Gay, 1951), p. 161.
- 5) EE, I, Ep. 296, p. 568 ; II, Ep. 333-34, intro. pp. 67-73 ; and Ep. 335, pp. 79-90.
- 6) In the *Ciceronianus*, Erasmus, *Opera Omnia*, I, 993 A, discussing a declamation held at the court of Julius, clearly indicates that he was present for. he says, "I do not refer to rumor but to what I heard with my own ears and saw with my own eyes". In EE, I, "Catalogus Lucubrationum", p. 37, he refers to two declamations he wrote for Julius on the subject of

the war against Venice. And in the adage "Dulce bellum inexpertis", he refers to the matter again and to a "book entitled Amtipolemus, which I wrote when living in Rome, for Pope Julius II, at the time when he was deliberating whether to make war on Venice", Phillips, *The 'Adages' of Erasmus*, p. 348. See also Erasmus, *Opera Omnia*, II, 968 C.

7) Phillips, *The 'Adages' of Erasmus*, pp. 104-5.

8) The dispensation is reproduced from Vatican registers in EE III, Ep. 187A, pp. xxix-xxx. The document itself refers to the "probity and virtue" of Erasmus "by which you are commended to us by trustworthy testimony". John J. Mangan, *The Life, Character and Influence of Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam* (New York : Macmillan, 1927), II, 60-61 provides the translation.

9) The whole incident is fully described in *ibid.*, I, 217 ff. It is also dealt with, though in a very different spirit and from another point of view, in Carl Stange, *Erasmus und Julius II : Eine Legende* (Berlin : A. Topfmann, 1937), pp. 37-38. Even Nolhac, *Erasme en Italie*, pp. 19-20 implies that he had gone in Italy in order to gain the doctorate, perhaps this specific degree. See also EE, I, Ep. 199, p. 430 intro.

10) The key figure is probably Andrea Ammonio of Lucca, a retainer of Silvestro Gigli, the Bishop of Worcester, who had come to England with the bishop in the fall of 1504. We know that he was one of Erasmus' most intimate friends after his return to England from Italy in 1509 and his principal correspondent during his stay at Cambridge (1511-1514). There is good reason moreover to believe that their friendship dates from before Erasmus' Italian journey. It seems likely that Erasmus was responsible for Ammonio's appointment as Latin secretary to Lord Mountjoy and that, in return, Ammonio facilitated both the matter of the dispensation and the doctorate. He had important contacts both in the Italian community in London and in the Vatican. We know that he was the principal in the later and better documented negotiation with Leo X to have the terms of the earlier dispensation extended. Gigli was also instrumental in this matter and may well have been involved in either of the earlier negotiations, as may other Italians in London, including Boerio. See EE, I, Ep. 215, intro. pp. 449-50 ; Ep. 228, p. 468, n. 13 ; Ep. 283, pp. 543-48 ; Appendix VI, p. 591 ; II, Ep. 521, intro., 442 ; and III, Ep. 187A, intro. p. xxix. See also Clemente Pizzi, *Un Amico di Erasmo, l'Umanista Andrea Ammonio* (Florence : Felice le Monnier, 1956), pp. 17-18 and his *Andreae Ammonii Carmine Opera...* in "Nuova Collezione di Testi Umanistici Inediti o Rari"

(Florence : Olschki, 1958), p. v, and Mangan, *Erasmus*, I, 219-22.

11) EE, I, Ep. 267, p. 519, intro. ; Ep. 192, pp. 423-24 ; Ep. 197, pp. 429-30 ; and "Catalogus Lucubrationum", I, p. 4. Ep. 192 may even link Boerio to Julius II and suggest another possible influence in Erasmus' dealings with the papacy at this time.

12) Of the many Italians in London, some like More's friend the merchant Antonio Bonvisi had lived there for many years. Others like Silvestro Gigli, Andrea Ammonio, or Polydore Vergil were papal diplomats and ecclesiastical officials. Some like Pietro Carmeliano and Cornelio Vitelli were simply attracted to court patronage. Almost all of them were polished and learned men, welcomed at the court of Henry VII (and later Henry VIII). They blended easily with English ecclesiastics and devotees of the New Learning, the majority of whom had traveled or studied in Italy and many of whom had court appointments. See Elizabeth F. Rogers (ed.), *The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More* (Princeton : University Press, 1947), pp. 87-88, hereafter cited as Rogers ; EE, I, Ep. 262, p. 513, n. 10 ; Ep. 267, p. 519, intro. ; Ep. 280, p. 540 ; Ep. 282, p. 541 ; and Ep. 531 ; V, Ep. 1366 ; VI, Ep. 1606 ; Denys Hay, "The Life of Polydore Vergil of Urbino", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XII (1949), 136-38 ; Cornelis Reedijk (ed.), *The Poems of Desiderius Erasmus* (Leiden : 1956), p. 70 and Car. 81, p. 279 ; Germain Marc'hadour, *L'Univers de Thomas More* (Paris : Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1963), p. 153 ; and D. F. S. Thomson and H. C. Porter, *Erasmus and Cambridge* (Toronto : University Press, 1963), pp. 8-10.

13) There are fewer than a dozen extant letters of More for the years with which this paper is generally concerned and only three that can be dated between 1504 and 1506, including those cross-referenced to EE. As Rogers observes (Preface, pp. ix-xii) "There is not the continuity in this correspondence that one finds in that of Erasmus. Many of More's papers were lost after his execution". Many of the letters to and from his scholarly friends and dealing with his literary interests exist only as excerpts in his early biographies. And there are even serious gaps in his official correspondence.

14) His close friendship with Antonio Bonvisi goes back at least this far. See Rogers, Ep. 217, pp. 559-69 and her *St. Thomas More : Selected Letters* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1961), pp. 254-56, hereafter cited as SL. See also A. W. Reed's introduction to More, *English Works*, pp. 18-19 ; Vittorio Gabrieli, "Giovanni Pico and Thomas More", *Moreana*, XV (1967), 45 ; and DNB, II, 827. It is quite likely that he had met both

Gigli and Ammonio although his intimacy with the latter dates from a somewhat later time. See EE, I, Ep. 283, p. 545, n. 71 ; and Pizzi, *Ammonio*, p. 18.

15) All the "Oxford Reformers" were in London by this time as well as such highly placed nobles and clerics as Lord Mountjoy and Bishops Foxe and Fisher, and Archbishop Warham. See Thomson and Porter, *Erasmus and Cambridge*, pp. 8-10, as well as the detailed register of epistles in EE, I.

16) The documents of Erasmus' residence "apud Morum" tend to be somewhat later but there is every reason to think that he stayed with More as freely in 1505-6 as in 1509-11. See Allen, *Ep. Eras.*, I, Ep. 218, p. 456, as well as Russell Ames, *Citizen Thomas More and His Utopia* (Princeton : University Press, 1947), pp. 44-45, and Johan Huizinga, *Erasmus and the Age of Reformation* (New York : Harpers, 1957), originally published by Scribners, 1924, pp. 79-80.

17) EE, I, Ep. 222, and intro. pp. 459-62, the prefatory letter to the *Praise of Folly* ; I, p. 19 ; and II, Ep. 337, p. 94.

18) Leonard F. Dean, *The Praise of Folly by Desiderius Erasmus, a New Translation, with Introduction and Notes* (New York : Farrar, Straus, 1946), pp. 111-113.

19) Erasmus refers specifically to his showing some of his manuscript to several friends in his long letter in defence of the book, written in 1515 to Martin van Dorp, EE, II, Ep. 337, p. 94.

20) On one manuscript it occurs in the cryptic phrase "Th. Morus Byth. Capad." and on the other as "Rosso" - More is known to have used the pseudonym William Ross - followed, as in the other manuscript, by the scribbled abbreviations for the ancient provinces of Bithynia and Cappadocia, as well as Galatia and others, the same list of places to which the first letter of Peter in the New Testament was sent. Reedijk has speculated that Erasmus was already playing with the idea of the contrast between St. Peter and Julius II which was later to become the *Julius exclusus*. It is even possible that the list of place names linked with the name of Thomas More may suggest that Erasmus had already discussed with More this nub of an idea.

The standard Latin text is in Ferguson (ed.), *Erasmi Opuscula*, pp. 35-37, based upon the first manuscript brought to light by J. B. Pineau. See his "Erasme est-il l'auteur du *Julius* ? ", *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, V

(1925), 384-415 and *Erasme et la Papauté. Etude Critique du "Julius Exclusus"* (Paris : Les Presses Universitaires de France, 1924), pp. 15 ff and 18 ff. It is translated in *The Julius exclusus of Erasmus*, ed. and trans. Sowards and Pascal, pp. 18-19. The more recently discovered manuscript is analyzed in Cornelis Reedijk, "Een Schimpdicht van Erasmus op Julius II", *Opstellen door Vrienden en Collegas aangeboden aan Dr. F. K. H. Kossmann* (The Hague : M. Nijhoff, 1958), pp. 186-207.

21) He had actually accepted the lectureship in 1506 and accompanied Fisher to Cambridge at that time. But the opportunity to go to Italy intervened and he did not assume the position until 1511. EE, I, Ep. 228, p. 468, n. 13, and Appendix VI, p. 591. See also Ronald Bayne, *The Life of Fisher*, Early English Text Society, extra series, CXVII (London : 1921 for 1915), p. 9-12 ; and the account in Thomson and Porter, *Erasmus and Cambridge*, pp. 24-26. Father Edward Surtz in his "More's Friendship with Fisher", *Moreana*, XV (1967), 116, concludes that Fisher did not have the same kind of close personal friendship with More as with Erasmus, although they certainly were old acquaintances. Erasmus' first letter from Cambridge, describing to Colet the miseries of the journey, is dated from Queens' College, Aug. 24, 1511, EE, I, Ep. 225, pp. 465-66.

22) The "Cambridge Letters" are not only available in the definitive EE, I, Ep. 225, p. 465 - Ep. 285, p. 549, they have been admirably edited and translated in Thomson and Porter, *Erasmus and Cambridge*.

23) EE, I, Ep. 232, p. 472 and Ep. 236, p. 476. Thomson and Porter, *Erasmus and Cambridge*, pp. 114-118.

24) EE, I, Ep. 294, 295, 296, and 297, pp. 652-674.

25) *Ibid.*, II, Ep. 431, p. 268. Much of the relevant correspondence is missing but the inference is clear from this letter.

26) *Ibid.*, II, Ep. 502, p. 420. See also the detailed analysis of this important piece of evidence in Pineau, "Erasme est-il l'auteur du *Julius* ?", 391-93.

27) Ferguson, *Erasmi Opuscula*, pp. 24-25 identifies it without hesitation, as does Allen, EE, II, Ep. 502, p. 419, intro.

28) *Ibid.*, II, Ep. 543, pp. 494-95.

29) The approximate date is suggested in both *ibid.*, Ep. 502, p. 419 and Ferguson, *Erasmi Opuscula*, pp. 41-42. Ferguson continues, "A number of editions followed in rapid succession, almost all without indication of place or date... but there is no way of absolutely identifying these editions".

30) EE, II, Ep. 502, intro., p. 419 ; III, Ep. 664, pp. 89-90 ; Ep. 877, p. 415 ; and Ferguson, *Erasmi Opuscula*, p. 44. Note also that More leans heavily upon this argument that the printer was more at fault than the author, in his "Letter to a Monk". See n. 39 below.

31) *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

32) F. M. Nichols (ed. and trans.), *The Epistles of Erasmus*, (London : Longmans, Green & Co., 1901-18), III, Ep. 753, p. 290 ; EE, IV, Ep. 785, p. 239.

33) *Ibid.*, III, Ep. 908, p. 463.

34) SL, pp. 6ff. See Rogers, Ep. 15.

35) SL, pp. 94ff. See Rogers, Ep. 60.

36) SL, p. 114. Miss Rogers identifies the Monk as John Batmanson, following Dom David Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England* (Cambridge : the University Press, 1959), III, 469. See Rogers, Ep. 83, pp. 165ff for the full Latin text. Richard Sylvester, "Thomas More : Humanist in Action", *Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 1966, p. 131, also notes the identity of the monk and that More had known him for some years. As for the anonymity, however, he observes, "...such anonymity would rhetorically heighten the insignificance of the monk's views".

37) SL, pp. 136-37.

38) *Ibid.*, p. 121.

39) *Ibid.* p. 122

40) Nichols, *Epistles of Erasmus*, III, Ep. 585B, p. 391 ; EE, IV, Ep. 999, p. 16.

41) See the exchange over his "derling" in More, *English Works*, ed. W. Rastell (London, 1557), p. 422.

42) James K. McConica, in his valuable *English Humanists and Reformation Politics under Henry VIII and Edward VI* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1965), pp. 14-15, 22, stresses that More was not alone in his support and protection of Erasmus. He argues that Erasmus commanded the allegiance of the best minds of his day precisely because he spoke for them through the program of reform sometimes called the *Philosophia Christi*.

43) SL, p. 38 ; Rogers, Ep. 15, p. 53.

44) In spite of Erasmus' low estimate of English law and legal practice – "remote as that profession is from true learning", he remarks to Hutten, in Nichols, *Epistles of Erasmus*, III, Ep. 585B, p. 393 ; EE, IV, Ep. 999, p. 17 – it was nevertheless More's profession and he was one of its most astute practitioners. It can be argued, as R. J. Schoeck does in "Sir Thomas More, Humanist and Lawyer", *University of Toronto Quarterly*, XXXIV.1, p. 11, that the law was More's primary profession and that its principles were largely at the root of More's concept of "the ethical basis of human society". Schoeck's researches on the extent of More's knowledge of canon and civil law also may apply at this point. He proves with reasonable certainty that More actually was admitted in 1514 to Doctors' Commons, an association of practitioners of Roman and canon law, and that even before this time his own legal practice, his functioning in a number of public offices, and his bent for scholarship had exposed him to these *corpora*. See his "Canon Law in England on the Eve of the Reformation", *Medieval Studies*, XXV (1963), 134, 138-39 as well as Pearl Hogrefe, "Sir Thomas More and Doctors' Commons", *Moreana*, XIV (1966), 15-20. It may well be significant for this study that More was thoroughly conversant with the forms and practices of church law and that he was a member of the association to which so many of the London Italians also belonged, including both Polydore Vergil and Andrea Ammonio.

45) SL, p. 212 ; Rogers, Ep. 199, p. 498.

46) SL, p. 214 ; Rogers, p. 499. Moreover, as Hay points out in his "A Note on More and the General Council", *Moreana*, XV (1967), 249-50, "This is not an isolated expression of such a view. He is reported in the same sense by Margaret Roper in August ; later he tells Dr. Nicholas Wilson that matters of doubtful faith are determined by general councils... He is absolutely explicit and claims further that his opinion is not a new one". Charles Dechert, *Thomas More and Society : A Study in Renaissance Thought* (Washington, D. C. : Catholic University of America, 1952), pp. 104-5, 114-23, and 146-47, follows and documents from More's works the

sinuous course of his views on papal supremacy, its limitations, and the separation of spiritual and temporal authorities and jurisdictions, and of their abuse. A. R. Heiserman, "Satire in the *Utopia*", *PMLA*, LXXVIII (1963), 173-74 sees these views reflected in *Utopia*. And Schoeck, "On the letters of Thomas More", *Moreana*, XV (1967), 199, suggests that More's correspondence shows the influence of the anti-papal criticism of the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum*. Stanford E. Lehmborg, "Sir Thomas More's Life of Pico della Mirandola", *Studies in the Renaissance*, III, (1956), 62 even suggests that More's omission of certain references to the papacy in his "editing" of the Pico translations "may well indicate that, already in 1504, he was questioning the extent of the pope's authority". As to the concurrence of Erasmus and More on a number of other theological points – or rather their divergence – see Rainer Pineas, "Erasmus and More : Some Contrasting Theological Opinions", *Renaissance News*, XIII (1960), 298-300.

47) Quoted by Dechert, *Thomas More and Society*, p. 147.

48) Robert P. Adams, *The Better Part of Valor : More, Erasmus, Colet and Vives on Humanism, War and Peace, 1496-1535* (Seattle : University of Washington Press, 1962), pp. 74, 1-122 *passim*. While I think Adams generally tends to overstate his case, he does make a provocative point for the purpose of this paper in pointing out that "Evidently the English humanists were as one in identifying Julius Caesar as a stock type of the tyrant-conqueror prince at his worst. The most infamous contemporary Julius, however, was the Pope of that name..." (p. 72). He goes on to refer to Colet's "scathing reference to Julius Caesar (i.e. also to the Pope) in his Good Friday sermon against the French War", in 1513 ; and to More's approval of Erasmus' epigram against Julius. As far as I am able to tell – at least within the circle of Erasmus' English friends – Erasmus was the initiator of this Caesar comparison. In general, Colet was surely familiar with Erasmus' views both on Julius II and on war. It is less likely, I think, that Colet would have been familiar with the *Julius excusatus*, and still less likely that he would have entered into the game of deception to conceal its authorship. See Erasmus' account of Colet's sermon in his epistolary biography of Colet, to Jodocus Jonas, EE, IV, Ep. 1211, p. 525, where he says that Colet exhorted the king to imitate Christ "potius quam Iulios et Alexandros". The double reference is brilliant. On the point of More's pacifism J. H. Hexter is more unequivocal than I have been. In *Utopia*, vol. IV of *Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, ed. by Edward Surtz, S. J. and J. H. Hexter (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1965), intro. p. lxxi, he says, "At the time of their publication without a single explicit

qualification Thomas More accepted the main positions which Erasmus took in the two crucial works just examined – the *Dulce Bellum Inexpertis* and the *Paraclesis*... From 1515 to 1520 More not only 'accepted' Erasmus' views ; he was their most pertinacious and combative defender". *Utopia*, he says, contains "an invective against war and a powerful satiric assault on Europe's warrior class". (intro. p. li) ; he points to "passage after passage of *Utopia*" in which this hatred of war stands out (intro. p. xlviii) ; and observes that "the papacy makes only one appearance in *Utopia* and then it is as the butt of the bitterest anti-military gibe in the book". (intro. p. l).

49) He was in the Low Countries from early May to late October 1515, largely at Bruges. It was during a recess in the deliberations that he went to Antwerp to meet Gillis. See Rogers, pp. 16-26, 73 and n.

50) See n. 14 above.

51) Thomson and Porter, *Erasmus and Cambridge*, p. 66.

52) On this point see the discussion in Eberhard von Koerber, *Die Staatstheorie des Erasmus von Rotterdam. Schriften 2, Verfassungsgeschichte 4.* (Berlin : Duncker & Humb, N. D.), pp. 50-51, 105, of the fundamental differences between More and Erasmus on what may be termed "nationalism" and "internationalism". See also Caspari, *Humanism and the Social Order in Tudor England*, pp. 33-34, and the contrary opinion of Paul Meissner, *England im Zeitalter von Humanismus, Renaissance und Reformation* (Heidelberg : Kerle, 1952), pp. 83 ff.

53) EE, I, Ep. 236, p. 476.

54) *Ibid.*, I, Ep. 273, pp. 530-31 ; Thomson and Porter, *Erasmus and Cambridge*, pp. 156-57.

55) For this dating see Richard S. Sylvester, "A Part of His Own : Thomas More's Literary Personality in His Early Works", *Moreana*, XV (1967), 34.

56) Nichols, *Epistles of Erasmus*, II, Ep. 503, p. 519.

57) See n. 39 above.

58) Nichols, *Epistles of Erasmus*, III, Ep. 585B, p. 391 ; EE, IV, Ep.

999, p. 16. Beatus Rhenanus wrote of More, "He is every inch pure jest", cited by Father Surtz in *Utopia*, intro. p. cxlix, from Bradner and Lynch (eds.), *The Latin Epigrams of Thomas More* (Chicago : the University Press, 1953), p. 426.

59) More's own works abound in examples of his mordant wit. One need only recall his ragging of Dame Alice. But, as William H. Hutton pointed out long ago in "Religious Writings of Sir Thomas More", *English Historical Review*, IV (1889), 668, "He wrote some of his most stinging epigrams against ignorant and immoral priests and incompetent bishops". Another good example of this kind of coarse Morean humor is to be found in Lawrence Eldredge, "Latin Poetry of the Renaissance", *Antioch Review*, XXIV.1, 83-85.

60) The point is suggested as part of the argument of Peter R. Allen, "*Utopia* and European Humanism : the Function of the Prefatory Letters and Verses", *Studies in the Renaissance*, X, (1963), 91-107. He speaks, for example, of the "deliberate ambiguity" in *Utopia* and the "illusion" as "a sort of humanistic conceit or extended metaphor... they can play with at great length". The same point is made by Heiserman, "Satire in the *Utopia*", 163-65 and to some extent by Father Surtz in *Utopia*, intro. pp. cxxxiv ff. The general point here is also underscored in Rainer Pineas, "Thomas More's Use of the Dialogue Form as a Weapon of Religious Controversy", *Studies in the Renaissance*, VII (1960), 197 ; R. J. Schoeck, "On the Letters of Thomas More", 198 ; Sylvester, "A part of his Own", 29-42 ; and M. P. Gilmore, *Humanists and Jurists : Six Studies in the Renaissance* (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 136-37.

