



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.”¹ Even the main title of *Utopia* – *De optimo reipublicae statu* – echoes Cicero’s well-known² *De re publica*.

Major Ciceronian Terms in *Utopia*

Princeps: “leading citizen”; used over twenty-five times in Book 1 – five times in the opening two paragraphs on page 156 of *EW*, 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 (158) and with *princeps* Morton (160ff).

Respublica: “republic”; used over twenty times in Book 1. Raphael praises the Polylerites (165) as a republic comparable to that of the Romans, who were “expert in the art of governing [*reipublicae*]” (164/83). He says that the Polylerite republic is marked by *humanitas* (165/87), *libertas* or liberty (165/10), and *felix* or happiness (165/22). *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* (174/10).

Humanitas: “fullness of humanity” or mature humanity; see 165/87, 113/4, 163/25, 165/28-29, 201/17.

Civis: “citizen”; More is interested in listening to Raphael’s advice about “soundly and wisely trained citizens” (159/3).³ 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”)⁴; More describes his friend Peter Giles as an *optimus civis* at *EW* 157/14-34.

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* (168/18-20). Raphael says it is slavery (155/41); 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 (159/31-38). Raphael assumes that a good leader must be able to motivate his people to do their duty (170) and that a leader has the duty of a shepherd guarding and caring for his sheep (170/69).

Orator: “orator, spokesman, ambassador”; More identifies himself as England’s *orator* (156/16) and argues for rhetorical appropriateness and decorum (171/78-80).

Honestas: “honorableness”; the criterion given for rulers – and for Raphael – by More. See 159/72. 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 148/57, 155/12, 166/44, 194/24, 206/79, 213/27, 215/28.

Frugalitas (161/32): “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* (159/68; 173/90) and *labora* (173/88) along with laws protecting private property (174/2-3), while Raphael emphasizes centralized distribution to guarantee that “everything is equalized, [and] everyone has plenty of everything” (173/25-26).

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 204/83, 84; 206/65; 208/22, 35, 37, 71.

Metaphors Used by Cicero and More to Explain Governing

Navigating [*gubernas*, governing] the ship of state (172/19-21); acting one’s part appropriately in the play at hand (171/78ff); shepherding and caring for the flock (170/69); ruler as doctor (171/13-15; 173/79-82).

¹ 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).

² More would have known this work, its general intent, and its famous definitions of *respublica* from Augustine’s *City of God*.

³ More and Giles “very eagerly” asked Raphael about “whatever correct and prudent provisions he observed among civilized nations [*quae apud populos unquam civiliter coniuventes*]” (158/82-84).

⁴ *Letters to Quintus*, translated by D. R. Shackleton Bailey (Harvard University Press, 2002), Letter 25.1 [3.5.1].