

## Study Guide for *Utopia*, 1 May 2023

All page numbers refer to the CTMS 2023 edition of *Utopia* available free at <https://thomasmorestudies.org/teaching/> and in paperback through [Amazon](#).

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**Note of caution:** *Utopia* is the kind of book Augustine describes as written “with a useful and healthful obscurity for the purpose of exercising and sharpening, as it were, the minds of the readers and of destroying haughty complacency and stimulating the desire to learn” (*On Christian Doctrine* 4.8.22).

In your adventurous exploration of *Utopia*, be prepared for the unexpected on this journey, and enjoy this masterpiece of Socratic wit!

For the Latin version of *Utopia*, and a commentary, see <https://thomasmorestudies.org/teaching/>.

## Introduction to *Utopia* – and Questions to Consider

*Utopia* records “the conversation of Raphael Hythloday on the laws and institutions [*legibus et institutis*] of Utopia” as reported by “citizen and undersheriff”<sup>1</sup> – and lawyer and city judge – Thomas Morus (102).

More published this book fifteen years after his law studies and two years before joining King Henry’s service as a counselor. In those fifteen years, More learned Greek, mastered it in three years, and then spent the next twelve in serious study of the Greek and Roman and Christian sources of jurisprudence – while also acquiring a wide-range of legal and judicial experience in London.

Despite his heavy dependence on Cicero in this work, More never uses the term “natural law.”<sup>2</sup> But he does create a utopia which has “very few laws” and no private property – and where all lawyers are outlawed! What follows are questions to consider in your investigation of More’s intriguing conversation with Plato’s and Cicero’s *Republic* and *Laws*, Aristotle’s *Politics*, and Augustine’s *City of God*. See also Cicero’s *On Duties*, *On Friendship*, and *On the Ends*.

## *Utopia*, Book 1, also known as “The Dialogue on Counsel”

### Setting and Context

England is in a time of grave economic and social upheaval. Poverty and crime are widespread; the country has recently emerged from civil war but uprisings still occur and threaten to continue.

### Main Characters in this Work; Other Lawyers & Civic Leaders

**Thomas Morus:** a London lawyer and judge who has been sent abroad as England’s official “orator”<sup>3</sup> for vital trade negotiations; the narrator and a main character of this work. In Greek, *moros* means “fool,” and More loved to pun on his name.

**Raphael Hythlodæus:** a world traveler who recounts evidence of unjust countries in contrast to the most just Utopia. Raphael means “God’s healer” in Hebrew; Hythloday means “skilled in idle talk” in Greek. Which is he? and when?

**John Cardinal Morton:** as Lord Chancellor & Archbishop of Canterbury, he is head of England’s legal systems of both church & state.

**An unnamed in-house lawyer:** antagonizes Raphael Hythloday, who accuses him of bias; Raphael also identifies bias among judges having personal or political interests at stake.

**Cuthbert Tunstal, George de Themsecke:** lawyers and leading citizen in Utopia’s opening paragraphs

**Peter Giles:** More’s friend and model civic leader who introduces Raphael to Morus

**John Clement:** More’s young secretary who silently observes (see woodcut on page 18)

**London!:** See the marginal gloss on page 51, lines 6-10.

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<sup>1</sup> As undersheriff, More was the professional legal adviser to the elected citizen-sheriff and would regularly preside over the sheriff’s court, the oldest and busiest judicial court in London with a wide range of civil and criminal jurisdiction. By the time More wrote *Utopia*, he had been undersheriff of London for five years, member of Doctors’ Common (a society for those practicing Roman or canon law), twice a lecturer of law, continuously an officer at the inns of court, selected to serve as a member of Parliament twice, and an ambassador and legal advisor on the foreign embassy in 1515 when he meets Peter Giles and begins writing *Utopia*.

<sup>2</sup> Only twice does the phrase “law of nature” occur in all of More’s writings. In his controversy with Luther, More argues for reason’s ability to guide human action; in this context he states that “the Ten Commandments put in remembrance again certain conclusions of the law of nature which their reason – overwhelmed with sensuality – had then forgotten” (*EWTM* 595.48; *CW* 6, 141/19-22). In the English version of *Richard III*, the Queen invokes man’s law, “the law of nature” (*EWTM* 114.54), and God’s law in the Sanctuary debate, but the phrase does not occur in the Latin version.

<sup>3</sup> See *Utopia* 18.11 and Cicero’s two famous treatises *De Oratore* and *Orator*.

**Terms to Understand:**

-*Princeps* or “**leading citizen**”: the term used for the leader of each Utopian city and for the major leaders mentioned in the opening paragraph of *Utopia*. This is a term Cicero invests with new meaning in his last philosophic works.

-*Humanitas*: another term invested heavily with meaning by Cicero, connoting the “fullness of humanity” which includes justice and friendly concern for those in society.

**Questions to Consider for *Utopia* 1:**

1. Who wins the argument about giving counsel to rulers: Morus the lawyer or Raphael the experienced observer? Can the learned professions really affect justice? Is the effort worth the “sacrifice of my peace,” as Raphael puts it?
2. Raphael presents the laws of the Polylerites as a model of *humanitas* (32.7). Do you agree? Why? How well do the means used in the Polylerites’ legal process bring about the stated ends of humane justice and liberty? [In book 2, Raphael will also present the Utopians as models of *humanitas* in their laws and customs: at 48.32, 59.2, 68.12, 69.3, 83.14.]
3. Raphael’s encounter with Lord Chancellor Morton takes up over one third of Book 1 (24-35). Why is this episode so important?
  - a. In the incident with Lord Chancellor Morton, the lawyer is ordered to shut up. Did he deserve this treatment? How would you compare lawyer Morton’s mode of communication with that of the lawyer who offends Raphael?
  - b. What are the “proud, absurd prejudices” Raphael recognizes in England’s legal system?
  - c. One form of bias Raphael identifies is, he says, a conflict between civil law and divine law. How do you assess the treatment of this issue?
  - d. Raphael and the in-house lawyer disagree about the punishment of thieves. What is your assessment of Raphael’s argument? How would you contrast the approach of this lawyer with the approaches of lawyers Morton and Morus?
  - e. Raphael also identifies the bias of judges who use the appearance of justice to further their own interests (37). What is your assessment of this problem?
4. Morus objects to Raphael’s uncivil mode of communication, i.e., Raphael’s speaking in a way not “citizen-like” (40.20). Morus explains his position on pages 40-41, advising that Raphael use an “indirect approach.” Raphael then strongly objects, arguing that such an approach is not appropriate for a philosopher or for a Christian. Who makes the better argument and why?
5. Considering that Thomas More ends his life losing everything and being condemned as a traitor, would you not conclude that Raphael is correct that one person of integrity is foolish to try to change an unjust legal system?
6. Morus has argued that good citizens have a duty to give advice. If so, why does he give so little advice to Raphael in Book 1? This question will gain importance when you read the puzzling and highly debated last paragraphs of Book 2: Why does Morus give Raphael *no* advice even though Morus tells his readers he has major disagreements with Raphael?

**Questions to Consider for *Utopia* 2:**

*Utopia*, Book 2: According to Raphael’s account, what is the view of law, justice, government, religion, and civic life as they have evolved over the 1,760 years of Utopia’s existence? Is this view attractive to you? Why? Would you like to live there?

**Question for *Utopia* as a whole:** What does *Utopia* help us see about human nature, law, justice, government, religion, and a complete, happy life?

## Names and Dates in *Utopia* (CTMS 2023 edition)

Utopia – “noplacē” in Greek (Eutopia would have been “happy place.”)

Raphael – “God’s healer” in Hebrew

Hythloday – “distributor or peddler of nonsense” in Greek

Morus – “fool” in Greek

*princeps* (“leading citizen”): ruler of each Utopian city

### Names of rulers before Utopus conquered

Barzanes (former name of the *princeps* or ruler in each city) – “son of Zeus” (56.10)

syphogrant – “old men of the sty” (52.26)

tranibor – “clearly gluttonous” (52.28)

### Names of rulers after Utopus conquered -- Why the changes? What do they indicate?

Ademus (present name of the *princeps* or ruler in each city, 56.11) – from *a demos* (“without people”) as Morus playfully points out on page 108.

Phylarch – “fond of ruling”; “leader of the tribe” (49.25)

Protophylarch – “most fond of ruling”; “chief leader of the tribe” (52.28)

### Names associated with Utopian religion

Abraxa – former name of island; highest of 365 spheres of gnostic universe (48.32)

Mithra – name of Persian gnostic god and of Utopia’s god (90.19, 97.2)

Buthrescae – Bythus (a gnostic god) + *ureskos* (“superstitious”) or *ureskeia* (“religious cult”) = superstitious cult of Bythus (94.28)

### Other names

Amurot – a ghost or phantom city, as Morus indicates on page 108, from “vanishing”

Anyder – a Utopian river “without water,” as Morus indicates on page 108

Anemolian [ambassadors] – “windy” (64.20, 7.27)

Nepheletans – “people born from the clouds” [allies of Utopians] (83.25)

Alaopolitans – “people without a country” [reduced to slavery by Nepheletetes] (83.26)

Zapoteles – “busy sellers” [mercenaries hired by Utopians] (86.2)

quaestor – “financial officer” (89.33)

Polyerites – “people of much nonsense (or lying)” [example used with Cardinal Morton] (30.34)

Achorians – “people without a country” [later example used by Raphael in Book 1] (36.29)

Macarians – “blessed ones,” “happy ones” (39.29)

**Title in Latin:** De Optimo Reipublicae / Statu deque / nova insula **Utopia** libellus vere aureus, / nec minus salutaris quam festivus, / clarissimi disertissimique viri Thomae Mori / inclytae civitatis Londinensis civis / & Vicecomitis.

### Dates

ca. 1497 – Raphael meets and speaks with Archbishop Morton (23.37-8, after 1497 English rebellion)

1501, 1503 – Vespucci’s 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> (and only) voyages to the New World; Raphael says he was on the last 3 of Vespucci’s 4 voyages (p. 20)

ca. 1504-1509 – Raphael then spends “more than five years” in Utopia (p. 43.36)

ca. 1504 – *Four Voyages of Amerigo Vespucci* (a forgery) published in Vienna & becomes best seller

1514 – first printing of Hesychius’s Greek dictionary, which Raphael says he took with him in 1503

1515 – More’s trip to Antwerp where he meets Giles and Raphael and then writes most of *Utopia*

1519-22 – Magellan is first to circumnavigate the globe, unless Raphael’s claim is correct

## BOOK 1 OF *UTOPIA* (CTMS 2023 edition)

### 1a. **Prefatory & Concluding Letters** by Thomas More to Peter Giles (13-16, 107-8)

*What expectations do these letters raise?*

### 1b. **Introduction:** Setting, occasion, & main characters presented (pages 18-20)

- a. Morus ["fool" in Greek] explains his presence in Antwerp (paragraphs 1 & 2).
- b. Morus meets Peter Giles; Peter is described (paragraph 3).
- c. Morus meets Raphael ["healer from God"] Hythloday [speaker of nonsense] outside Notre Dame; Raphael: Who he is (paragraphs 4ff).
- d. Giles, Raphael, and John Clement are invited to Morus's garden (page 20). Morus summarizes the long conversation with Raphael; Morus states his intention in telling the narrative that follows (pp. 20-21).

**Study questions:** *What do we learn about each of these characters?*

*What do we learn about Morus's intentions in narrating this account?*

### 2. **The Main Issue of Debate Is Posed:** Should the wise give counsel to a king? (22-23)

- a. Raphael argues no.
- b. Morus and Giles argue yes.

**Study question:** *What are the arguments on each side? With whom do you agree?*

### 3. **Raphael's First Example of the Futility of Counsel:** Cardinal and Lord Chancellor Morton (24-35)

- a. John Morton is described (24); urgency of reform; scandal & imprudence of hanging thieves.
- b. With a lawyer, Raphael discusses the cause of thievery in England (24-29).
- c. Raphael condemns enclosures; how sheep devour people (26-28)
- d. Lawyer objects but the Cardinal asks Raphael to explain his position (29). Thou shalt not kill.
- e. Raphael suggests ways of remedying theft in England (30); he explains the methods used by the Polyerites ["people of much nonsense"] (30-32) and the purpose of punishment (32).
- f. Lawyer objects; the company agrees; Cardinal expresses interest in Raphael's proposal (32-33).
- g. Raphael relates a "silly" incident between a friar and a fool (33-34); Morton's tactful responses.
- h. Raphael concludes; **Morus still disagrees** and invokes duty & Plato; Raphael objects (35).

**Study question:** *How does the example of Morton support Raphael's argument against serving?*

### 4. **Raphael's Second Example:** An imaginary court of some French king set on war (35-37)

- a. In a 464-word sentence, Raphael advises the French king to imitate the Achorians ["people without a country"] who required their king to choose & rule only one kingdom (36).

Compare similarities of two different passages here with Epigram 243 & Epigram 112.

- b. **Morus's response** to Raphael (37), four words in Latin (*Profecto non valde pronis.*)

**Study question:** *What is the main point of Raphael's argument here? Do you agree?*

### 5. **Raphael's Third Example:** An imaginary court of a king set on accumulating money (37-40)

- a. At the end of this 926-word sentence, Raphael gives the example of the Macarians ["blessed, happy" -- usually associated with the Greek Elysium]. Compare similarities with Epigrams 120, 112, 115.
- b. **Morus gives his longest reply**, distinguishing academic from political philosophy (40-41).

**Study question:** *Who seems to make the stronger argumentation here?*

### 6. **Introducing Raphael's Fourth Example:** Utopia (41-)

- a. Raphael disagrees with Morus, invoking Plato and Utopians and Christ (41).
- b. Raphael then explains why the elimination of private property is needed for justice (42-43).
- c. **Morus strongly disagrees, invoking the need for legal protection** (43).
- d. Raphael responds by wishing that More had seen Utopia (43-44).

### 7. **Morus invites Raphael to tell him all about Utopia**, after they have lunch (44-45).

**Critical reflection question:** Who wins the argument about giving counsel to rulers: Morus the lawyer or Raphael the experienced traveler?

## Marathon Sentences of *Utopia* 1 -- Context

- Raphael refuses to counsel any ruler; governments are too corrupt
- Three proofs given by Raphael: Cardinal Morton incident (1/3 of Book 1); Foreign Policy of “some French king” (**464-word sentence**); Domestic Policy of unnamed king (**926-word sentence**)
- Raphael’s true mind on major source of corruption: private property (42.13-14); Morus strongly disagrees
- Raphael: TM has a “false image or no image” of *respublica* (43.33-4). “But if you had been in Utopia”
- Morus: “Do not be brief, but explain ... everything” (44.32-33)
- Lunch; Raphael’s afternoon-long discourse – Book 2; Morus’s half-page response; Dinner

**Marathon Sentence 1** (464-words, *CTMS* 35.31-37.20): **Foreign Policy** of “some French king”

-artful chiasitic structure, beautifully balanced in a “ring construction” (vs. “careless simplicity” 13.12)

-See Gerald Malsbary, “Hythlodæus’ 464-Word ‘Marathon Sentence’: How Does It Work?,” *Moreana* nos. 195-96 (June 2014): 153-75.

-climax: the ruler should “simply **love** his people and **be loved** by them”

I. Imperialistic counsels: kings and their counselors are only greedy for money, lands (35.31-36.25)

II. Exemplary **decree** of Achorians who mistakenly agreed to war for “another kingdom” (36.31). Once this second kingdom was acquired, the king’s counselors **perceived ten bad effects** (36.33-37.4):

that they were enduring no less suffering to retain it than they had in acquiring it, but

that seeds were constantly germinating either of rebellion on the inside, or of foreign invasion from

the outside, of their newly-conquered country, so that were always fighting either against it or on its behalf;

that they never had the opportunity to dismiss their armies;

that they meanwhile were being pillaged;

that money was being exported;

that their own blood was being spilled for the petty glory of others;

that their “peace” was no more secure than before;

that moral character at home had been corrupted by the war;

that a lust for robbery had been imbibed, and recklessness encouraged by the slaughters of warfare;

that the laws were held in contempt—....

Perceiving and reflecting upon all these factors, the **Achorian counselors** concluded

that the root cause was “all because the king, distracted by having to care for two kingdoms, could not fix his mind on either” (37.4-5).

This led the counselors to decision: They

very humanely [*humanissimus*] **gave** their king **a choice**: to decide which of the two kingdoms he wanted to keep, for he could not keep both; they were too numerous a people to be governed by half a king (since nobody is happy even about having to share a mule driver with somebody else); and in this way, that good ruler [*princeps*] **was forced** to be content with his ancient kingdom and left the new one to one of his friends (who was driven out soon afterwards anyway). (37.17-18)

**Climax** of chiasitic structure: “simply **love** his people **and be loved** by them; just live with them, rule them pleasantly, and say farewell to other kingdoms” (37.17-18).

(Compare with Epigrams 19, 32, 112, **243**.)

Here, in Raphael’s own example involving a country with money and private property, wise counselors guide their king with advice so artful and effective that the result is a new and better law that restored peace and prosperity—thus disproving the very position Raphael defends, i.e., that genuine improvement is not possible unless his radical solution of eliminating all private property and most laws is enacted.

### Marathon Sentence 2, 926-words (37.22-40.8) on Domestic Policy

- another artful and highly analytic sentence; ring composition with myth in the middle
  - See Gerald Malsbary, “Hythlodæus’ Second Marathon Sentence of 926 Words and the ‘Contextual Launch’ of the Utopia,” *Moreana* nos. 216 (December 2021): 163-76.
- conclusion: following good counsels, the ruler “will be ... **loved** by the good” (40.5)

-I. Six “dishonest and destructive counsels” based on the “Crassus Principle”<sup>4</sup>: “no amount of money is enough for a ruler” (38.21)

- manipulating currency values, requesting taxes for an invented war, heavily fining citizens for allegedly violating outdated laws long in disuse, selling privileges, and manipulating carefully-selected judges to interpret laws to the king’s advantage (37.24-38.20).

II. Prudent counsels based on the “Fabricius Principle”<sup>5</sup>: ruler helps people acquire prosperity, happiness (advice that author Thomas More gives in Epigrams 19, 112, 120, 198, 243):

1. The people choose a king for their own sake and not for his – to be plain, that by his labor and effort they may live well and safe from injustice and wrong. For this very reason, it belongs to the king to take more care for the welfare of his people than for his own, just as it is the duty of a shepherd, insofar as he is a shepherd, to feed his sheep rather than himself. (38.36-39.11)

2. Although unjust rulers and their counselors think that the **poverty of the people is a safeguard of peace**, the facts they are very far wrong—for it does not befit the *dignity of a king* to exercise **authority** over beggars, but rather **over prosperous and happy people**: this was a fact that **Fabricius**, a man of upright and lofty mind, certainly knew, when he replied that he preferred to exercise authority over the wealthy, than to be wealthy.... (39.11-13).

3. A bad king is like the most inexperienced of doctors, who does not know how to cure a sickness except with sickness; thus, he ... does not know **how to rule the free**.... (39.13-19)

4. Good rulers should cultivate virtue in themselves and then work to ensure the timely “right education” of their people: “he should correct his **sloth** or his **pride**, for through these vices it usually happens that the people hold him in contempt or hate him; let him live harmlessly on what already belongs to him; let him match his expenses with his revenues; let him rein in crime and by right education of his people prevent crimes from happening rather than allowing them to increase and then punish them afterwards.... (39.19-28)

III. Macarians: people-favored (not king-favored) economics (39.28-40.5)

- king’s treasury restricted to a thousand pounds of gold

- “established by an excellent king, who cared more for the welfare of his country than for his own wealth”

- “to prevent the heaping up of so much money as to cause scarcity of it among his people”

- “so [the king] would not be looking for occasions to commit injustice”

- result: such a king “will be dreaded by the bad and **loved by the good**” (40.5)

These examples prove that leaders *are* the major source of good [or of evil] within a country even in countries with money and private property. Nonetheless, Raphael refuses to give counsel to *any*.

<sup>4</sup> See Cicero’s *De Officiis* 1.25 and 109; 3.73-5.

<sup>5</sup> See Cicero’s *De Officiis* 1.40, 3.86-7; *De Finibus* 5.64

## BOOK 2 OF *UTOPIA* (CTMS 2023 edition)

- 1. Introduction** (pp. 48-50)
  - First view, origin, general features
- 2. The Cities**, esp. Amaurot (50-52)
  - Number, size, rotate homes, gardens, Utopus's design, founding in 244 BC
- 3. The Officials** (52-53)
  - Number, way of selection, prince elected for life, how senate works
- 4. Occupations** (53-57)
  - Farming, trades, morning lectures, recreation, architecture, clothing; scholarly class
- 5. Social Interactions** and distribution of goods (57-61)
  - Household and population policies, colonization (58), source of greed and pride
  - Distribution of food, hospitals, eating arrangements
- 6. Travels of Utopians** (61-62)
  - Regulations and punishments
- 7. Food Distribution**; use of money and of surpluses (62-63)
  - “whole island is like a single family” (62) [cp. Aristotle's *Politics* 1261a16-19, 1252b22-3]
- 8. Attitude and Policy towards Gold and Jewels** (63-66)
  - Raphael's concern that he won't be believed, rationale for this policy. Example of Anemolian ambassadors
- 9. Education** (66-76)
  - Utopian institutions and good character, what they study, ethics and nature of human happiness, philosophy based on religious principles, *summum bonum*, relation of virtue and pleasure, true and false and best pleasures, absurdity of fasting, description of Utopian people, Raphael's “Great Books” [N.B.: no Bible or Christian book is included], Utopians and medicine and inventions
- 10. Slaves** (76-83)
  - Types and treatment of slaves, care for sick and euthanasia, marriage and premarital inspection, divorce and punishment for adultery and attempted seduction, treatment of fools, attitude towards cosmetics, public honors and penalty for campaigning, few laws and no lawyers, Utopians as excellent officials, what destroys justice, Utopia vs. Europe on treaties, understandings of justice
- 11. Military Affairs** (83-90)
  - Attitude towards war and why they go to war, how they wage war and their use of Zapoletans, why wives and children fight, amazing armor and weapons, “truces...observed religiously,” victors live abroad “in great style”
- 12. Utopian Religions** (90-99)
  - who/what is worshiped, Mythras, relation to Christianity, Utopus's laws about religion, compulsory and other beliefs, 2 religious sects (“haereses,” role of priests, religious worship, architecture of churches, practices, rituals, how they spend the 2 religious days each month, military training
- 13. Raphael's Peroration** (99-101)
  - Why Utopia is the “best” and “only” country deserving the name “republic”; the justice of Utopians vs. the “conspiracy of the rich” in other places; R's diatribe against money, greed, pride; money as the main problem preventing good social order; pride prevents this needed social change
- 14. Morus's Final Comment** (102)
  - What does More object to in Utopia? Is he ironic or serious here? Why doesn't he raise his objections to Raphael? What does Morus do instead? Why?

**Critical reflection questions:** (1) Raphael presents the Utopians as models of *humanitas* in their laws and customs (48.32, 68.12, 69.3–4, 83.14: translated as “humane conduct”) – just as Raphael presented the laws of the Polylerites as a model of *humanitas* (32.7: translated as “humane”). Do you agree? Why? (2) Who profits most from Utopia's arrangement? Who has the most power in Utopia?



## FORM(S) OF GOVERNMENT IN UTOPIA (CTMS 2023 edition)

### What dominant form of government does Utopia have?

Is Utopia more **democratic** in its popular election of syplogrants? Or more **republican** in the syplogrants' election of the *princeps* or "ruler"? Or more **aristocratic** in that the major positions are limited to the scholar class? Or more **monarchical** in the governor's ability to hold office for a lifetime?

**In Each City** (The "well-being ... [of a commonwealth] depends on the character of the magistrates," 81.24)

- Each city household has 10-16 adults, with the oldest of the clan ruling; 6000 households in each city (57-8)
  - Marriage: women at 18, men at 22; custom for choosing a marriage partner (77)
- Each of the 200 dining halls serves 30 households or 300-480 adults plus children (59-60)
- 200 syplogrants/phyllarchs – each elected annually by 30 households (52); their "chief & practically only business": prevent idleness (54.13-4); though exempt by law, they work to motivate the others (52)
- Each rural household has no fewer than forty men and women and two slaves; no communal dining; one syplogrant serves over 30 rural households or 1200 adults; city folk serve two-year stints (49, 61)
- 60,000 to 96,000 adults are in each city plus children, adjoining farmers, and slaves – well over 100,000 people. [London at the time was roughly 60,000 people.]
- Slaves in each city: many of the thousands<sup>6</sup> are citizens, but most are bought or brought (76)
- 20 tranibors/protophyllarchs – each elected annually (but seldom changed) from the scholar class; they comprise the senate and are each set over 10 syplogrants (52)
- 1 *princeps* or "city ruler" -- elected from the scholar class for life by 200 syplogrants by secret ballot from the four elected by the people of the four sections of the city and accepted by senate<sup>7</sup> (52-3)
  - the *princeps* works with the senate every other day on state matters and settling private disputes (52-3); he can also lighten or remit punishments (79)
- city magistrates (*magistratibus urbanis*) who can freely give away city surplus (50), assign number of city residents needed for harvest (50), very often announce a shorter workday (57). Do they also manage transfers by adoption (54) and keep the limit of 16 adults per family (57)?
- 13 priests (one priest for roughly 7,600 people) including one high priest, all elected by secret ballot of the people, but appointed during war time (94); they are not subject to law (95.23-4); 13 temples per city
- 300 scholars, who can become ambassadors, priests, tranibors, governor (56, 66)
- Very few laws (42, 80); many customs, conventions, regulations<sup>8</sup>; no lawyers (80)
- Senate serves as judiciary for such things as authorizing suicide & divorce (77, 79-80); it also serves legislative and executive functions (52-3).
- Men, women, children all train for war after their monthly two-day church services (96.20-21, 99.6-7)
- Popular vote can lighten or remit slavery (79.28-9)

### Beyond the city

- Utopian Senate, composed of 3 representatives from each city (49, 50, 52, 62,64)
- Utopians serve as magistrates for other countries (81)
- Agents work in enemy countries and serve as assassins (85)
- Financial officers and daring soldiers are given estates abroad where they live "magnificently" (89, 85)

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<sup>6</sup> Each rural household has two slaves serving 40 adults (49). In each of the city's 200 eating halls (each hall feeding 300-480 adults three times a day, plus children), slaves do the dirty & heavy chores (59) – that would be roughly 15-24 slaves per hall if proportionate to the rural household (i.e., ca. 3000-4800 slaves in the 200 eating halls). In addition, all butchers and hunters are slaves (58,71), and slaves do such things as drive the travel carts (61).

<sup>7</sup>Officials are elected by secret ballot (52, 56, 94).

<sup>8</sup>For example, they must take turns farming (49), change houses by lot every ten years (51), conduct secret votes every year (52), rotate syplogrants every other day (53), deal with family transfers (54), make sure no one sits in idleness (54), care for food distribution (50, 59), deal with travel requests (61), handle and sell exports (62).

## FAMILY LIFE, PUNISHMENTS, AND REWARDS IN UTOPIA (CTMS 2023 edition)

### Family Life in Utopia

1. Severe punishments regarding (protecting?) marriage. (See below.)
2. “whole island is like a single family” (62.17-18) A strength? Cf. Aris’s *Politics* 1252b22-3; 1261a16-9
3. Effect of practices at meals, temple service, war, family transfers for trades and population needs?
4. Note differences between *domus* (“home” as used by TM at 13.29, 32; 19.17) and *familia* (“household, i.e., all persons subject to the control of one man [*paterfamilias*], whether relatives, freedmen, or slaves”); Raphael and the Utopians use these terms interchangeable. A *paterfamilias* – the oldest of each household – is in charge of the 10-16 adults in his housing unit; a syphogrant oversees the 30 households assigned to his dining hall.
5. Courtship customs and premarital inspections

### Punishments

1. Only fixed penalties “established by law” (79.14)
  - a. premarital intercourse: no marriage ever; parents disgraced (77)
    - reason for punishment: otherwise few would undertake annoyances of marriage (77-8)
  - b. 1<sup>st</sup> violation or attempted violation of marriage (adultery): “harshes slavery” and divorce (79.5-6, 30)
  - c. 2<sup>nd</sup> adultery: death (79.13)

What about the following? Do they have penalties “established by law”?

- Death for speaking about public affairs outside the Senate or public assemblies (53.5-6)
  - Slavery for a second travel offense (61.30-31)
  - No burial but tossed into a swamp for suicide without approval of the priests and Senate (77)
  - Slaves being slaughtered like untamable beasts if rebellious or uncooperative (79.23-24)
  - Disqualification if one campaigns for office (80.21)
2. Senate decrees for other crimes
    - a. Most serious crimes: slavery (79.29)
    - b. Proselytism: exile or slavery (91.22, 33)
    - c. Denying soul’s immortality, Providence, or the afterlife’s reward or punishment: revocation of citizenship, not being considered human for impiety; “scorned everywhere” but “not punished” (92)
    - d. If charged by the priests with “very shameful” behavior, the unrepentant Utopian is “arrested and punished for impiety by the Senate” (95)

**N.B.:** Compare these punishments with those of the Polylerites in Book 1 (30-32), whose aim is “to remove vice while preserving human beings” (32.8) and where criminals are punished “in such a way that they have to be good” (32.9). *What is the aim of Utopian punishments? Is rehabilitation a main motive?* Some of the Polylerite customs:

- cutting off a piece of the slave’s ear (31.31-2)
- whipping a slave for laziness (31.27)
- death for giving money to a slave or for a slave receiving money (31.33)
- planning escape is death for the slave, and slavery for the free person complicit (32.2)

### Rewards in Utopia

-The Utopians inspire their citizens to virtue by public honors, especially erecting “statues in the city center ... for all those who have performed outstanding service for the commonwealth” (80.16-8). *What other examples of rewards are given?*

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**Critical Reflection Question:** What virtues do the Utopian family laws and customs foster in Utopia’s citizens? Do these virtues support a more democratic, republican, aristocratic, or monarchical form of government?

## **Religions in *Utopia*** (CTMS 2023 edition)

### **Utopian religions and beliefs:**

- beliefs mandated: a provident God created our immortal souls to be happy; we will be rewarded or punished in the afterlife, based on our virtuous or wicked deeds, 67.23-5
- why these religious principles are necessary for a sound ethic: 67.18-2; 92.15-25
- beliefs outlawed “solemnly and severely”: that (1) the soul is destroyed with the body,” (2) Providence doesn’t exist, thereby denying punishments and rewards in the afterlife, 92.11-15
- different types of religions: 90.6-15
- the one “more reasonable [and therefore official] religion”: 90.24
- Utopians’ reaction to Christianity: 90.31ff
- wars of religion allowed Utopus to conquer: 91
- Utopus instituted laws for the sake of peace and to benefit religion itself: no one should suffer for his religion; everyone may cultivate the religion of his choice: 91
- 2 special sects: celibates “entirely rejecting all pleasures of the present life as harmful”; those who choose a hard life but don’t reject marriage or all pleasure: 94.12ff
- they believe it “utmost madness” to “pursue harsh and difficult virtue” if there were no reward later: 67.31, 74.6
- need for religious fear:** 67.25; 90.18; 92.14, 18-21; 95.5ff; 97.18, 28
  
- How do Utopian religions compare with the mythological, natural, and civil religions that Augustine presents and critiques in books 6-10 of Augustine’s *City of God*?

### **Utopian priests & churches**

- the priests’ role in society: 95-96
- Utopia’s temples and public liturgy and prayers: 96-97
- 13 priests for each city’s 13 temples, serving 60,000 – 96,000 adults and children: 94
  - one priest for up to 7,500 people
  - Each priest is elected by secret vote to avoid factions: 94.37-8
  - one high priest (*pontifex*) is over the other 12 priests (94.36); 54 high priests on the island

### **Names associated with the official Utopian religion**

- Abraxa – former name of island; highest of 365 spheres of Persian gnostic universe: 48.3
- Mythra – name of Persian gnostic god and of Utopia’s god: 90.19, 97.1
  - Utopian language resembles Persian language: 75.10

### **Special religious groups**

- Buthrescas – “very religious,” from *bou*, “very,” and *threskos*, “religious”: 94.28-9

### **Utopian beliefs vs. those expressed in Augustine’s *City of God***

- Not private property or money is the source of greed (42.14, 100.22) but the human will: *City of God* 12.8.6; 14.11
- Utopia resists changing the “form of the commonwealth” (53.7, 9-10; 95.15, 17 *statum reipublicae*, although consider the official Utopian prayer at 98.29-35) – in contrast to the “diversities” in “laws and institutions” acceptable in *City of God* 19.17.

## Pleasure in *Utopia* (CTMS 2023 edition)

- I. Introduction:** goods of soul, body, external goods & how virtue, pleasure, & happiness are related (67.10-17)  
 Ethics of Utopians and their view of happiness-as-pleasure which ends up being a “serious and strict and almost sad and rigid” way of life (67.19-20)  
 Why principles must come from religion; what they are; why necessary (67.20-34)  
**Rule, 1<sup>st</sup> formulation of hedonistic calculus** for true, “good and honest [*honesti*]” pleasure: Don’t “let a lesser pleasure interfere with a greater one”; don’t “pursue a pleasure” that brings pain (67.29-31)  
 -“utmost madness”: “to pursue harsh and difficult virtue” without a reward (67.31, 74.6)  
 Obeying reason in following nature leads us to:  
 -define virtue as living according to nature (68.1)  
 -stir us “to love and revere the divine majesty” (68.4-5)  
 -stir us “to live ... with the minimum of anxiety and maxim of joy allowed” and to help others “acquire the same in accord with our natural fellowship” (68.6-8) since the most humane conduct of all is for one person to be a refuge and comfort for another and to relieve the difficulty of others (68.11-14) – since nature’s “prescription” for us is to have a joyous life and “to help one another in leading a more cheerful [*hilarioris*] life” (68.27-28) and  
     therefore honor private agreements as well as laws justly promulgated by a good *princeps* or common consent of the people regarding distribution of the “essential commodities -i.e., the materials of pleasure” (68.33-37).  
**Rule, 2<sup>nd</sup> formulation of hedonistic calculus:** Doing your duty [*officium*] of *humanitas* & *benignitas* towards others “is compensated by the exchange of benefits”: good memories, God’s reward (69.3-9)
- II. False Pleasures** (69.13-71.25)  
 Definition of pleasure: 69.13-14  
**Rule, 3<sup>rd</sup> formulation of hedonistic calculus:** follow nature as an appetitive principle ordered to true pleasure determined by right reason (69.14-18)  
 -3 criteria of true pl: no injustice, no loss of greater pleasure, no painful struggle follows (69.16-17)  
 Danger and consequences of false reasoning and disordered desires regarding pleasure: six common European pleasures are satirized: clothing, shows of respect, gems, hoarded money, gambling, hunting (69.28-71.13)  
 Conclusion: These perverse habits are from distorted judgment (71.14-25; 69.22-25)
- III. True Pleasures** (71-74)  
 Of soul: intellect, contemplation of truth, memory of well-spent life, sure hope of good future life (71.27-30)  
 Of body: 1<sup>st</sup> class = replenishing, emptying, generating, scratching/rubbing, music (71.31-72.3)  
     2<sup>nd</sup> class = health – cause of other pleasures (72.4-38)  
 Leading pleasures of soul, mental: from practice of virtues & from consciousness of good life (73.1-4)  
 Leading pleasures of body: health (73.4-5);  
     1<sup>st</sup> class of bodily pleasures: desirable only for the sake of health, Utopians say; wise man would rather escape such “sicknesses” rather than have medicine against them; better not to need these since they are disgusting, miserable – but necessary! BUT, all can enjoy these because nature is an indulgent mother. [A comical and paradoxical treatment of the pleasure rule?? How is this surprising turn to be explained?] (73.5-26).  
**Rule [modum] summarized, 4<sup>th</sup> formulation of pleasure calculus:** a lesser pleasure should not interfere with a greater; no pain should follow, which will if the pleasure is *inhonesta* (73.34-36; cf. 67.37)  
**Rule of pleasure calculus, 5<sup>th</sup> formulation:** sacrificing your interests for others, expect greater pleasure from God; otherwise, it would be “utmost madness” (74.6, repeating 67.31)
- IV. Conclusion, final claim:** “no truer opinion can be found by human reason” about virtue and pleasure unless “a religion were to be sent down from heaven” (74.8-12). **Do the Uns “think rightly”?** “There is no time for us to examine the question, nor is it necessary anyway” (74.12-13). Why? Raphael is only telling about, not defending, Utopian institutions, but he is “certainly convinced” that “whatever the validity of their judgments, there is [nowhere, *nusquam*] a more outstanding people [*praestantiorem populum*] or happier commonwealth [*feliciorum rempublicam*]” (74.13-14)

**Critical Reflection Question:** How does the Utopian view of human nature compare with Cicero’s in *On Duties*?

## Towards Finding the Ethical “first principles” in *Utopia* (4/12/2023)

**Ethics:** the study of our “final end” or “ultimate good” or “happiness” and the means to achieve it.

Utopians inquire into the “end” or “good” of soul, body, and external gifts, and they ask whether “good” only applies to gifts of soul [Stoic view], 67.10-13. This is the traditional three-fold division of goods (See Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* 1098b12-14, Cicero’s *De Finibus* 2.68-9).

**Virtue,** Utopians define as do the Stoics: “living in accordance with nature[’s command]” at 68.1, 25.<sup>9</sup>

### What is a “principle”?

- comes from *principium* meaning a “beginning” – a starting point of reasoning, making, or doing
- a beginning or “first principle” in mathematics: an axiom or postulate
- a first principle of thought: principle of non-contradiction
- first principle of practical reason: the end used to judge good making [*techne*] or good doing [*praxis*]
  - ex: making a bridge or a cake or a knife, each has its end: safe passageway, tastes good, cuts well
  - ex: a “good general” is one who can achieve the end of victory & knows how to judge accordingly
    - needed: knowledge, experience & training, keenness & talent to reason and act soundly
    - “end” is first in intention, last in execution – depends on choosing right means
- **first principle of ethics** [“good doing”]: the “supreme good” or “end” of life -- happiness<sup>10</sup>

### Cicero on first principles (*principia*) and ultimate end (*finis*) of human action (see side-note at 67.14)

How, for Cicero, do we know the first principles of human action? Self-knowledge arising from comprehensive philosophic reflection on the human soul, the world, the gods – in themselves and as manifested over time and in many different places (e.g., esp. *De Finibus* 2.69, 5.34-46). In *De Finibus*, Cicero holds that the best of the Stoics and of the Peripatetics actually agree on the source that supports their ethics: the source is the nature of the soul with its innate inclinations (*appetitus*) for knowledge, sociability [justice and benevolence], magnanimity, and apt-decorous-tempered-action. These moving powers or “seeds” or “springs” naturally present in the soul are the “first principles” and ultimately arise from reason ordered both to know and to live in society. (See, for example, *Finibus* 4.16-18, 32-40; 5.15-22, 41-44.)

### Latin terms used in *Utopia* (CTMS 2023 edition):

*principia*, “principles”

RH: the first principles of Utopias are from their religion, not from reason (67.23, 27; 106.15)

*appetitus*, RH: Utopians ascribe, not rashly, appetite to nature (69.15) – i.e., the soul has a “moving power” in itself, is not simply inert [See Aquinas’s *inclination naturalis* at *Summa* 1-2, q.94a2]

*semina*, “seeds” – a term connoting a dynamic source/origin/root

RH: to ask kings to uproot from their souls the seeds of evil and corruption (35.29)

*fontes*, “springs” – “springs” or “sources” of conduct

PG: claims Utopia reveals the *fontes* from which all good & bad of republics arise (10.29)

Poets: Utopia reveals *fontes* of right and wrong (106.7)

Do you want to know the *fontes* of the virtues? (106.14)

*fundamentum*, “foundation” (a term too passive to connote the full meaning of *principia*)

RH: most Utopians consider health the foundation of all pleasures (72.11)

RH: praises the Utopians for having laid the foundations of a just commonwealth (101.30)

TM: foundation of all Utopian institutions seems absurd: common life without money (102.5)

### Critical Reflection Question: Evaluate Utopian ethics on pages 67-74.

Consider those sections of *On Duties* where Cicero gives his last account of those “principles of nature that we are bound to follow” (*principia naturae ... quae sequi debeas*, 3.52). Cicero explains those principles as the “four springs of moral excellence” [*quattuor fontibus honestatis*, 3.96] set forth in 1.11-14: those innate “moving powers” to know the truth, to live justly and benevolently in society, to act in a great-souled or magnanimous manner, and to live in a decorous or fitting manner [Cicero’s reformulation of Plato’s four cardinal virtues].

<sup>9</sup> Page and line numbers are to the CTMS 2023 edition of *Utopia*.

<sup>10</sup> For the importance of the *summum bonum*, the *finis* [end] of life, and the happy life see Cicero’s *De Officiis* 1.5-6 and *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* 1.11, 2.5, and throughout, *Tusculan Disputations* 3.1-2, 4.5-6, 5.1-2. See also the marginal glosses in *Utopia* on page 67: “Higher and lower goods” [*Ordo bonorum*], “Supreme goods” [*Fines bonorum*], and “The Utopians consider honest pleasure the measure of happiness” [*Utopiani felicitatem honesta voluptate metiuntur*]. For Augustine’s review of these issues, see *City of God* 19.1-4, 11.

## WHAT TO MAKE OF UTOPIA?

### What seems undoubtedly good in Raphael's Utopia?

- There is plenty of everything for all.
- All eat well.
- There is only a six-hour work day, and learning and leisure are encouraged.
- Goods are distributed according to need.
- No time is wasted in building and rebuilding since all structures are built to last.
- Humane conduct (*humanitas*) is praised (48.32, 59.2, 68.12-13, 69.3, 83.14).

### What seems impossible in Utopia?

- ability, with “unbelievable speed” (49.3) to quickly cut a channel fifteen miles wide, making a peninsula into an island (48.34-5)
- their clothing serves for both warm & cold weather (53.35)
- very old buildings are so well built that they need minimum repairs (56.27)
- adults are “easily” transferred from one household to another, to maintain population limits (57.31)
- chains to bind slaves are made of gold and silver (64.2)
- ability to tear up “with their own hands” a forest and move it from one district to another (74.23-25)
- armor that doesn't even interfere with comfortable swimming (89.4-6)
- eliminating greed (100.32-33)

### What questions are raised by Raphael's account of Utopia?

- Is it prudent or just to eliminate money, private property, and most laws?
- What are the costs of having no personal privacy in Utopia?
- How freely can Utopians debate and discuss public matters?
- Is the elimination of competition between citizens likely or wise?
- Is evil in individual lives eliminated by the Utopian institutions?
- Do Utopian citizens lose or gain by the absence of lawyers?
- Do all Utopians enjoy equality under the few laws they have?
- How well do Utopian policies work to rehabilitate wrong-doers?
- What are the pros and cons for outlawing all public campaigns for elections?
- What kind of division of power exists among the branches of Utopian government? How is it enforced?
- What is the status of love, courtship, and marriage among the Utopians?
- How do the Utopians understand and practice friendship?
- How is family life developed on a practical, daily basis for the Utopians?
- What is the Utopian sense of beauty and its place in life?
- What is the Utopian sense of the arts, including poetry and literature?
- What is the purpose of Utopian religious education according to page 95? Pros and cons?
- How would you characterize church/state relations in Utopia?
- What is the Utopian attitude toward slavery? What is your reaction?
- What is the Utopian attitude toward state-encouraged suicide on page 77? What is your reaction?
- What are the pros and cons for involving “senators and their wives” before granting divorce (79.2)?
- What are the pros and cons for privileging scholars (56), financial officers (89.33), and priests (94-5)?

## Apparent Contradictions, Impossibilities, and Odd Features of Raphael's Tale

Utopia's change from peninsula to island: Really? How would it be possible to cut a fifteen-mile-wide channel with primitive tools "with unbelievable speed" (49.3)? The marginal gloss on this "incredible" accomplishment reads: "This was greater than digging through the Isthmus [of Corinth]." Attempting to build that Corinthian isthmus involved so many futile attempts that the project became proverbial as an impossibly difficult--and unaccomplished--task. See Erasmus, *Adages* 3326 (*CWE* 36: 76-77).

Utopia's cities: Raphael tells us that his small island supports fifty-four cities, each the size of London. Could there be fifty-four Romes in central Italy or fifty-four New York Cities in New England? Why this is economically impossible would lead to a fascinating lesson on the nature of real economics.

Words vs. reality: Raphael makes sweeping statements that are initially inviting, but then we discover they are not true. Examples include: the attractiveness and ease of travel in Utopia's harbor although access to that harbor is treacherous (48); supposed ease of travel within Utopia when travel requires many difficult requirements (61); repeated insistence that *everyone* shares the farming duties when in fact the scholar class does not (53.23, 28; 55.36ff); insistence that free speech exists, yet it is a capital offense to "engage in counsels about public affairs outside the Senate or the public assemblies" (53.5-6).

Raphael's credibility when comparing his statements and actions: Twice Budé raises the issue "if we believe" Hythloday (5.24, 6.12-13). When, for example, Raphael speaks passionately in Book 1 against any form of slavery for himself, what are we to think when he is completely undisturbed by the widespread slavery in Utopia – even of Utopian citizens? True, Raphael speaks about the importance of governing free citizens, but how free actually are his Utopians, even in an activity as common as the travel that Raphael passionately loves?

Equality of all: Repeatedly Raphael praises the equality of all Utopians, and he denounces money as the source of all evils. How are we to take the off-handed revelation, then, that certain Utopian leaders called "financial officers [*quaestores*]" who "live magnificently" and play "the role of nobles" (89.33-4)?

Other Utopian impossibilities include: Uprooting whole forests by hand and transplanting them from one region to another (74.22-23); securing slaves with chains of gold, the softest of metals (64.2-3); using durable armor that does not make swimming the least bit uncomfortable (89.1-3); saying that their very old buildings are so well constructed that it takes "least amount of work" to maintain them (56.27); possessing Hesychius's Greek dictionary years before it was printed (75.20); adapting the same clothing for "both cold and hot weather" (53.35).

The root of all evil: If money and private property are the root of all evils as Raphael argues in his own name, what are we to make of his opinion that he has "fulfilled [his] obligations" to his relatives and friends by giving them his money and property (22.14-17 and 20.7)? –And how does eliminating money and property eliminate greed and pride in Utopia (58.30-33, 100.32ff; see Budé's letter at 5.39-6.4)?

On care for the sick: Raphael tells us that the Utopians "very lovingly care for" the sick (77.9) and that they are treated "with gentle and solicitous care," and that no one is sent to the city hospitals "against his will" (59). Yet he then tells us that "the priests and the magistrates" urge some of the sick to "end their life by voluntarily fasting" or by being "made senseless" and thus "set free without a sensation of death" (77.24-5). And what do the Utopians do if persons sick with contagious diseases (59) decide they want to stay home? Would they really not oblige such a person "against his will" to go to the hospital's isolation wards?

On divorce: Marriages, we are told, are not often dissolved except by death (78.25-6) yet a married couple can "separate by mutual consent and contract new marriages" and can even look for better matches while married (78.35-8).

Virtue and pleasure: Virtue is described as "harsh and difficult" at 67.32, yet virtue is defined as "living according to nature" which is explained to mean living for pleasure (67.16ff). Nature is also described by Raphael as a "most indulgent parent" (63.24 & 73.21) while Morus warns that indulgence leads to corruption (14.3).

Location of Utopia: We are never told where it is because, Morus mistakenly claims (11.8-15), Raphael never thought to mention the location (14.32-2). We are, however, told that Raphael circumnavigated the entire world in 1503 to get there, when in fact Magellan was the first to do so years later, in 1519-22. Well-trained lawyers and judges notice such discrepancies.

Raphael's travel to Utopia: After being compared to Ulysses rather than Palinurus, Raphael claims to have gone on the "last three of those four voyages which are now read about far and wide, except that he did not return on the last one" with Vespucci (20.9-10) and then proceeded to Utopia. But Vespucci

never made a fourth voyage, and the book everyone was reading contained fabricated stories about activities of naked natives that would appeal to readers since Vespucci's accounts were much too uninteresting.

All killing is wrong: In Book 1, Raphael delivers a strong tirade against those who change the law of God to support their own misguided interpretation of killing (29.36ff). How then are we to respond in Book 2 when Raphael approvingly reports the Utopians' frequent use of capital punishment and the Utopians' pride in deserving "the greatest favor from the human race" in "purg[ing] the world of all the filth of that foul and nefarious people" (86.35-6)? Even in Book 1, however, Raphael praises the *humanitas* of the Polylerites' punishment of criminals, punishment that includes death (31.33, 32.2) – thus raising questions of the consistency of Raphael's thought and action.

Misuse of Scripture: Raphael misquotes Scripture to support other positions. In referring to God's alleged biblical command against all killing, he does not distinguish between murder and killing, failing to recount that capital punishment is "fully approved" in the Old Testament itself and that the Biblical term "*rāsah* means *illegally* to kill a human being." A similar misrepresentation occurs when Raphael strongly rebukes Morus for advocating a tact and prudence that Raphael calls lying (41.5-8). In support of this position, Raphael invokes the New Testament, supposedly quoting Christ as saying that "what He had whispered in their ears," He "commanded them to proclaim openly from the rooftops" (41.20-21). This quote could refer to two passages in Scripture. The first occurs when Christ is advising his twelve newly selected apostles to be "wise as serpents" but "innocent as doves" (Mt 10:16). Even with such shrewdness and virtue, however, Christ warns them to expect persecution and only "[w]hen they deliver you up," then "[w]hat you hear whispered, preach it on the housetops" (Mt 10:27-8). The second source is Christ's discourse on the Last Judgment, when "what you have said in darkness will be said in the light; and what you have whispered in the inner chambers will be preached on the housetops" (Lk 12:1-3). Considered in context, the sources of Raphael's quotations work against Raphael's dismissive position towards prudent and tactful action in the world.

On warfare: Raphael reports that the Utopians "absolutely abominate" war as "bestial" (83.6-7). Are there exceptions to this position? What reasons are given for going to war? What do you think of their wars for colonization (58)?

On the cause(s) of injustice: Raphael says that "fear of want" or "pride" cause greed (58.30-31), and that "favoritism and greed ... destroy all justice" (81). Do you agree? After making the claim that Utopia is "not only the best [commonwealth], but also the only one, which can deservedly claim that name commonwealth for itself" (99.9-10), Raphael indicates that injustice is caused by money (100.39), but then Raphael says pride is the cause (101.19). What does the book as a whole indicate?

**Alexander Hamilton's objection to *Utopia*, *Federalist* #6:** "To presume a want of motives for [frequent and violent] contests [among these city-states] ... would be to forget that men are ambitious, vindictive, and rapacious. To look for a continuation of harmony between a number of independent, unconnected sovereignties situated in the same neighborhood would be to disregard the uniform course of human events, and to set at defiance the accumulated experience of ages. ... The causes of hostility among nations are innumerable. There are some which have a general and almost constant operation upon the collective bodies of society. Of this description are the love of power or the desire of pre-eminence and dominion – the jealousy of power, or the desire of equality and safety."



## ***Utopia*: Key Terms from Cicero**

*The connections between More and Cicero seem to be wide-ranging, as these notes on Latin terms from Utopia suggest. In Book 1 of Utopia, Thomas More “echoes [Cicero’s] On Duties almost word for word” and sets forth “one particular set of humanist beliefs – those of a ‘civic’ or Ciceronian humanism.”<sup>11</sup> Even the main title of Utopia – De optimo reipublicae statu – echoes Cicero’s well-known<sup>12</sup> De re publica.*

### **Major Ciceronian Terms in Utopia – and in Historia Richardi Tertii and in the Latin Epigrams**

**Princeps:** “leading citizen”; used over twenty-five times in Book 1 – five times in the opening two paragraphs on pages 18-19 of the 2023 CTMS *Utopia*, but with different meanings. Consider what Raphael says about the ordinary as opposed to the true *princeps*; then compare with his own experiences with *principes* in perilous circumstances (20.30-36) and with *princeps* Morton (24ff).

**Respublica:** “republic”; used over twenty times in Book 1. Raphael praises the Polylerites (30.34ff) as a republic comparable to that of the Romans, who were “the greatest experts in administering a commonwealth [*reipublicae*]” (30.28-9). He says that the Polylerite republic is marked by *humanitas* (32.7), *libertas* or liberty (30.36), and *felix* or happiness (31.4). Utopia will also be called a *respublica* over forty times in Book 2. At the end of Book 1, Raphael remarks that More does not have a proper image (*imago rei*) of a true *respublica* (43.33-4).

**Humanitas:** “fullness of humanity” or mature humanity ; see 32.7; 48.32, 68.12, 69.3–4, 83.14.

**Civis:** “citizen”; More is interested in listening to Raphael’s advice about “sensibly and wisely educated citizens” (21.30-1).<sup>13</sup> Cicero explained to his brother, Quintus, that *De re publica* dealt with *de optimo statu civitatis et de optimo cive* (“the ideal constitution and the ideal citizen”)<sup>14</sup>; More describes his friend Peter Giles as an *optimus civis* at 20.8-20.

**Officiis:** “duty”; see *On Duties – De officiis*, Cicero’s last and best-known work. More insists that Raphael has a duty, as does every good person, to advise the *princeps* (35.17-18). Raphael says it is slavery (22.19); Raphael argued earlier that he had done his duty, his *officiis*, to his family and friends by giving away to them his money and property (22.13-18). Raphael assumes that a good leader has the duty of a shepherd guarding and caring for his sheep (38.36).

**Orator:** “orator, spokesman, ambassador”; More identifies himself as England’s *orator* (18.11) and argues for rhetorical appropriateness and decorum (40.22).

**Honestas:** “honorableness”; the criterion given for rulers – and for Raphael – by More. See 23.1. This is the major topic of *De officiis*. It requires personal consistency and practice of the major human virtues.

**Utilitas:** “utility”; another major topic of Cicero’s *De officiis*. *Utopia* poses the question of what is “useful” or beneficial to the commonwealth or republic. See 7.23, 15.20, 33.3, 75.30, 95.15 & 17, 107.27.

**Frugalitas** (25.11): “fruitfulness”; Cicero explains that Roman *frugalitas* “embraces all the other virtues” and “is derived from ‘fruit’ [*fruge*]” (*Tusc. disput.* 3.16-18). More and Raphael disagree about what brings prosperity and fruitfulness to a country. More emphasizes the Roman virtues of *industria* (22.36) and *labora* (43.26-28) along with laws protecting private property (43.24-32), while Raphael emphasizes centralized distribution to guarantee that “because possessions are equalized, there is an abundance of all things for everyone” (42.22-23).

**Amor/caritas/amicitia:** “love” and “friendship”; Cicero argues that a *princeps* governs best by appealing to love, not fear. Machiavelli, in direct opposition to Cicero, insists that the people must fear the *princeps*. Compare *De officiis* 2.23-25, 29 with Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, chapter 17, written in the same decade as More’s *Utopia*. Utopia fosters religious fear (Latin: *metus*), as seen at 92.18; 95.7-8; 95.17; 97.18, 28; 98.12.

### **Metaphors Used by Cicero and More to Explain Governing**

Navigating [*gubernas*, governing] the ship of state (40.33-4); acting one’s part appropriately in the play at hand (40.21ff); shepherding and caring for the flock (38.36); ruler as doctor (39.16-17, 43.18-20).

<sup>11</sup> Quentin Skinner, “Thomas More’s *Utopia* and the Virtue of True Nobility,” 213-44 of *Visions of Politics, vol. 2, Renaissance Virtues* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 222-23. George Logan gives the same judgment in *The Meaning of More’s “Utopia”* (Princeton University Press, 1983).

<sup>12</sup> More would have known this work, its general intent, and its famous definitions of *respublica* from Augustine’s *City of God*.

<sup>13</sup> More and Giles “most avidly” asked Raphael about “whatever right and prudent measures he observed anywhere among people who were living together as citizens [*quae apud populos unquam civiliter coniuventes*]” (21.25-7).

<sup>14</sup> *Letters to Quintus*, translated by D. R. Shackleton Bailey (Harvard University Press, 2002), Letter 25.1 [3.5.1].

## Cicero's Understanding of "Leading Citizen" [*princeps*]

The *princeps* is the one who "takes or captures first place" by a popular acclaim arising from trust and proven service. The Latin word comes from *primus* (first) and *-ceps* (a form of *capio*, *capere*, to capture).

"Leading citizens" are well versed in law and experts in communication and conflict resolution. They are the ones who "have better insight into the future, and who, when an emergency arises and a crisis comes, can clear away the difficulties and reach a safe decision according to the exigencies of the occasion" (Cicero's *On Duties* 2.33). In Cicero's account, such talented and skilled artisans are the only ones able to persuade and teach others to form societies:

Those who stood out as first in virtue and outstanding in counsel (*consilii*), having perceived the essential teachableness of human nature, gathered together into one place those who had been scattered abroad, and brought them from the state of savagery to one of justice and humanity.<sup>15</sup>

Here and elsewhere, Cicero shows that it takes an expertise of the "great and wise" to bring about peace and prosperity,<sup>16</sup> **an expertise rooted in *studia humanitatis***. This extensive education is for Cicero -- and More -- the best way to fashion justice, liberty, and peace.

Erasmus **defines the *princeps*** as the "embodiment of the laws," ideally selected by the vote of a free and willing people. The custom of having a *princeps* "born to the office, not elected was the custom of some barbarian peoples in the past (according to Aristotle) and is also the practice almost everywhere in our own time," commented Erasmus, Thomas More's great friend (*Education of a Christian Prince*, Cambridge UP 1997, 6).

**To be a leading citizen**, a leader must freely take on a demanding education and arduous training to achieve the highest excellence – just as the greatest sportsmen or doctors or other experts do in their specialties. To achieve a true "common-wealth" for their fellow citizens, **leading citizens** have to learn such things as *how* to achieve peace and prosperity and *how* to preserve their own integrity in the difficult task of enabling justice [*ius*] to conquer violence [*vis*]. To do so, leading citizens must pay special attention to the laws developed through their country's history, but view them from a truly philosophic perspective.

Law has special importance because without law – and without the courts and other constitutional means to enforce them – *ius* (justice) cannot conquer *vis* (violence). Cicero "repeatedly stressed that a state is a partnership in justice, a community held together by a common agreement about the principles of right that ... must be spelled out in a state's laws, whose purpose it is to ensure that citizens may live honorably and happily in safety and peace" (Mitchell's *Cicero*, Yale UP, 1991, 51). In what may be his most famous lines about law, Cicero insisted that

law is the bond by which we secure our dignity, the foundation of our liberty, the fountain-head of justice. Within the law are reposed the mind and spirit, the judgment and the conviction of the state. The state without law would be like the human body without mind – unable to employ the parts which are to it as sinews, blood, and limbs. The magistrates who administer the law, the jurors who interpret it – all of us in short – obey the law that we might be free. (*Pro Cluentio* 146)

Here Cicero uses the metaphor of the human body to explain the workings of the body politic: Just as the mind facilitates the free movement of the body, so the laws facilitate the free movement of the body politic.

**Leading citizens** are experts at captaining or "governing" (*gubernans*) the ship of state: "But just as in sailing, it shows nautical skill to run before the wind in a gale, even if you fail thereby to make your port; whereas when you can get there just as well by slanting your tacking, it is sheer folly to court disaster by keeping your original course, rather than change it and still reach your destination; on the same principle in the conduct of state affairs, while we should all have as **our one aim and object** what I have so repeatedly urged -- the **maintenance of peace with dignity** -- it does not follow that we ought always to express ourselves in the same way, though we ought always to have in view the same goal." (Cicero, *Epis. Fam.* 1.21)

<sup>15</sup> *Pro Sestio* 91; *De Inventione* 1.1-3, *De Oratore* 1.30-33, and *Tusculan Disputations* 1.62-63.

<sup>16</sup> *De Inventione* 1.2; *De Oratore* 1.30

**On *humanitas*** or humane civility: Cicero himself affirms<sup>17</sup> that **leading citizens** need a full and complete education in *studia humanitatis* -- that “wide domain of science” not “split up into separate departments” (3.132). Otherwise, leaders come “to office and to positions in the government quite naked and unarmed, not equipped with any acquaintance with affairs or knowledge” (3.136). Only such a well-educated leader can “win freedom for his native land,” having been “equipped ... with weapons for the task” (3.139). The dangers of a partial education is seen by two extremes: [1] those Cynics and Stoics who “in the Socratic discourse had been captivated chiefly by the ideal of endurance and hardness”; and [2] those Epicureans “who had taken delight rather in the Socratic discussions on the subject of pleasure” (3.62). “Law or violence,” *ius* or *vis*, peace or war, ***humanitas*** or savagery -- that was the fundamental alternative.<sup>18</sup> Cicero’s landmark that should guide citizens and **“leading citizens”** was this:

What then is **the mark** set before those who guide the helm of state, upon which they ought to keep their eyes and towards which they ought to direct their course? It is that which is far the best and the most desirable for all who are sound and good and prosperous; it is **“peace with *dignitas*.”**<sup>19</sup>

***Humanitas*** or humane civility achieves its **full flourishing** when governed by those guidelines or laws arising from the very structure of its being, just as with the arts of farming, doctoring, and navigation.<sup>20</sup> Hence, the “most fruitful of all arts,” for Cicero, is the “true and refined philosophy” that teaches the way of good living.<sup>21</sup> This same position Thomas More held from his earliest published work.<sup>22</sup>

Cicero repeatedly insisted that **true *humanitas*** requires one to have “contempt” for passing human things (*humanarum rerum contemptio*) -- especially pleasure -- if one is to achieve truth, the common good, and “greatness of soul.”<sup>23</sup> He explained, as he had done “so often,” that such “contempt” is a necessity especially for statesmen:

Statesmen, too, no less than philosophers -- perhaps even more so -- should carry with them that greatness of spirit [*magnificentia*]<sup>24</sup> and indifference to outward circumstances [*despicientia rerum humanarum*] to which I so often refer, together with calm of soul and freedom from care, if they are to be free from worries and lead a dignified and self-consistent life.” (*De Officiis* 1.72)

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<sup>17</sup> In *De Oratore*, see Cicero’s own comments in the Prefaces to each day of his Crassus dialogues, esp. 1.5 & 16, 2.5-6, and 3.15.

<sup>18</sup> *Pro Sestio*, esp. 91-92.

<sup>19</sup> *Pro Sestio* 98. We have no adequate translation of *dignitas*. Cicero identifies it with *honestas*, i.e., a human being’s distinctive moral excellence; see esp. *De Officiis* 1.94-99, 106 and 1.124 that present the duty of magistrate and citizen as working for *tranquillitas et honestas* and which emphasizes upholding the state’s *dignitas*, enforcing laws and rights, and living up to *fides*.

<sup>20</sup> *De Finibus* 4.16-17.

<sup>21</sup> *Tusculan Disputations* 4.5-6.

<sup>22</sup> *Selected Letters of Thomas More* 4-6, 103-7 and More’s humanist letters (*CW* 15). See also his introduction to Pico della Mirandola’s “Letter to Andrew Cornueus,” where, contrary to Pico’s own opinion, More states that one reason to study philosophy is “for the instruction of [the] mind in moral virtue” (*CW* 1: 85/10-11).

<sup>23</sup> *De Officiis* 1.13; in these contexts, *res humane* is often translated as “human vicissitudes” or “worldly conditions.” In the “Dream of Scipio” (*Cicero’s Republic* 6.20), the command is to “keep your gaze fixed upon these heavenly things, and scorn the earthly”; the dream allows Scipio to see “what a small portion...belongs to you Romans” (6.21).

<sup>24</sup> Compare this use with Morus’s famously controversial conclusion on page 113, invoking “*nobilitas, magnificentia, splendor, maiestas.*”

## Thomas More as a Lawyer and Judge of London, Member and Speaker of the House of Commons, Counselor and Lord Chancellor of England

|                         |   |           |
|-------------------------|---|-----------|
| [50                     | Londonium established as Romans' military and trading center  |           |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> century | Londonium: 60,000, public buildings and a forum, wall 20' high, 8' wide, port, roads  |           |
| 410                     | Roman occupation of England ends  |           |
| 695, 700                | Anglo-Saxon code of law; "folk moot" court of all free citizens held 3 times a year   |           |
| 1215                    | Magna Carta grants London the right to elect its own mayor & calls for 1 <sup>st</sup> parliament   |           |
| 1265                    | 1 <sup>st</sup> parliament having commoners represented   |           |
| 1327-77                 | Edward III calls 48 parliaments, with Houses of Lords & of Commons, in his 50 years]  |           |
|                         |   |           |
| 1478, Feb 7             | Born in London to law student John More and his wife Agnes  |           |
| 1485; 1487-97           | End of Wars of the Roses (1455-85); revolts during Henry VII's reign  | (7, 9-19) |
| c. 1489-1491            | Page for Archbishop and Lord Chancellor Morton at Lambeth Palace  | (11-13)   |
| c. 1491-1493            | Student at Oxford   | (13-15)   |
| c. 1493-1495            | Pre-law student, New Inn, London  | (15-17)   |
| 1496-c. 1501            | Law student, Lincoln's Inn; called to bar; then begins Greek  | (18-23)   |
| c. 1503-1506            | Reader at Furnivall's Inn; his father becomes a serjeant-at-law in 1503; elected to 1504 Parliament   | (25-28)   |
| 1505; 1506              | Marries Jane Colt; Margaret born; <i>Tyrannicide</i> published w/ Erasmus   | (27)      |
| 1509                    | Member of Mercers' Guild; Henry VIII crowned; "Coronation Ode"  | (31)      |
| 1510-1518               | Undersheriff of London; elected to 1510 Parliament  | (32-40)   |
| 1511                    | After Jane's death, marries Alice Middleton; Autumn Reader at Lincoln's Inn   | (33)      |
| 1512                    | Governor and treasurer of Lincoln's Inn   | (34)      |
| 1513                    | Writes history, comparing England to ancient Greece and Rome: <i>Richard III</i>  | (35)      |
| 1514                    | Elected to Doctors' Common; serves on sewers commission   | (36)      |
| 1515                    | To Bruges and Antwerp for commercial treaties; Lenten Reader, Lincoln's Inn   | (37)      |
| 1516                    | <i>Utopia</i> , modeled on Plato's <i>Republic</i> , but in English & European context  | (38)      |
| 1517                    | Embassy to Calais; legal counsel to pope's ambassador in England; quells riot of Evil May Day; his father becomes a Judge of the Common Pleas   | (39)      |
| 1518                    | Joins King's service after England agrees to Treaty of Universal Peace; publishes poetry on just rule vs. tyranny   | (40)      |
| 1521                    | Knighthood; undertreasurer; ambassador to Bruges and Calais; cautions Henry not to exaggerate the pope's secular authority  | (43)      |
| 1522                    | Gives public oration welcoming Emperor Charles V; serves as Henry's secretary and cautions against war; war with France resumed   | (44)      |
| 1523                    | As Speaker of the House of Commons gives oration defending free speech; truce with France; his father becomes a Judge of the King's Bench   | (45)      |
| 1524                    | Moves to Chelsea; war with France resumes: "If my head could win [the King] a castle in France, ... it would not fail to go."   | (46)      |
| 1525                    | Appointed chancellor of Lancaster; Peasants' Revolt, Germany: 60,000 killed   | (47)      |
| 1526                    | Appointed to royal council's subcommittee of four; Turks invade Hungary   | (48)      |
| 1527                    | Accompanies Wolsey to France; sack of Rome; Henry consults More about divorce; More's daughters' dispute before Henry; Holbein's portrait of More family  | (49)      |
| 1529                    | Delegate, Peace of Cambrai; appointed Lord Chancellor, calls for legal reform   | (51)      |
| 1530                    | More almost dismissed for his opposition to Henry   | (52)      |
| 1531                    | Henry declared by clergy Supreme Head of the Church in England, "as far as Christ's law allows"   | (53)      |
| 1532                    | Counters Cromwell's and St. German's attacks on the clergy; Submission of Clergy after Parliament is dismissed (May 15); More resigns his office (May 16; has epitaph for his tombstone engraved & published; gives advice to Cromwell on lions | (54)      |
| 1533                    | England declared an empire (April); Anne Boleyn's coronation (June 1); <i>Apology</i> counters St. German's <i>Division Between the Spiritual and Temporality</i>   | (55)      |
| 1534                    | Henry asks for More's indictment (Feb. 21); House of Lords refuses three times. More finally imprisoned (illegally) for refusing oath regarding Act of Succession   | (56)      |
| 1535                    | More interrogated May 7, June 3, June 14; trial (July 1); execution (July 6)  | (57)      |