



TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE JEROME  
DE BUSLEYDEN, PROVOST OF ARIE  
AND COUNSELOR TO THE CATHOLIC  
KING CHARLES, PETER GILES,  
CITIZEN OF ANTWERP, WISHES  
HEALTH AND FELICITY

**T**homas More, the singular ornament of this our age, as you yourself (right honorable Busleyden) can witness, to whom he is perfectly well known, sent unto me this other day the *Island of Utopia*, to very few as yet known, but most worthy which, as far excelling Plato's commonwealth, all people should be willing to know: especially of a man most eloquent, so finely set forth, so cunningly painted out, and so evidently subject to the eye, that as oft as I read it, me thinketh that I see somewhat more then when I heard Raphael Hythloday himself (for I was present at that talk as well as master More) uttering and pronouncing his own words. Yea, though the same man, according to his pure eloquence, did so open and

*This dedication letter appeared in all four original editions of Utopia.*

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declare the matter, that he might plainly enough appear to report not things which he had learned of others only by hearsay, but which he had with his own eyes presently seen, and thoroughly viewed, and wherein he had in no small time been conversant and abiding. A man truly, in my opinion, as touching the knowledge of regions, peoples, and worldly experience, much passing, yea, even the very famous and renowned traveler Ulysses, and indeed such a one: as for the space of these eight-hundred years past I think nature into the world brought not forth his like, in comparison of whom Vespucci may be thought to have seen nothing.\*

Moreover, whereas we be wont more effectually and pithily to declare and express things that we have seen then which we have but only heard, there was besides that in this man a certain peculiar grace and singular dexterity to describe and set forth a matter with-all. Yet the self same things as oft as I behold and consider them drawn and painted out with master More's pencil, I am therewith so moved, so delighted, so inflamed, and so rapt, that sometime methink I am presently conversant, even in the island of Utopia. And I promise you, I can scant believe that Raphael himself, by all that five years space that he was in Utopia abiding, saw there so much as here in master More's description is to be seen and

\* Amerigo Vespucci was, a fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Italian explorer and popular chronicler of voyages to the Americas with whom Hythloday ostensibly travels before splitting off to discover Utopia. Ulysses, of course, is Homer's mythic traveler.

perceived. Which description, with so many wonders and miraculous things is replenished, that I stand in great doubt whereat first and chiefly to muse or marvel: whether at the excellency of his perfect and sure memory, which could well nigh word by word rehearse so many things once only heard; or else at his singular prudence, who so well and wittily marked and bare away all the original causes and fountains (to the vulgar people commonly most unknown) whereof both issue and spring the mortal confusion and utter decay of a commonwealth, and also the advancement and wealthy state of the same may rise and grow; or else at the efficacy and pith of his word, which in so fine a Latin style, with such force of eloquence, hath couched together and comprised so many and divers matters, especially being a man continually encumbered with so many busy and troublesome cares, both public and private, as he is. Howbeit all these things cause you little to marvel (right honorable Busleyden) for that you are familiarly and thoroughly acquainted with the notable, yea, almost divine, wit of the man.

But now to proceed to other matters, I surely know nothing needful or requisite to be adjoined unto his writings. Only a meter of four verses written in the Utopian tongue which, after master More's departure, Hythloday by chance showed me that have I caused to be added thereto, with the Alphabet of the same nation, and have also garnished the margin of the book with

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certain notes.\* For, as touching the situation of the island, that is to say in what part of the world Utopia stands, the ignorance and lack whereof not a little troubleth and grieveth master More, indeed Raphael left not that unspoken of. Howbeit, with very few words he lightly touched it, incidentally by the way passing it over, as meaning of likelihood to keep and reserve that to another place. And the same, I know not how, by a certain evil and unlucky chance escaped us both. For when Raphael was speaking thereof, one of master More's servants came to him and whispered in his ear. Wherefore, I being then of purpose more earnestly given to hear, one of the company, by reason of cold taken, I think, a-shipboard, coughed out so loud, that he took from my hearing certain of his words. But I will never stint, nor rest, until I have got the full and exact knowledge hereof; insomuch that I will be able perfectly to instruct you, not only in the longitude or true meridian of the island, but also in the just latitude thereof, that is to say in the sublevation or height of the pole in that region, if our friend Hythloday be in safety and alive. For we hear very uncertain news of him. Some report that he died

\* Here Giles claims authorship of the marginalia that accompany More's first letter to Giles and the first and second books of *Utopia*; the title page of the 1517 edition, however, credits these to Erasmus (which may be an error, a correction, or, given the literary stature of Erasmus, a clever marketing move). Giles also hints here that he supplied the Utopian alphabet and accompanying poem.

in his journey homeward. Some again affirm that he returned to his country; but partly, for that he could not abide with the fashions of his country folk, and partly for that his mind and affection was altogether set and fixed upon Utopia, they say that he has taken his voyage thitherward again.

Now as touching this: that the name of this island is nowhere found among the old and ancient cosmographers, this doubt Hythloday himself very well dissolved. For why it is possible enough (quotes he) that the name which it had in old time was afterward changed, or else that they never had knowledge of this island; forasmuch as now in our time divers lands be found, which to the old geographers were unknown. Howbeit, what needeth it in this behalf to fortify the matter with arguments, seeing master More is author hereof sufficient? But whereas he doubteth of the edition or imprinting of the book, indeed herein I both commend, and also acknowledge the man's modesty. Howbeit unto me, it seems a work most unworthy to be long suppressed and most worthy to go abroad into the hands of men, yea, and under the title of your name to be published to the world: either because the singular endowments and qualities of master More be to no man better known then to you, or else because no man is more fit and meet than you, with good counsels to further and announce the commonwealth, wherein you have many years already continued and travailed

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with great glory and commendation, both of wisdom and knowledge, and also of integrity and uprightness. Thus, O liberal supporter of good learning, and flower of this our time, I bid you most heartily well to fare.

*Antwerp, 1516, the first day of November*