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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE BATTLE OF WORRINGEN, 1288

THE HISTORY AND MYTHOLOGY OF A NOTABLE EVENT

BY

JAN MÄHLER

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

The battle of Worringen in 1288 is generally considered as an important local event in the history of both the City of Cologne and the Low Countries. Present understanding of its causes, circumstances and historic significance has been shaped primarily by the Brabantine rhyme chronicle of Jan van Heelu and subsequent histories based on it, repeatedly influenced by the resurgence of local patriotism. Upon examination of documentary and chronicle evidence and the general historical background of the battle of Worringen, certain discrepancies became apparent. It seems that the animosities between the Archbishop of Cologne, the City of Cologne, the Duke of Brabant, and the Archbishop's vassals originated much earlier and in slightly different circumstances than generally accepted. The sequence of events in the battle related by Jan van Heelu, as well as its geographical location defined in the subsequent historical literature, are amended. Despite what other treatments of this event have claimed, the Duke of Brabant was not the lone victor of Worringen, nor was the Archbishop completely defeated. The City of Cologne did not significantly improve or even change its relationship with its feudal lord. Thus the battle of Worringen was neither decisive nor important in quite the way it has come to be understood.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

There have perhaps been few other periods of history which were more inspired by fantasy, and in turn gave rise to more tall tales, than the Middle Ages. As medieval people were affected by their superstition and credulity, so we too sometimes find ourselves the victims of legendary rather than realistic accounts of that past. The challenge to separate fact from fiction is likely not yet completed for many tall medieval tales that have become part of our historical tradition.

A good example of how an epic tale about a real event of the past can survive to become history's official version of that event is provided by the literature surrounding a specific incident in medieval Germany, of personal interest to me. My first contact with this event was very much in the form of folk-tale, when as a child I was told that, once upon a time, on a certain farmer's field, just a few miles from my home-village near Cologne, a large and bloody battle had occurred. The full circumstances of what took place in that open meadow near the River Rhine have been of some interest to me ever since, if for no other reason than curiosity.

Confirmation that such a battle really had occurred on 5 June 1288, at a place called Worringen, I found only years later. There a bloody conflict was fought by Duke Jan I of Brabant, Counts Adolf V of Berg and Everhard of Mark, numerous citizens of Cologne, and their allies against Siegfried of Westerburg, Archbishop of Cologne; his allies, the Counts Reinald of Guelder, Heinrich of Luxembourg, Heinrich of Westerburg, and Adolf of Nassau[1]; and many other noble knights. I was surprised to find that the battle of Worringen, within the circles of at least some German and Belgian historians, was indeed considered a rather significant local event[2]. It was taken to indicate the precise time at which the City of Cologne claimed its independence from the rule of its feudal lord, the archbishop[3], marking a shift from strictly feudal ideas of jurisdiction to the development

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[1] See Genealogical Table.

[2] The recent seven-hundredth anniversary of the battle of Worringen has once again caused a reemergence of interest in the events of 1288. The resulting accounts have been very useful in defining the present state of knowledge concerning this event. (See below, Chapter 6.)

[3] See Stehkampfer, Hugo: "Die rechtliche Absicherung der Stadt Köln gegen eine erzbischöfliche Landesherrschaft vor 1288", in: Die Stadt in der europäischen Geschichte. Festschrift fur Edith Ennen (Bonn, 1972), pp. 343-377.

of territorial centralized rule in the Rhine valley[4].

Confronting the generally accepted interpretations of the battle of Worringen with available primary evidence, however, raises doubts about the accuracy of those interpretations. This is not to say that the story was actually falsified, but rather that it seemed, on occasion, to have been related with other purposes in mind than just explaining the how and why of what happened at Worringen in 1288. Clearly of great significance here was the fact that our principal primary source, presumably the only eyewitness account of the battle, out of which the vast majority of information about its conduct and its circumstances has been extracted, is the rhyme chronicle of Jan van Heelu[5], an attendant at the Brabant court. Its biases and point of view, originally meant to boost the image of Brabant and its duke, without question have influenced today's understanding of the events. Although fairly soon after Heelu recorded the battle at Worringen interest in

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[4] See Erkens, Franz-Reiner: "Territorium und Reich in Politik und Vorstellung des Kölner Erzbischofs Siegfried von Westerburg", Nassauische Annalen 94 (1983), pp. 25-46, and Jansen, W.: "Niederrheinische Territorialbildung. Voraussetzungen, Wege, Probleme", Klever Archiv 3 (Kleve, 1981), pp. 95-113.

[5] Originally edited by Jan Frans Willems as Rymkronyk betreffende den Slag van Woeringen in Chronique en vers de Jan van Heelu ou relation de la bataille de Woeringen (= Collection de chroniques belges inédites, tom. 1) (Bruxelles, 1836).

the event declined, relegating his chronicle to relative obscurity, on some noteworthy later occasions Heelu's narrative was found to be valuable in the service of politicians and historians. Thus even in this century Worringen and the "Limburg War", although of little current relevance, have attracted some limited interest, this time in explaining historical trends resulting in the formation of the modern state. Information about the battle, its issues and its participants, through the centuries has remained subject to various interests trying to prove a point or promote an image.

The present attempt to distingush historical facts about the battle of Worringen from its historiographical legacy will be carried out in two stages. The first consists of a reconstruction on the basis of all available sources, some of which have perhaps not received due attention, of the circumstances, events, and people affecting and affected by the battle of Worringen. The second stage consists of an examination of the narratives, reflecting varying interests, which came to be accepted as historically truthful and thus shaped today's perception of the battle of Worringen and its significance. If this exploration is successful, not only the battle of Worringen, but also the way in which our knowledge of it has been distorted by the historiographical tradition, may

be more satisfactorily explained.

Before we focus on the specific event, however, it seems desirable to review some of the general circumstances of the later Middle Ages in the Holy Roman Empire, which defined the issues and conditioned the people involved in this conflict.

Part I

ORIGINS AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE BATTLE OF WORRINGEN

Chapter 1

TOWNS, NOBLES, AND CHURCHMEN

The Roots of Conflict

In thirteenth-century Europe, the commercial and political rise of towns was one of the more crucial developments. Through commerce and manufacture, many European towns rose from subjection to feudal lords to economic and political self-sufficiency. Previously, in the eleventh century, feudal rulers may have seen an opportunity to participate in the prosperity and wealth of towns by condoning the generally "un-feudal" freedoms of urban life through the granting of charters and privileges. Presently, however, urban communities, typically inhabited by populations with strong commercial interests, came to develop their own administrative institutions, often based on some type of merchant guild. In the interest of free and uninhibited enterprise the commercial urban elite pursued a number of methods in attempting to detach themselves from the feudal authority of their overlord, frequently and most obviously consisting of the construction of elaborate and expensive fortifications[6].

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[6] Pounds, N.J.G., An Economic History of Medieval Europe (New York, 1974), pp. 225 ff.

To most self-reliant city dwellers, feudal practices conceived for the administration and control of a rurally based feudal society must have seemed like outdated rules, arbitrary customs, or bad habits[7], obstacles to business which were high on their list of incentives for acquiring administrative and political independence. The initial success of urban centres in separating themselves from feudal society was, however, to lead to severe conflicts whenever rulers attempted to reverse an evolution they themselves might have promoted in the beginning.

The traditional authorities, secular or religious, could not easily accommodate a growing autonomy outside the conservative framework of the feudal hierarchy. For one thing, feudal rulers, increasingly dependent on cash revenue, could little afford to let their access to the economic potential of towns be restricted by the rival claims of a bourgeois leadership. To aggravate aristocratic apprehensions, urban growth and prosperity created opportunities for the bourgeoisie to accumulate wealth and status which allowed it to acquire blue-blooded dress and manners without the sanction of noble birth[8]. Feudal

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[7] Pirenne, Henri: Geschichte Belgiens, transl. by Fritz Arnheim (Gotha, 1899), p. 206.

[8] Painter, Sidney: A History of the Middle Ages, 284-1500 (New York, 1953), p. 239.

rulers only had two choices, either to come to terms with the towns, peacefully and co-operatively, by further sanctioning already existing conditions through the granting of yet more charters and privileges, or forcibly to return urban administration to their own control, through the use of military power.

Secular princes, based in the countryside, generally seem to have been disposed towards accepting a degree of urban autonomy, which could be of considerable financial benefit to them[9]. For example, in the Low Countries urban independence often advanced relatively peacefully and perhaps therefore also most radically in places such as Bruges and Ghent. The County of Flanders[10] and the Duchy of Brabant[11] are certainly places where until the end of the thirteenth century the local rulers were very generous towards the towns, mainly, perhaps, because they depended on them financially.

By contrast, religious rulers, traditionally themselves resident in urban centres, often took a more

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[9] According to Painter the potential benefit the money economy was particularly helpful for the more important feudal lords who cculd control and promote fairs and owned the larger towns. Painter, A History of the Middle Ages, p. 243.

[10] Clarke, M.V.: The Medieval City State (London, 1926), pp. 44-45.

[11] See below.

hostile approach to municipal autonomy. Although in part influenced, according to Pirenne, by doctrinaire views concerning the morality of commerce, church potentates were also compelled to pursue relatively repressive policies against the political aspirations of their urban flock by the political need to defend the full range of authority and power held by the church[12]. Thus, in the particular case that concerns us here, the commercial and political aspirations of the City of Cologne's civilian leadership were opposed with more or less severe animosity by their feudal and religious overlords, the archbishops. Other episcopal cities in the Rhineland experienced very similar difficulties in asserting their autonomy against their religious and secular lord. At some point it seems indeed to have been quite fashionable to challenge one's episcopal superior. For example, when the people of Cologne in 1074 rose up against Archbishop Anno, it appears that they were inspired by a similar uprising in Worms the previous year, asserting that "they were more numerous and wealthy than the people of Worms", and should do no less[13].

Contemporaneous with the commercial prosperity and

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[12] Pirenne, Geschichte Belgiens, p. 209.

[13] Clarke, The Medieval City State, p. 48.

industrialization of northern European towns, such as Cologne, was an incipient decline of the status and wealth of the rurally based nobility in areas such as Flanders and the lower Rhine Valley, especially in the second half of the thirteenth century[14]. Here the feudal manor was less and less the centre of economic activity which it had been in earlier years. People moving into the cities to participate in the manufacture of cloth and the processing of other commodities not only swelled the population of the towns but also depleted the work force on noble estates. Moreover, the growing money economy was leading to the replacement of contributions in kind which had made up the traditional income of the rural nobility. While many nobles began to prefer collecting rents and other dues in hard currency, they apparently failed to recognize the threat that inflation represented to these often permanently set amounts. Although it was a benefit to his tenants, currency inflation could severely reduce the value of a nobleman's revenue[15].

At the same time that feudal revenue no longer

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[14] One very interesting study of the status of European nobility, but possibly of wider importance in the context of the Lower Rhine, is Warlop, E.: The Flemish Nobility before 1300 (Kortrijk, 1975).

[15] Koch, H.W.: The History of Warfare (London 1987) p. 94.

provided a secure financial basis, the demands of the aristocratic lifestyle began to require ever larger sums of currency. Being noble was increasingly difficult to afford[16]. As armour became more sophisticated, both it and horses, a knight's working tools, were becoming prohibitive in cost to anyone not wealthy by birth[17]. Moreover, vassals were no longer bound to military service for their lord exclusively by feudal ideals of personal loyalty, but instead increasingly by monetary compensation only the wealthiest princes could afford. Warfare thus became a very expensive proposition for rulers no less in need of money than their vassals[18]. The military life-style had to be made to pay for itself.

It is therefore no surprise that at this time, winning at tournaments and taking hostages in war began to

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[16] Duby, Georges: Rural Economy and Country life in the Medieval West, transl. by Cynthia Postan (Columbia, 1968), p. 234.

[17] Rössner, Werner: "Ritterliche Wirtschafts-verhältnisse und Turnier im sozialen Wandel", in Fleckenstein, Joseph, ed.: Das Ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter (= Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 80) (Göttingen, 1985), pp. 296-338.

[18] Pirenne, Geschichte Belgiens, pp. 262-263.

replace agricultural revenues as the main source of income for many European noblemen[19]. Particularly in the Holy Roman Empire, nobles, desperate for cash and aware of the inability of the imperial administration to control them, resorted to ever more creative methods of financing of their courts, from the levying of taxes and tolls to the abuse of church revenues, right down to simple highway robbery[20]. Feudal rulers in need of additional income were obviously tempted to look towards the financial resources of the towns, whether given by choice or taken by force.

One less recognized, but interesting and perhaps far-reaching effect of these developments, was that many noblemen could no longer afford to have all male members of their family become independent knights. A career in the church or the civil bureaucracy, which necessitated giving up one's independence to a superior, had always been an option for the lower orders of society to improve themselves, but now even someone who might normally have been looking forward to a life of war, feasts, and jousting was compelled into the service of God or the king

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[19] Ibid., p. 309.

[20] Bäuml, Franz H.: Medieval Civilization in Germany 800-1273 (London, 1969), p. 156.

as a result of economic necessity[21]. Whereas in France joining the king's administration could ensure not only the preservation of a noble life style but also access to political authority, in the declining Empire only a position in the administration of the Church would have provided similar possibilities. Such positions were increasingly sought, and many noble fathers who might have otherwise placed their sons in monasteries perceived new opportunities in the secular hierarchy of the church[22].

One need not assume that on joining the church hierarchy young noblemen lost any of their military ambition or their taste for the knightly life. These were merely now channelled into the service of a church only too happy to make use of such qualities. Not surprisingly, these churchmen tended to show less concern for piety. Rising perhaps to become bishops and archbishops

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[21] In the introduction of Lacomblet, Theodor J., ed,: Urkundenbuch für die Geschichte des Niederrheins (Aalen, 1960), vol. 2, p. ix, the editor has noted a number of these developments. According to one of his sources (doc. no. 912) even King Rudolf commented on the growing number of young noblemen crowding into financially attractive positions in the church hierarchy.

[22] According to research conducted by Manfred Groten, a vast majority of positions in Cologne's church and cathedral chapters during the twelfth and thirteenth century were occupied by the sons of the minor local nobility. Groten, Manfred: Priorenkolleg und Domkapitel von Köln im Hohen Mittelalter (= Rheinisches Archiv 109) (Bonn, 1980).

of the Empire, these noblemen more often administered the power than the sacraments of the church. In contrast to the communal living practised by their brothers in the monasteries, many enjoyed themselves in their favourite estates or town houses. It is said that by the thirteenth century only lavish feasts and special delicacies could interest noble-born members of the Cologne church chapters in attending religious observances[23]. Indications are, however, that for many men of the church active participation in military conflicts required considerably less incentive.

A church hierarchy dominated by the offspring of the rural aristocracy, frequently practising the quarrelsome lifestyle of their feudal relatives, undoubtedly succeeded in earning the mistrust of the urban bourgeoisie. Even an archbishop of Cologne was bound to be viewed not simply as a man of the church, but also a representative of a class whose values and interests frequently clashed with those of the new urban elite.

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[23] Lacomblet, Urkundenbuch, vol. 2, pp. ix ff.

The politics of the Empire after 1250

The second half of the thirteenth century confronted the Holy Roman Empire with the political uncertainties which followed the death of Frederick II in 1250 and continued through the Interregnum, persisting in many respects even after the election of Rudolf of Habsburg in 1273[24]. Counts and dukes, bishops and abbots, uninhibited by strong central control and the imperial peace, and increasingly regarding their territorial jurisdictions, most of which at some time had been imperial fiefs, as their personal possessions[25], fought over the remaining unprotected imperial holdings and sovereign rights, while the important decisions determining the future of Germany were increasingly made by foreign potentates. It was not until the intervention of the new pope Gregory X (1270-

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[24] According to Herbert Grundmann in Gebhardt, Bruno: Handbuch der Deutschen Geschichte, Bd. 1, eighth edition reprinted (Stuttgart, 1964), p. 382, the disorder associated with the Interregnum actually began in 1245, even before Frederick's death, and continued until 1355 and the next legitimate emperor Charles IV, although the German kingship (the actual title was King of the Romans) was never vacant for long. Nevertheless the Interregnum signalled the real decline of centralized authority, by whatever name, and the near anarchical fight over its remnants by the remaining figures or institutions of authority.

[25] Barraclough, Geoffrey: The Origins of Modern Germany (New York, 1963), p. 326.

76), who had considerable political interest in the preservation of imperial institutions to counterbalance French and Angevin ambitions in Italy, that some semblance of normality appeared to return to Germany.

When Gregory X became pope in 1270, he had the difficult task of reconciling his personal goals and those of the church with the political realities of Europe[26]. We know that his desire was to summon a crusade once more. A crusade with any chance of success required the unification of the rulers of Western Christendom under one single banner against a common enemy[27]. The foremost among these secular princes to lead such undertaking could only be a legitimate emperor, still the nominal superior of all other sovereigns.

There was also political prudence in strengthening the imperial institution to counterbalance its increasingly powerful competitors. In its efforts at centralization and European hegemony, the French royal family was beginning to put considerable pressure on the papacy and the Empire. Although Charles of Anjou had been useful in removing the last Hohenstauffen offspring from southern Italy, his growing ambitions and those of his cousins in

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[26] Ibid., pp. 301 ff.

[27] Redlich, Oswald: Rudolf von Habsburg (Innsbruck, 1903), p. 144.

France represented a threat to the independence of the papacy. The concentrated power of two of Europe's most centralized and efficient kingdoms, France and Sicily, was also increasingly uncomfortable for the Italian pro-imperial party, whose candidate Gregory had been[28]. French power had already exerted itself on the papacy, for Gregory X, the Italian Thebaldo Visconti, former archdeacon of Liège, had been preceded by two French popes. Philip III of France's candidacy for the imperial throne only increased French pressure. The balancing of the French and Angevin power with that of an emperor was therefore a prudent political move in the interests of both the continued independence of the church and the political aspirations of Italians in general.

Gregory thus insisted that a new Roman king be elected by the princes of the Empire, and threatened that otherwise one would simply be named by himself[29]. With unexpected speed, the electors, led by the three archbishops of Cologne, Mainz, and Trier, heeded Gregory's threat[30] and proceeded to elect Rudolf of Habsburg, who

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[28] Redlich, Rudolf von Habsburg, p. 143.

[29] In August of 1273 Gregory threatened that he and his cardinals would simply appoint a ruler for the Empire. Redlich, Rudolf von Habsburg, p. 153 and Barraclough, Origins, p. 301.

[30] Redlich, Rudolf von Habsburg, p. 162.

although he later proved to be quite a potent imperial authority[31] was at the time seen as unlikely to threaten the position, to which the imperial princes seemed to have grown accustomed since the demise of the imperial authority of the Hohenstaufen. The German princes indeed seem to have realized reluctantly that their own position, in the face of French ıs of hegemony, could be endangered by too weak an imperıal figurehead. At the same time, a too strong imperial authority could threaten their individual interests. One can assume that the electors regarded Rudolf as the perfect compromise candidate through whom they could obtain the desired combination between external protection and internal freedom for themselves in the Empire.

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[31] Redlich sees Rudolf as rather suitable for the post he was to occupy and represents him as anything but a "little count" chosen merely for his lack rather than his abundance of influence. Rudolf von Habsburg, p. 163.

Chapter 2

THE TWO COLOGNES

The political position of the Archbishops of Cologne

Even before the Interregnum the three German ecclesiastical electors seem to have played a decisive role in imperial elections. In 1246 the three Rhenish archbishops, on their own, elected Heinrich Raspe as an anti-king against Frederick II. Apparently they continued to dominate subsequent imperial elections[32]. It must have been obvious to the papacy that, in view of the European political situation, placing suitable personnel in such exceedingly important offices of church and Empire as the Rhineland archbishoprics required considerable attention. Primary among these centres of political as well as spiritual authority was the Archbishopric of Cologne.

Their role as imperial electors was however not the

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[32] In 1292 Archbishop Siegfried of Cologne would be successful in convincing all other electors to accept his own vassal Adolf of Nassau as King of the Romans. About this subject see Schmid, L.: Die Wahl des Grafen Adolf von Nassau zum römischen König (Wiesbaden, 1870).

only cause for the pre-eminence of Cologne's archbishops. As princes of the Church, their spiritual rule covered large tracts of the lower Rhine valley and the Low Countries, and with it some of the most productive and wealthy lands of Europe; furthermore, as dukes of Cologne (since 1151) and Westphalia (since 1180), they were also important secular rulers.

These additional roles of Cologne's archbishops had their origins in the imperial policies of the Hohenstaufen dynasty. The position of duke of Cologne was created by Konrad III (1138-1152), the first Hohenstaufen emperor, for his chancellor, Archbishop Arnold II (1151-1156), in an attempt, according to one argument, to secure for the new Swabian dynasty a jurisdictional foothold in the north-west of the Empire[33]. In the event, the imposition of a new feudal authority above the already existing network of local jurisdictions served only to create a number of complications and conflicts[34]. The ducal authority of Cologne's archbishops was to have been coterminous with their existing spiritual jurisdiction,

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[33] Droege, Georg: "Lehnrecht und Landrecht am Niederrhein und das Problem der Territorialbildung im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert", Aus Geschichte und Landeskunde. Franz Steinbach zum 65. Geburtstag (Bonn 1960), pp. 278-307.

[34] See Appendix III.

covering the entirety of the Cologne archdiocese, including the feudal lordships within it[35]. The counts and dukes of the lower Rhine, however, possessed traditional rights and jurisdictions which frequently came into conflict with the new feudal supremacy of the Cologne archbishops[36]. Obviously the more powerful rulers of Brabant or Guelder never admitted feudal subordination to the Cologne archbishops; but even among the less influential barons, who in the short run had little choice but to recognize the archbishops' overlordship, there seems to have been no intention of ultimately accepting it. While the Hohenstaufen monarchs continued to place men loyal to them in the Archdiocese and Duchy of Cologne, the lords of the Lower Rhine remained fundamentally opposed to these figures of feudal and imperial authority.

Archbishops Frederick II (1156-1158) and Reinald of Dassel (1159-1167) gained their seats as strong allies of the imperial family. Archbishop Philip of Heinsberg (1167-1191) was elected at the express wish of Emperor Frederick I and received the Duchy of Westphalia and Egern in 1180 after successfully supporting his emperor against Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony. In 1225, however, the

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[35] Also called "Lehnrecht".

[36] Droege, Lehnrecht und Landrecht, pp. 282 ff. The technical term in that case would be "Landrecht".

brewing conflict between the Rhenish lords and their supposed feudal superior cost Archbishop Engelbert of Berg (1216-1225) his life at the hands of an assassin. Engelbert had been a particular favourite of Emperor Frederick II, and besides tutoring Frederick's son, had been his right hand man in the German portion of the Empire. Although Archbishop Konrad of Hochstaden (1238-1261) also began as a champion of the Hohenstaufen king, he was swept up in the papal campaign against the Sicilian "Antichrist" deposed by Gregory IX in 1245[37], while continuing to quarrel constantly with his vassals and subjects in the Rhineland. It seems that as the power of those who had made the archbishops of Cologne important began to wane, so the frequency and seriousness of attacks on them from within began to rise.

The most important objective of Konrad of Hochstaden's successor, Archbishop Engelbert II (1261-1274), therefore, consisted in protecting his position of authority in the absence of Hohenstaufen or indeed any other effective imperial support. He struggled fiercely to do so, but when he died in 1274, a year after crowning Rudolf of Habsburg as king of the Romans, he had not been

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[37] In 1247 Konrad participated in the election of the anti-king Heinrich Raspe and a year later that of William of Holland.

successful in subduing the opposition.

After Engelbert's death the archiepiscopal election of a candidate who would have strong ties to the local nobility seemed all but certain, owing to the preponderance of sons of local noble families in the electoral positions of the Archdiocese. A local candidate would be likely to use the authority of the archdiocese to accomplish the ambitions of his family, rather than to further papal or imperial interests. This time it fell to the papacy to protect the integrity of the archbishopric, but also to make use of it to promote its own allies as previously the Hohenstaufen emperors had done. Pope Gregory X reserved to himself the legitimate and customary election usually conducted by members of the Cologne church[38]. It was Siegfried of Westerburg, the provost of the church of Mainz, recommended by the Archbishop of Mainz and the King of the Romans, who found Pope Gregory's favour. Siegfried was not the only archbishop in the history of the church of Cologne who was more or less

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[38] The Archbishop of Cologne since early times was elected by the representatives of his church. The exact makeup of the electorate seems not to have been defined explicitly over the centuries. It could range from the members of all of Cologne's church chapters to merely the cathedral chapter. In the election of 1274 the churches of the Cologne diocese sent appointed delegates to come to a decision. Knipping, Richard, ed.: Regesten der Erzbischöfe von Köln im Mittelalter (Bonn, 1913), vol. 3, no. 2591.

imposed from the outside, but he was the first selected directly and arbitrarily by a pope without even the appearance of a free election.

When the news of Gregory's choice of their new superior reached the delegates of the Cologne church, they had already proceeded with the customary election. By a nine to one majority they had chosen the provost of the Cologne cathedral chapter, Konrad of Berg. He was the younger brother of Count Adolf of Berg, who was the head of this important vassal family of the Cologne church, which although it had provided a number of archbishops in the past, following the reign of Konrad of Hochstaden had become one of the primary enemies of the archbishops' feudal authority. It is conceivable that their consistent exclusion from archiepiscopal office, possibly due to their earlier affiliation with the despised Hohenstaufen dynasty, contributed to the long standing and increasingly violent conflicts between the house of Berg and Archbishop Engelbert II[39]. Undoubtedly a candidate such as Konrad of Berg, with a locally orientated agenda, possibly favourably disposed toward a Hohenstaufen resurgence, was viewed by Gregory and others as a severe threat, likely not only to do harm to the power and influence of the archbishopric

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[39] See below, Chapter 3, for a discussion of house of Berg.

itself, but indeed to jeopardize some papal objectives in imperial politics. It appears from the swift papal action that Gregory was well aware of the situation in Cologne and took it very seriously. One could indeed view his action as a last resort to preserve one of the few remaining power-bases for defending the political interests of the church in the Empire.

The man, however, who in 1274 came to be archbishop as a result of papal intervention was to face much the same opposition as his predecessor because of it[40]. Ambitious and warlike, one of the previously characterized sons of a noble house who had found a career in the church, Siegfried of Westerburg had occupied a number of important posts in the church hierarchy before becoming archbishop of Cologne. His martial tendencies had been clearly expressed in his participation in a military campaign of Archbishop Engelbert II, and his appointment as the church official responsible for the overseeing of the Order of Teutonic Knights in Germany[41]. He must have appeared the perfect papal candidate, intelligent, educated, politically reliable, and, perhaps most important of all, seemingly capable of protecting not only himself but also

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[40] See Chapter 1.

[41] Knipping, Regesten, no. 2591.

the interests of both the Pope and the King who had promoted him to the archbishopric. Pope Gregory's letter informing him of his election specifically praises his loyalty to the church as well as his literacy[42]. Judging by subsequent events one may question the prudence of promoting this particular man, who harboured his own, still unclear interests and ambitions, to protect the integrity of the Archdiocese and Duchy of Cologne. It still cannot be established conclusively if he came to act only in his own interest or also in that of Church and Empire. In either case, however, we can safely assume that for now his objectives included subduing any local opposition to church authority, regaining the revenues and jurisdictions usurped by city dwellers and local lords, and maintaining the Duchy of Cologne as it had been conceived in 1151[43]. At the centre of his concerns must have been the metropolis of his archdiocese, one of the most significant and wealthy urban communities of the age, that had caused numerous problems for his predecessors, the City of Cologne.

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[42] Gregory X to Archbishop Siegfried, Lyon 3 April 1275, concerning the circumstances of and the reasons for his election. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2594.

[43] See Map.

The Rise of the City of Cologne

By the time of Siegfried's accession, Cologne had become the largest urban centre adorning the landscape of the Lower Rhine[44]. It was located at the juncture of important trade routes linking the old Mediterranean world with the new and prospering towns of the Low Countries, perhaps the most important of which connected Cologne with Bruges and beyond that England[45], also passing through some of the more important towns of Brabant - Louvain and Brussels. Active in production as well as trade, Cologne exported some local wine and beer; more significantly, it was also one of the more important centres of woollen cloth and arms manufacture in the Empire. As a result of the enterprising activity of its population in the sale and exchange of trade-goods to places as far away as London, Cologne acquired wealth and influence that

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[44] Unfortunately no documentary evidence for the thirteenth century population of the City of Cologne has survived, therefore calculations can only be based on the number of people the town walls of 1180 could perhaps have accomodated. The resulting estimates of Cologne's population in the late thirteenth century range between 35,000 and 40,000. It is generally agreed that Cologne was by far the largest German city, roughly comparable in population to London. Russell, Josiah Cox: Medieval Regions and their Cities (Newton Abbot, 1972), p. 91; Leuschner, Joachim: Germany in the late Middle Ages (Amsterdam 1980), pp. 6-7; Bäuml, Franz: Medieval Civilization in Germany, (London, 1969) p. 152.

[45] Pirenne, Geschichte Belgiens, p. 197.

according to some made it the virtual centre of Northern Europe's commercial and cultural network[46]. The mark of Cologne became a respected currency in the towns of Flanders, Brabant, and Holland. Cologne's participation was indispensable to the activities of the Rhenish League, intended to keep the peace and protect trade along the important Rhineland roads and waterways during the uncertainty of the Interregnum[47].

The inhabitants of Cologne, although always officially under the jurisdiction of the archbishop, were steadily increasing their independence from their temporal and spiritual lord. The year 1074 had brought the first example of how they could act in concert against the arbitrary rule of their archbishop[48]. After the annual Easter celebration, Archbishop Anno had confiscated a merchant's barge to provide transportation for the visiting bishop of Münster. Stirred up by the outraged merchant's son and his friends, the townspeople rioted and

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[46] Postan, M., Rich E.E., ed.: The Cambridge Economic History of Europe, vol. 2, Trade and Industry in the Middle Ages (Cambridge, 1952), pp. 184 ff.

[47] Ennen, Edith: "Kölner Wirtschaft im Früh- und Hochmittelalter", in Zwei Jahrtausende Kölner Wirtschaft (Köln, 1975), Bd. 1, pp. 89-193. Cf. Russell, Medieval Regions and their Cities, p. 90.

[48] Strait, Paul: Cologne in the Twelfth Century (Gainesville, 1974), p. 25.

chased the Archbishop out of town. Although the immediate issue was eventually settled, it was clear that a certain sense of community and co-operation had developed among the people of Cologne, directed from the beginning against their feudal overlord who just happened to be an archbishop.

Since that time their ambitions for civic autonomy had continued more or less unchecked by the archbishops, who were increasingly preoccupied with issues of imperial politics. Philip of Heinsberg, while actively supporting the politics and wars of Emperor Frederick I, almost ignored a significant as well as illegal extension of the town walls in 1180. Against a one-time payment of 2000 marks and the town's promise to obey his rule, Philip actually allowed the completion of construction of wall and ditch, which conceivably were intended partly to keep his own forces out[49]. Also, through his frequent absences campaigning with the Emperor, he seems to have greatly contributed to the peaceful development of civic institutions in Cologne[50], which ultimately were to represent a direct threat to archiepiscopal authority.

The civic institutions through which Cologne's

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[49] Knipping, Regesten, vol. 2, no. 1148.

[50] Strait, Cologne in the Twelfth Century, p. 42.

policies were directed in the thirteenth century are not perfectly understood; they had not then achieved their fully developed form as found in the middle of the fourteenth century. It is evident, however, that, as in other wealthy towns of the period, a type of oligarchical government conducted by the civic elite evolved in Cologne[51]. In the particular case of Cologne, wealthy merchants were joined by former servants and officials, the ministeriales, of archbishop and emperor. The extent to which the ministeriales began to participate independently in Cologne's politics as a kind of urban nobility has been examined without conclusive results. They evidently acted quite frequently against their nominal masters[52]. It seems that the offices of the archiepiscopal administration and imperial supervision within Cologne had remained in the hands of certain families for generations. In that time the office holders had achieved a measure of independence from the authority of their lord which was apparent but never seems to have

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[51] For this see Clarke, M. V.: The Medieval City State (London, 1926), pp. 47-48.

[52] See Zotz, Thomas: "Stättisches Rittertum und Bürgertum in Köln um 1200", in Fenske, Lutz; Rösener, Werner and Zotz, Thomas, ed.: Institutionen, Kultur und Gesellschaft im Mittelalter (Sigmaringen 1984), pp. 609-638. Russell considers that the ministeriales were of little importance in the Cologne region. Medieval Regions and their Cities, p. 91.

been explicitly acknowledged. At some point the heterogeneous urban aristocracy came together in an association, presumably originating from a body meant to supervise commercial activity, outside the established structures of administration and referred to by its members as the Richerzeche[53]. Not quite a merchant guild, this fraternity was made up of people who possessed authority in Cologne based on either their wealth, their ancestry, their holding of archiepiscopal appointments, or their ownership of property, and who quite accurately could be called a patriciate. Its members determined who would sit on the town councils and who would be the Bürgermeister[54]. In this fashion the Richerzeche took control of the city's institutions and set out to usurp rights from the archbishop one by one. By the time Siegfried of Westerburg became archbishop in 1274 they quite likely were the only true governing body of Cologne.

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[53] Strait, Cologne, pp. 44-75. Previous scholars do not seem to have discussed the meaning of this term. Judging from Cologne's present day dialect, very similar today to modern Dutch and in the past probably even more closely related, the term could perhaps be translated in either of two ways:
(a) as "Rich heren zeche" = Rich men's association;
(b) as "Richter zeche" = Judges' association.
As the real body was most likely made up from a combination of both rich men and judges, the effective difference between the two translations seems minimal.

[54] Strait, Cologne, p. 143.

Documents recording communications between archbishop and the town of Cologne in the period during which this development took place, as an example of 1218 demonstrates, usually employed the addressing formula: judices, scabini, universique magistratus Coloniensis. These titles, refering to once dependent archiepiscopal officials, seem remnants of a time when such offices were filled by appointment or election, and make no reference to the independent status their holders had aquired[55]. This form of adress may have been useful for the archbishops in order to avoid acknowledgement of the independence these officials now enjoyed[56].

In spite of the stubborn refusal of successive archbishops to acknowledge what had become a reality, the City of Cologne had for some time been acquiring visible signs and proofs of its growing emancipation. Already in 1119 it possessed its own seal, in 1180 it built on its own a new city wall, and in 1239 it won for its citizens exemption from being cited before external courts[57]. The City independently concluded trading agreements and joined

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[55] Strait, Cologne, p. 45.

[56] Archbishop Siegfried to the City of Cologne, 12 July 1287, Lacomblet, Urkundenbuch, vol. 2, no. 828.

[57] Herborn, Wolfgang: "Die Stadt Köln und die Schlacht von Worringen", in Der Name der Freiheit, 1288-1988 (Cologne, 1988), pp. 289-293.

alliances protective of its trade such as the "Rheinische Bund". For military protection at home, the City of Cologne, ignoring the archbishop's power completely, relied on the support of the surrounding nobles, to whom it frequently offered and gave citizenship.
Ironically it was left to one of the Hohenstaufen emperors, Philip of Swabia, to give the City of Cologne its strongest support yet for a status independent from its archbishop. Having given active assistance to the Welf Otto IV, the city had been forced to surrender to Philip after a siege in 1206. Interested in winning over this enemy stronghold by an honourable peace, he had given it a direct imperial connection by having its authorities swear an oath to him personally[58]. Although successive archbishops refused to recognize this relationship, it could have provided a legitimate reason to claim independence from the archbishop, but it never seems to have been used as such.

Since 1248 the enormous wealth and respectability of Cologne's patricians had found expression in the construction of a magnificent cathedral, which according to its plans was to surpass anything so far built in Christendom. Although ostensibly a symbol of Cologne's

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[58] Kluger, Helmut: "1074-1288 Auf dem Wege zur Freiheit", in Der Name der Freiheit, p. 19.

position as the seat of an important archbishop, it served in fact as a sign of the wealth and freedom of the people of this commercial centre.

Evidence was mounting for anyone to see that Cologne, despite the religious extravagance of its patricians, was no longer a hospitable place for its archbishops. After the death of Engelbert I in 1225, for example, the administrators of Cologne felt confident enough in their grip on independence, and upset enough at the Archbishop's refusal to acknowledge it, that they dared to burn Engelbert's ordinances[59].

Konrad of Hochstaden, who received his post in 1238, was indeed the first archbishop to acknowledge the obvious loss of authority by being also the first seriously to challenge Cologne's patricians, and attempt to return the city to archiepiscopal control. His efforts were helped by a decree of Emperor Frederick II in 1232 against the autonomy of archiepiscopal towns[60]. Konrad's strategy was to fuel the fire of civil war not only between competing clans but also, more radically, between the patricians and

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[59] Archbishop Heinrich I punished the citizens of Cologne for burning Engelbert's ordinances, 15 November 1225. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 573.

[60] King Frederic II signed ordinance against the independence of archiepiscopal cities, January 1232. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 747.

the guilds. In his desire to break the hold which the patricians had on city politics, Konrad found willing allies among the craftsmen and guild masters of Cologne. Violent competition for authority within the city walls, among the leading families and between them and other segments of the population, seems to have been a permanent affair in Cologne as it was in other medieval cities. Full-scale battles between competing family clans and between guild and patrician classes were fought in the crowded city streets and outside the town walls. In alliance with the guilds, Konrad was temporarily able to win the upper hand and arrest several of the most important patrician leaders[61].

Although in this way the power of the patricians was temporarily broken, the grievances between the Archbishop and the City were far from resolved. Despite their representing guild-masters rather than patricians, Cologne's new administrators proved no less independently minded. The "Grosse Schied" of 1258, written and negotiated by the prominent Dominican friar, scholar, and scientist, Albertus Magnus (1196-1280), defined in 75 points the jurisdictional and economic disputes between

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[61] 1 May 1260, according to chronicle sources. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2103.

town and archbishop[62]. The mere fact that the civic leadership was able to negotiate on an equal footing with the Archbishop is certainly notable. In practice Albert's arbitration represented little more than an agreement to disagree between Archbishop and city administrators. Despite Konrad's efforts, Cologne's council remained able to function independently, and in some ways the results even helped to support the City's claim to autonomy from its ruler.

Although Konrad subsequently acquired a reputation for having subdued the unruly subjects of his church, by the time of his death in 1261 the remaining patricians of Cologne had allied themselves with the guild-masters and recovered the support of large sections of the populace. Temporary upheavals evidently did little to change the basic goals of any administration in the City. Konrad, it can be argued, passively acknowledged his defeat by moving his residence to Bonn, which only in 1244 had been provided with fortifications and a charter[63].

Engelbert of Valkenburg, who followed Konrad as

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[62] The "Schied" of 1258 between the citizens and the Archbishop lists their 52 separate complaints reaching from disruption of trade to a dispute over the coining of money. It is too expansive to deal with here in detail. It serves, however, to demonstrate the already existing civic independence. Lacomblet, Urkundenbuch, vol. 2, no. 452.

[63] Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 1131.

archbishop in 1261, found archiepiscopal jurisdiction contested not only by an independent-minded civic leadership, but increasingly by a number of his own local vassals. In the nearly anarchical circumstances of the Interregnum, the minor feudal lords within the Duchy of Cologne were taking advantage of the inability of the archbishop to establish dominance over his ducal jurisdiction as envisioned in 1151[64]. Land-use taxes which were supposed to go to the church were instead collected by the local nobility. Prominent among these usurpers of church property were Counts Adolf V of Berg (1259-1296), William of Jülich (1219-1278), and Engelbert of Mark (1249-1277), all of whom were unwilling to tolerate archiepiscopal control after the dynasty of the Hohenstaufen was no longer available to bolster it. Their own jurisdictional rights to the land and its administration went back as far as late Roman and Frankish times when the title of "count" had referred to something like a minor provincial administrator of a certain territory. Unwilling to accept the feudal institutions and new superiors imposed on them by successive imperial dynasties, but quite willing to appropriate feudal revenues, they remained intent on making life as difficult

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[64] See Appendix III.

as possible for their nominal overlord. Although the City of Cologne continued to be the principal target of the Archbishop's resentment, its feudal allies among his own vassals constituted a growing threat as well.

Despite violent efforts, Engelbert II proved even less skilful than Konrad of Hochstaden in dealing with insubordination in his domain. On 1 June 1262 he took control of the city gates of Cologne by force and on 8 June stated his conditions for releasing the patrician leaders who had remained in detention since Konrad's time. His demands included returning the collection of municipal tolls and taxes to the jurisdiction of the archbishop, as well as a one-time damage payment of 6000 marks. Outraged, the tradespeople and remaining patrician leadership of Cologne staged a popular uprising against the Archbishop in the city, as a result of which they recaptured most of the town fortifications Engelbert's men had occupied[65]. Immediately the Archbishop laid siege to the city[66], but with little apparent hope for success, for only eight days later he agreed to a settlement in which

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[65] Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2203, 2206, paraphrasir the accounts of several chronicles.

[66] Engelbert II was apparently convinced to settle peacefully by the Bishop of Liège and the Count of Guelder who had hurried to Cologne shortly after the beginning of the siege. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2208, chronicle extracts.

his financial and jurisdictional demands were significantly reduced and all the detained patricians were to be reinstated in their town-council positions[67].

Engelbert of Falkenburg's apparent weakness made him the target of a strong reprimand by Pope Urban IV, for having failed to restore the church of Cologne to its rightful status[68]. Here we find one of the pieces of evidence for the fact that it was not just the personal ambition of the archbishops of Cologne which resulted in conflicts, but also the desire of the papacy to prevent the undermining of what was also a significant part of its own power and resource-base.

Despite the protests of Pope Urban, Archbishop Engelbert agreed to abstain from hostilities with the City of Cologne in August 1263 on the already established basis of the "Grosse Schied" of 1258[69]. It nevertheless appeared that the leaders of the City were not entirely convinced of their Archbishop's sincerity, and on the

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[67] Archbishop Engelbert II and the City of Cologne sign a settlement, Cologne 16 June 1262. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2210.

[68] Pope Urban IV to Archbishop Engelbert, Orvieto 13 January 1263. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2240.

[69] Archbishop Engelbert signs another settlement with Cologne, Cologne 25 August 1263, in addition to the one of June 1262. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2261. One might wonder what the pope was complaining about, as Conrad had evidently not done any better.

suspicion that he had come to stage another takeover, Engelbert II was actually arrested in Cologne later the same year[70]. The following five years saw relations between the Archbishop, on the one hand, and the City and the nobles supporting it, on the other, continue in very much the same fashion. As the Archbishop continued to stir up factional fighting[71] among the citizens and made yet another takeover attempt[72], the relations between overlord and subjects showed little signs of improvement.

In 1267 near the small town of Zülpich, belonging to the Count of Jülich, the party of the Archbishop confronted its enemies in battle. Open warfare on such a scale between a lord and his vassals in terms of the feudal system can only be described as anarchy. Here we find among Engelbert's allies important representatives of the German church, including the provosts of the Mainz and Trier cathedral chapters, Siegfried of Westerburg and Dietrich of Trier. In a confrontation similar to the one

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[70] Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2275. According to several chronicles Engelbert was detained for twenty days in the city.

[71] In June 1264 Archbishop Engelbert sends one of his advisors to Cologne to stir up the guilds against the Patriciate of Cologne. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2303.

[72] 5-13 September 1265. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2334.

that was to occur in 1288 at Worringen, they were opposed and defeated by the Counts of Jülich and Berg and the citizens of Cologne. There is not much doubt that the battle-lines between whoever represented worldly and spiritual feudal authority as archbishop of Cologne, and the people of Cologne joined by the local barons, were drawn long before the dispute over the Limburg inheritance, which is often cited as the principal cause of the battle of Worringen, ever began. Engelbert and his church colleagues were captured. In order to ensure a favourable settlement, Engelbert was kept in prison by the count of Jülich for the next three years[73], a turn of events perhaps far more serious and decisive in terms of Cologne's independence than often realized.

Archbishop Engelbert was released in 1270; nevertheless, from then until his death in 1274, the conflicts between the Archbishop and his subjects were not by any means resolved. He left behind numerous enemies with outstanding grievances, and the City of Cologne still under the interdict imposed on it after the battle at Zülpich.

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[73] Following the battle of Zülpich 18 August 1267. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2387.

Chapter 3

ISSUES LEADING UP TO THE BATTLE OF WORRINGEN

Siegfried of Westerburg as Archbishop of Cologne before 1288

With the accession of Siegfried of Westerburg as archbishop, it appeared that at least the troubles with the City of Cologne were going to be settled peacefully. On 2 June 1275, with papal permission, he lifted the interdict which had prevented any type of religious activity in the town, and assured the [illegible], scabini, council, and community of Cologne of his lasting friendship[74], though the war with the archiepiscopal vassals, particularly Count Wilhelm of Jülich, continued with undiminished intensity[75].

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[74] Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2606, 2608.

[75] Gregory X to Siegfried of Westerburg, informing him of his election and its circumstances, Lyon 3 April 1275. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2594. It is not clear whether or not Pope Gregory X and Rudolf of Habsburg, who had promoted Siegfried's election in 1274, were aware of his participation in the Zülpich battle on the side of Engelbert II, or if they were, whether it would have detracted from or perhaps even contributed to his suitability for the position of archbishop of Cologne.
(continued...)

One of the reasons why the City of Cologne was willing to accept the Archbishop's proffered friendship may have been the military threat created when Count Wilhelm erected a castle on his territory near Worringen[76]. Although Jülich had been one of Cologne's allies, the castle at Worringen gave one baron, strapped for cash just like any other, an armed presence uncomfortably close to Cologne and its trade routes on land and water. In the perilous conditions prevailing over much of Germany at that time, local alliances, such as the one between Cologne and Jülich, were most likely based on nothing more than the prospect of immediate advantage and short term security. That it was also possible to seek an advantage by hostile means must have been quite clear to both parties. If joining its former enemy was helpful in avoiding a direct military threat to

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[75](...continued)
Far from preventing disarray and promoting the peace which Gregory X had presumably expected, Siegfried's election seems to have caused the opposite to occur.

[76] Archbishop Siegfried prospectively permits the eventual destruction of both castles at Worringen by the people of Cologne, in the event of his success in capturing the castle of the Count of Jülich; Bonn-Godesberg, 29 November 1276. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2695. The counts of Jülich had been the "Vögte" of the village of Worringen until the ducal appointment of the archbishops of Cologne (in 1151). During Archbishop Engelbert II's imprisonment after the battle of Zülpich (1267-70), Count Wilhelm had erected a castle at Worringen in clear violation of the Archbishop's ducal rights.

the safe conduct of commerce, the City of Cologne was willing, for once, to support even its Archbishop.

Not only the City of Cologne was keenly aware of the threat that war represented to the commercial activities in the Rhineland. Fears about the security of trade were also very much in the mind of Cologne's trading partners and were expressed to Siegfried by the major trading towns of Brabant, including Louvain and Brussels. He hoped to calm their trepidation by arguing in his letter of 23 February 1277 that he was only fighting against the Count of Jülich because the latter harboured thieves and robbers, who were the only ones truly endangering trade[77]. It is conceivable that Siegfried had used the very same argument to convince the City of Cologne to change sides after Wilhelm of Jülich had erected his castle at Worringen.

Although Cologne was now siding with the Archbishop against Jülich, the remaining local nobility were still at odds with him for their own reasons. In addition to the causes of their feud with his predecessor, a new point of contention arose because of the manner in which Siegfried had received his appointment. In the original election

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[77] Archbishop Siegfried to the citizens of Louvain, Brussels, and the remaining towns of Brabant, 23 February 1277. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2708.

held to replace Engelbert II, which had been annulled through Siegfried's direct appointment by Pope Gregory, the candidate chosen by a majority of representatives of the Cologne diocese had been Konrad of Berg, brother of the Count of Berg[78]. His election had presented the family of Berg with the possibility of a decisive take-over, which would enable them to use the archiepiscopal authority in their own interest. The annulment of the election must have been a considerable personal blow to the family of Berg, members of which had held the office of archbishop no less then five previous times. Between 1132 and 1216 four members of the Berg family had already held the chair of St. Maternus[79]: Bruno II (1131-1137), Frederick II (1156-1158), Bruno III (1191-1193), and Adolf I (1193-1205)[80]. Engelbert I (1216-1225) between 1218 and 1225 had been both Count of Berg and Archbishop of Cologne. Konrad of Hochstaden himself had been a relative of the house of Berg[81]. The counts of Berg had once again been thwarted from establishing a virtual dynastic

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[78] Gregory X to Siegfried, Lyon 3 April 1275. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2549.

[79] Wisplinghoff, E.: "Engelbert I von Berg, 1182-1225", in Rheinische Lebensbilder (Düsseldorf, 1971), Bd. 1, p. 31.

[80] See Genealogical Table.

[81] See Genealogical Table

succession for a church office. Outside political interests had influenced the selection of the archbishops several times in the past and had taken it away from the domination of the family of Berg in favour of the imperial interests of the Hohenstaufen emperors. The arbitrary appointment of Siegfried of Westerburg was without doubt one very significant reason for their troubles with him. Together with political power and influence the Count had lost the considerable financial benefit of which he doubtless would have taken advant[illegible] his brother become archbishop, and financial considerations were of substantial importance to the house of Berg[82].

Luckily for Archbishop Siegfried, in March 1278 the Jülich-Berg coalition suffered a major blow when Count Wilhelm of Jülich and his eldest son were killed while tr[illegible] to lead a commando-style night raid into the city [illegible]hen, which was allied with Siegfried[83]. In less [illegible] a week the Archbishop's army was able to strike against the town of Jülich itself, capturing it and destroying its castle. With Jülich defeated outright, it did not take very much longer for Siegfried's other opponents to come to terms with their new lord. Three

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[82] See Chapter 4.

[83] Based on chronicle information, 16 March 1278. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2742.

months later the Count of Mark came to an arrangement with Siegfried and one year later the Count of Berg himself agreed to settle with his new victorious overlord[84].

The Archbishop had been able to overcome these enemies just in time. Already in spring of 1279 Duke Jan I of Brabant (1267-94) had undertaken an expedition into Limburg, one of the Archbishop's more important vassalages, in support of the city of Aachen, whose protector he claimed to be[85]. This young and ambitious ruler of an ascending power, although technically himself one of Siegfried's vassals, was interested in eastward expansion, friendly with both France and England, and clearly the Archbishop's most serious rival for hegemony along the Lower Rhine[86]. Although Siegfried met with Duke Jan I and Count Reinald of Guelder (1271-1326) in Wankum on 28

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[84] Count Adolf of Berg attests in a letter to his settlement with Archbishop Siegfried, 1 April 1279. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2792.

[85] "Want hi ende al sin vordere ye
Hilden t Aken die voghedye
Vanden Roemschen rike te leene
Daer bi en liet hi en ghene
Cracht der stat von Aken doen..."
Heelu, Jan van: Rymkronyk betreffende den Slag van Woeringen, in Willems, J. F., ed., Chronique en vers de Jean van Heelu, ou relation de la Bataille de Woeringen (Bruxelles, 1836), lines 1175-1179.

[86] See Ganshof, F.L.: Brabant, Rheinland und das Reich im 12., 13. und 14. Jahrhundert (Bonn, 1938).

August[87] to make arrangements for a permanent peace and the protection of trade in the Lower Rhine area, it has to be assumed that Archbishop Siegfried did not feel entirely comfortable with the challenge Brabant's ruler offered to the jurisdictional authority of the Duchy of Cologne. For the first time in almost a generation, however, peace was a reality and the conduct of trade once more seemed secure from the violence which had threatened it over much of the last half century. It was not to be long, however, before this promising state of affairs once again fell victim to local and imperial politics which began a struggle between the Archbishop and his vassals. As a representative of the church and in his increasingly autonomous role as a prince of the Empire, it was in Siegfried's best interest to prevent the development of too strong an imperial authority. His archiepiscopal predecessor as well as his colleagues in the electoral college of the Empire had served their own purpose by electing a supposedly weak candidate to the imperial throne. Against all expectations, however, Rudolf of Habsburg had managed to overcome the odds, by defeating Ottokar of Bohemia, his strongest rival, to create a rather promising chance to do away with the internal anarchy of the Empire. Rudolf had

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[87] Heelu, Rymkronyk, ed. Willems, doc. no. 18, p. 404.

succeeded in constructing a considerable power base for himself in what was to become the Austrian nucleus of the future Habsburg patrimony[88]. It was up to the German princes, the church potentates in particular, who had gained so much independence and had usurped imperial property and authority, to stop him from solidifying his power base and establishing sovereign control. Accordingly, Siegfried, who himself had once been promoted by the new King[89], unexpectedly developed into Rudolf's political arch-opponent[90].

Examples of Siegfried's subsequent insubordination included an affair in which the imperial toll at Kaiserswerth, which had been a bargaining chip in Rudolf's election, was not, as promised, turned over to the King[91], and the matter of the royal crown, used in any imperial

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[88] Redlich, Rudolf von Habsburg, pp. 334-384.

[89] See Chapter 2.

[90] Redlich, Rudolf von Habsburg, p. 188.

[91] Kaiserswerth was an imperial castle also used to collect toll on the Rhine. Under Archbishop Conrad of Hochstaden it had been taken over and had remained in the possession of the archbishops ever since. As its official status as imperial domain had remained unchanged, Rudolf of Habsburg had pledged its revenue to Pope Gregory X for the purposes of his election and the still expected imperial coronation. Archbishop Siegfried, however, continued to refuse to return Kaiserswerth to imperial possession despite both Rudolf's and Gregory's insistence. Knipping, Regesten, no. 2525, 2623.

coronation, which Siegfried had the audacity to pawn for 1050 marks[92]. If nothing else, this was the perfect symbol for the imperial princes' reluctance to let the King's power develop and willingness to take advantage of his weakness.

Finally King Rudolf seems to have decided to take action to subdue this unruly church potentate and to establish a general peace that originated not in local alliances but in legitimate imperial authority. In early 1282 Rudolf began making allies to embark on an expedition against Siegfried[93]. Not surprisingly, several of Siegfried's former enemies recognized the opportunity and joined in the coalition against him in the succeeding months. Rudolf, holding court at Worms, showed them much consideration, so that even some of Siegfried's friends began arriving to pay their respects. The archbishops of Trier and Mainz capitulated under the threat and came before Rudolf to assure him of their support[94]. It was at Worms that the King, perhaps to win another ally, invested

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[92] Archbishop Siegfried pawns the royal crown to Wilhelm von Schinne for 1050 marks, 11 August 1276. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2690.

[93] Redlich, Rudolf von Habsburg, pp. 518-520.

[94] Redlich, Rudolf von Habsburg, p. 519.

Reinald of Guelder with the Duchy of Limburg[95].

In view of Rudolf's growing support, Siegfried seems to have become rather concerned to defend himself, for he took an amount of 5000 marks in silver from the crusading tenth stored in Cologne's cathedral. Although this might in many circumstances have been considered a crime against the church[96], it seems that the unauthorized withdrawal in this instance was regarded as being necessary for the protection of the church's interests and thus could be accepted by the papal authorities[97].

Nevertheless, Siegfried soon recognized it as prudent to back down, and did so on 27 July 1282. What Rudolf's show of force achieved was Siegfried's permission for the

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[95] King Rudolf attests, Worms 19 June 1282, in "Urkundenregesten", Der Name der Freiheit, p. 62.

[96] In 1278 pope Nicholas III had ordered Siegfried to require Bishop Jan of Utrecht to return the portion of the Crusading tenth taken by force from Dominican friars in Utrecht or to face suspension, excommunication, and judgement by the papal court. For his own similar infraction Siegfried does not seem to have received even a protest. Not until 1317 under the papacy of John XXII was Siegfried's successor Heinrich II asked to return the money. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2759.

[97] Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2929. It is not explained under which conditions Siegfried removed these funds, with or without sanction of the pope, but it seems that confirmation of either could not have occurred until after he had already done so. The fact that little issue was made of it by church officials allows for the possibility either of the pope having permitted it subsequently or of his just having turned a blind eye.

King to select new dukes and counts whenever he desired to do so; this applied particularly to his own sons Albrecht and Rudolf[98]. Albrecht received Austria and Styria in June of 1283, while his younger brother Rudolf was promised a kingdom or duchy, as yet unspecified, before Easter 1288[99]. Investiture of Albrecht and Rudolf with the domains that Rudolf had captured from Ottokar of Bohemia was a decisive step in enabling the Habsburg clan to found a dynasty. There are reasons to suspect that the pressure put on Siegfried was directly related to Rudolf's dynastic goals.

Rudolf, however, was already an old man and fairly soon he might have to rely on the younger Archbishop to ensure the election of one of his sons to the Roman kingship. Two months after his formal submission to Rudolf and the above mentioned concessions, the Archbishop of Cologne received in return a significant concession from Rudolf. When in September 1282, to replace a weak currency prone to frequent counterfeiting, King Rudolf decided to have a new high-value coinage struck, he agreed to share his regalian right to produce the new currency

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[98] Archbishop Siegfried gives his agreement to King Rudolf, Oppenheim 27 July 1282. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2950.

[99] Redlich, Rudolf von Habsburg, p. 549.

with the Archbishop of Cologne[100]. With this agreement Archbishop Siegfried's position as the second most important man in Germany seems to have been recognized and demonstrated.

This act might seem to have created an alliance between the German king and the German church which could conceivably have helped towards the development of a centralized German kingdom. In the event, however, the only significant result of Rudolf's dealings with the feudality of the Lower Rhine in 1282 seems to have been the inadvertent revival of local quarrels by his investiture of Reinald of Guelder with the Duchy of Limburg.

The inheritance question of the Duchy of Limburg

The Duchy of Limburg was small in size and limited in its sources of agricultural revenue, but some of the most important trade routes in Europe, between Cologne and the urban centres of the Low Countries, crossed its territory. The traditional duty of the dukes of Limburg had therefore been to guarantee the safe conduct of trade. To accomplish this duty the heads of the house of Limburg had once

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[100] Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2960.

held the title of Dukes of Lower Lotharingia, created by Otto I in 944, with jurisdiction over most of the Low Countries and the Lower Rhine region. The duke was supposed to act as royal governor, protecting trade and the church, and assisting in the administration of the German kingdom. After a dispute, Emperor Henry V took the title away from Henry of Limburg and gave it to Gottfried of Louvain instead. A long series of conflicts between the houses of Louvain and Limburg ensued, as a result of which both finally claimed the title, which in the meantime had become little more than a "pompous word" of negligible significance[101], for the structure envisioned by Otto had long since all but disappeared. Nevertheless, the dukes of Brabant, originating from the house of Louvain, still had some interest in this supposedly meaningless old imperial title which was finally revived by their new contender for hegemony on the Lower Rhine.

Duke Jan I of Brabant (1267-1294) was a rather charismatic young leader, who, supported to some extent by an equally ambitious French monarchy, had succeeded in his own fight for his father's inheritance against determined opposition, and conducted his own policies quite detached

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[101] Pirenne, Geschichte Belgiens, p. 226.

from the Empire[102]. The French kings, who, at least according to Brabant court chronicler Jan van Heelu, were the "most important men in the world", had a special relationship with the house of Louvain under Duke Jan I[103]. Duke Jan's first wife had been the daughter of French King St. Louis IX. In turn Philip III had married Duke Jan's sister, Marie of Brabant. Count Robert of Artois, cousin of Philip III and Jan of Brabant, accompanied the Duke on at least one campaign, as did other important French military figures[104]. Equally the French monarchs relied on

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[102] Pirenne, Geschichte Belgiens, p. 231-232.

[103] "Want Janne ginc sine sake
ter eeren wert, in allen dingen
Want hi ghewan, cortelinge
Daer na, te wive des rijcs
Conincs dochter Lodewijcs
Van Vrancerike, des grooten heeren
Daer quamen hi te hoger eeren
Doen hem verre die hoechste man
Die men ter werelt vinden can,
Sijnre dochter te wive gaf."
Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 626-635.

[104] "...sijn neve de grave Robeert
Sire moyen sone van Artoys,
Die, met menegen Fransoys,
Ten parlemente met hem reet...."
Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 1116-1119.

" Ende daer toe menich rike
Grave, ende menich hoge baroen
Vander Marchen, van Sessoen
Van Sympoe, van Vendomme
Van Jastelioen, ende van Crome
Van Nouville, van Momorasi
Menich anderen hoege man
Die ic genomen niet en can,

Jan of Brabant, when Charles of Anjou for example chose him to participate on the French side in the proposed duel of selected champions with Peter III of Aragon to settle the possession of the Kingdom of Sicily, at Bordeaux in 1283. Jan I could clearly be considered as one of the outstanding knights of his time, even though according to some he had become a "creature" of one of King Philip IV's advisers, to whom Duke Jan gave considerable sums to remain in the French King's favour[105].

According to F. L. Ganshof, Jan I was interested in an eastward expansion, taking control over the vital trade links through territories such as Limburg; a revival of the Lotharingian Duchy doubtless lent a certain traditional legitimacy to the Duke's new expansionist policy[106]. By exercising some of the rights associated with the original Lotharingian mandate as the Duke of Brabant and Lotharingia, Jan I began to assert himself in the lower Rhine region during the 1270s. Citing traditional Lotharingian responsibilities for the protection of peace

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Pickaerde, ende Fransoyse
Henewire, ende Jampenoyse
Burgengone, ende Poitevene
Vlaminge ende Artesiene...."
Ibid., lines 2396-2408.

[105] Pirenne, Geschichte Belgiens, p. 261.

[106] Ganshof, F.L.: Brabant, Rheinland und das Reich im 12., 13. und 14. Jahrhundert (Bonn 1938).

and the conduct of trade in the area, the Duke of Brabant began conducting campaigns to subdue the nobility of Limburg. It is rather likely that political pressure coming from the towns of Brabant, on which he depended financially, had played a role in causing the Duke to take these actions and to extend his authority over the vital roadways. It was quite clear, however, that the Duke's activities towards a re-establishing of the old imperial domain of Lower Lotharingia had to be interpreted as a direct threat by Archbishop Siegfried, who as Duke of Cologne was supposed to be feudal overlord of the very same region. Expansionist ambitions by an apparently pro-French Brabant also represented a very serious threat to Archbishop Siegfried's political position in the Empire. Despite his apparent autonomy, the Archbishop of Cologne still derived most of his secular authority from his position as a prince of the Empire, and thus remained among those quite interested in preserving and protecting some semblance of imperial authority. One may indeed argue that Siegfried's authority as representative of the church was at stake, as the political prominence of the papacy very much depended on a weak but intact Empire to counterbalance French ambitions. Confining the French influence associated with Duke Jan's ambitions was therefore not just in Archbishop Siegfried's interest. As

a result Duke Jan's expansionism was temporarily curtailed in 1279 by an alliance of the Archbishop of Cologne, the Count of Guelder and the Count of Cleves. Forced into a peace treaty, signed at Wankum, Duke Jan's army, augmented by a significant French contingent, was prevented fro further progress for the time being[107].

Duke Jan seized the opportunity to continue Brabant's expansion and to cement his title as well as feudal rights in the Duchy of Lower Lotharingia by pursuing the peaceful acquisition of the Duchy of Limburg after the ruling house died out with Walram of Limburg in 1280. Before Duke Jan could legitimately secure his claim, however, he would have to eliminate the officially recognized heir, his own distant cousin Count Reinald of Guelder, an important prince of the empire in his own right.

The Count of Guelder's strong interests in the region were well documented since the "Landfrieden" agreement among himself, the Archbishop of Cologne and the Duke of Brabant at Wankum in 1279. Reinald had gained control over the Duchy of Limburg through his wife Irmgard who had been Walram of Limburg's only child. The arrangement was further legitimized by King Rudolf in 1282, when he

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[107] Peace treaty, Wankum 28 August 1279, plus additional chronicle sources. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2812.

actually invested Reinald, on behalf of his wife, with the Duchy of Limburg. Obviously even King Rudolf saw some advantage in preserving a "balance of power" in the region. Recognizing that he was certain to face Brabant's opposition, Reinald willingly acknowledged the overlordship of his natural ally in this matter, the Archbishop of Cologne. Still reluctant to enter into an official alliance against the Duke of Brabant, to whom he stated he had many special obligations, the Count of Guelder was to be challenged for his Limburg possession very soon[108].

Although imperial recognition should have settled the ownership of Limburg conclusively, there was something of a tradition among Duke Jan's relatives in this portion of the Empire not to look upon the domains they claimed to possess as imperial fiefs, and as such subject to investiture, in this case, by King Rudolf. Years earlier, for example, the Duke's father-in-law, Gui of Dampierre, Count of Flanders, had refused to pay homage to King Rudolf for the part of his domain traditionally under imperial jurisdiction. Rudolf's subsequent investiture of the Count of Hainault, Gui's own step-brother, with the fief

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[108] Count Reinald of Guelder, Duke of Limburg attests to his loyalty to Archbishop Siegfried against his enemies with the exception of Jan of Brabant "cui specialiter sumus obligati", Mönchen-Gladbach, 18 March 1283. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2992.

the King naturally considered unclaimed, failed to impress the Count of Flanders, leading to a family feud between the Dampierre and Avesnes families not unlike the dispute over Limburg. Certainly in these parts of the Empire, if not directly French, at least non-imperial interests were beginning to represent a real challenge to the defenders of the Empire.

Jan I of Brabant further profited from the fact that there were other claimants equally unwilling to accept King Rudolf's decision. In 1283 Duke Jan strengthened his position by buying out Adolf V of Berg's claim to Limburg[109]. The Counts of Berg could demonstrate strong family connections to the house of Limburg and their own valid claim to the now furiously contested inheritance of Limburg. Count Adolf was a close relative of Walram of Limburg. Adolf V's great-grandfather, who was Walram's grandfather, had been Adolf III, Duke of Limburg and Count of Berg. Following the death of Adolf III on a crusade in 1218, his domains had gone to his daughter's husband Heinrich of Luxembourg, after being administered by his brother, Archbishop Engelbert I, until 1225. The inheritance had been finally split between the two sons of Henry of Luxembourg, Walram and Adolf, the latter

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[109] Document, Worms 19 June 1282, Der Name der Freiheit, p. 62.

receiving Berg as Count Adolf IV[110]. He had been followed by his son Adolf V in 1262, who as Walram of Limburg's nephew had rights to the duchy of Limburg upon Walram's death without male heirs. As male inheritance seems not to have been a standard legal requirement at the time, however, Adolf V of Berg's claim was likely weaker than that of Reinald of Guelder. In any case, Count Adolf had little chance of enforcing his claim against the powerful lord of Guelder and the decision of King Rudolf. With the sale of his claim, however, Count Adolf had obtained the powerful ally against the Archbishop of Cologne he had lacked in 1279, especially important now that it became clear that armed conflict between the parties would remain the only avenue to resolve the situation permanently.

Soon after the death of Walram of Limburg, therefore, the contest for local hegemony between the Duke of Brabant and the Archbishop of Cologne, aggravated by the disputed inheritance of Limburg and the rebelliousness of Siegfried's vassals, progressed into open warfare. Two rulers whose claims to ducal authority had comparable origins at different times and who exhibited different approaches towards the execution of that authority began to fight over the future of a domain either of them would

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[110] Lacomblet, Urkundenbuch, pp. xxvii ff. (see also Genealogical Table).

have difficulty holding on to. A secular ruler with a solid territorial base, an accommodating attitude towards the social progress of his towns (on whom his lavish court just happened to depend very heavily financially[111]), and a friendly relationship with France, faced an ecclesiastical ruler without a clearly defined territorial base, intent on subduing his unruly urban and rural subjects, and concerned to maintain his position in the degenerating structure of a weak Empire. In this contest the local enemies of the Archbishop, led by Count Adolf of Berg, might hope to gain some advantage, but the fact remained that they could have little interest in merely replacing one overlord with another, a fact that was to shape the outcome of the war which ensued.

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[111] Barraclough, The Origins of Modern Germany, p. 327.

Chapter 4

THE BATTLE OF WORRINGEN

The "Limburg War"

By 1288, war between the partisans of Archbishop Siegfried of Cologne and Duke Jan of Brabant had lasted, with interruptions, for almost six years, causing death and devastation in the territories of the combatants, without resulting in any clear victory. The Limburg inheritance dispute, although officialy the casus belli of this protracted war, appeared more and more as merely a provocation for the feudal rulers of the lower Rhine region to settle some of the traditional disputes, rivalries, and resentments previously examined, that had flourished since the Archbishops of Cologne had first acquired secular authority.

The war had been far from a polite and chivalrous affair. Villages, towns, and farms in Brabant, Guelder, Jülich, Limburg, Berg, Mark, and the area around Cologne had been subjected to the devastation of hostile raids, sieges, and plundering. As the enemy territory closest to him, the right bank of the Rhine had been subjected to the anger of the Archbishop, presumably to the considerable

distress of the population[112]. He was intent most probably on destroying fortified towers, very commor 'n the area at that time, and disrupting the agricultural resource base his enemy in Berg still largely depended on.

The military campaigning, however, had evidently been a considerable financial burden on the Archbishop, since he began attempts to share some of it with the wealthy City of Cologne. The merchants once more were confronted by increases in taxes and tolls on their trading activities. Even though, after the protest of Cologne's citizens, some tolls had been lifted, others were left in place, though supposedly only for the duration of hostilities[113]. Another concern for the merchants was the Archbishop's new castle at Worringen, which controlled the road as well as the river traffic up and down the Rhine. They had actually helped him to build this, to oppose the other castle erected in the same area by the Count Wilhelm of Jülich. The Archbishop had promised to tear it down as

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[112] Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 3170.

[113] Archbishop Siegfried to the judges, echevins, council and citizens of Cologne, 12 July 1287. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 3149. Siegfried promised to give a special letter to the merchants of Cologne which would exempt them from the new tolls, on land and water, which had been established because of the rising military expenses of the Archbishop. Siegfried, however, apparently excluded the new road toll near Cologne (likely at Worringen) which was to be lifted only after successful conclusion of the war with the Duke of Brabant.

soon as the opposing castle fell[114], but in 1288, even though the Jülich threat had been removed ten years ago, it was still standing, presumably to protect the Archbishop's interests in his active war with Brabant and Berg. There was reason to suspect that the castle in Worringen, on Cologne's side of the river, like the one across the river in Deutz, could and would be used by the Archbishop for more than just defending the district against raids from Brabant and Berg or for collecting the detested tolls.

At the beginning of 1288, there had not been any tangible threat to the City on the part of the Archbishop, yet suspicions were arising that Siegfried of Westerburg, like his predecessors Konrad of Hochstaden and Engelbert II, intended to use heavy-handed tactics on the city in order to support his finances through political control. Back in August 1279, Archbishop Siegfried had managed to purchase the office of imperial burggrave in the city from its last holder, completely disregarding possible royal prerogatives in this matter. This office entitled him to the right of law enforcement within the walls of the town, which his traditional ducal authority

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[114] Arcbishop Siegfried to the citizens of Cologne, Godesberg 29 August 1276. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2695.

no longer sufficed to give him in practice[115]. As a result of the war over Limburg, the threat of oppression by their Archbishop, which had previously not been taken very seriously perhaps, was becoming an active concern of the patricians of Cologne.

It is therefore understandable that they followed a policy of friendly neutrality towards the enemies of their lord. The City administration had an interest in maintaining amicable relations with the Duke of Brabant, who in his campaigns was frequently joined by the militias of his important towns. The merchants who ran Cologne could no more afford to offend him than their Archbishop. It seemed obviously prudent to accommodate the leader of the opposition who might have very well become their future lord, and for their part the Duke of Brabant and a number of his allies had promised to safeguard the city and allegedly had contracted a secret alliance with it[116]. The counts of Berg and Mark also continued to have their own long-running protection agreements with the City of

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[115] Archbishop Siegfried attests to the purchase of the "Burggrafschaft" of Cologne, 16 August 1279. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2809.

[116] Evidence given at the papal inquiry of July 5 1290. Lacomblet, Urkundenbuch, no. 532.

Cologne[117]. Cologne's attitude of hostile neutrality could not be anything but annoying to Archbishop Siegfried. In an apparent attempt to allay the Archbishop's resentment, the council of Cologne in July 1287 once more assured him of their loyalty and denied any connections with his enemies[118].

Nevertheless it was the "Gude Lude"[119] of Cologne who, in the early summer of 1288, pre-empted their Archbishop's likely thoughts of taking action against them by themselves forcing the decisive break. Despite their earlier promises, on the arrival of Duke Jan's army, which could shield them from the retaliation of the Archbishop, the patricians of Cologne finally decided to choose sides openly and throw in their lot with the Duke and his allies. The invading forces of the Duke were causing havoc in the possessions of the Archbishop near Bonn, among them his collection of rare animals, which were being subjected to the hunting pleasures of the Duke and

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[117] Adolf of Berg to the Citizens of Cologne, 9 June 1262. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2207.

[118] Judges, echevins, council and citizens of Cologne to Archbishop Siegfried, 12 July 1287. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 3150.

[119] "Good people" was what the patricians of Cologne called themselves.

his associates[120], when a delegation of important citizens from Cologne arrived. They invited him into the city, where the alliance was made official. In a public meeting the majority of the remaining townsfolk (the guilds) agreed to support the Duke of Brabant[121]. Together with the troops of the Count of Berg, they promptly proceeded to lay siege to the castle at Worringen, which also happened to serve as Siegfried's arsenal.

This turn of events must have infuriated Siegfried, who himself was trying his best to collect allies in this lengthy war. Precisely in the spring of 1288 he had actually convinced Reinald of Guelder, facing the prospect of defeat, to sell his title to the Limburg possessions to Count Heinrich of Luxembourg (1281-1288)[122], who also happened to be a distant relative of the deceased Duke of

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[120] "Ten Brule, inden dire gaert,
Daer in berijt sijn ende bewaert
Des eerstbisscops wilde beesten
Daer woude die hertoge in, met feesten
jagen met bracken, ende met winden...."
Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 4099-4103.

[121] Evidence given by cathedral-scholar Wickbold von Holte at papal inquiry, Cologne July 1290. Lacomblet, Urkundenbuch, vol. 2, no. 592.

[122] Reinald of Guelder attests to the sale of Limburg to the Count of Luxembourg, 15 May 1288, in "Urkunden-regesten", Der Name der Freiheit, p. 2.

Limburg[123]. Both Siegfried and Reinald seem to have been very much in need of the military support that Luxembourg could provide. Who in the end received control over Limburg was apparently of secondary importance, save to the City of Cologne and the towns of Brabant interested in the security of their trade routes.

Up to this point there had been no pitched battle in the war, but when the City of Cologne joined the Brabant-Berg coalition the allies evidently felt strong enough to end it all in one decisive contest. The suspension of the mobile tactics until then used by Brabant and its allies in favour of a siege of the Archbishop's castle at Worringen in the late spring of 1288 was finally the sign to Siegfried that his opponents were ready to resolve the issue once and for all. He prepared to take up the challenge.

The Battle

The following events can only be reconstructed with some degree of probability from the one surviving eyewitness report, that of Jan van Heelu, whose credibility will have to be examined later, as well as some

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[123] "Want si van Limborch sijn geboren,
Van Lutzenborch die grave...."
Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 1200-1201.

more remote, far less detailed, and occasionally contradictory chronicles, supplemented by testimony given before a papal inquiry in 1290.

Confidently, Archbishop Siegfried conducted mass on the morning 5 June 1288 in the Abbey of Brauweiler, 10 kilometres south of Worringen, and absolved his troops of all the sins they were about to commit. After a moving address to his men[124], he marched his army onto an open field about 5 kilometres north-west of Cologne and 1 kilometre south east of Worringen, on the left bank of the Rhine, where he intended to meet his enemies while cutting off their escape route to Cologne[125].

Meanwhile the Duke Jan of Brabant and his allies left their camp around Worringen and proceeded south along the course of the Rhine, which in those days sent a huge

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[124] "Ende voer te Bruenwilre ter kerken:
Daer sanc hi den heeren messe
Ende na predecte hi ene lesse
Van goeden troeste ende van rade...."
Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 4270-4273. After conducting mass the Archbishop adressed his troops, telling them of how a huge whale was about to be stranded far into enemy territory and that a fortune was about to be made by those joining the Archbishop of Cologne to confront the Duke of Brabant on this day. Finally:
"Hier met gaf hi sijn pardoen,
Ende dede hen allen aflaet
Soe groot, van hare mesdaet,
Ochte daer yeman bleve doot
Dat hi voere in Abrahams scoot."
Ibid., lines 4314-4318.

[125] See Map 5.

meander deep into the countryside west of its present course[126]. Passing the Bergerhof farm, which the counts of Berg claimed as their ancestral home[127], the army crossed a brook flowing into the river and took up position in the open field just south of the Rhine River, facing the Archbishop's army positioned between them and Cologne.

Unfortunately, Jan van Heelu is unclear about the arrangement of the battle-lines. Instead we have to rely on conjecture based on who was likely to have fought whom over which issues. The mounted knights, about 3000 on the side of Siegfried of Westerburg and about 2500 on that of his opponents, arranged themselves on a wide front running east to west across the open field[128]. The forces from the City of Cologne, Jülich, and Berg would have faced their principal enemy, the Archbishop. Jan of Brabant with Everhard of Mark and William of Jülich, Provost of Aachen, would have faced Heinrich of Luxembourg and Reinald of Guelder, the Duke's challengers for the Limburg inheritance.

Surveying the field from the higher ground which was

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[126] See Map 4.

[127] Andernach, Norbert: "Entwicklung der Grafschaft Berg", in Land im Mittelpunkt der Mächte (Kleve, Düsseldorf, 1984), p. 64.

[128] Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 3193.

formed slight incline south of the river bend before Worrin[illegible] the Duke of Brabant, the Count of Mark, and the Provost of Aachen chose a stationary defensive position across a dried-up arm of the Rhine running parallel to the battle formations, across which they presumably intended to retreat in case of difficulties. The patricians and guild militia from Cologne, joined by the Count of Berg and his knights, continued the front towards the lower ground next to the river. Though fully prepared for battle, both sides then halted their advance for close to an hour during which two brothers of the Order of Teutonic Knights tried unsuccessfully to arrange a last-minute settlement.

Archbishop Siegfried and his allies finally took action and initiated the first cavalry charge, followed almost immediately by an offensive of their entire front line[129]. Having to charge across drainage ditches, the Archbishop's contingent began to lose some of its

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[129] There is some evidence to suggest that although sharing one common battleline, each commander (i.e. Duke, Count, or Archbishop) only controlled his individual contingent and at the beginning of the action led it into battle only against an equally individual enemy contingent. This would explain the initial success of Siegfried against Berg and Cologne, seemingly detached from the action between his remaining allies and enemies.

coherence[130]. Nevertheless this first assault succeeded in collapsing the Cologne-Berg lines on Brabant's left wing. Seemingly so soon in the welcome position of having eliminated his personal opposition, Siegfried felt free to turn west to take part in the attack which the forces of Guelder and Luxembourg had commenced against his political enemy, Duke Jan I of Brabant, and his remaining allies. Dispensing with any further tactical manoeuvring at close quarters, the combatants carried on with general hand to hand combat, while the battle began to take on the character of a rather large brawl, interspersed with numerous individual contests between noble opponents[131]. Owing to their superior numbers and the sufficient space for movement likely available to all the combatants, the allies of the Archbishop were beginning to gain the upper hand in the fighting by about midday, and were forcing the Duke's army back across the dry river bed[132], when

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[130] "Doen die Brabantre vernamen
Datsi hare drie scaren braken,
Doen riep lude, met hoge spraken,
Die bastaert van Wesemale:
<< Ghi heeren, nu sie ic wale
Datsi des strijts niet en connen:
Sla wi te hen, si sijn verwonnen!>>"
Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 4906-4912.

[131] Heelu spends much time describing many of them without any further reference to tactical movements.

[132] "Drongen si, met sterker vaert,
Die Brabantre achterwert:

suddenly, in a move that seems to have been a well planned strategic manoeuvre, the Count of Berg with an infantry militia made up of peasants from Berg, accompanied by the remaining Cologne patricians on foot, decided the battle by attacking the Archbishop and his allies from the rear and left flank[133].

However despicable the use of peasants in medieval military terms was, one needs to realize the impact which determinedly-led armed civilians could have against a

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Maer dat en was geen wonder:
In hare bataelge waren (sonder
Die ghene die te voet streden,
Ende die mate waren gereden,
Die men daer toe niet en telde nochtan,)
Met helmen meer dan MC man.
Dat die scaren alle drie
Hadden in tsertoghen partye."

Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 5225-5234.

[133] "Maer ic sal nu voere vertellen
Hoe dat, met haren prikellen,
Toe Quamen ende voort voeren
Van den Berge die coene geboeren,
die, na die tale van Brabant,
Dorpliede sijn te rechte ghenant.
Dese quamen alle wel ten stride bereet,
Na die gewoente, die daer steet.
Diere hadden een groot deel
Beide wambeys ende beckeneel,
Ende een deel haddeter platen;
Maer diere swert met scarpen waten
En wouden si hen niet onderwinden;
Maer clupple haddens alle, tinden
Met grooten hoefden geprikelt."

Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 6241-6255. One can presume that Cologne's merchants were quite able to provide the necessary transportation across the river, which later must also have been used to remove the Archbishop from the battlefield.

supposedly superior knightly army, as was demonstrated convincingly at Courtrai in 1302[134]. The fact that military service of peasants in Berg was described by chronicler Jan van Heelu as a matter of custom furthermore suggests that they were not only organized but also possibly trained in some way[135]. Their weapons, "clubs spiked with long nails", clearly identifiable with the "goedendags" of the Flemish craftsmen at Courtrai, had an undeniably destructive impact on the armour of medieval knights. Another equally unchivalrous but effective weapon against medieval armor was the crossbow[136], often employed as the favourite weapon of town militias in this period. It seems quite likely that Cologne, as a centre of weapons manufacturing[137], would have been able to supply its citizenry and its allies with this weapon. Although it was not specifically mentioned, the use of crossbows in a battle where winning was clearly more important to some

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[134] A fact that continues to be played down by some who insist on the absolute superiority of the mounted man-at-arms. For example, Lehnart, Ulrich: "Kampfweise und Bewaffnung zur Zeit der Schlacht von Worringen" in Der Name der Freiheit, pp. 155-162.

[135] See note 130: line 6248.

[136] Verbrüggen, J.F.: The Art of Warfare in Western Europe during the Middle Ages (from the Eighth Century to 1340) (Amsterdam-New York, 1977).

[137] Lehnart, "Kampfweise und Bewaffnung", p. 160.

of the combatants than just being chivalrous is quite likely. In addition, quite a number of simple farm implements could be used rather effectively in combat.

Armed in the fashion described, peasants and townsfolk indiscriminately killed anyone in sight, and only after some time could they be directed against their proper target[138]. In addition to the anger created by the Archbishop's raids on Berg territory earlier in the war, they may possibly have been moved by some religious animosity. Certainly the interdict which Siegfried had placed over his enemies shortly before the battle could have aroused the population against him. The Archbishop had sufficient reason to fear for his life from the enraged populations of Berg and Cologne, and made demonstrating little intention of taking anyone prisoner: therefore, as was the knightly custom of the day, he gave himself up to the nearest noble opponent. Presumably for his own protection he was taken off the field by Adolf of Berg, and imprisoned in the Count's castle above the river Wupper[139].

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[138] "Die geburen, die daer bleven,
Na, ten stride, die gingen staen
Op en Grachte ter neder slaen
Vriende ende viande, sonder sparen;
Daer haddense geene kinesse af."
Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 6302-6306.

[139] See Appendix II.

Despite this significant capitulation, the fighting among the remaining combatants continued until late into the evening. Again and again the Archbishop's troops regrouped and fought on, as his standard, held by Count Adolph of Nassau, his brother-in-law, remained on the field some time after Siegfried had been captured. Count Reinald of Guelder, already injured, was also forced to continue the fight for some time against the peasant forces of Cologne and Berg, as he was unable to find a noble opponent who would spare his life[140].

The battle also gave some of its participants the opportunity to settle feuds that had no direct relation to the principal issues at stake. Heelu records the encounter between the feuding Mulrepas clan, loyal to the Duke of Brabant, and the Scaevedrieves, a noble family from the Duchy of Limburg, who continued to fight until one party, in this case the Scaevedrieves, were completely wiped out[141].

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[140] "Doen bleef die grave in selker noot
doen hi arderwerf sach sinken
Die baniere dat hi dinken
En wiste siat, noch ane gaen
Gherne ware hi in hant gegaen
Maer hine dachte om geen vlien
Wat daer sijns soude gescien...."
Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 6600-6606.

[141] "Die van Witham, ende hare knecht
Her Mulrepas, ende sijn geslechte,

Even before the battle was finally concluded by the onset of darkness, however, the plundering of the dead and the taking of the wounded as prisoners for the purpose of ransom had already begun. As they observed victorious knights looking out for their own financial welfare in this manner[142], the townsfolk and peasants also realized that there was some money to be made by not killing every nobleman. Nevertheless, the armed peasants of Berg had turned what had started as a chivalrous battle between

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Daer ic vore af liet die tale
Die ic weder nu verhale
Si waren die viande
Daer die Scavedriesche haer ande
Gherne ane hadden gewroken...."
Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 7185-7191.

"... Ende voeren hier en daer, ende sochten
Waer si in hant gaen mochten
Daer si dat lijf souden ontdragen
Doen men die Scavedriesche ginc jagen
Ende doot slaen, waer mense kinde
Daer met was des strijts een inde."
Ibid., lines 7289-7294.

[142] "Doen dit die ghebueren sagen
Dat die heeren des plagen
Datsi die viande alle vingen
Ende om goet lieten verdinghen
Doen woudense met ane winnen
Ende gingen oec des selves beginnen
Daer bi lieten si hare slaen
Ende gingen dapperlike vaen,
Die ane hen ghenade sochten;
Maer diere ieghen vochten
Die sloegen si alle thant doot
Doen sachmen iammerlike, dor noot,
Die vroemste van al kersten lant
Armen gebueren gaen in hant."
Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 7003-7014.

equals into a slaughter of the nobility. To the horror of the chronicler, the carnage among the knights of the Lower Rhine was considerable; over a thousand mounted knights had been killed on the Archbishop's side alone[143]. It would almost seem that the population of the surrounding countryside in one single afternoon had taken revenge for generations of oppression as much as for the most recent war and destruction visited upon them by their noblemen. Count Heinrich of Luxembourg and his two sons, as well as Siegfried's own brother and numerous other noble knights, did not leave the field alive. Jan van Heelu also lamented the death of more than 4000 horses, representing the waste of a considerable fortune, which like many of their riders fell victim to the crude weaponry of peasants[144].

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[143] "... Daer bleven doot
Elf hondert manne, bi getale
Ende meer daer toe, die men wale
Ter waerheit weet, nochtan sonder
Die ghene die na storven...."
Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 7314-7318

[144] "Dat scade was ende iammer groot
Want daer en bleven doot
Niet vele gebueren noch knechte
Maer si waren van geslechte
ende ridderscape die men vant
Die beete van al Duytsche lant
Dat sceen wel aen hare striden
Want daer bleven van beiden siden
Doot op tfelt inde porsse
Meer dan XLC orsse
Die onder hen worden ghevelt
Sonder die daer gheqult
Ute quamen, ende gewont

Chapter 5

THE AFTERMATH OF THE BATTLE OF WORRINGEN

Even though Worringen has gone down in history as a significant victory, above all for Duke Jan of Brabant and the City of Cologne, the terms of the peace settlement and the subsequent careers of the participants tend not to correspond with such an interpretation of events. The consequences of the battle for each of the main participants may be examined in turn.

The City of Cologne

One might have expected that the City of Cologne would have gained significant advantages from the defeat of its old enemy the Archbishop. Indeed, the citizens took steps the very next day to weaken further his military capability. They proceeded to capture not only the castle of Worringen but also that of Zons, a few kilometres further North along the Rhine, and to dis-

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Die strijt was vander onderstont
Lanc al tote der vespertijd
Men vernam nye strijt
In en geen lant soe lange dueren...."
Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 7325-7341.

mantle both castles to the last rock[145]. The building material was supposedly later used in some sections of the town wall, probably more as a symbolic statement than an architectural necessity. In addition, the possessions of the Jews of Cologne, who until then had been under the protection of the Archbishop, were confiscated[146]. The people of Cologne then accompanied the Count of Mark to the Archbishop's Westphalian domains and participated in the destruction of further castles[147].

The City of Cologne, however, did not receive any more tangible benefits for its involvement than the ones mentioned above. Even during his incarceration by Count Adolf of Berg, Siegfried remained unwilling to make concessions to the City. Under the terms he first proposed on 18 June 1289 he merely promised not to seek damages, while continuing to demand the return of his possessions

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[145] Evidence of 5 July 1290, Lacomblet, Urkundenbuch, vol. 2, no. 892. On 5 July 1290 the Archbishops of Trier and Mainz on the orders of pope Nicholas III convened an interrogation of witnesses regarding the battle at Worringen and subsequent events involving the city of Cologne. These events are related by testifying Cologne church officials.

[146] Evidence given by Cathedral-scholar Wickbold, 5 July 1290. Lacomblet, Urkundenbuch, vol. 2, no. 892.

[147] De Dynter, Edmond: Chronique des Ducs de Brabant, De Ram, P. F., ed., vol. 3 (Bruxelles, 1854), p. 444.

within Cologne[148]. Only after the arbitration through Count Adolf did he let up on that demand seven days later[149]. In his nevertheless continuing intransigence toward the City, the Archbishop was backed up by the Pope. When, on 5 August 1289, Pope Nicholas IV heard the news of Siegfried's defeat and subsequent imprisonment by his enemies, he demanded the Archbishop's immediate release[150]. When this demand was ignored by the rebellious vassals, on 18 January 1290 the Pope declared all promises made by the imprisoned Archbishop invalid, again without much consequence[151]. The same year, however, Nicholas ordered an inquiry to determine the City of Cologne's guilt in the matter, which met with considerably more success. It was conducted by the Archbishops of Trier and Mainz, and as a result Cologne, under threat of an interdict, was required to pay damages to Siegfried in the amount of 200,000 marks. As the City refused to pay, the interdict promptly went into effect on 2 August 1290 and continued until

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[148] Archbishop Siegfried to the City of Cologne, June 18 1289. Lacomblet, Urkundenbuch, vol. 2, no. 870, p. 517.

[149] Count Adolf of Berg to Archbishop Siegfried and the City of Cologne, 25 June 1289. Lacomblet, Urkundenbuch, vol. 2, no. 871, p. 517.

[150] Pope Nicholas IV to the Counts of Berg and Jülich, 5 August 1289. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 3227.

[151] Pope Nicholas IV to Archbishop Siegfried, 18 January 1290. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 3262.

after Siegfried's death in 1297[152], when his successor Wickbold von Holte released Cologne from it without payment of the fine[153]. It represented a rather severe punishment in medieval terms for a city calling itself "holy Cologne", for no weddings, masses, or funerals could be performed legitimately during the entire time.

Although the victory of Worringen has again and again been described as an event freeing the people of Cologne from subjugation to their Archbishop, it is not clear if that was really accomplished, or if indeed the victory had any advantageous effects for Cologne. In 1288 the City had already enjoyed effective autonomy for well over a century. At most, it might have hoped to protect itself from a threat to this autonomy. The fact that Worringen was little more than a short-term military success must have become perfectly clear to the people of Cologne soon after the battle. In the absence of effective support from their feudal allies, they presently had to suffer the consequences of an interdict lasting over ten years. In

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[152] Herborn, Wolfgang, "Die Stadt Köln und die Schlacht von Worringen" in Der Name der Freiheit, p. 291.

[153] Archbishop Wickbold in a letter attests that he has released the people of Cologne from the interdict, on condition that they will be faithfull and obey him. Cologne 21 March 1298. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 3568. Archbishop Wickbold also advises the churches of Cologne to once again perform all religious services. Ibid., vol. 3, no. 3569.

matters of military protection the City of Cologne remained dependent on outside support similar to that which the neighbouring rulers of Berg or Jülich had provided before the battle of Worringen[154]. Territorially, the City never expanded beyond the walls of 1180 for the rest of its existence as a political unit of the Empire. Even its eventual recognition as a free imperial city in 1475 did not significantly improve its position. Success in the battle of Worringen may have been better for Cologne than failure would have been, but in the long run did nothing to enable it to increase either its territory or its power.

Brabant

Duke Jan I of Brabant, despite claiming victory at Worringen, had to wait for the final resolution of the Limburg issue. He had captured his earlier rival, Reinald of Guelder, during the battle, but Reinald's claim now technically belonged to the heirs of Heinrich of Luxembourg. Until a negotiated settlement could be reached, the Duchy of Limburg was put under the temporary custody of Gui of Dampierre, Count of Flanders, himself apparently quite interested in keeping it. Even Adolf of

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[154] Herborn, "Die Stadt Köln", Der Name der Freiheit, p. 292.

Berg in May 1289 garnered for himself a claim to decide the future of Limburg in his settlement with Archbishop Siegfried, helping little to resolve the question of who finally was to receive Limburg[155]. (If Siegfried could indeed still make such a concession, his overlordship over the counts and dukes of the Lower Rhineland must have continued despite his defeat.) Negotiations for the possession of Limburg dragged on until 15 October 1289, and then it was only through the arbitration of the King of France, Philip the Fair, that a settlement was achieved with the handing over of Limburg to Duke Jan[156].

Jan of Brabant had gained the Duchy of Limburg, and with it justified his title of Duke of Lotharingia, but the wider political circumstances of Europe limited the actual benefit of this success. The court of Brabant

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[155] Settlement between Archbishop Siegfried and the Count of Berg, Burg 27 June 1289. "...Item nos archiepiscopus bona ducatus Lymburgensis, que debent recipi et teneri a nobis in feodo, prout descendunt a nobis et ecclesia Colon., absque quolibet impedimento nostro et conradictione nostra, prout ad nos, successores nostros et ecclesiam Colon. pertinet et pertinere poterit, concedemus et porrigemus cuicunque idem comes de Monte dixerit et iusserit seu voluerit per suas patentes litteras siue per viue vocis oraculum porrigi seu concedi....". Lacomblet, Urkundenbuch, no. 865, p. 508 ff.

[156] Philip IV King of France, arbitrates a settlement concerning the possession of Limburg between the Duke of Lotharingia and Brabant and the Count of Guelders including reparations following the battle of Worringen, Paris 15 October 1289. "Urkundenregesten", in Der Name der Freiheit, p. 77.

seems to have suffered from chronic financial difficulties even after receiving Limburg; for in 1292 an agreement was apparently made to forgo some future taxation in Brabant against a one-time payment needed to liquidate the Duke's debts[157]. In any case, the consolidation of great monarchies such as France and England had probably already before Worringen put limits on Brabant's chances ever to be more than a secondary power. Brabant's period of apparent success after acquiring Limburg was therefore short, and followed by slow and steady decline as a political dependent.

In any case Jan's taste for the chivalrous lifestyle was not to let him enjoy the fruits of his victory for very long. While attending a tournament of the Count of Bar in 1294, Duke Jan was injured, and he died shortly thereafter. His son and successor, Duke Jan II, to whose wife Jan van Heelu dedicated his rhyme chronicle, was to propel Brabant into a dangerous diplomatic position between the rising monarchies of France and England. Although he had been raised at Edward I's court in London, Jan II was eventually prudent enough to choose neutrality in the ensuing war over Flanders. Jan I's brother Godefrid, although having participated in the battle at

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[157] Barraclough, Origins, p. 327.

Worringen, seems to have learned little from his experience with civilian militias and in 1302, while fighting for the King of France, found his end under the goedendags of Flemish craftsmen at Courtrai.

Berg

Strategically as well as financially the Count of Berg received the most tangible benefits from his participation in the battle at Worringen, suggesting once more that he was also the true military victor. In partnership with his brother Konrad, who as provost of the cathedral chapter of Cologne was acting in place of Archbishop Siegfried, he proceeded to take over the authority of the captured enemy. Provost Konrad immediately revoked the interdict against Berg and as "protector of the church of Cologne" began to manoeuvre into the position of Siegfried's successor[158]. Meanwhile in the "castrum novum" of his brother Count Adolf, the terms of a costly settlement were forced on Archbishop Siegfried over the next twelve months. They consisted of extensive monetary payments, for which some of the Archbishop's

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[158] Settlement between Archbishop Siegfried and Count Adolf of Berg, Burg 19 May 1289. Siegfried sanctions the already undertaken lifting of the interdict through Provost Conrad of Berg. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 3208.

possessions were taken as security; a promise not to erect any fortifications along the Rhine that might threaten trade or the County of Berg itself; and most interestingly, as mentioned above, cession of the right to decide the future ownership of the duchy of Limburg[159]. Although this was not put down in writing, Berg was also able to continue its own coining of money, a practice that had contributed to its troubles with the Archbishop in the first place[160]. Despite the papal intervention which allowed Siegfried not to honour his promises, the Count of Berg was able to enforce the terms he had negotiated. Presumably the Archbishop was in no position to make use of the papal sanctions. With the founding of the City of Düsseldorf only a year later and the eventual consolidation of the Counties of Jülich, Berg, Mark, and Kleve into the Duchy of Berg in 1386, the family of Berg seems to have benefited more from the conflict than the reputed beneficiaries, Cologne and Brabant.

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[159] Archbishop Siegfried's settlement with Adolf of Berg, 19 May 1289. Lacomblet, Urkundenbuch, p. 508, no. 865.

[160] Luck, Dieter: "Die Ausswirkungen der Schlacht von Worringen auf Berg", in Der Name der Freiheit, p. 278.

The Archbishop

Archbishop Siegfried of Westerburg was finally released by his captors after more than two years of captivity, perhaps in the expectation that he would soon die of a disease which he had contracted during his incarceration[161]. He did stay alive, nonetheless. (Thus Adolf of Berg did not, as expected, secure the archiepiscopal seat for his brother Provost Konrad.) Moreover, Pope Nicholas IV had freed Siegfried from any promises that he had made under duress from his captors. It is true that the intervention of the papacy proved largely symbolic; although the Church could enforce religious sanctions against the City of Cologne, it was evidently unable to exact reparations from secular rulers with the same success. Nevertheless, though Siegfried's position seemed to have deteriorated somewhat in political terms, there is no reason to assume that he had fared any worse than his predecessor Engelbert II after the battle of Zülpich.

There is no indication that the Archbishop's status was diminished in any way within the Holy Roman Empire; for we find him only four years later promoting Adolf of Nassau, his ally at the battle of Worringen, as a

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[161] Testimony at the papal inquiry of 5 July 1290. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 3221.

candidate for the German kingship, with the explicit and contractually defined intention of recovering his losses at Worringen[162]. In the agreement of 27 April 1292, Adolf of Nassau promised to return the royal castles and fortifications which had been in Siegfried's possession before Worringen, and to force the Count of Berg not to demand payment of the 12,000 marks and to return immediately the castles and villages given in guarantee. Furthermore, Adolf promised Siegfried to protect him against the Duke of Brabant and the Count of Flanders with armed force if necessary, and to allow him to collect certain imperial tolls along the Rhine. Adolf also promised to punish the City of Cologne and not to allow any of Siegfried's enemies at his court. The promise not to invest anyone with the duchies of Austria and Limburg without Siegfried's express permission, and to accept abdication should he fail to honour any of these promises, only demonstrated how much a puppet King Adolf was meant to be[163].

To Siegfried's dismay, however, Adolf of Nassau did not live up to most of his promises. Once he became King

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[162] Count Adolf of Nassau to Archbishop Siegfried, Andernach 27 April 1292. Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 3354.

[163] Schmid, L.: Die Wahl des Grafen Adolf von Nassau, pp. 25 ff.

of the Romans in 1292, he pursued his own, however misguided, policy. As his principal concern seems to have been to garner revenue and military support, he became in fact rather friendly with Siegfried's enemies in Brabant and Cologne[164]. For much of 1292 Adolf made Cologne the scene of his court at the citizens' expense[165], and from Jan I of Brabant he received a loan of 16,000 marks. In return Adolf not only confirmed all vassalages, rights, and privileges given to the Dukes of Brabant by any Emperors (including of course jurisdiction as Duke of Lotharingia)[166] but also developed a rather friendly relationship with the City of Cologne, based on its substantial loans to him[167]. Such actions might seem to support the view that Brabant and Cologne gained significantly from their conflict with the Archbishop. In fact, however, the damage to Siegfried's interests was limited, because Adolf of Nassau remained a weak king, more dependent on such lesser powers as Brabant and

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[164] Schmid, Die Wahl, p. 89-90.

[165] Still today the people of Cologne refer to someone who tries to impress at someone else's expense as a "Nassauer".

[166] King Adolf to the Duke of Brabant and Lotharingia, 21 September 1292. Willems, Chronique en vers, Codex Diplomaticus, p. 561, no. 198.

[167] King Adolf to the City of Cologne, 11 October 1292. Lacomblet, Urkundenbuch, vol. II, p. 553, no. 934.

Cologne than they were on him.

In the long run the position of the Archbishop of Cologne deteriorated after his defeat at Worringen, but only in part because of that defeat. What had happened at Worringen, likely not appreciated by those present, was that a ruler with far-ranging formal feudal authority had suffered defeat at the hands of other rulers who instead based their authority on more direct administration of their populations, working in concert with a town with essentially republican institutions. In his capacity as a distant feudal overlord, the Archbishop could not hope to obtain the kind of loyalty demonstrated in the charge of the peasants of Berg, or the valour of the nobility of Brabant. The Duchy of Cologne had been reduced to the position of one jurisdiction among others, roughly equal in terms of real power. Siegfried himself seems to have conceded this indirectly; while he tried to reclaim some feudal rights, most of his grievances, like those of his enemies, pertained to revenue and territorial posessions.

The question arises, however, whether this one military defeat of Archbishop Siegfried at Worringen in itself represented such a fundamental turning-point. We have to remember that very much the same situation also occurred at Zülpich in 1267. There too, a similar alliance, with the exception of Brabant, defeated and

captured an Archbishop. Worringen was neither the first time that the people of Cologne fought their Archbishop, nor the first time that the counts of Berg, Mark, and Jülich confronted their feudal overlord. It would rather seem that the battle of Worringen was only one stage of a process which had begun almost half a century before, with the end of the last great and truly feudal German monarchy.

The Empire and France

One of the losers and also one of the winners at Worringen were not actually among the combatants. Throughout the whole affair King Rudolf of Habsburg had seemingly turned a blind eye, being preoccupied with consolidating his newly gained foothold in the south-eastern reaches of his domain. Odilo Engels has argued that Rudolf had few resources available to enforce the peace in the west of the Empire and thus settled for whatever consequences might arise from its political instability[168]. It is also possible, however, that despite some early disagreements and conflicts between Archbishop Siegfried and King Rudolf, following their mutually highly

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[168] Engels, Odilo: "Het Duitse Rijk ten tijde van de slag van Woeringen", in Der Name der Freiheit, p. 53.

beneficial settlement of 1282, Rudolf had accepted Siegfried as a virtual partner in the leadership of the Empire. When he found himself having no choice but to use his limited time and resources for the establishment of a solid base for his successor, he could count on Archbishop Siegfried to defend imperial interests along the lower Rhine. King Rudolf had originally recommended Siegfied to Pope Gregory specifically for his military proficiency and would certainly not have expected his defeat at Worringen.

It was an enemy of the Empire, King Philip the Fair of France, who as a result of the battle of Worringen found himself in a position to arbitrate possession of what was an Imperial fief, Limburg, in favour of someone who had been an imperial vassal but was now very friendly to France, Duke Jan of Brabant. Although it was certainly not unprecedented for an outsider to arbitrate in such a matter, particularly if he was as respected as the King of France, it is significant that the arbitrator himself had some very strong territorial interests in the region. France's encroachment on Imperial jurisdiction and domains along the border area in this time is well documented. The gains of France in influence and prestige, in the aftermath of the battle of Worringen, may have been far less concrete than those of Berg and Brabant, but they were by no means negligible.

Part II

THE TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE BATTLE OF WORRINGEN

Chapter 6

PRIMARY SOURCES

Jan van Heelu's Rymkronyk

The only eyewitness account of the battle of Worringen which has survived into our time is contained in the rhyming chronicle of Jan van Heelu. His epic, containing almost nine thousand lines in the Flemish language[166], recounts in the first book the deeds and adventures of Duke Jan I of Brabant shortly before and after his accession in 1267, while in the second book it centres almost exclusively on the Limburg War and the battle of Worringen in 1288. For better or worse, this single document has been used as the main source of evidence for this historic event. Although there is also a considerable amount of documentary source material as well as a number of less significant and less detailed chronicles, some being themselves quite possibly based on Heelu, his own version of the story generally has been the one by which all other evidence has been judged, which is all the more reason to examine this narrative very critically.

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[166] A form of Middle Dutch, which became the dominant literary language of the Low Countries.

Jan van Heelu appears to have written his chronicle around 1290 as a loyal member of Duke Jan I of Brabant's court at Brussels[167]. Although there is no personal information available about him, it seems likely that he was member of a close circle of friends around the Duke, many of whom he featured prominently in his work. As he himself does not seem to have participated in the fighting, one may suppose that he was a cleric and also quite possibly something like an official court historian. Heelu addressed his work to Margaret, daughter of King Edward I of England and daughter-in-law of the Duke, so that she might learn the language of her husband. The dukes of Brabant had been conducting a policy in favour of both France and England for a number of years. Dependent as they were on the political and financial support of the merchant class of their towns, they had good reason to maintain good relations with the English customers of these merchants. Duke Jan actively sought the friendship of English kings, marrying his son and heir to Edward I's daughter, and even letting him stay at King Edward's court, where he remained until his accession as Jan II in 1294. In these circumstances it could certainly be

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[167] De Ridder, Paul: "Dynastisches und nationales Gefühl in Brabant 1267-94", in Kölnischer Geschichtsverein, Jahrbücher 50 (1979), p. 211.

considered politic for someone in Jan van Heelu's position to present the English princess, or anyone else for that matter, with a narrative which portrayed Brabant in a positive light[168].

Vanity may also have played a role in the composition of Jan van Heelu's narrative. Like Duke Jan, his chronicler was extremely fond of the chivalrous ideals of medieval knighthood. Like many of their contemporaries, the knights of Brabant idolized the heroes of the pantheon of chivalry, such as King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table. What could have been better for the courtiers of Brabant, than to have themselves immortalized in a narrative of epic character which told how they, in real life, had emulated their heroes? Given his motives of diplomatic prudence and personal glorification, Heelu's reconstruction of the chain of events leading to the battle, like his account of the actual fighting and the result of the battle, remains quite open to challenge.

In explaining the reasons for the Limburg war, Jan van Heelu very skilfully worked into his narrative Brabant's existing interest in the disputed territory based on Jan I's title as Duke of Lotharingia, whereas in

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[168] Jan van Heelu also did his best to present Brabant's French sponsors in the best possible light.

fact the validity of a title Duke Jan did not publicly use until after the death of Walram of Limburg in 1279 was never satisfactorily established. Heelu also described the sale of the claim on Limburg by the "rightful heir" Adolf of Berg in 1283, which further served to strengthen Duke Jan's claim as Duke of Lotharingia. He failed to mention, however, that King Rudolf, only a year earlier, had already given Limburg to Reinald of Guelder, also a quite legitimate heir[169].

It is made clear by the chronicler who the evil initiator of the war must have been. Heelu states that the citizens of Cologne, shortly before the battle, called on the Duke of Brabant to help them against the "robber-baron's nest" at Worringen[170], which, protected by the peace-breaker Archbishop Siegfried, threatened the trade routes along the Rhine. He does not mention that Worringen was inhabited by the Archbishop's regular troops, who as far as we know had not caused any damage other than administering the much hated but nevertheless legitimate tolls.

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[169] See Appendix III.

[170] "Doen spraken si: << Hertoge heere!
Over Woeronc clagen wi seere;
Want dat es dire rovere nest....>>"
Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 4135-4137.

With the help of independent primary sources and some common sense we can also find some apparent contradictions in Heelu's account of the battle. From what we can surmise about medieval warfare, it was most probably a very noisy and difficult to control affair, once it had progressed beyond certain preliminary manoeuvres. The nature of hand to hand combat, which for good reason was termed mêlée, made effective tactical control of a large force at best a difficult proposition[171]. Not essentially different from large scale tournaments, battles, except for the initial charge, seem to have consisted of a large number of individual encounters, simply because of the nature of the weaponry and the individualistic approach to warfare among social equals of noble birth. It is impossible that a single eyewitness could have watched each one of them. Still Heelu purports to have observed each prominent member of the court of Brabant playing a significant role in the fighting and contributing to the victory. The source of his information, rather than a single eyewitness account, might indeed be found in the stories which circulated among the surviving participants of the battle for years after it had taken place, but these must almost certainly have been mixed with a good

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[171] Verbruggen, The Art of Warfare, passim.

portion of their individual imagination to which Heelu added his own dramatic sense. Even apart from the obvious limits to a single person's ability to observe all the complex events of a battle, one gets the suspicion that, except for the essential facts, Heelu may have been forced to use what we might call a "generic" battle account to fill in the missing details and lend more drama to his narrative of individual incidents. Many of the descriptions of one-on-one combats in his chronicle could very well have been based on incomplete bits of information mixed with the existing models of chivalrous warfare that combatants were expected to follow at least in theory. Considering the fact that even his description of the site of the battle seems insufficient and contradictory at times, it is rather unlikely that Heelu actually observed most of what he wrote about, even if he was actually present.

To give one significant example, Heelu credits Godefrid, the Duke of Brabant's brother, with the capture of Archbishop Siegfried. Although Count Adolf of Berg led the Archbishop off the field, Heelu goes out of his way to depict the Archbishop as surrendering to Godefrid of Brabant before the arrival of the Count with the peasants of Berg. Heelu relates how Siegfried, while under attack from the rear and desperate to surrender in order to save

his life, found himself separated from Godefried of Brabant by piles of dead men and horses. Unable to yield in person, he is said to have yelled his submission across the obstacle and to have had it accepted by Godefried in the same manner. The physical realities of the medieval battle lend little credibility to such things as insurmountable body piles[172]. Although the individuals in question might have been able to see each other, it seems rather unlikely in the noise of battle that they should have been able to communicate over a distance which they could not cross on foot. Godefried's following intimate chat with Adolf of Berg regarding Siegfried's safe-keeping, also described by Heelu, seems equally improbable, as both were on opposite sides of an enemy army which, unlike its leader, had not yet given up the fight.

The view that the troops of Berg, both noble and peasant, forced the surrender of the Archbishop seems far more likely, if one considers for example the version put forward by Ottokar of Styria, who contradicts Heelu on this very point. Contrary to Heelu's version Ottokar even suggests that Adolf only agreed to extricate Jan of Brabant from his near defeat after certain unspecified

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[172] Keegan, The Face of Battle, p. 107.

concessions. These could conceivably have included the privilege of taking the Archbishop prisoner[173]. The view that the Count of Berg and his largely peasant army had the most decisive effect on the outcome of the fighting is further supported by the description contained in the Gesta Baldewini[174].

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[173] "Von den Perigen der onverczait,
Daz sein Oeheim versprach
Der von Luczelburg an den Zeiten,
Er wolt mit ym nicht streiten
Daz waz wol auch sein Will
Er hielt mit seiner Schar still
So lang, unczt das geswant
Der Chraft dem von Prabant.
Der sand pald zu ym her
Einen Poten, daz er
Ym ze Hilf chem,
Anders er nem,
Wann er sein Hilf vor ym purg,
Den Sig der von Luczelburcg.
Do enpot er ym herwider
Wer er so frue mude Lider,
Daz wer ain grozz Laster
Daz er sich rurt vaster,
Er west wol, wenn er chomen solt
Ihm ze Hilf, und wolt.
Sunst liez er sew teihen,
Unczt das pegund weihen
Der von Prabant durch Not;
Allerst im gepot
Sein Trew und Manheit,
daz er zu Hurt rait,
Und half von Prabant dem Held."
Ottokar Horneck: Reimchronik, in M.G.H., Deutsche Chroniken, Bd. V (Hannover, 1890), lines 778 ff.; also in Willems, Chronique en vers, "Bylagen", pp. 365-366.

[174] "Primo Colonienses cum archiepiscopo praelium inchoantes, partem deteriorem habere. Secundo Henricus comes (Luczelinburgensis) cum duce praelium commiscens, duce ad jactum retropresso, comes visus fuit praevalere. Tertio comes de Monte inermibus suis cum rusticis in vulgo

The anonymous author of the life of Baldewin of Luxembourg, Archbishop of Trier (died 1354), despite having written more than two generations after the event, also offers, in connection with the death of Count Heinrich of Luxembourg, an intriguingly clear summary of the tactical sequence of the battle. According to this chronicler, who must have had access to an unknown independent source, first the troops of Cologne clashed with the Archbishop and were scattered by the attack; secondly Count Heinrich of Luxembourg attacked Duke Jan of Brabant forcing him into a retreat; thirdly Count Adolf of Berg arrived with his peasant militia which effectively annihilated the forces of both Count Heinrich and Archbishop Siegfried. Though only a summary, this seems the most reasonable of all the available versions of the battle, even though it was recorded so many years after the event.

Kempen appelatis, in Coloniensium et ducis adjutorium praelium agressus archiepiscopi et Henrici partes infirmavit, separavit, dissipavit totaliter et prostravit. Heu miserabile spectaculum! Hic captivatur, illic trucidatur, hic morti addictus spoliatur, ille Rhenum fugiens suffocatur, in nemore vero paludinoso submerguntur plures, substantiae capientur, fugae a multis rapientur. Archiepiscopus vero a comite de Monte capitur et custodiae in Breusbure mancipatur." Liber de Gestis Baldewini de Luczenburch, quoted in Willems, Chronique on vers, "Bylagen", p. 386.

The peace settlements documented after the battle also seem to be in conflict with Heelu's narrative at this point, as no mention of Godefrid in connection with Archbishop Siegfried's capture is ever made again. Most of the significant surrenders, and indeed the turning point of the battle in favour of Duke Jan's alliance, seem to have coincided with the arrival of Count Adolf and the armed peasants of Berg. Heelu could not entirely avoid mentioning the significant involvement of the peasants of Berg and the townsfolk of Cologne, but he did succeed in underplaying their effect on the outcome of the battle. Nevertheless he himself supplied indirect evidence which points to the deadly effectiveness and decisive impact of the armed farmers and craftsmen.

Judging from the casualties on the Brabant side at the hands of the Archbishop's men, a mere forty combatants, in what had been a losing cause until the arrival of the Berg peasants, the encounter of armed knights alone can be characterized as having resulted in comparatively few fatalities. The encounter between the Archbishop's party and the Count of Berg's armed peasants, however, produced disproportionately more dead nobles then peasants. (We also have to assume that unlike Count Adolf's peasant militia, Duke Jan's knights would have taken prisoners rather than killing their opponents,

particularly as many of the noble combatants seem to have been relatives.) Moreover we have to surmise that dismounting the opposition by killing its horses would have been the most effective tactic for the Berg peasants armed with pikes and "goedendags". Once un-horsed, knights would have become easy prey for groups of peasants, explaining not only the high number of casualties among mounted men-at-arms but indeed making sense of the staggering number of dead horses reported by Heelu. Despite such evidence, and the obviously somewhat unconventional unfolding of this medieval battle in its later stages, Heelu limited his description mainly to his own chivalrous perspective and accordingly reserved credit for the victory for his master, Duke Jan I, and the troops of Brabant[175]. Although one may well understand that, in place of his own lord, no self-respecting, and probably prudent, Brabant courtier would ultimately credit a mob of foreign subsistence farmers with the winning of this important victory, the reliability of Jan van Heelu's "eyewitness" account may certainly be compromised by it.

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[175] "Want elc van hem mach hem beroemen
Die daer was van Brabant,
Dat hi heelt was, ochte gygant
Van live, of dien dach wale."
Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 8704-8707.

Further indication of inaccuracies in Heelu's narrative is provided by the peace settlements which followed the battle. It was Adolf of Berg who held Archbishop Siegfried in custody and it was he, not the Duke of Brabant, who managed to press the most advantage out of him[176]. Compared with his settlement with the Count of Berg, the Archbishop's treaty with the Duke of Brabant conceded much less. The Archbishop and the Duke agreed to settle their differences without either one of them claiming damages. Evidently Jan of Brabant had not yet gained much advantage, as the dispute over the Limburg succession remained unsettled. Some contemporaries indeed seem to have openly doubted Brabant's success at Worringen. Why else would Heelu specifically undertake to present a narrative which unlike those of others (which unfortunately do not seem to have survived) recounted the true course of the battle[177]? Heelu was setting out to justify Duke Jan's claim to be the victor at Worringen, and therefore the rightful possessor of Limburg. Heelu's

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[176] Further evidence supporting the fact of Siegfried's capture and imprisonment by Count Adolf of Berg is given by the Annales Agrippinenses, Pertz, G. H., ed., in M.G.H. SS. (Hannoverae, 1859; reprinted Stuttgart, 1963), tom. XXVI, pp. 736-738.

[177] "Maer dese yeeste was te voeren
(Beide in dietsch ande oec in walsch)
van vele lieden gedicht valsch"
Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 58-60.

intention to lend support to Duke Jan's claims on Limburg by presenting then recent history in a specific way could have been of some practical significance at the time, but must put in question the accuracy of any subsequent work relying on him as a source.

Jan van Heelu, it would appear, was interested not only in preserving but actually creating the mythology of a great leader fighting a glorious battle, while backing up some of that leader's political claims. The presentation of his chronicle in rhymed verse, in the popular style of the time used for works of fiction and non-fiction of a dramatic nature, and in the Flemish vernacular a far broader audience would understand, reminds us that he wrote also for effect on the reader or listener, and not just for the written recounting of an experience. Part of his objective may certainly have been to entertain. One can easily imagine the recitation of such a poem by the author as a diversion for the courtiers of Brabant on a long winter evening. Primarily, however, Heelu's text, as already suggested by its dedication, was meant to establish a positive public relations image for Brabant and its Duke. It is not necessary to argue that Heelu deliberately falsified facts he and others had observed. For his purpose, it was far more effective to select, enhance, and when necessary supplement authentic

information. The proclamation of his own sincerity in presenting only the truth, however, should merely serve to make us even more vigilant[178].

Other Chronicles

Within twenty years of the battle of Worringen a group of short reports about it, originating in the Low Countries, found their way into chronicles written in places as far distant as France and England. The earliest representatives of this group are the Chronicon of Balduin of Ninove of about 1293[179], and the Chronica de origine ducum Brabantiae, written about 1304[180]. This group of reports is characterized by the use of some of the arguments which can also be found in Heelu, for example that Worringen was inhabited by robbers and thieves threatening trade, justifying the siege by Jan of Brabant

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[178] "Hier mede hebbich doen verstaen
Ende na die waerheit bescreven
Dat voer Woeronc wert gedreven,
Al mest op den dach...."
Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 8898-8901.

[179] Balduini Ninovensis Chronicon, Holder-Egger, O., ed., in M.G.H., SS., tom. XXV (Hannoverae, 1880; reprinted Stuttgart, 1964), p. 546.

[180] Chronica de origine ducum Brabantiae, Heller, Johannes, ed., in M.G.H., SS., tom. XXV (Hannoverae, 1880; reprinted Stuttgart, 1964), pp. 411 ff.

and his allies, and also by the fact that they not only identify Duke Jan as the sole victor but also fail to mention the significant involvement of the Count of Berg and the citizens of Cologne. Probably inspired by current political relations with the Duchy of Brabant, such a selective transmission of information may show that these reports were derived from the same oral accounts Heelu presumably used in his rhyming chronicle[181].

In contrast, a second group of reports originating closer to Cologne makes explicit mention of Adolf of Berg's involvement, in particular his capture of Archbishop Siegfried. The Catalogi Archiepiscoporum Coloniensium, Continuatio Postrema (ca. 1300), and several more following in its tradition, point out not only the significant contribution of Cologne's citizens but also the decisive participation of Adolf of Berg, leading to the capture of Archbishop Siegfried[182]. As this incident

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[181] Cf., e.g., Guillemus de Nangis, Chronicon, Brosien, H., ed., in M.G.H., SS., tom. XXVI, (Hannoverae, 1880; reprinted Stuttgart, 1964), pp. 674-696; Annales Waverleienses, Lieberman, F. et Pauli, R., ed., M.G.H., SS., tom. XXVIII (Hannoverae, 1856; reprinted Stuttgart, 1963), pp. 458-464.

[182] "Hiis sic electis, dominus Gregorius X. in concilio Lugdunensi Conradum cassavit et ecclesie Coloniensi auctoritate apostolica providit de Sifrido, qui 20. consecrationis sue agens annum, plurimorum fortunam prosperam et adversam est perpessus. Oui prope Worinch in conflictu, quem habuit cum Iohanne duce Brabancie et Adolfo comite de Monte civibusque Coloniensibus, captus

consistently appears in chronicles associated with the area near and around Cologne, it stands to reason that these had a common origin in a now lost local chronicle tradition, which placed a different emphasis on the reporting of events at Worringen, than that current in Brabant.

A number of short but surprisingly insightful explanations of Worringen appear in chronicles describing the life and times of several of Trier's Archbishops. Possibly originating with the Gesta Henrici archiepiscopi Treverorum, probably written not long after the battle, they provide a consistent and reasonable explanation of the issues that had caused the war[182]. This tradition, also including the Gesta Bohemundi Archiepiscopi Treverensis, is unique in pointing out that Archbishop Siegfried's authority as feudal overlord in the diocese of

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est a comite de Monte Adolpho, qui subvehi consuevit in curru." Catalogi Archiepiscoporum Coloniensium, Continuatio Postrema, Cardauns, H., ed., in M.G.H., SS., tom. XXIV, (Hannoverae 1880, reprinted 1964), p. 357. The Continuatio Brabantina (ca. 1319) of Martin of Troppau reads: "Iohannes dux Brabantie apud Worunc super Renum, adjunctis Coloniensibus et comitem de Monte, de inimicis suis mirabiliter triumphavit." Continuationes Chronici Martini Oppaviensis, IV. Continuatio Brabantina, Weiland, Ludwig, ed., in M.G.H., SS., tom. XXIV (Hannoverae, 1880; reprinted Stuttgart, 1964), p. 260.

[182] Gesta Henrici archiepiscopi Treverorum, Cardauns, H., ed., in M.G.H., SS., tom. XXIV (Hannoverae, 1880; reprinted, Stuttgart, 1964), p. 463.

Cologne was at stake in this war[183], an issue omitted from much of the subsequent historical discussion because the main source - Heelu - never discusses it. (Heelu, of course, would not have found it politically prudent to make reference to the Archbishop of Cologne's jurisdictional rights, which his own lord, the Duke of Brabant, had no intention of recognizing). It seems likely that the information in the Trier tradition was based on evidence presented at the papal inquiry of 1290 in Cologne, conducted personally by the Archbishop of Trier.

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[183] "Anno Domini 1288, Non. Iunii commissum est terribile bellum prope Coloniam apud villam que Wurung dicitur inter Iohannem ducem Brabancie, comitem de Monte et Iuliacensem et de Vianna comites et cives Colonienses ex una parte, et dominum Sifridum archiepiscopum Coloniensem, Gelrie et de Luzzillemburg comites ex altera; in quo proelio Henricus Luzzillemburgensis et Walramus frater eius, ac mille et quadringenti viri bellatores tam equites quam pedites in ore gladii corruerunt. Archiepiscopus et comes Gelrie ac multi alii capiuntur, duce Brabancie in omnibus victoriose triumphante. Causa belli fuit hec. Comes Gelrie duxit in uxorem natam ducis Limburgensis, unicam heredem patris que decessit sine prole. Comes de Monte heres proximus vendidit ducatum duci Brabancie pro triginta et duabus milibus marc., comite Gelrie asserente, quod ipse dictam terram tenere deberet quoad vitam suam dotali seu sponsalicio iure. Comes Luzzillemburgensis dixit, ratione consanguinitatis se propinquiorem esse vendicioni, archiepiscopo allegante, quod sine consensu suo vendicio non valeret; nam iure feodali esset astricta ecclesie Coloniensi." Gesta Bohemundi Archiepiscopi Treverensis, Waitz, G., ed., M.G.H., SS., tom. XXIV (Hannoverae, 1879; reprinted Stuttgart, 1964), p. 471.

Although dating from as late as the mid-fourteenth century, the Gesta Baldewini[184] appears to be the best surviving representative of this tradition, as far as the tactical aspects of the battle of Worringen are concerned. As mentioned above, it outlines the conflict in three stages: the apparent defeat of the city of Cologne by the Archbishop; the Count of Luxembourg's success against the Duke of Brabant; and the Count of Berg's return to the field with his peasant-militia, obtaining the victory. It has already been shown that this seems to be a very plausible description of events.

The far more extensive account presented by Ottokar of Styria could also be traced back to the Rhineland. We do know that he had the opportunity to examine Rhenish archives in his travels. Ottokar ouz der Geul, also known as Ottokar of Styria or Ottokar Horneck (approx. 1260-1320)[185], employed the same rhyming style as Heelu in his early fourteenth century Reimchronik, dealing primarily with the life and times of Rudolf of Habsburg and the Habsburg family. Little is known about Ottokar's career; he seems to have been son of a minor but wealthy noble family from the area of Lichtenstein. He spent his youth

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[184] Quoted in Willems, Chronique en vers, p. 386.

[185] Kranzmayer, Eberhard: Die steirische Reimchronik Ottokars und ihre Sprache (Wien, 1950), p. 9.

as a travelling singer before becoming interested in gathering historical material and recording it. In later life he joined the court of Frederick of Habsburg and acted as diplomat for him in Spain, where he was involved in arranging the marriage between Frederick and Isabella of Aragon in 1314. While escorting the bride through the Rhineland to meet her future husband, Ottokar is supposed to have visited archives in Kolmar, Strassburg, Mainz, Trier, Cologne, Brabant, and Flanders to examine documents and chronicles[186]. There he may well have seen information on Worringen that is lost today. At least part of the information he transmitted concerning the Battle of Worringen was supposedly based on a chronicle originating in the County of Berg[187]. Nevertheless, one should remember that Ottokar wrote from the perspective of someone remote in time and space, about a subject with which King Rudolf, the "hero" of his main body of work, appeared to have little direct connection. Ottokar had had personal experience of battles and their conduct, when he witnessed Rudolf's victory over the King of Bohemia in 1278. Nonetheless, his lengthy narrative shows less interest in the military aspects of the action than its

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[186] Kranzmayer, Die steirische Reimchronik, pp. 9-13.

[187] Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 3193.

dramatic nature and moral implications. It seems that his background as a poet and entertainer was not without its influence on his perception of historic events.

Other chronicles that also contradicted Heelu's account seem to have existed, as he himself referred to them on one oc n[188]. Unfortunately none of them seems to have survived.

With all their differences and contradictions, most accounts of Worringen preserved in chronicle form tend to be exceedingly short, referring merely to the primary combatants and their fate. It seems that owing to Worringen's very limited and localized political impact, soon overshadowed by larger political concerns of the early fourteenth century, sufficient interest in the battle and its details did not remain to inspire extensive

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[188] "Want God es mijn ghetuge dies
Dat ic om niemans verlies
Noch om niemans ghewin
Daer to en legghe meer noch min
Dan daventueren sijn vergaen
Want ik hadde, sonder waen
Hier af des dichtens nu onboren
Maer dese yeeste was te voren
(Beide in dietsch ande oec in Walsch)
Van vele lieden gedicht valsch
Die der waerheit daer misten
Want si dystorie niet en wisten
Dat dochte my wesen groote scade;
Want daer sijn in die scoenste dade
Die man van ridderscape mach vinden."
Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 50-65.

writing on the subject. Although certainly not the only source of information, Heelu's chronicle soon gained a virtual monopoly status as a supplier of detailed information concerning the background and course of the battle of Worringen.

The documentary evidence

Most of the surviving documentary evidence relating to the battle of Worringen originated with the Archbishop of Cologne and the Duke of Brabant; however, relatively few such documents of the Rhenish counts have survived. This inevitably gives certain points of view a more extensive hearing. The problem with this information, however, does not lie with its accuracy but rather with its interpretation. Richard Knipping, for example, who always interpreted the documents he printed by paraphrasing their content and providing a historical context supplied from additional sources, judged certain information inaccurate if it did not quite correspond to Heelu's account, particularly regarding the location and conduct of the battle[189]. Theodor Lacomblet's most complete collection of relevant documents makes no such

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[189] Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, no. 2930; see also Appendix 2.

judgements and leaves all interpretation to the researcher. Thus in most other available collections, including those within the Catalogue accompanying the 1988 Cologne Exhibition commemorating the event[190], documents already printed in Lacomblet's Urkundenbuch are simply repeated. Lacomblet does supply part of the evidence recorded at the papal inquiry of 1290. Unfortunately most of this material, which might supply much valuable information collected from actual eyewitnesses, has not been published and remains in manuscript form. The available documentary evidence, however, can serve to supply information on some of the background and consequences of the battle of Worringen which the chroniclers were unwilling or unable to provide. It is on a re-evaluation of this evidence that part of the preceding criticism of the accuracy of Jan van Heelu's Rymkronyk is based.

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[190] "Urkundenregesten in chronologischer Folge" in Der Name der Freiheit, pp. 62-83.

Chapter 7

HISTORICAL TREATMENT OF THE BATTLE AT WORRINGEN

Late chronicles and early histories

Edmund de Dynter's account of Worringen, written in the fifteenth century to celebrate the history of Brabant and its dukes, only takes up about two pages. It seems to recount the story very much as it appears in Heelu, particularly regarding the description of Worringen as a "robber-baron's nest" and of the Duke of Limburg as having the responsibility to protect trade[191]. Dynter, also a native of Brabant, would most likely not have had a problem with accepting Heelu's tendentious account. Dynter's depiction may indeed have been taken from the original directly, as the City of Brussels commissioned a new copy of Jan van Heelu's chronicle in 1453, perhaps in an effort to boost its own image as having contributed to

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[191] "...comites Montensis et Juliacensis atque cives urbis Coloniensis ipsum ducem deprecabantur, quatenus castrum Woerinck archiepiscopi Coloniensis, in terra ipsius situatum (in quo nonulli raptores latitarunt, qui ex eo exilientes repentinis incursibus mercatores, peregrinos et alios viatores super viam et stratam publicam spoliare et depredari solebant), obsidere et viam assecurare dignaretur asserentes quod securus conductus per eandem stratam ad ipsum tanquam ducem Lymburgensem spectaret." Dynter, Edmund de: Chronique des Ducs de Brabant, Ram, P. F. X. de, ed. (Bruxelles, 1854; reprinted Farnborough, 1970) vol. 2, p. 442.

the victory in order to promote also Burgundian interests[192].

In later chronicles on the German side there seems to have been an even greater lack of authentic information, leading their authors to embellish on such particulars as the number of combatants and casualties, taking the events surrounding Worringen into the realm of myth. The Koelhoffsche Chronik, printed in 1499, provides only what has been described as a "late and legendary account"[193] of Worringen. When it comes to an explanation of the circumstances and issues, not one of these historians goes into any detail. This leads one to suspect that perhaps a satisfactory account of Worringen was never written in German, and that the now lost works of chroniclers from Mark and Berg never achieved the same level of exposure that Jan van Heelu's work had in France and the Low Countries. Despite such occasional appearances in historical works, Worringen seems to have become a more and more obscure episode of local history.

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[192] Van Uyten, "Worringen 1288", p. 262.

[193] Chronica van der hilliger stat van Coellen (Koelhoffsche Chronic 1499) in Hegel, C., ed.: Die Chroniken der Niederrheinischen Städte: Cöln, Bd. 2-3 (= Die Chroniken der Deutschen Städte, Bd. 13-14) (Leipzig 1876, reprinted Göttingen 1968), pp. 646-648.

Patriotic histories

Thereafter it was not until the nineteenth century that interest in the battle at Worringen resurfaced to any significant extent. Then the epic military conflicts of the medieval period found renewed popular appeal. An aspiring nation could draw on them for evidence of a proud and victorious heritage shared by its people. Divided Italians could look to the Sicilian Vespers for encouragement in their struggle for unification rather than domination by foreign powers. Battles such as Agincourt could be valuable in supporting the national mythology of England. The Swiss could find inspiration in their victory at Morgarten and their struggle for freedom from the Burgundian yoke. The Flemish victory of craftsmen over mounted knights at Courtrai stood out as a great morale-booster for bourgeois Flemish-speaking Belgians. Although part of the historical record, these events had almost been forgotten over the centuries; now, for patriotic purposes, they were invested with almost mythical significance.

It was a prominent Belgian historian, linguist, and poet, who also became a spiritual leader of the Flemish cultural and linguistic movement in the new Belgian state,

Jan Frans Willems (1793-1846)[194], who edited the chronicle of Jan van Heelu for Belgium's newly formed Historical Commission. Although it cannot be conclusively determined if his political views had any influence on his editing of Heelu's text, Willems, obviously a romantic, does seem to have been quite intrigued by the epic and heroic nature of Heelu's narrative[195]. The editing of the chronicle, thus likely inspired by romantic idealism and an interest in the preservation and promotion of Flemish heritage, did, however, also serve contemporary political interests. It could hardly have been just a coincidence that during the 1830s control over something called Limburg was once again an issue, this time for the new nation of Belgium. The violent revolution which in 1830, with strong support from bourgeois liberal intellectuals, separated Belgium from the Kingdom of the Netherlands, involved also a dispute over the possession of the province of Limburg. Only after military intervention by France and England during 1832-33 and subsequent lengthy negotiations, was Belgium's parliament prepared to accept the imposed treaty of 24

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[194] Knabe, P.E., ed.: Das Königreich Belgien, Geschichte und Kultur (Cologne, 1988), p. 91 ff.

[195] Already in his youth Willems demonstrated a certain affinity for the writing of songs and poetry about warfare. Biographie universelle, ancienne et moderne, Michaud, J. Fr., ed. (Paris, 1854; reprinted Graz, 1970), tom. XLIV, p. 633.

articles in 1839 and cede Limburg to the Netherlands. Earlier that very year also Nicaise de Keyser's monumental painted interpretation of the "Victory at Worringen" had found a favoured place beside the other scenes from the glorious past of the Belgian fatherland at the Palais de la Nation in Brussels[196]. One can only speculate that historical material which identified "Limburg" as a gloriously acquired possession of a medieval Duke of Brabant who was quickly becoming one of Belgium's most distinguished historical figures served to strengthen the position of those intent on holding on to the province of Limburg, which by the way was not quite the same as the historical Limburg. The publication of Jan van Heelu's chronicle in 1836, which in such heroic language described the claim to and final acquisition of a disputed territory called Limburg, would have been a political priority. Thus it does not seem surprising that the publication of just this chronicle was the very first project undertaken by the Royal Belgian Commission for History by orders of the new government. Willems in fact had been working on the text, on his own, as early as 1830 when the outbreak

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[196] Meyers kleines Konversations-Lexikon (Leipzig-Wien, 1892), p. 212, and Van Uyten, "Worringen 1288", p. 262.

of the revolution delayed its scheduled printing[197]. Even though the proposition that the revived interest in Worringen had a specific relevance to the Limburg question is based on circumstantial evidence, one cannot help but recognize that in a more general sense Worringen could be quite useful in forming a historic identity for the young Belgian state. At least, R. Van Uyten implies that during the 1830s bourgeois Belgians found the events of 1288 at Worringen, where representatives of the cities of Brabant had supported their duke, politically valuable for a country in which the power of the new monarchy was also very much based on the actions and support of the bourgeoisie[198]. Consequently the chronicle seems to have been promoted at the highest levels and its publication was indeed ordered by the new government.

Officially promoted by a state with such urgent need for historical justification, a text that had already been written with propaganda in mind, but which also represented the bulk of source material on the events it described, was bound to influence the nature of much of the early historical research on the subject; research

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[197] Potthast, August, Wegweiser durch die Geschichtswerke des Europaischen Mittelalters bis 1500, (Graz, 1957) vol. 1, p. .

[198] Van Uyten, "Worringen 1288", p. 262.

which itself in turn provided most of the reference material for subsequent historians dealing with Brabant and Worringen.

At this stage it should also be pointed out that some suspicions have arisen, according to which certain passages of Heelu's text may have later been added to the narrative by another hand[199]. Depending on which passages are questionable and who was responsible for the additions, arguments made on the basis of specific passages may be invalidated. Unfortunately no re-examination of the text with respect to its linguistic authenticity seems to have been done yet. Consequently Jan van Heelu's Rymkronyk has remained largely unchallenged and fundamental for all studies concerned with Duke Jan I and the war over the Limburg inheritance. Karel F. Stallaert's 1859 early patriotic history of Duke Jan I of Brabant, for instance, was based almost entirely on Heelu's partisan narrative, which it did little more than paraphrase into a

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[199] Smeets, K.: "Is een hernieuwde bestudering van de <<Rymkronyk>> van Jan van Heelu gewenst?" in Handelingen van het XXIVe Vlaams Filologencongres (1961), pp. 345-352, cited in De Ridder, "Dynastisches und nationales Gefühl", p. 193. The present author could not obtain a copy of this intriguing argument and has thus been unable to examine any of the questionable passages of Heelu's text identified in it.

simpler prose[200]. Not only did Stallaert establish a belief about the location of the battle which has hardly ever been questioned, but more importantly he presented Heelu's subjective version of events as objective historical fact. Influenced by such works as Stallaert's, primarily for a lack of suitable alternatives, subsequent historical treatments of the battle of Worringen habitually failed to challenge Heelu's account of the facts.

The battle of Worringen, a territorial conflict?

More recently, historians such as W. Jansen and Franz-Reiner Erkens, seeking to trace the process of the formation of territorial states, have interpreted the Limburg War as a symptom of this process[201]. Erkens argues that Siegfried of Westerburg was only the latest in a long succession of archbishops of Cologne who hoped to create a territorial state based on their ducal titles. This hope, Erkens further argues, was dashed in 1288 at Worringen by

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[200] Stallaert, Karel F.: Geschiednis van hertog Jan den Ersten van Brabant en zijn tijdvak (Brüssel, 1859).

[201] Jansen, W.: "Niederreinische Territorialbildung. Voraussetzungen, Wege, Probleme", Klever Archiv 3 (1981), pp. 95-113, and Erkens, Franz-Reiner: "Territorium und Reich in Politik und Vorstellung des Kölner Erzbischofs Siegfried von Westerburg", Nassauische Annalen 94 (1983), pp. 25-46.

a number of minor rulers equally intent on territorial consolidation for their own domains. Benjamin Arnold argues that the Duke of Brabant at Worringen ensured his rise into the Reichfürstenstand as the undisputed Duke of Lotharingia and most important territorial ruler of the Low Countries. Somehow the ambitions of individual princes and lords, clashing at battles such as Worringen, coupled with the impotence of the imperial authority, resulted in a number of territorial states rather than a whole state called Germany[202]. What these authors seem to have under-valued, and what the preceding examination tends to demonstrate, is the fact that the combatants at Worringen were not fighting to increase or create territorial states but to protect what were still quite feudal jurisdictions from the perceived aggression of their feudal neighbours. In the case of Archbishop Siegfried his efforts may even have been directed towards a preservation of the imperial feudal institutions, quite contrary to what Erkens has argued. Even though eventually these feudal domains, having become personal possessions of a duke or count as much by default as by intent, may have formed the mosaic of small but distinct territorial states which in Arnold's view comprised the

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[202] Arnold, Benjamin: Princes and Territories in Medieval Germany (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 36-37.

late Holy Roman Empire, at the time of Worringen the objectives and policies of the ruling nobility were inspired by an imperial feudal system still thriving in Germany.

Territoriality in a sense was, admittedly, also a feature of feudalism at the time of Worringen, inasmuch as entitlement to revenue and jurisdiction over people always had geographical limitations. Nevertheless, the traditional conventions of feudal jurisdiction, even though territorially expressed, often created the precise opposite of centrally administered and homogeneous domains. The territorial limits of a lord's right to administer justice could be quite distinct from the territorial limits of his right to collect rents or tolls. A single village could thus belong to one lord but also be the source of revenue for others while at the same time still other lords could be permitted to administer several layers of justice. The fact that physical control and protection of such jurisdictions, i.e., territorially circumscribed authorities, was largely impossible only contributed to this state of affairs. The campaign leading up to the battle of Worringen in fact illustrates this; each combatant's army had free movement through the countryside administered by the opposition. Actual territorial control was limited to the fortified places

each ruler possessed and could defend, as was very well demonstrated in the siege and destruction of Worringen itself and the stipulation in the settlement between the Archbishop and the Count of Berg not to allow the construction of fortifications in certain sectors. The battle of Worringen did not in any way change these realities.

We must assume that the desire of a feudal lord to add to his domain, although it entailed certain territorial consequences, arose primarily out of an interest in enlarging jurisdiction, most often in order to secure or increase revenue. Furthermore, the protection and consolidation of existing or presumed rights and privileges (not territories), and the values, in terms of revenues which they represented, was in the interest of feudal lords with a chronic need for cash. From all evidence, none of the combatants at Worringen hoped to gain territory beyond what they could demonstrate traditional claims for. Duke Jan of Brabant was claiming possession of and jurisdiction over Limburg through a legitimate purchase and his status as Lotharingian Duke. Archbishop Siegfried of Westerburg was defending his own ducal jurisdiction, and position as imperial representative in the disputed areas; as well he hoped to reclaim the jurisdictions usurped by the citizens of

Cologne and his vassals. Equally, the Rhenish counts of Berg, Jülich, and Mark were defending their traditional jurisdictions, in turn challenged by the ducal authority of the Archbishop of Cologne.

One need only look at how the conflict was finally settled -- not, like a territorial conflict, by territorial repossession, but rather by re-defining and amending existing feudal relationships to suit the victors. Whenever there was a choice between money or the control of territory, all parties without exception chose cash[203]. Adolf of Berg did not hesitate to exchange his claim over a sizeable and important territory against monetary compensation. Reinald of Guelder likewise was willing to forgo his claim in favour of Count Heinrich of Luxembourg for payment and the hope of winning a war with his neighbour. Also Jan of Brabant was evidently interested in Limburg not for its farms and forests as a justification for the exercise of his long claimed jurisdiction as Duke of Lotharingia. The right this title gave him to control the important trade routes along the Rhine, reassuring the towns of Brabant which he really depended on financially, superseded any need for actual territorial posession. The settlements after Worringen

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[203] See Chapter 4.

consisted in almost all instances of monetary compensation, against which jurisdiction over specific locations, usually fortified villages, was only taken as collateral, to be returned upon payment.

Conflicts such as the one over Limburg arose out of ill-defined and contradictory feudal relationships, and ended up being settled by amending these to suit the winning side. Far from arguing like Erkensor Arnold that in this period feudal domains of ambitious lords were already evolving into small territorial states, it seems instead that the German nobility, deprived of active leadership on the imperial level and themselves unaware of the potentialities of "international" politics and unaccustomed to sovereign rule in their domains, for some time continued to operate within the remains of a feudal infrastructure that still suited many of them. Such a view of the political realities of the Empire in the late thirteenth century would better correspond to the causes and outcome of the battle of Worringen illustrated here. Thus Worringen would be symbolic of a transitional stage between feudal and territorial rule, during a period in which the old imperial system was becoming obsolete but had not yet been replaced by a new one.

History as a promotional tool

While in the twentieth century historical awareness of the battle was established, if only on a small scale, public awareness of the event remained more limited. The battle of Worringen was not forgotten but remained largely obscure even close to where it occurred. Even in the vicinity of Cologne most of its details and circumstances would never have seen the light of day if not for the promotional usefulness offered by its anniversary years. The military contest was celebrated in 1938 during the nationalist fervour of Nazi Germany. Just recently Europeans' interest in things medieval once again reached a peak following the enormous success of such novels as The Name of The Rose by Umberto Eco. In this environment, the 1988 anniversary of the battle was the perfect vehicle to market the image of the modern City of Cologne by associating it with the historic mythology of a fight for freedom that a much different Cologne had waged seven hundred years ago. This anniversary was also the occasion for a number of books and articles on this historic event. Much of the literature, however, once again relied heavily on Jan van Heelu's chronicle and the relatively few historical works written on this subject before 1988. Consequently the traditional interpretations of where exactly the battle was fought, how it was conducted, and

who lost or profited from it were preserved more often than they were challenged. Collections of articles on this subject contained within Der Tag bei Worringen 5 Juni 1288 (Düsseldorf 1988) and Der Name der Freiheit (Köln 1988) present much fact and detail, but in general go remarkably easy on Jan van Heelu's credibility or the traditional interpretations first established by the early patriotic histories.

The impression persists that this battle represents a pivotal point in the achievement of civic freedom for the City of Cologne, even though the evidence suggests that this one violent victory gained the City little that it did not already possess. Evidently Cologne's patricians had achieved effective autonomy long before the battle of Worringen. Most of the city's population, however, remained as politically underprivileged after the battle as it had been before, and in addition suffered some dire consequences often underestimated. Although the urban middle class may have been in support of the patricians because of hatred against the person of the Archbishop, of which evidence was given before the papal inquiry of 1290, they did not receive many of the supposed benefits of "freedom". The eventual violent overthrow of the patricians in 1396 at the hands of the guilds may serve to demonstrate that fact. A portion of Cologne's

inhabitants may have been moved to vent their frustrations on the battlefield, but it is highly questionable if they received any long term profit out of it.

It does seem somewhat out of place, therefore, even to contrast the modern democratic freedom of a city with the somewhat ambiguous aims of people who participated in a bloody battle 700 years earlier. For all we know, freedom as we may understand it was not something at stake at Worringen. Perhaps it is the melodramatic nature of the battle and the victory of good over evil that represents an appeal which easily overshadows the realities of its causes and consequences. Although the more recent literature is more realistic and pragmatic in its treatment of the subject, it exhibits little desire to challenge a popular myth created over centuries -- to put a different face on the story of Worringen, even though evidence is quite available to do so. Even the sometimes over-romanticised reputation of the mounted medieval knight still has been protected from the somewhat distasteful suggestion of a massacre at the hands of armed peasants[204].

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[204] A reconstruction of the battle-formations at Worringen through the use of traditional tin figures, on the occasion of the 1988 Cologne exhibition, focused primarily on the initial clash of mounted knights "in order to communicate the impression of a cavalry charge" and "so that one may be able to distinguish and identify

The story of the battle at Worringen, interesting as it is for its own sake, points out some of the difficulties inherent in trying to discover and preserve historical fact. On several occasions, as in Belgium in 1836 and in Cologne in 1938 and 1988, knowledge about an otherwise obscure medieval event suddenly became of interest in the service of patriotism. (It should be no surprise that Belgium, as the successor to Brabant, and Cologne were the only modern political entities that could claim any even remote relation to the combatants at Worringen.) Several individuals' political interests (not just Jan van Heelu's) in relating the story contributed to the result. Using one-sided interpretations of past events to justify current undertakings and opinions is not something that happened exclusively in medieval times. There is a way in which half-truths if repeated often enough develop a momentum of authenticity over time. Fortunately some of the conscious and unconscious editing jobs are still discernible. It seems inevitable that notable events such as the battle of Worringen are the points of interest to which our understanding of history as a whole is often attached. Particularly in the case of medieval history, the commercially appealing pageantry of

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the more prominent [of course noble] participants".

chivalrous knights and virtous ladies seems to persist in obscuring the unpleasant realities of the age. Interest in the past merely for the present's sake and the worship of heroes and great battles has led to the neglect of some important facts, and one might still be justified in considering the resulting history to be just another kind of mythology.

LIST OF REFERENCES, APPENDICES, MAPS, GENEALOGICAL TABLE

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Appendix 1

THE LOCATION OF THE BATTLE OF WORRINGEN

The chronicle of Jan van Heelu offers few clues to the precise location of the battle of Worringen, nevertheless these clues have served to specify the movements and combat of soldiers long since dead. After consideration of local tradition and geological and geographical features, I have come to the conclusion that the maps so far published indicating the location of the battle of Worringen are based on faulty interpretation of the available evidence.

The first map of the battle of Worringen seems to have been produced together with the first "popular" treatment of Jan van Heelu's chronicle in Karel F. Stallaert's Geschiedenis van Hertog Jan den Ersten van Brabant en zijn tijdvak (1853). According to this map the battle occurred directly west of the Rhine between Cologne and Worringen in a field framed by two roads: the Cologne-Neuss road and a path designated as the old Roman street (see Map 3). Since this first appearance of this geographical placement of the battle it has only been

challenged once, by Georg von Hirschfeldt[205]. He apparently argued that in 1288 the Rhine flowed through a geographical feature known today as the "Worringer Bruch", a former meander west of the Rhine's present course. His opinion was apparently dismissed on the basis that this would not correspond to the information given in Jan van Heelu's chronicle[206]. Consequently the map of the battle at Worringen has remained as it was drawn in 1853.

When I came to be interested in the battle of Worringen I remembered it having been described to me as having taken place on a certain field across some railroad tracks. This field, referred to by the locals as the "Blut Acker" (Blood Field), was the subject of some superstitions by local farmers; they were reluctant to plough it very deep, as would otherwise be customary in this area. It seems that on occasion certain things had been dragged up by their implements which were in some way identifiable with the bloody events of a defeat of the Archbishop of Cologne by the Count of Berg.

This Blood Field, however, did not seem to correspond at all with what I later discovered to be the

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[205] Von Hirschfeldt, G.: "Geschichte und Topography des Rheins", in Picks Monatschrift, vol. 7, pp. 401 ff., cited in Knipping, Regesten, vol. 3, p. 171. No copy of this article has been available to the writer.

[206] Knipping, Die Regesten, vol. 3, p. 171.

officially accepted site of the battle of June 1288. The battle site on the Blood Field might fit with Heelu's description, however, if one assumed a different course for the river. It would appear that Hirschfeldt's argument regarding the historic course of the Rhine can be reconciled with both Heelu's chronicle and with geological evidence. According to a present day geological map, the Worringen meander indeed belonged to the floodplain of the Rhine, and proves to be a more obvious feature than can usually be observed on most other maps[207]. According to its soil composition and elevation it was still subject to frequent flooding as little as half a century ago, as were many old stream-beds of the Rhine plain. Dikes along this section of the Rhine were only built within the last two hundred years, and provide further evidence that this was an active river bed not too long ago.

The strategic advantage of a castle at Worringen becomes much more apparent if one visualizes the old course of the Rhine. A piece of evidence to that effect is provided by one of the settlements made following the battle of Worringen. In it the Archbishop of Cologne was forced to promise never to erect fortifications along any

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[207] Bodenkarte von Nordrhein-Westfalen 1:50000, L4906 Neuss, Paas, W., ed., publ. by Geologischen Landesamt Nordrhein-Westfalen (Düsseldorf, 1972)

part of the river's bank between certain villages below Cologne[208]. These, one has to presume, would help to identify the course of the river at the time. One of the specifically mentioned places is a small farm called "Bergerhof". The Bergerhof last appeared as a place-name on a map of 1820[209], and identifies a location some considerable distance from the modern Rhine but directly adjacent to the old meander. The old document could only be correct in identifying the Bergerhof as next to the river if indeed in 1288 the present day "Bruch" had been an active section of the Rhine's streambed (Map 4). Considering the disappearance of the Bergerhof name from modern maps it is not surprising that this little piece of evidence may have been missed.

Assuming that the Rhine flowed through the "Worringer Bruch" would significantly alter the conventional picture of where and how the battle of Worringen took place. The space between the two roads, identified as the battlefield in 1858, would in 1288 most likely have been covered by water. Consequently a

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[208] Lacomblet, Urkundenbuch, vol. 2, no. 865.

[209] Landesvermessungsamt Nordrhein-Westfalen, "Kartenaufnahme der Rheinlande durch Tranchot und von Müffling 1803-1820" in Publikationen der Gesellschaft für Rheinische Geschichtskunde XII 2. Abteilung - neue Folge, (Nordrhein-Westfalen, 1968), Section 61, Hackenbroich.

reinterpretation of the information given in Jan van Heelu's chronicle seems in order.

It would appear that Duke Jan I of Brabant accompanied by the count of Mark, the Provost of Jülich, and the remainder of his army proceeded south from their siege of the castle of Worringen to cross the Pletsch, a brook flowing into the Rhine, and joined their allies from Cologne and Berg already in position on the other side of the Pletsch, with their backs towards the Rhine[210]. The Duke proceeded as far as a slight rise in the land on which to wait for his enemy to attack. There is only one geographical feature in the area which could be described as higher ground; it is located just south of the old river course and north of the present day "Blut Acker". Here the Duke's forces awaited their enemy, the Archbishop, whose troops had arrived from Brauweiler in the south and taken up a position northeast of the small village of Esch in three separate divisions. The combatants were now separated by the dry bed of a still older side-arm of the Rhine running northeast to the river.

The Archbishop and the right wing of his army began

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[210] "Doen dede die hertoge met staden
Sijn heer op breken, ende laden,
Ende deedse over dwater varen
Op tfelt, daer gelogeert waren
Die vanden Berge, ende die Coelneren...."
Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 4437-4441.

the battle by moving across the stream bed in order to attack the Count of Berg and the people of Cologne[211]. Meanwhile the Duke of Brabant had also advanced his battle line to meet the charging enemy, crossing the old stream bed further to the southwest[212]. Having driven the Count of Berg from the field, the Archbishop moved southwest to attack the Duke's forces, which were pushed into slow retreat back across the ditch.

In the afternoon, when the army of Brabant and its allies were fighting for survival, the Count of Berg returned across the Rhine, moving westwards, bringing with him not only the remaining people of Cologne but also his well armed peasant militia. They had either been ferried across the river by merchant barges or possibly crossed the then shallow current on foot. These peasants fell on the Archbishop from the rear and effected his immediate surrender to the Count of Berg, who hurried him off the field of battle. These irregular troops were then positioned at or near the dry stream bed, where they would have an advantage over mounted knights, and proceeded to butcher large numbers of them, including, in ignorance, some of

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[211] See Map 5.

[212] "<< Dat en wille God nemmermeer geven,
Dat wi, om om sterven noch om leven
Houden voor grachte, oft for straten....>>"
Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 4857-4859.

their own allies[213]. It is quite reasonable to presume that the geographical feature, popularly referred to over the generations as the "Blut Acker", received its name as a direct consequence of local memories of this uncommonly bloody episode in a medieval battle.

It may also be noted that among the castles destroyed after the battle was that of Zons. The strategic importance of this castle, like that of Worringen, can only be accounted for by its being on the river bank, showing that the Rhine in 1288 must have flowed through a different channel on this entire portion of the river. Zons at the present day, however, is surrounded by fields and lies about a kilometre west of the Rhine.

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[213] "Die geburen, die daer bleven,
Na, ten stride, die gingen staen
Op ene grachte ter neder slaen
Vriende ende viande, sonder waren...."
Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 6302-6305.

Appendix 2

THE CAPTURE OF ARCHBISHOP SIEGFRIED

"Die biscop ende die sine waren
Quam die grave ende die Coelneren,
Ende ghemenlike al die heeren,
Diere te voren was gewach
Doen die bisscop dat sach
Dat die vanden Berge quamen
Riep hi ontfermelike met namen
<< Her Godevaert van Brabant,
Edel riddere! ic ga in hant.
Voert my gevaen met u te lande
Ende hout my voor mine viande;
Want, waer datsi mi over voeren
dese duvelike ghebueren
Vanden Berge, ic bleve verslagen.>>
Doen her Godevaert hoorde clagen,
Ontfinc hine te ghenaden,
Ende en lieten vanden live niet scaden.
Maer, daer op die plaetse, lagen
Doot gesteken ende geslagen
Soe vele bede, ende peerde,

Tussen heren Godeverde
Van Brabant ende den bisscop,
Al gaf hi hen gevaen op,
Dat her Godevaert niet en mochte comen
So verre, datti hadde genomen
Den bisscop metten breidele doe
Hier en binnen soe quamen toe
Die vanden Berge op die stat,
Ende vonden den bisscop mat
Soe dat hi was in hant gegaen
Daer bi en wouden sine niet slaen
Maer vanden Berge die grave bat
Heeren Godevaerde van Brabant dat,
Beide hi ende sine neven
Van Simpoel si hem wouden geven
Den eerstbisscop ghevaen;
Want hi woudene, sonder waen,
Int ghevancnesse houden stille
Tot dat, no des hertogen wille
Die bisscop quame te genaden
Van alle sine mesdaden.
Heeren Godevaerde dochte
dat hi den bisscop niet en mochte
(die wile dat soude die strijt dueren,)
daer houden, noch henen vueren;

Want hine woude van daer niet riden
Noch stille houden, sonder striden
Daer bi gehoorde hi die bede
Die grave adolf dede,
Ende sprac:<< Van den Berge, heere!
op u ridderlike eere,
Ende op trouwe, die onderlingen
Goede ridders altoes volbringen,
Soe willen wi u den bisscop laten,
Bider vorwaeren dat hi sachten
Jeghen u niet en sal mogen,
En si bi wille des hertogen
Mijns broeders ende mijns heren
Ende oec alle diere Coelneren
Ende daer toe alle die heren mede
die met hem swoeren lantvrede.
Op dese vorwaerde gheven wine u:
Nemet, ende voertene thant met u.
Ende laet u volc hier ten striede.>>
Die grave vanden Berge was blide,
Dat hi met soc grooten pande
Weder keeren soude te lande.
Ende greep den bisscop ane, ter vaert
Doen hi hem ghelevert waert,
Ende deden thant over Rijn

Te Monben, doer dat lant was sijn

Met hem die kerke vueren."

Heelu, Rymkronyk, lines 6058-6129.

Appendix 3

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE VERNACULAR CHRONICLES

Note 85 (Lines 1175-1179)

"Because he and all his ancestors held in [illegible]n the office of Vogt, as a fief of the [Holy] Roman Empire. Therefore he let no one do damage to the City of Aachen...."

Note 103 (Lines 626-635)

"Because Jan conducted his affairs honourably in all matters, he won shortly thereafter as his wife the daughter of the rich King Louis of France, the great lord. Thereby he came to higher honour, since by far the highest man that one can find in the world gave him his daughter to be his wife."

Note 104 (Lines 1116-1119 and 2396-2408)

"... his nephew the count Robert, the mighty son of Artois, who with many Frenchmen, rode with him [Jan] to the meeting...."

"And there came many rich counts, and many high barons of Marche and Soissons, Saint-Pol, Vendôme, Chatillon, Craon, Nouille, Montmorency and many other high men that I cannot all name; Picards and Frenchmen,

Hainaulters and Champenois, Burgundians and Poitevins, Flemings and Artesians...."

Note 120 (Lines 4099-4103)

"Into the game preserve at Brühl, in which the Archbishop's wild beasts are looked after and kept, the Duke wished to enter, to feast and to hunt with bloodhounds and greyhounds...."

Note 123 (Lines 1200-1201)

"Because from the house of Limburg, the counts of Luxembourg are born...."

Note 124 (Lines 4270-4273)

"And in front of the church at Brauweiler he sang mass for his men, and afterwards he preached them a sermon of good comfort and advice...."

"With that he gave them his pardon and absolved them all from their sins, so fully that if any of them should be there killed he would be taken to Abraham's bosom."

Note 130 (Lines 4906-4912)

"When the Brabanders observed that their [the enemy's] three companies were breaking up, the Bastard of Wesemale cried out in a high voice: 'Gentlemen, now I see

that they do not understand warfare; if we attack them now they will be defeated!'"

Note 132 (Lines 5225-5234)

"With a mighty charge they pushed the Brabanders backward: but that was no surprise. In the enemy forces (even without those who fought on foot and those who had already ridden themselves tired, whom one does not count) were 1100 more men-at-arms than in all three companies on the Duke's side."

Note 133 (Lines 6241-6255)

"But I shall now first tell how, with their spiked clubs, the bold farmers of Berg came up and advanced to attack, who in the tongue of Brabant we rightly call villagers. They all came ready for the fight according to the custom which exists there. Many of them had quilted vests and helmets and some even carried armour. They did not want to bother with sharp-edged swords but rather carried clubs spiked with large horse-shoe nails."

Note 138 (Lines 6302-6306)

"Those farmers, who had stayed there to fight, stood above a ditch and clubbed both friend and enemy without mercy, as they could not tell the difference."

Note 140 (Lines 6600-6606)

"Then the count remained in great distress; then he saw the banners fall again, and did not know how he should proceed. He would have liked to surrender, but he had no thought of fleeing whatever might happen."

Note 142 (7185-7191 and 7289-7294)

"Those of Witham and their men, Lord Mulrepas and his family, of which I have talked before, I will now tell about again. They were the enemies that the Scavedriesche wished to take vengeance on...."

"... And they went back and forth trying to find someone to whom they could surrender, so that they might save their lives. Then everyone hunted the Scavedriesche and slew them wherever they could. With that the fight was at an end."

Note 142 (Lines 7003-7014)

"When the farmers saw that the lords were in the habit of capturing their enemies and exchanging them for ransom, they too wanted to profit and began to do the same. So they stopped the killing and bravely went to capture those who sought their mercy, but those who continued to fight they killed at once. Then one saw

sorrowfully the most virtuous men of all Christendom surrender, through necessity, to poor farmers."

Note 143 (Lines 7314-7318)

"...There lay dead eleven-hundred men that were counted, and more than that, as one knows for certain, quite apart from those who died later...."

Note 144 (Lines 7325-7341)

"The damage and distress was great, for not many farmers or footsoldiers had died, but most that were found were of noble family and of the knighthood; the best of all the German land, as one could see by the way they fought. And there remained of both sides dead on the field and in the mêlée more than 4000 horses, which were killed under their riders, apart from those that came out maimed and wounded. The fight lasted from nine in the morning until late in the time of vespers. No one has ever heard of any fight in any country which lasted for so long."

Note 170 (Lines 4135-4137)

"Therefore they said: 'Lord Duke! We have to complain much about Worringen, because it is a nest of robbers....'"

Note 173

"The lord of Berg insisted that his uncle in his time had promised the lord of Luxembourg he would not fight with him. That was also his will and he held back with his army until the power of the lord of Brabant grew weaker. He soon sent to him a messanger asking him for help, otherwise he thought if he withheld his help the victory would be with the lord of Luxembourg. He sent a message back that it was a great shame that his forces had tired so early and he [the count of Berg] would have to come faster. He knew well that he should come to help him and he would do so. Now he made his men get ready and let the banner be blessed; the lord of Brabant in his distress requested of him first of all that in his loyalty and manliness he would ride onto the field; and he helped the hero of Brabant."

Note 175 (Lines 8704-8707)

"Each one of Brabant who was there may pride himself on being a hero or a giant in strength, at least on that day...."

Note 177 (Lines 58-60)

"But this story was formerly falsely recounted (both in German and French) by many people."

Note 178 (Lines 8898-8901)

"Hereby I have made clear and described truthfully what was done before Worringen on that day...."

Note 188 (Lines 50-65)

"For God is my witness, that I have set forth no more or less, to no one's gain and no one's loss, then the happenings that have occurred. For I should have not unwillingly given over writing such a poem; but this story was formerly falsely recounted (both in German and French) by many people, who missed the truth because they did not know the history. This caused great distress to my soul, for these are among the finest deeds of knighthood that one may find."

Note 210 (Lines 4437-4441)

"Then the Duke had his army break camp and pack up in good order, and had them cross the brook onto the field where those of Berg and Cologne were camped...."

Note 212 (Lines 4857-4859)

"' May God prevent that we for life or death will be stopped by roads or ditches....'"

Note 213 (Lines 6302-6305)

(See note 135.)

Appendix 2 (Lines 6058-6129)

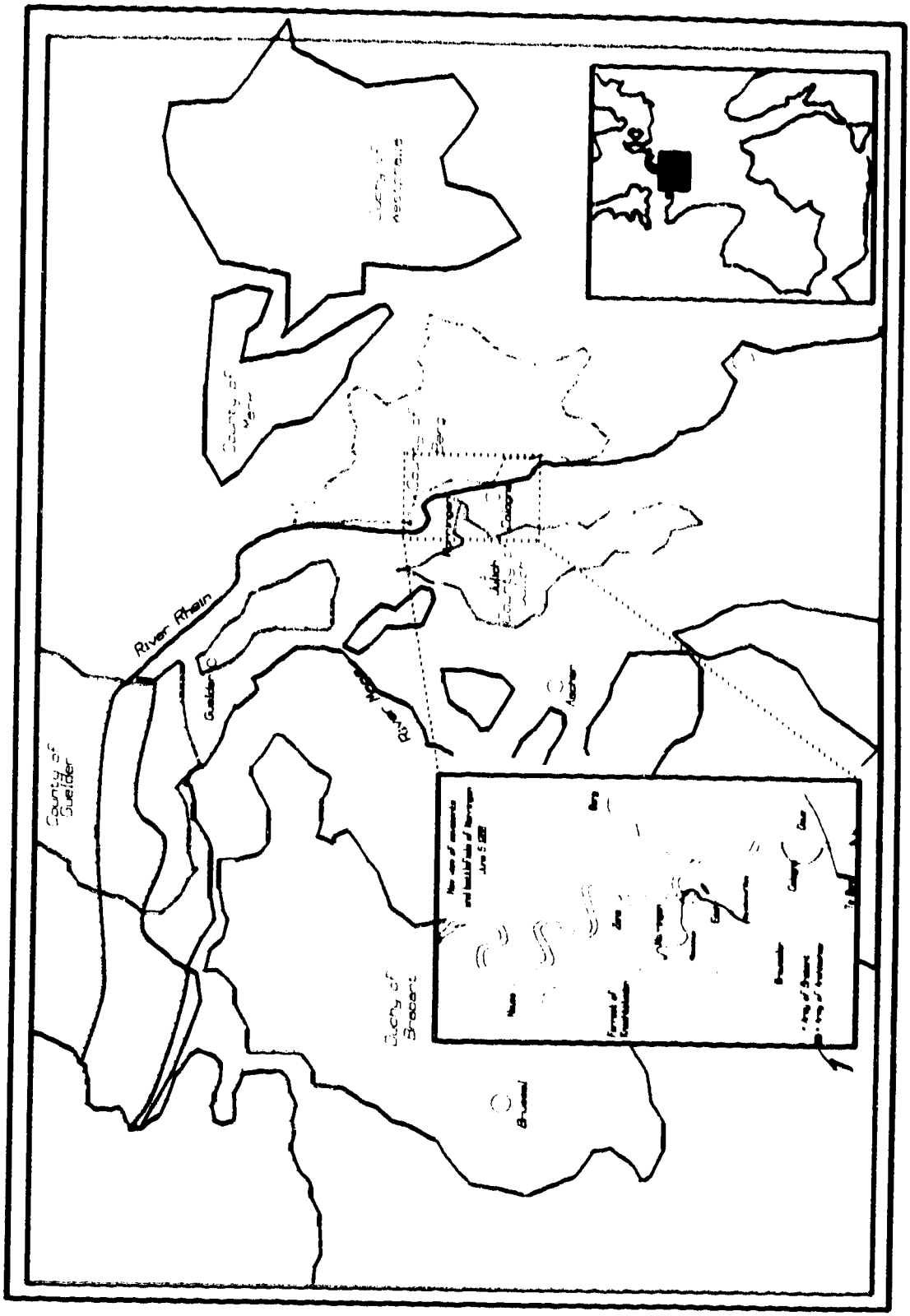
"The Count [of Berg] and the people of Cologne came up, together with all those knights that he had previously avoided. When the Bishop saw that the men of Berg were coming, he piteously cried out: 'Lord Godefrid of Brabant, noble knight! I will surrender. Take me as prisoner with you to your country and preserve me from my enemies; for if I am attacked by these devilish farmers of Berg, I shall be slain.' When Lord Godefrid heard him lament he began to pity him and would not allow his life to be taken. On that place, however, lay struck dead and slain so many bodies and horses between Lord Godefrid of Brabant and the Bishop, that though he yielded himself a prisoner, Lord Godefried could not reach him to take the Bishop's horse by the bridle. Meanwhile those of Berg arrived on the spot and found the Bishop so weak that he had surrendered. Therefore they were unwilling to slay him. But the Count of Berg asked Lord Godefrid of

Brabant if he would give the Archbishop as prisoner jointly to him and his nephew of St. Pol; because he would without fail hold him fast in prison until by the Duke's will the Bishop obtained pardon for all his misdeeds.

"Lord Godefrid thought that he would not be able to hold the Bishop or take him away from the field as long as the fight was continuing, because he [Godefrid] wished neither to ride away nor to stand still, but to fight. He therefore assented to the request of Count Adolf and said: 'Lord of Berg! On your knightly honour and the trust that good knights share with each other we will yield to you the Bishop. You may keep him on condition that he shall not be allowed to come to terms with you, unless with the consent of the Duke, my brother and lord, and also of all from Cologne, and as well all those lords who have sworn the Land's Peace with him. Under these conditions we give him to you. Take him and lead him away with you, and leave your people here to fight.' The Count of Berg was happy that he would return to his domain with such great a prize. And as the Bishop was delivered to him, he took him and led him away and brought him across the Rhine to Monben, for that was in his domain, to put him in prison."

Map 1

THE LOWER RHINELAND AND THE AREA AROUND COLOGNE


River Rhein
County of Gelder
County of Brabant

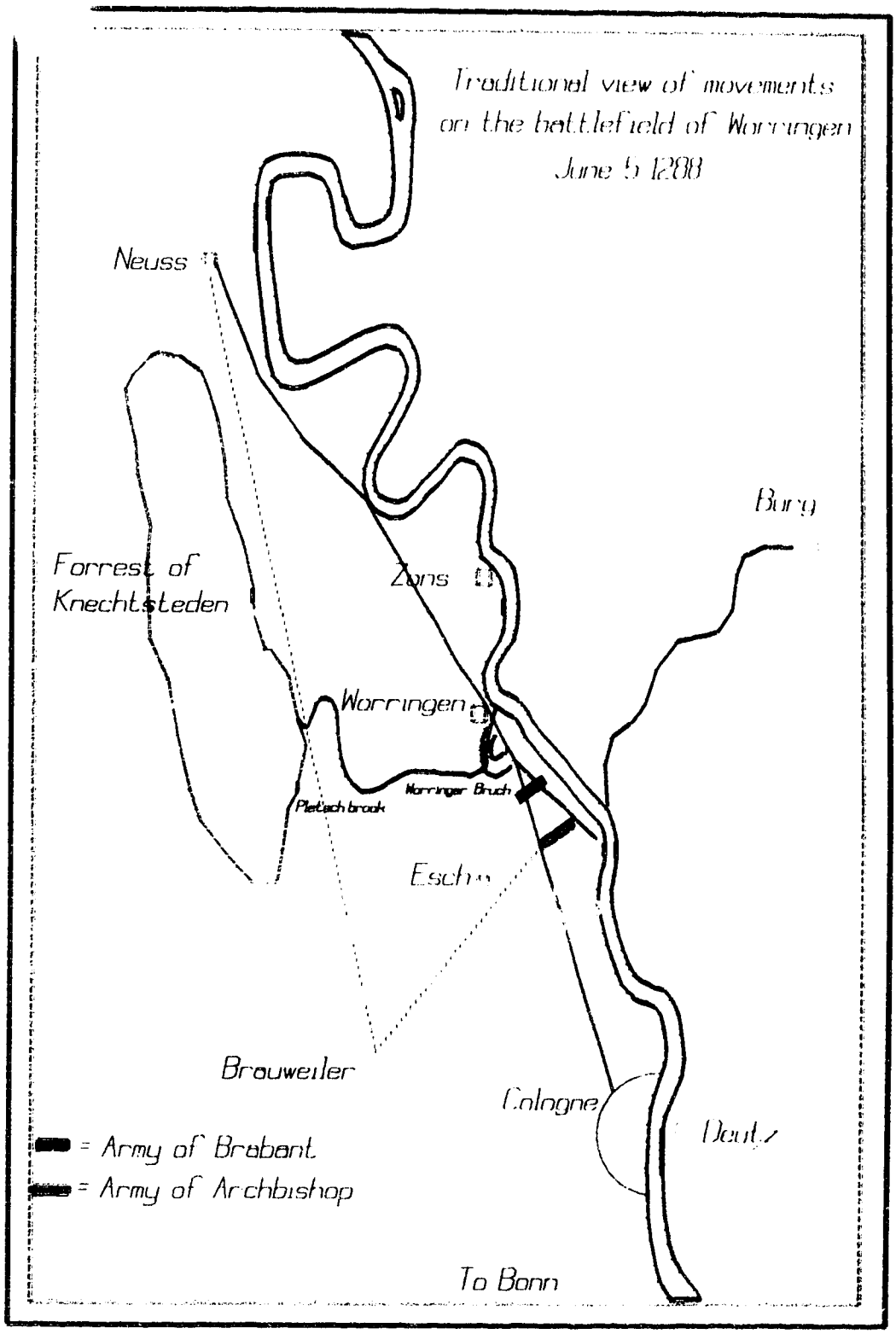
Map 2

THE FEUDAL DOMAINS OF LOWER LOTHARINGIA

River Rhein
Aachen
Brussel
Liege

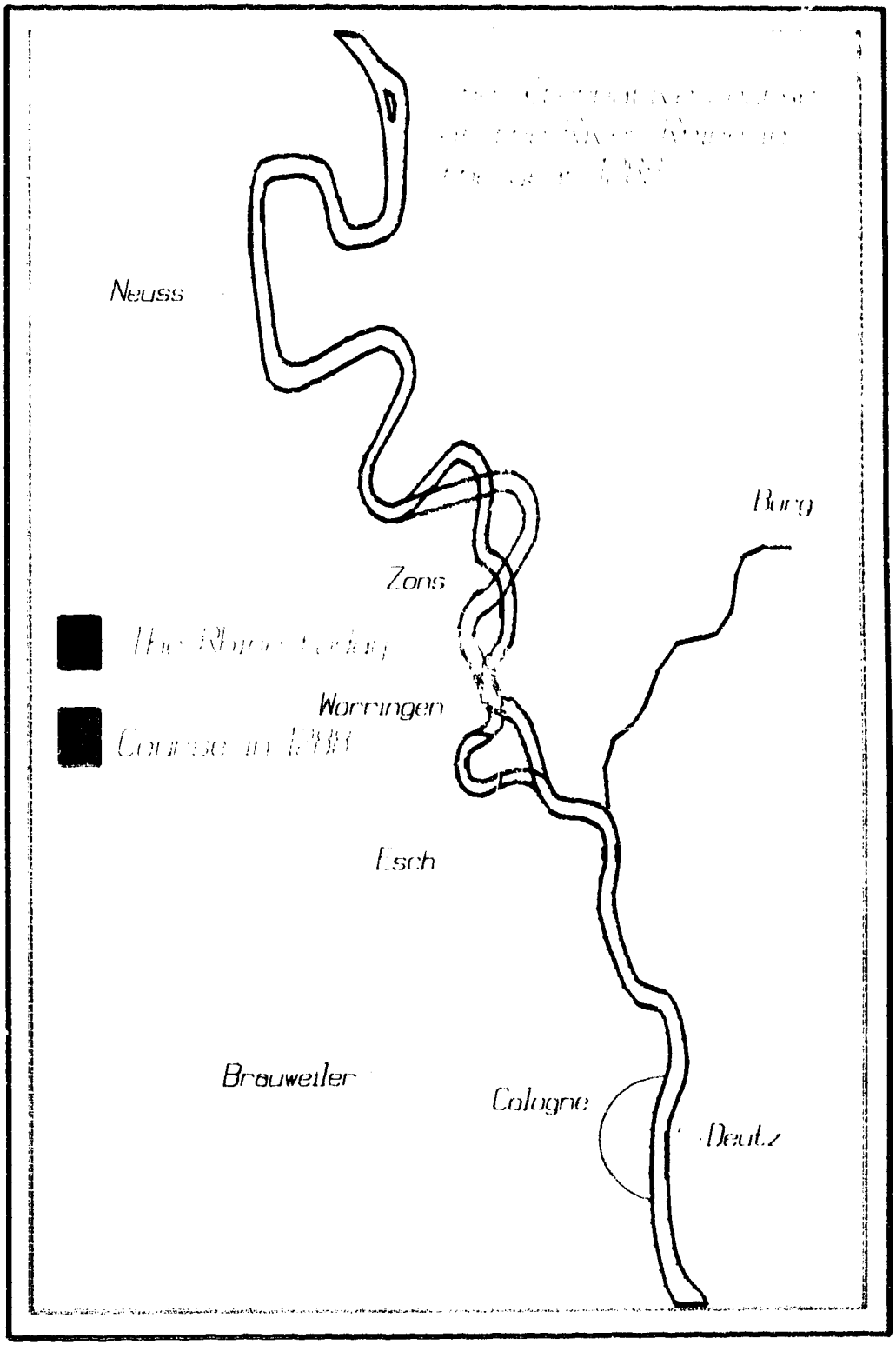
Map 3

TRADITONAL VIEW OF MOVEMENTS ON THE BATTLEFIELD OF WORRINGEN


Traditional view of movements
on the battlefield of Worringen
June 5 1288
Neuss
Bury
Forrest of
Knechtsteden
Zons
Worringen
Worringer Bruch
Pletschbroek
Esch
Brauweiler
Cologne
Deutz
= Army of Brabant
= Army of Archbishop
To Bonn

Map 4

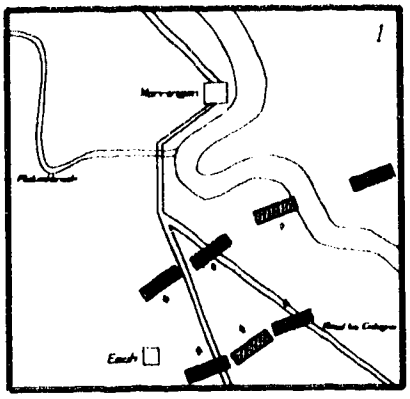
THE PRESUMED COURSE OF THE RIVER RHINE IN 1288


Neuss
Burg
Zons
Worringen
Esch
Brauweiler
Cologne
Deutz

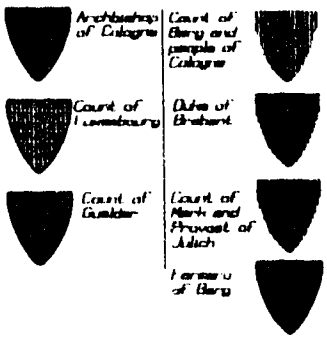
Map 5

THE BATTLE OF WORRINGEN, 1288: A REVISED VERSION

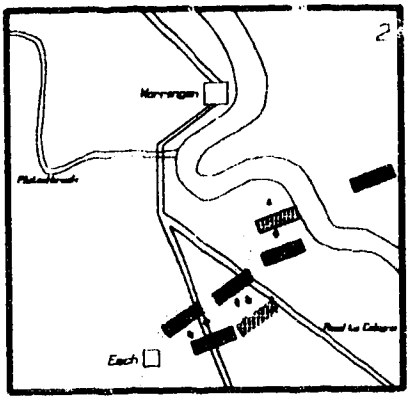
The Battle of Worringen, 1288: a revised version.



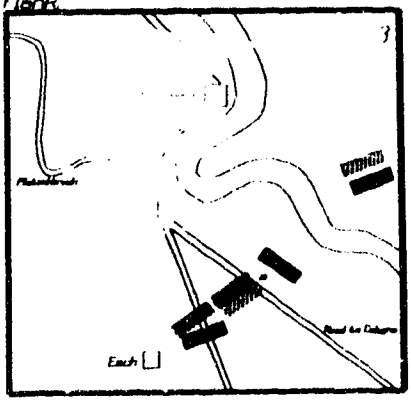
1) The Order of Battle



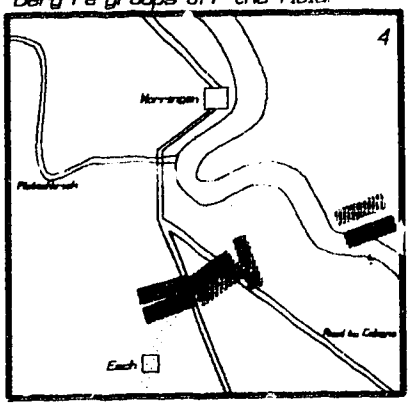
2) The opening Attack: Berg retreats.



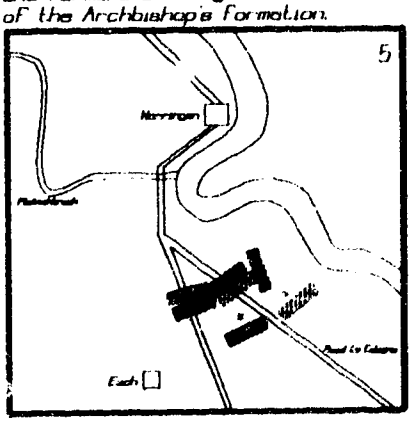
3) The Archbishop senses the opportunity and attacks Brabant's flank.



4) Brabant and its allies are pushed back across the dry river-bed. Berg re-groups off the field.

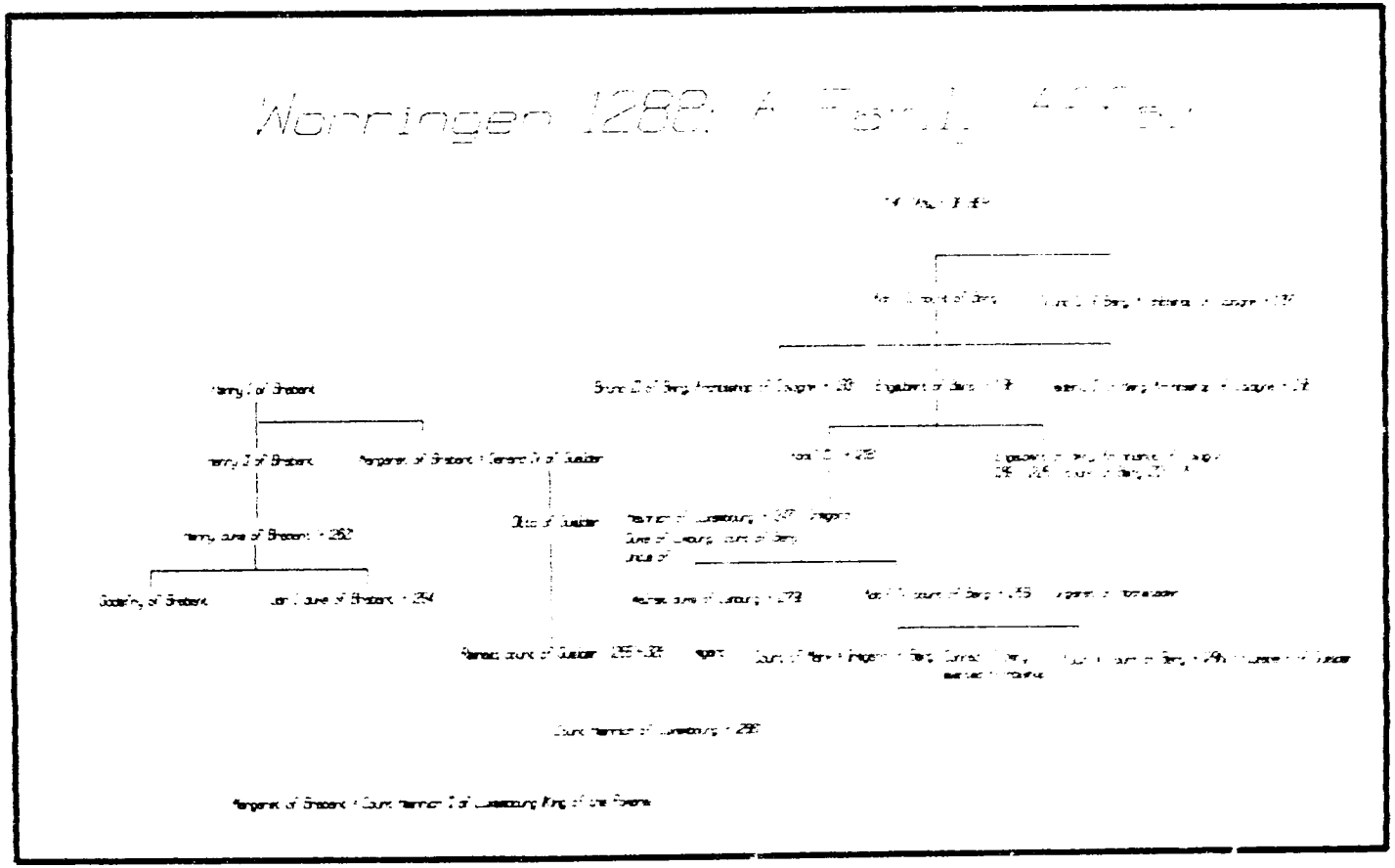


5) The Count of Berg, people of Cologne and farmers of Berg attack the rear of the Archbishop's formation.



Genealogical Table

WORRINGEN 1288: A FAMILY AFFAIR



END

18-08-93

FIN