Despite leading an active and productive life, rubbing shoulders with some of the foremost humanists, public figures, and poets of the sixteenth century, the Flemish scholar and poet Charles Utenhove has been relatively neglected by critics.¹ Born in Ghent on 18 March 1536, he was brought up in a humanist family which had embraced Protestantism. His father, also called Charles, had travelled extensively as part of his education, meeting Erasmus in Basel towards the end of 1528, and subsequently studying under Bembo in Padua. Although he became an alderman of his native city of Ghent, he felt the need to leave for Paris in 1556, to avoid the close interest of the Inquisition, and after a brief return in 1557, he went into exile in Germany.²

His son was taught in Ghent by Jean Othon, a native of Bruges who also fled his homeland for Germany on religious grounds in 1557, but around 1555–1556, Charles himself followed his father’s footsteps to Basel, where he was taught by Thomas Platter and Sebastian Castellion. However, he, along with his two elder brothers, joined their father in Paris probably in the course of 1556, and Charles was soon introduced to the Morel household where, some time early in 1557, he became tutor to the four children of Jean de Morel and Antoinette de Loynes.³ The Morel house in the rue Pavée was the centre of a flourishing literary circle, which brought together some of the most progressive writers of the time: Jean Salmon Macrin, Nicolas Bourbon, George Buchanan, Jean Dorat amongst the neo-Latinists, Joachim Du


Bellay, Pierre de Ronsard, and Jean-Antoine de Baïf amongst the vernacular writers. Charles quickly settled into this stimulating environment, and appears to have been popular as a teacher with his young pupils, Isaac, Camille, Lucrèce, and Diane. They would already have learnt the rudiments of Latin from their well educated mother, but Utenhovius also taught them Greek and some Hebrew, a language he himself mastered well.

In what follows, however, I should like to concentrate on Utenhovius’s experiences as a Protestant in Paris between 1556 and 1562, and his sojourn in London from 1562 to 1565, as reflected in his correspondence. Although this has not been published in extenso, both Janssen and Will include elements of it in their studies, and I have myself consulted the manuscript letters in Munich and Paris. The letters I shall be considering are in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Lat. 10383, and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. lat. 8589. Unsurprisingly, it is not clear from the correspondence whether the Morel family was aware of Utenhovius’s religious allegiances, though it would have been odd if they were ignorant of them, and there is no doubt that some of those who frequented the Morels, notably Nicolas Bourbon and George Buchanan, got into trouble with the authorities at various times for their religious views. Nevertheless, in the Paris of the 1550s, under the reign of Henri II, the young Utenhovius would have needed to be discreet.

It appears, however, that he was not, at least in some aspect of his association with the family, since at some point in 1561 he was dismissed from their service. In an undated letter (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Lat. 10383, f. 180), he writes to Jean de Morel to ask that

\[ \ldots \] quod hodie mihi non obscure innuere uisus es, de alio tuorum παιδαγωγῷ et doctiore, et meliore, et ad hanc functionem magis idoneo investigando cogitasti, ὅτι ἐγὼ μετὰ Σωκράτους νέους διαφθείρων ἀδικῶ,


5 Bourbon was arrested and imprisoned in Paris in 1534, and Buchanan was put on trial by the Portuguese Inquisition in 1550 and released in 1552. On Bourbon, see Nicolas Bourbon, Nugae (Bagatelles) 1533, édition critique, introduction et traduction par S. Laigneau–Fontaine (Geneva 2008); on Buchanan, see I.D. McFarlane, Buchanan (London 1981).