



The Role of the Parerga in *Utopia*: What exactly are “parerga”? The etymology of the word suggests that “parerga” serve as entry points into a work. *Utopia* is rich in such rhetorical ornamentation, in the form especially of letters from More’s fellow humanists and friends. The Letter of Budé furnishes an excellent example of the Utopian parerga.

- How does the letter provide an “entry” way into serious reflection on More’s *Utopia*?
- What questions and themes does Budé’s letter address? How does *Utopia* work through them?

I. Introduction: Opening Frame of Friendship

1-2: Budé thanks Lupset for introducing him to the “very pleasant” and “profitable” *Utopia* by that “man of the keenest wit,” Thomas More, who has “the most profound experience in judging human affairs.”

3: *Utopia* has helped Budé reflect on the absurdity of avarice, the constant concern with accumulating more & more.

II. Budé’s Argument about Justice, Credibility, and *Utopia*

A. Examines Avarice and Justice: Examining Justice in the Context of Contemporary Problems

4-8: Budé gives five definitions of justice and invites readers’ engagement with the question: What is justice?

4: Today, this appetite – this “gadfly” of greed – is so embedded that the “object of legal and civil arts and sciences” appears to cultivate malice towards one’s neighbors to whom we are bound by citizenship and even blood.

5: Today, this greed seems even greater in countries where civil and canon law have greater authority. There, the “high priests” of justice and equity pervert, invert the law in order to prey on “unadvised citizens.” Budé explains how.

6: Imagine if truth and the Gospel were the standards of “true equity.” Today, however, nowhere – not among rulers or citizens – can even the ancient understanding of justice be found: giving to each his due.

7-8: Today, justice and natural right are seen as rule of the stronger, i.e., of the one who gets the most. Budé points out that this approach to law works against citizenship and the country, and is made worse by “humanist scholars living far from public business” and by families more concerned with accumulating power and wealth for themselves and their heirs than for their fellow citizens and their country.

B. Considers Justice and What Is Claimed to Be Christ’s Principle: Common Property “Proved” by Ananias Example

9: Christ left behind charity and the law of communion, not contentious volumes of civil and canon law.

C. Renames, and Reflects on, Utopia; Raises Questions about Credibility and Authorship

10: Utopia (“no place”), also called Udepotia (“neverland”) – “if believable” – has adopted and maintains true Christian wisdom; this is achieved by constant combat to maintain three divine institutions: (1) full and complete citizenship for all, (2) fixed and unwavering dedication to peace, (3) contempt for gold and silver.

11: If these three Utopian pillars were strong and fixed convictions in everyone, then pride, avarice, insane competition, and many of those contentious laws would disappear.

12: Budé invokes the gods above, wondering what accounts for Utopia’s not having avarice for so many centuries.

13: Budé wishes that God would treat Christian countries as he has treated Utopia. The god of justice from the Age of Saturn must reside on the island of Utopia, if Raphael is to be believed.

14: Budé’s careful study convinces him that Utopia is not in the known world, but is a Hagnopolis (“holy city”).

15: Budé says More allows us to know of this world illuminated by “precepts & rules” through his rhetoric, but Hythlodæus “brought home to us [the Utopians] pattern of the good life.”

16: In Greek, Budé praises More as “wise and virtuous” in giving credit to Raphael for discovering Utopia.

III. Conclusion: Friendship Again, and Utopia as Nursery

17: Based on their *societatem amicorum* [“society of friends”] with Erasmus and therefore with Giles, Budé affirms his full faith in More.

18: Budé extends farewell to Lupset and praise to Linacre who is a model of “all that concerns good learning,” recognizing that friendship is deepened by shared studies.

19: Budé ends by extending his friendship to More, expressing his “highest possible love and veneration” because of More’s account of Utopia, that “nursery of elegant and useful institutions from which everyone can import and adapt transplanted customs to his own city.”

For Further Study: For a detailed structural and rhetorical analysis of this letter, see Andrea Frank’s “Humanist Guillaume Budé’s Artful Rhetoric: Responding in Kind to *Utopia*,” *Moreana* 54.2 (June 2017): 204–224.