

## THE LIFE OF THE ESSENES AND THE LIFE OF THE UTOPIANS: A CASE STUDY

In this paper I intend to explore part of the religious background of Thomas More's *The Best State of a Commonwealth and the New Island of Utopia*.<sup>1</sup> Possible influences of medieval monasticism--as an element in the relationship between utopia and religion--have often been raised and explored in the critical literature about Renaissance utopias, and particularly about More's *Utopia*.<sup>2</sup> So far as I know, however, no one has considered an earlier utopian religious community--the Judaic sect of the Essenes, which is probably the first utopian community in the Judeo-Christian tradition for which we have a relatively large amount of information.

The Essene community was one of the four principal religious sects of Judaism in Palestine from the middle of the second century B.C. to A.D. 66-70. They are referred to as Essenoi and Essaioi by Josephus, as Essaioi alone by Philo, and as Esseni by Pliny; etymologically this word suggests 'holy', 'pious', and perhaps also 'healers,' almost certainly in reference to their special concern with cures. These are the inhabitants of Qumram who probably wrote the *Dead Sea Scrolls*.

The texts that contain the most reliable information about the Essenes are the following: a) Philo's *Quod omnis probus liber sit*, 75-91, and *Apologia pro Iudaeis* (both included in *Hypothetica*, 11.1-18), known to us through the fragments quoted by Eusebius in his *Praeparatio Evangelica*, VIII, 6-7 & 12, and in his *Vita contemplativa*, 36-89;<sup>3</sup> b) Josephus' *Bellum Judaicum*, I, 78-80, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 13, 15 & 18, and *Life*; 10-11.<sup>4</sup> c) Pliny the Elder's *Historia Naturalis*, 5.17, 4 (73).<sup>5</sup>

The idea of separateness, of physical as well as rhetorical detachment and isolation from the world of common men, complemented by extreme internal cohesion (the whole people behaving like a single family), permeates Essene society: "First, it

should be explained that, fleeing the cities because of the ungodliness customary among town-dwellers, they live in villages.<sup>6</sup> Pliny confirms this in his *Natural History*, 5.17, 4 (73): "To the West [of the Dead Sea] the Essenes have put the necessary distance between themselves and the insalubrious shore .../ having for company only the palm trees."<sup>7</sup> Although Josephus seems to contradict both Pliny and Philo in *The Jewish War*, 2, 124 ("They are not in one town only, but in every town several of them form a colony"<sup>8</sup>), his overall description of the Essenian community confirms that—even if they did not have palm-trees as their only company, as Pliny suggests—they did indeed constitute a separate community within each town. That the majority of the Essenes lived in their own villages has been proved in our century.<sup>9</sup>

Partly as a result of this emphasis on separation from the world of common men, membership was far from being automatically granted upon request; the Essenes had a low opinion of any other form of organized human behavior and admitted members only after a three-year probationary period: "Persons desirous of joining the sect are not immediately admitted. For a whole year, a candidate is excluded but is required to observe the same rule of life as the members [and] for two more years his character is tested ..."<sup>10</sup>

The two most outstanding features of the Essene society are its simplicity and its strictly hierarchical organization. Their communal way of life was the basic pillar of their society; they dedicated themselves to agriculture<sup>11</sup> and other basic crafts, in order to be self-sufficient from an economic point of view. They resided in commonly occupied houses, under the authority of superiors. But they also found time to "apply themselves with extraordinary zeal to the study of the works of the ancients, choosing, above all, those which tend to be useful to body and soul."<sup>12</sup> They also kept their temper under control at all times, refusing to surrender to anger or wrath without sufficient cause and remaining truthful to their word, which meant that they never had to make oaths to support their statements.<sup>13</sup>

When a man entered the sect he gave over his property to the order. The abolition of private property was a radical choice that affected every aspect of their lives, and a number of important

consequences followed, including the complete absence of "wholesale, retail or marine commerce, rejecting everything that might excite them to cupidity."<sup>14</sup> Moreover, "when any of the sectarians come from elsewhere, all things they have lie available to them, just as if they were their own, and they take up lodging with those whom they have not seen before, as if they were their most intimate friends. Consequently when they journey, they carry nothing at all with them."<sup>15</sup> Stewards looked after the members' needs. Food, clothes, or social care were administered following a strictly hierarchical organization that sought the best use of resources and guaranteed equality in every way. At the same time, the requirements of the population were voluntarily reduced to a minimum. Essene moderation and virtuous behaviour were the safeguards of their moral excellence as well as of their economic system, and these were supported by a frugal diet—two ritual meals per day, with prayers, readings, etc.—and simple clothing, to be worn at all times until completely worn out before being replaced by new ones:

"There are farmers among them expert in the art of sowing, and cultivation of plants, shepherds leading every sort of flock, and bee-keepers. Others are craftsmen in diverse trades. So they have to suffer no privation of what is indispensable to essential needs. ... The steward elected by them ... buys what is necessary ... . Daily they share the same way of life, the same table, and even the same tastes, all of them loving frugality and hating luxury as a plague for body and soul. And not only do they have a common table but common clothes also. ... As for the aged, even if they have no children they are as fathers not only of many children but of very good ones. They usually quit life in an extremely happy and splendid old age, honoured by privileges."<sup>16</sup>

For those who transgressed the unchanging norms of the Essene rule, punishment of a very strict nature, often resulting in death, speedily followed: "Men convicted of major offences are expelled from the order, and the outcast often comes to a most miserable end ... forced to eat grass till his starved body wastes away and dies."<sup>17</sup> Although there was no room for change or progress in the socio-judicial field, some room was still found for mercy and charity:

"Charity compels them to take many offenders back, when at their last gasp. ..."<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, the administration of justice was trusted to a collegiate body: "Those who are caught in the act of committing grave faults are expelled from the order. ... They [the Essenes] dispense justice at assemblies of not less than a hundred, and their decisions are irrevocable."<sup>19</sup> The primary principle governing their judicial decisions was the rejection of the notion that man can be the maker of his own history. It was Moses who delivered the Law, and since this law, according to them, eradicated any idea of progress, their constitution and the secular customs it ordains could not be changed. It was then crucial to ostracize strictly any individual whose behaviour was heteronomous and thus a threat to the social order. On the other hand, beyond the inherent separatist nature of their society, the Essenes gladly accepted newcomers who were ready to become members by willingly adhering to the prevailing constitutional law. Besides, the Essenes "[...] adopt the children of others at a tender age in order to instruct them"<sup>20</sup> and bring them up in their faith; priests are the ones responsible for the instruction of the youth, and theirs is considered an extremely important task. Among the Essenes, for every group of ten students there is a priest who teaches and guides them: "They make it their duty to obey their elders as well as the majority,"<sup>21</sup> and sit in specially appointed places, according to their age, "the young men below the old, attentive and well-behaved."<sup>22</sup>

Finally, it appears that the Essenes rejected slavery and animal sacrifices--though our sources do not agree on this latter issue: "... they do not offer animal sacrifices. ... There are no slaves among them, not a single one, but being all free they help one another."<sup>23</sup> Their condemnation of slave-owners was justified not directly by an appeal to God's revelation but on the premises of natural law. They suggested that in order to be consistent with the principle that "all men are created equal," slavery should be eliminated before any kind of spiritual progress could be initiated.<sup>24</sup>

The first and paramount principle of the belief system that governed the society of the Essenes and explains these practices is love--love directed towards God, to nature, and especially to humankind. Philo, Josephus, and Pliny agree that this mutual

affection among the sectarians is their most outstanding characteristic and is a direct result of the idea of 'holiness' implicit in the etymology of 'Essaeon'.<sup>25</sup> They believed God was the cause of all good and they constantly manifested their love in all their actions.<sup>26</sup> Their love made them accept communal living as a natural choice and they rejected those pleasures that took away the necessary strength for the mastery of their passions.<sup>27</sup> They wanted to lead a happy life in this world and in the hereafter and moderation was for them the safeguard of virtue. To be truly free to love God and men whole-heartedly they believed that a firm control of the passions was necessary. This is why they thought of pleasure-seeking as a vice and slavery a corruption of the heart and of the love due to God through men,<sup>28</sup> who were created equal and had all to be free to love and praise God and help one another.

There was a division amongst the Essenes as far as marriage and sex were concerned. One branch believed that they should not marry or practise sex at all but dedicate themselves entirely to God without any concession to human passion. And they showed certain signs of misogyny (this coincides with the interpretation of our three historians) in their contention that women were promiscuous and unfaithful, incapable of staying with one husband.<sup>29</sup> They insisted that the body was a prison-house and that man's senses deceived him. The other branch contended that procreation was a rational and religious necessity, although they agreed that pleasure-seeking should not be the reason for having sex.<sup>30</sup>

The Essenes held an absolute belief in Providence; when conflict arose between rationality or freedom and Providence they preferred the latter to human free will.<sup>31</sup> Their veneration for ancestral laws and for the law-giver was extraordinary.<sup>32</sup> They also believed that bodies were corruptible while souls were immortal,<sup>33</sup> and they adhered to the Greek idea that the good (that is, the virtuous) would be eternally rewarded in the afterlife and the evil (that is, the vicious) would be eternally punished. This is the reason why they rejected violence, greed, and pride and were perfect communists.

They believed that they had the gift of prophecy and carefully studied healing powers that could cure both body and soul, but they

did not offer animal sacrifices.<sup>34</sup> They dismissed logic because they regarded it as useless in the achievement of virtue.<sup>35</sup> The study of natural philosophy was almost totally absent; in the field of philosophy, they were particularly fond of ethics, since it taught how one should behave to find happiness in this and in the other world.<sup>36</sup>

Utopia's practices and beliefs show a number of parallels, in some cases startling, with those of the Essenes. Following a principle resembling that of the Essenes, that a close contact with the world of common men is harmful, Utopos--at the very beginning of Utopian history--ordered "the excavation of fifteen miles on the side where the land was connected with the continent and caused the sea to flow around the land" (113). Both the womb-like form of the isle and its "luna renascens" appearance subtly symbolize an enclosed community made possible by the virtual impossibility of entry by non-natives or non-authorized people; the isle of Utopia cannot be reached without the permission and help of its inhabitants. Natural and artificial defenses against foreigners protect the 'splendid' isolation of the Utopians (111).

Like the Essenes, they constitute a closed society with a strong sense of internal cohesion. This is partly the result of their spirit of commonwealth--their perfect sharing of goods--and partly the result of their pride in their form of life. Both themes are suggested by the narrator Raphael Hythlodæus in absolute and maximalistic terms. Like the Essenes, the Utopians' most pronounced characteristic, which best differentiates them from other peoples, is the special love they feel towards each other, and their low opinion of any other form of society; only in these two fundamentals do they allow themselves to feel proud, an emotion otherwise strongly condemned. Of course, there are abundant reasons for this pride: the community of the Utopians is described by Hythlodæus as a big and happy family (149), while constant references to England--as the representative of the ironically called "civilized nations"--and other neighbouring countries of Utopia reveal an attempt to emphasize the perfection of Utopian institutions and way of life as compared to other socio-political organizations in the world (125; 129-131; 143-147).

For these reasons, nobody can join the Utopian society if he does not accept in full its strict intellectual and social patterns together with its contradictions, as we consider them both from the vantage point of our historical perspective and by way of some of More's objections to Raphael's account. The probationary period imposed on newcomers by the Essenes was also intended to corroborate this firm and willing acceptance of the nature, beliefs, and patterns of behaviour of the utopian society. Utopia is a republic of pseudo-monarchic origin; it is democratic, but its constitution--delivered by its founder, the *Dux*, Utopos--cannot be modified, just as Moses' laws--for the Essenes--cannot be revised, and the Utopians, like the Essenes, claim to hate tyranny (123). As was true of the Essenes, if one does not share the fundamental beliefs and presuppositions of the Utopian society--in the form of both intellectual affirmations and uncertainties--one is likely to be forced into exile or even run the risk of being put to death (219-221). Besides, all must submit to a strictly hierarchical organization that leaves little space for personal freedom or intimacy in their common houses, farms, dining-halls, and other meeting places. Officials or siphogrants, tranibors or protophylarchs, senators and the governor--whose office is for life--constitute the chain of command in Utopia (123-124), and all submit to the authorities: women wait on their husbands, children on their parents, the young on the elderly, and all individuals on the majority (135-137). The Utopians, like the Essenes, also consider the education of children and the youth a priority; priests are in charge of their instruction in both knowledge and virtue (229).

For both Utopians and Essenes, agriculture is the principal concern and the only occupation common to all (115, 117, & 125); farming and other crafts that guarantee self-sufficiency, "with an eye to necessity not to luxury" (125), are also common in Utopia. However, production does not go much beyond bare necessity, with allowances for reserves to last for two years and a surplus for international commerce. Expenses are reduced largely through the effectiveness of cooperative labour and their common way of life. In their commonly occupied houses the doors are permanently unlocked (115 & 121), and personal accumulation of any kind of goods is

virtually non-existent, since they normally eat in common dining-halls (141) and share simple clothes and all necessities. There is no form of private property (121) (a fundamental characteristic the Utopians have in common with the Essenes, with early Christian communities, and with monastic life); money does not exist; and they degrade gold (149) and all precious stones by assigning to them the humblest use of all (chamber-pots and children's toys). Money is only used for their commercial and diplomatic relations with neighbouring countries, and these are related to their need of iron and their hatred of war, which they try to avoid at all costs, even if it means bribing the enemy. Here, the Utopians deviate from the Essene ideal, which prohibits trade; in this sense, More's *Utopia* is heir to its age, one of great urban developments, great voyages of discovery and exploration, and of trade.

The simplicity of the Utopians' social, economic, and political systems (like the Essenes') is largely based on a mixture of optimization of resources and moderation in consumption. They take merely two meals per day, a simple dinner and a more prolonged and elaborate supper; both begin with an edifying reading and include a ritual with special seats for the officers, the elderly, and the visitors--who do not have to carry luggage because (as was true for the Essenes) throughout Utopia everything is made available to them (141, 145). To give just one more instance of Utopian moderation, which again coincides with Essene conventions, clothes are practical and long-lasting (they are not changed before they are completely worn out, which can take from two to seven years); duplication of suits is prohibited along with differences in colour, design or fibre: all are white, and made of linen, wool or leather.

An important consequence of this organization of labour and of Utopian patterns of behaviour, actually common to both communities, is the possibility of reducing the labour force and working day to just a few hours and a few people, while the rest of the time available can be devoted to intellectual enterprises, especially the study of the works of the ancients, nature, and theology (159-160). Moreover, the Utopians are represented as a people that leads a truly happy life. They are the masters of their passions and champions of virtue, and

the humanity of their social organization is reflected in their everyday life, from the behaviour of the youth at table (144-145) to their liturgical celebrations (217). As we shall see, the Utopian philosophy of pleasure has a lot to do with this simple and happy life they are said to lead.<sup>37</sup>

Although the majority of the Utopians, like the majority of the Essenes, readily give up freedom in exchange for higher perfection, crimes, grave and minor, do exist among them; for those who transgress the law, severe punishment is always at hand, taking such forms as the prohibition of marriage, or exile, slavery, and even capital punishment. Nevertheless, if the criminal is openly repentant, the Utopians--like the Essenes--in charity, take him or her back, lightening or completely remitting slavery (191-193).

Of course, differences in the patterns of behaviour of the Essenes and the Utopians do exist, but they are largely the result of the evolution of human life from ancient times to the later Middle Ages and early modern Europe. For instance, the Essenes avoid cities, whereas Utopia and its cities constitute an image of the ideal city of the Renaissance and the nucleus of Utopian society. The Essenes also prefer a rough appearance and do not use oil, while the physical appearance of the Utopians is attractive, if extremely simple and inexpensive. Similarly, the Essene purificatory baths, purity rules, and prescribed ablutions are non-existent in More's account. Although no explicit contradiction exists, these details are largely the result of Jewish secular traditions, cultural rather than properly religious. Besides, More's Utopia is intended as a pre-Christian society, whereas the Essenes constitute a sect within Judaism and, therefore, by necessity, differences between the two societies are inevitable, since the former is intended primarily as a secular utopia and the latter as a strictly religious one.

However, love is, in both societies, the commanding and distinctive feature that illuminates their life. In the commonwealth of Utopia citizens generally do love each other. There is no reason why they should not: there are no social differences, need, or greed--which the Utopians believe is the result of fear of want (139). Along with the abolition of private property and extreme wealth, they have eradicated

poverty and enacted an egalitarian version of a welfare-state. The Utopians, under the rule handed down by their founder, agree with the Essenes in believing that the ultimate target of life is to find happiness here and in the world to come. Economic activities and work are organized so that the maximum number of people may be as free as possible to "be withdrawn from the service of the body and devoted to the freedom and culture of the mind. It is in the latter that they deem the happiness of life to consist" (135).

At first glance, the Utopian philosophy of pleasure may seem the opposite of that held by the Essenes; however, upon closer scrutiny, both prove to be similar. From the point of view of religion, there are two schools of Utopians: "one is composed by celibates who not only eschew all sexual activity but also ... entirely reject the pleasures of this life as harmful" (227), while the other branch considers it a duty to father children. Like the Essenes, though in a less explicit formulation, some Utopian beliefs and patterns of behaviour could be labelled as patriarchal and even slightly misogynous; moreover, the sexes are separated at meals and religious services: women are obligated to attend their husbands and to kneel down before them to ask forgiveness, but no provision is made for husbands to do likewise (233).

From a philosophical point of view, the Utopians, like the Essenes, also prefer ethics: they discuss virtue and pleasure and above all what constitutes happiness. Actually their philosophic principles are borrowed from religion and they conclude that happiness "rests not in every kind of pleasure but only in good and decent pleasure" (163). Both the Utopians' definition of pleasure and their classification of them into false, true and genuine suggest that it is not the concept of pleasure itself that the Essenes eschew. The conclusion of the chapter on pleasure is self-explanatory in this respect: "... They cling above all to mental pleasures. ... Of these the principal part they hold to arise from the practice of the virtues and the consciousness of a good life. Of those pleasures which the body supplies, they give the palm to health" (177). In this way, even the sensual enjoyment of actions such as eating, drinking, sex, and so on is not an ultimate end in itself, but rather exists for the sake of health, the expression of a

particular affection, or for procreation, for example. On the other hand, since the Utopian rule for a correct understanding of pleasure requires that the lesser pleasure does not interfere with the greater one and that it will not produce pain after it, and since "Pain they think a necessary consequence if the pleasure is base" (177), we find an identical rejection of bodily pleasures, beyond the reasonable moderation that guarantees happiness in self-sufficiency. For both societies, then, moderation in all spheres of life is the safeguard of happiness and the vehicle of virtue.

Of course, to pursue the Utopian way of life, a peculiar concept of freedom is required. In order to be really free, one has to be the master of one's own passions and, in turn, to be always in command one has to surrender his own will to the official social and religious dictates of the commonwealth. Again, then, we are forced to face the logical equation "more perfect = less free," unless we read the text from the point of view of religion, and see how the community of the Utopians--like the community of the Essenes--resembles a monastic commonwealth. Not in vain has it been noted that the description of religion in Utopia receives far more attention than any other theme or issue.

However, it must be noticed that there are at least apparent inconsistencies in Raphael's account of the life of the Utopians, and the concept of freedom is no exception: the Utopians have abolished private property but own slaves who do the dirty jobs that are judged inappropriate for a sensitive human being to perform (animal slaughter is the outstanding, but by no means the only example). In this, they certainly differ from the Essenes.

The question of war is another point that, at first sight, seems to distinguish the two societies. The Utopians accept war, although they define it in such a way that it should be qualified by the adjective 'just' or 'defensive'. Moreover, although the Utopians hate war and consider it "an activity fit only for beasts and yet practiced by no kind of beast so constantly as by man" (199), they find excuses to enter a war, even when neither their own interests nor safety are threatened. On the subject of war and the use of violence, the Essenes are also inconsistent: while they totally rejected war, and prohibited the

manufacturing or import of weapons of any kind, Philo and Josephus agree that, when they travel, "they are however armed against brigands."<sup>38</sup>

To conclude this comparative analysis, let me summarize some of the major parallels found in the customs and patterns of behaviour of the Essenes and the Utopians:

1. The abolition of private property and the practice of communal life.
2. The degradation of money and material riches in all their forms: neither luxury nor poverty exist.
3. A separation and detachment from the rest of the world.
4. Extreme internal cohesion (social, political, and religious).
5. A negative consideration of any other form of life.
6. A special love and affection for members of the community.
7. The acceptance of new members, who are welcomed if they conform to the principles of these communities.
8. strict hierarchical organization.
9. Authority in the hands of an intellectual aristocracy and the priests.
10. An emphasis on cooperative labour, agriculture, and economic self-sufficiency.
11. An unemotional character.
12. The use of symbolic language and action.
13. Two ritual meals per day.
14. War generally avoided if at all possible.
15. Simple clothing that is changed only after years of use.
16. Priests entrusted with the education of children and adolescents.
17. Tyranny regarded as hateful and a form of patriarchal democracy considered best.

18. Special care and privileges designed for the sick and elderly.
19. Longevity and lasting health, considered the result of virtuous and simple lives.
20. Similar penal codes and manifestations of charity towards those who repent.

Beside these thematic parallels, various historical pieces of evidence suggest that More might have known about the Essenes.<sup>39</sup> Whether or not he did, however, their corporate life certainly illuminates our understanding of More's utopian society. I also believe that such parallels help us to see *Utopia* in the light of previous experiments in religion-inspired idealistic communitarianism. At the same time, the study of these texts shows to what extent utopia embodies religious ideals that emphasize man's active role--as a social being--in Salvation History. There are obvious differences in the forms of these two works. *Utopia* is a literary work, written--at least to some extent--under the canons and conventions of the English Renaissance, unlike the matter-of-fact account about the Essenes, written by three historians who are trying to convince their hellenistic compatriots of "the best state of a commonwealth" which "cannot" be radically different from their own. Symbolic language and action that are essential for the expression of their beliefs are different as well,<sup>40</sup> and the one thousand four hundred and forty year period that approximately separates the works may be held responsible for many of the dissimilarities in customs and practices. But both More and Josephus depict communities where the 'core' of Revelation has not yet been reached. The Essenes lived in this world with their eyes on the world to come; they saw all life from the vantage point of the perfect life that was to come; to a large extent, the Utopians also maintain--even without Revelation--that man's happiness in this world depends on a preparation for the world to come by practicing virtue and enjoying basically spiritual pleasures. Finally, the horizon of both societies is essentially eschatological. Many critics have highlighted the eschatological origins of the utopian genre in its attempt to design for mankind and then enforce a state of happiness and perfection.<sup>41</sup> The time of eschatology is the future and More's *Utopia*--like all other utopias--is temporally placed in a timeless present that is projected

into the future, since it is the author's hope--perhaps only the wish--to see at least some Utopian attitudes introduced into his own society before it is too late.<sup>42</sup>

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#### NOTES

1 All quotations from *The Best State of a Commonwealth and the New Island of Utopia*, unless otherwise stated, are taken from *Utopia, The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, Vol. IV, ed. Edward Surtz, S.J. and J.H. Hexter (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1965) and will be referred to by page numbers within parentheses in the text. I want to thank the editors and reviewers of this issue and Professor M. Smale for reading this paper and offering valuable suggestions.

2 See P. Albert Duhamel, "Mediaevalism of More's *Utopia*," in *Essential Articles for the Study of Thomas More*, ed. R.S. Sylvester and G.P. Marchadour (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1977), pp. 234-250. See also: Walter Gordon, "The Monastic Achievement and More's Utopian Dream," *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 9 (1979): 199-214 and R.W. Chambers, *Thomas More* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1981).

3 See L. Cohn & P. Wendland eds., *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt*, Vol. 6 (*Quod omnis probus liber sit* and *De Vita contemplativa*) (1915); K. Mraz, ed., *Eusebius, Werke*, Vol. 8 (*Die Praeparatio evangelica*, GCS43; Philo, *Apologia pro Iudaeis*), in Geza Vermes & Martin D. Goodman, *The Essenes According to the Classical Sources* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), pp. 20-31. The translations into English are by G. Vermes.

4 Quotes from *Bellum Judaicum* are taken from *Josephus, The Jewish War*, trans. by G.A. Williamson, rev. ed. by E. Mary Smallwood (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981); on occasion, the edition and translation used by G. Vermes & M.D. Goodman, B. Niese, ed., *Flavii Iosephi Opera*, 7 vols., 1885-95) has also been used. Quotes from *Antiquitates Iudaicae* and from *Vita* are taken from G. Vermes & M.D. Goodman, pp. 34-57.

5 Quotes from Pliny are taken from C. Mayhoff, ed., *C. Plinii Secundi Naturalis Historiae* Vol. 1, 1906, as cited by G. Vermes & M.D. Goodman, p. 32.

6 Philo, 76. Compare G. Vermes, ed. Cohn, p. 21.

7 Compare G. Vermes, p. 33.

8 Vermes, p. 39.

9 See T.S. Beall, pp. 1-34.

10 Compare F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, ed. Smallwood, p. 135.

11 "Otherwise they are the noblest men in their way of life and have dedicated themselves to work entirely in agriculture." Compare F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 1.3, 5, Par. 19; quoted from Todd S. Beall, *Josephus' Description of the Essenes Illustrated by the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1988).

12 Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 2, 136. Compare G. Vermes, p. 43.

13 See Josephus, *The Jewish War*, II, 125, as quoted by Smallwood, p. 134.

14 Philo, *Quod omnis...*, p. 79. Compare G. Vermes, p. 21.

15 F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 2.8, 2-13, 124-125.

16 Philo, *Apologia pro Iudaeis*, pp. 8-10. Compare G. Vermes, pp. 27-29. See also Josephus' explanation of the longevity of the Essenes: "I think it is because of the simplicity of their way of life and their regularity that they live long, so that most of them reach the age of more than a hundred years". Compare *The Jewish War*, 2, 151, in Vermes, p. 45.

17 Compare F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, ed. Smallwood, p. 135.

18 Compare F. Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum*, ed. Smallwood, p. 135.

19 Compare *The Jewish War*, 2, 145.

20 Compare Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 2, 120. Quoted from Vermes, p. 39.

21 Josephus, *The Jewish War*, 2, 146. Quoted from Vermes, p. 45.

22 Philo, *Quod omnis...*, 82; as quoted by G. Vermes, p. 23.

23 Philo, *Quod omnis...*, 75-80. Quoted by Vermes, p. 21.

24 At this time, the idea that all men are created equal was indeed a revolutionary one: "And they condemn slave owners, not only as unjust in that they offend against equality, but still more as ungodly, in that they transgress the law of nature which, having given birth to all men equally and nourished them like a mother, makes of them true brothers, not in name but in reality". Philo, *Quod omnis...*, 79, as quoted by Vermes, p. 21.

25 Philo, *Quod omnis...*, pp. 84-89. Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum*, 2.119, Pliny, *Historia Naturalis*, p. 73.

26 Philo, *Quod omnis...*, p. 84 and following: "Of their love of God they give a thousand examples... of their love of men, by kindness, equality and a communal life". See also the passage from Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum*, 2.128 & following.

- 27 *Quod omnis...*, p. 78, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 18.19, *Bellum Judaicum*, 2.120, 2.126 & 2.133.
- 28 *Quod omnis...*, p. 79, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 18.21.
- 29 *Quod omnis...*, II, p. 161.
- 30 All three sources note the Essene condemnation of marriage: see *Apologia pro Iudaeis*, II, 14-17, *Historia Naturalis*, V, 73, *Bellum Judaicum*, II, 120-1; however, Josephus mentions a branch of the sect that permitted marriage and sexual intercourse for the survival of the species: see *Bellum Judaicum*, II, 160-1.
- 31 *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 13.172.
- 32 *Bellum Judaicum*, II, 145-149.
- 33 *Bellum Judaicum*, II, 145.
- 34 *Quod omnis...*, p. 75.
- 35 *Quod omnis...* p. 80 and following.
- 36 *Quod omnis...*, pp. 80-82; see also *Bellum Judaicum*, II, 136-138.
- 37 About the Utopians' philosophy of pleasure, see More, pp. 161-167; see also Edward Surtz, S.J., *The Praise of Pleasure: Philosophy, Education and Communism in More's "Utopia"* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1957).
- 38 Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum*, II, 125.
- 39 All source-texts quoted were available to More in Greek, in Latin, or in both. There are references to the Essenes in St. Jerome's letters, which More had his daughters read, and the editors of the Yale edition of the *Utopia* often cite Philo, Josephus, and Eusebius as sources for various customs and characteristics of the utopian society. Of course, saying that More was familiar with these texts does not prove that the life of the Essenes was an actual influence; some features of Essene life have obvious parallels in monastic communities. But the Essenes' commonwealth shares with the Utopians' a certain concept of 'originality'; both are pre-Christian and both are the earliest examples of their kind.
- 40 For symbolic language and action in *Utopia* and in the *Bible*, see G. Marc'hadour, *The Bible in the Works of Thomas More*, Part V (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1972), pp. 119-126.
- 41 Vita Fortunati, *La Letteratura Utopica Inglese. Morfologia e Grammatica di un Genere Letterario* (Ravenna: Longo, 1979), pp. 16-19.
- 42 See V. Fortunati, p. 17.

### Biographical statement

Miguel Martínez López is Associate Professor and Secretary of the Department of English, University of Granada (Spain). He received his doctorate from the University of Bologna (Italy) and has held positions as Fulbright Visiting Fellow at Yale (1990-1991) and Visiting Professor at Nazareth College (Rochester, N.Y.) in 1991; he will be Visiting Professor at the University of Delaware (Fall Semester 1994). His books include *Literature, Culture and Society of the Middle Ages*, *El Análisis de Errores* and the forthcoming *Y Seréis Como Dioses: Estudio sobre Doctor Fausto de Christopher Marlowe*, (University of Granada Press). He has presented papers and published articles on Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, Thomas More's *Utopia*, Walt Whitman's *Democratic Vistas*, and on Utopia as a literary genre. He is currently teaching a Ph.D. course on "English Utopian Literature" at the University of Granada.

