



### Crimes and Punishments in Utopia

*What end(s) do they support? Do they serve the common good?*

Private conspiring about affairs of state: incurs a death sentence (178/54-56).

Anyone traveling without government permission: first offense, the citizen “is treated with contempt...and severely punished”; a second violation incurs slavery (184/56-61).

Anyone committing suicide without approval: no burial (195/60-64).

Marriage violations are the only crimes that warrant fixed penalties [196/73-74]:

- Premarital intercourse and attempted seduction: guilty parties forbidden to marry (195/67-80, 197/5-11).
- First adultery: incurs slavery (196/60-61).
- Second adultery: incurs death (196/71-72).
- “Unbearably offensive” behavior leading to divorce: guilty parties are forbidden to remarry (196/38-41).

Rebellious slaves: put to death (196/88-91).

Campaigning for public office: the guilty party is disqualified for all offices (197/46-48).

Killing or maiming a Utopian citizen: death penalty or slavery (195/84-200/2).

Proselytism: exile or slavery (204/46-47).

Impiety: loss of citizenship and attending privileges, including bodily protection, “but [the guilty party] is not subjected to any punishment” (204/70-81, 205/2-9).

### Social Mores in Utopia

*What end(s) do these cultural mores and customs support? Do they serve the common good?*

Attendance at public lectures is not required, but many citizens freely choose to attend (179/77-84).

Citizens are praised for using leisure time to practice their trade and to serve others (179/84-180/2).

Symphogants are legally exempt from work but freely chose to work to set a good example (180/76-81).

Citizens are not required to use the public hospitals, but freely choose to do so (183/5-9).

Citizens are not required to dine in public halls, but “it is not considered proper” to dine in private (183/24-34).

Women are praised for nursing adopted children (183/55-61).

Citizens are shown to have contempt for money and consider jewels to be childish (185/64-82, 186/22-30).

Citizens have contempt for “false” or “unnatural” pleasures such as fine clothing, honor, wealth, gambling, and hunting (190/29-191/63). They say they prize the pleasures of the mind, which include virtue and “consciousness of a good life” (191/49-53).

The Utopians especially welcome visitors with “intellectual gifts or knowledge of many lands” (194/63-65).

Priest-approved suicide is considered a “wise act” and a “pious and holy deed” (195/49-53).

### Questions to Consider:

- What kinds of behavior are encouraged and discouraged, praised and blamed, by Utopian rewards and punishments and by their social customs? For what purpose(s)?
- Are Utopian punishments always just and humane? (Cf. the guide to “Cicero on the *Princeps* and *Humanitas*”)
- Compare Utopian punishments with those of the Polylerites in Book 1, whose professed aim is “to eliminate the vice and preserve the person, and to handle him in such a way that he has to be good” (165/88-90).
- In book one, Raphael relates that Lord Chancellor Morton experiments with new punishments without changing existing laws (166/38-53). Is this wise, overly cautious, or foolhardy?