

A JUSTIFICATION OF WAR IN THOMAS MORE'S *UTOPIA* BETWEEN MACHIAVELLIAN REALISM AND ERASMIAN IDEALISM

ELENA IRRERA

Department of Political and Social Sciences
University of Bologna
elena.irrera2@unibo.it

FRANCESCO RASCHI

Department of Political and Social Sciences
University of Bologna
francesco.raschi@unibo.it

ABSTRACT

This essay addresses some of the thoughts expressed by Thomas More on just war and international relations in the light of Machiavellian realism and the ethical-political idealism ascribed to Erasmus of Rotterdam. We propose that More's idea of "just war" can be interpreted as an early modern attempt to legitimise the paradigmatic role of State policies designed to export and impose certain political and cultural models on other States. That same idea might contextually contribute to qualify a paradigm of international relations which, by combining realism and idealism, preserves a distinctively ethical basis while justifying war as a strategy of reduction of moral evil.

KEYWORDS

Peace, just war, Utopia, international political thought.

I. SETTING THE ISSUE

As it is well known, the gradual development, construction and consolidation of the modern State that took place in the 16th century definitively changed the political landscape of early modern Europe¹. That process determined not only a progressive integration of civic relations, territories, political strategies, and economic

¹ In this paper we adopt the chronological category of "early modern Europe" to address the geographical, political, cultural, and economic entity that gradually took shape between 1450 and 1789. On the sense of this periodisation cf. J. Dewald, (ed. by), *Europe 1450 to 1789. Encyclopedia of the Early Modern World, Volume 1. Absolutism to Coligny* (New York, 2004), xxv-xxx.

pursuits around a centralized sovereign power², but also a neat polarisation between single States that showed a readiness to enter reciprocal conflict for reasons of self-preservation and/or conquest³. In fact, war between individual States that appeared determined to impose their sovereign power outside national borders became a well-rooted political practice in the context of international relations. It is no coincidence then, that the main political writers of that time were inclined to identify inter-state war –whether actual or simply potential – as an endemic and ineradicable condition within early modern Europe. Equally understandable is the fact that, against the backdrop of a conflict-ridden coexistence between early European States, the same authors attempted to frame peace as an actualisable ideal, developing innovative conceptual paradigms of domestic and international justice that were inevitably destined to inspire subsequent intellectual investigations and research traditions in matters of war and peace, from early modernity up to the present day.

In this essay we focus on one of these authors, Thomas More, and discuss some implications of his views on war and peace between States. As we believe, the extent of More's original contribution to modern and contemporary reflection on international relations is a relatively unexplored issue in his political thought, and an attempt to understand it requires an examination of the cultural environment in which his writings were produced. At that time, two different theoretical and methodological approaches to the analysis of peace and war began to emerge: the realist one, notoriously represented by Machiavelli, and the idealist (or "liberal") one, inspired by the thought and writings of Erasmus of Rotterdam. While the first approach frames politics as a realm of human coexistence in which both inter-individual and interstate relations appear inevitably marked by dynamics of conflict and attempts at domination, the second understands peace *within* and *be-*

² In the early stages of the modern state's historic formation, the source of its coercive power, as well as that of the cohesive bond of civic unity at its basis, were represented by the institutional figure of the absolute monarch. From a conceptual point of view, the emergent idea of "modern state" might also be thought to embody an idea of "central authority" that operates primarily through laws and regular organisational processes (as Max Weber's theorisation notably emphasized). Although substantial disagreement has always occurred between scholars over the definition of the word "State" (cf. Q. Skinner, 'A Genealogy of the Modern State', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 162(2009), pp. 325-70, p. 326), it might be reasonably supposed that the concept at stake also embraces the idea of respect of the ruled for the authority of rulers – one that finds expression in the form of a shared sense of justice and duty. On the coexistence of these aspects see A. Passerin d'Entreves, *The Notion of the State. An Introduction to Political Theory* (Oxford, 1967), and N. Matteucci, *Lo Stato Moderno* (Bologna, 1993). See also Skinner (Genealogy, pp. 327-8), who, referring to Machiavelli's thought, emphasizes the aspect of "civic union" underlying the preservation of the modern State.

³ On the idea of "modern state" as a political entity situated in an international order of unequal and competing powers of the same nature see Ch. Pierson, *The Modern State* (London and New York, 1996), especially chapter 6, pp. 157-92, and D. Held, *Political Theory and the Modern State. Essays on State, Power, and Democracy* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 46-51 and 225-8.

tween States as a condition attainable through practices of communication based on respectful reason and reciprocal cooperation. We shall argue that, although More's cultivates the possibility of an ethically oriented model of international relations, the normative dimension of that pattern appears profoundly affected by realistic considerations - anthropological, as well as political - that preclude the guarantee of a respectful collaboration between States. By analysis of More's idea of "just war" in the *Utopia*, we will propose that, on the one hand, his theorisation can be interpreted as an early modern attempt to legitimize the paradigmatic role of State policies that propose to extend certain political and cultural models to other States. On the other, that same idea might contribute to qualify an innovative paradigm of international relations, i.e. one which, by preserving the link between ethics and politics, manages to combine realism and idealism, thus introducing the possibility of an ethical bases for the acceptance of strategies that might contemplate the employment of war in inter-state relations.

In the first sections of this article, we provide a general overview of the main theoretical approaches in international relations that might be adopted as a suitable background for a clarification of More's ideas on the subject, i.e. respectively realism and idealism. Then, we proceed to offer a tentative reconstruction of his own conceptual paradigm for justification of war in international relations. By so doing, we shall use a principle of methodological caution in separating the illustration of the Utopian project provided by the main character of the book, i.e. Hythlodæus, from the author's real view on the matter. We will finally argue that: (1) Thomas More's notion of "just war" would not fully (or, in other words, only partially) match Hythlodæus' idea of a war justifiable on grounds of (Stoic) philanthropy and various types of (scholastic) *recta intentio*. Despite this, in More's own view, the prospect of war would still find an ethical justification. For The idea of just war would fit into More's plan of a society which, although oriented at peace, remains at the same time profoundly anchored in recognition of the irremediability of conflict in inter-state relations, and accepts a morality of the "lesser evil".

II. MORE'S *UTOPIA*. A PRELIMINARY INTRODUCTION

Thomas More's *Utopia*, published in 1516, notably depicts a fictional island where a perfectly happy and just society, which is produced with the help of an innovative system of political organisation, successfully frees its members from the risk of vicious human interactions. Being constituted of 54 cities administered by a central sovereign power, Utopia can be rightfully viewed as a political entity patterned after the normative groundlines of the State in early modern Europe. The island is governed by a prince endowed with the power to coordinate institutions and to entrust government to magistrates (these being elected by groups of families

– i.e. the basic social units of each city⁴). A series of revolutionary measures, however, seems to distinguish Utopia and its social organization from the one at the basis of existing modern States. In the first place, the sovereign power of the prince, whose task is to represent his people, enables islanders to instantiate a wise alternation of agrarian work⁵ and time for education and culture (the Utopians are generally portrayed as devoting their free time by reading classics, listening to music, and studying subjects like astronomy and geometry⁶). Furthermore, the abolition of private property and of the practice of commerce, alongside the education of children in common spaces, strengthens a sense of commonality and collaborative inclinations between citizens. Most importantly, the islanders of Utopia enjoy freedom of thought and speech, being also educated to religious toleration towards believers (atheists are not punished, but they are despised by the inhabitants and are deprived of the right to take part in public office). It is in these respects that More's *Utopia* encourages hopes for a pacific society and delves into the possibility of a social reform based on education for all its citizens⁷ to reciprocal loyalty and harmony. These are aspects which, at the time, were taken into consideration only in the realm of philosophical fiction, being relatively ignored (or, in the best case, not adequately examined) by political leaders in early modern states.

Despite More's insistence on the possibility of outlining adequate bases for an ideal society, the first part of his dialogical novel exhibits a special sensitivity to the historical, empirical, and imperfect dimension of political power, as well as to its ways to affect civil society. In May 1515, at the time of the composition of his *Utopia*, Thomas More was in Bruges, an important merchant city in Flanders, as part of an English delegation sent to negotiate, on behalf of King Henry VIII, the renewal of trade agreements between England and the Netherlands (the latter being governed by Prince Charles, who would have soon become emperor)⁸. In the book, written in Latin and dripping with sophisticated irony, More denounces the

⁴ See G.M.A. Logan et al. (eds.), *Thomas More, Utopia, English Text and Translation* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 112-5.

⁵ See Logan et al., *Utopia*, pp. 66-7 and 125-7.

⁶ See Logan et al., *Utopia*, pp. 154-162

⁷ As Wegemer and Smith (2004: xvii) point out: «In his early political writings, More regularly used the word "citizen" instead of "subject," and he pointed out the dangers associated with monarchy» (G.B. Wegemer and S.W. Smith (eds.), *A Thomas More Source Book* (Washington, D.C., 2004), xvii). Cf. More's poems on *Politics* at pp. 235-9 of the same book.

⁸ For more details on this phase of More's life see Wegemer and Smith, *A Thomas More Source Book*, xxiv-xx. The authors stress that, from 1511 to 1518, More was a very active citizen, who acted as undersheriff, developed one of the largest law practices in London, and represented the country's business interests in foreign embassies, while at the same time establishing fruitful correspondence with some of Europe's leading intellectuals. See also Lupton's introduction to More's *Utopia*, in J.H. Lupton, J.H. (ed. by), *The Utopia of Sir Thomas More. In Latin from the edition of March 1518 and in English from the first edition of Ralph Robinson's translation in 1551* (Oxford, 1895), pp. 29-32.

social and the ethical evils lurking within European societies by showing not only penetrating realism, but also an extraordinary visionary power. The author presents a fictional meeting, taking place in Bruges, between the Portuguese Raphael Hythlodæus (which means "the teller"), a civil servant, Peter Giles⁹, and himself.

Raphael Hythlodæus is presented as a (fictitious) traveler who, having first sailed in the retinue of Amerigo Vespucci in his circumnavigation of the terrestrial globe and then on his own¹⁰, discovered the island of Utopia (which can mean both "place that does not exist" and "happy place"). Of this land he describes its life and institutions. Utopia appears characterized by institutions and customs completely different from the English and European ones, being described as a democratic republic where equality and justice, rather than kings and noblemen, are in power. In that State gold is despised, and so are war and religious conflicts. Through the figure of Hythlodæus, in Book 1 of *Utopia* More fiercely attacks various types of injustice within contemporary Tudor England and other European societies at the time (such as the legitimation of private property, social and economic inequalities, death penalty for crimes like theft, and the lack of a proper education for children and members of civil society in general). The conversation at stake, which bears on the issue as to whether a philosopher should enter royal service, acts as a suitable backdrop to the view of a perfect society which More will subsequently outline in Book 2 of *Utopia*¹¹.

Similar observations in matters of political anthropology are contained in other works of More, which suggest that his plans for a perfect society rely on realistic – and definitely non-optimistic – assumptions on the quality of political leaders. As he says for instance in one of the original poems¹², which he wrote between 1500 and 1516 (being first published in the 1518 editions of his *Utopia*), it is not infrequent to find vicious would-be politicians, and it is often safer to entrust government to a senate rather than to a king. For being composed of a plurality of people, a senate would be more likely to contain good men and enable them to persuade the bad ones in deliberative activity. A king, to the contrary, might not only be a bad man as such, but also one encouraged by his position of absolute power to persist in his bad habits and to treat citizens as slaves. As More says,

⁹ Unlike Hythlodæus, Giles is a non-fictional character. Like More, he was a classical scholar and an intimate friend of Erasmus. He was also a city clerk of Antwerp, and he was deeply involved in the business of commerce and cosmopolitan shipping (on these aspects see Logan et al., *Utopia*, xx).

¹⁰ As More says in *Utopia* I, 36-37 (p. 42 ed. Logan et al., from which all the passages of *Utopia* shall be quoted, unless differently specified), Hythlodæus travelled like Ulysses, rather than like Plato (I, 36-37: «Atqui, inquit, aberrasti longissime: navigavit quidem non ut Palinurus, sed ut Ulysses, immo velut Plato»).

¹¹ Cf. D. Halpin, 'Utopianism and Education: The Legacy of Thomas More Source', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 3(2001), pp. 299-315, p. 303.

¹² Unlike these poems, others had been written by other authors and were simply translated by him from Greek into Latin.

[W]hat Is the Best Form of Government You ask which governs better, a king or a senate. Neither, if (as is frequently the case) both are bad. But if both are good, then I think that the senate, because of its numbers, is the better and that the greater good lies in numerous good men. Perhaps it is difficult to find a group of good men; even more frequently it is easy for a monarch to be bad. A senate would occupy a position between good and bad; but hardly ever will you have a king who is not either good or bad. An evil senator is influenced by advice from better men than he; but a king is himself the ruler of his advisers. A senator is elected by the people to rule; a king attains this end by being born. In the one case blind chance is supreme; in the other, a reasonable agreement. The one feels that he was made senator by the people; the other feels that the people were created for him so that, of course, he may have subjects to rule (*Latin Poems*, #198. Thomas More. *Complete Works*, vol 3.2.)¹³.

On the other hand, More's view of a fallen world does not rest on the belief that human evil is rooted in an irreversible ontological condition. To the contrary, it seems to him that the environment in which citizens and rulers live end up affecting their character, habits, practices and even physical state. By way of example, as we read in a letter he wrote to his fellow English humanist John Colet in October 1504,

...in the country, where men are of themselves either almost innocent, or at least not ensnared in great sins, the services of any physician can be useful. But in the city because of the great numbers that congregate there, and because of their long-standing habits of vice, any physician will have come in vain unless he be the most skillful¹⁴.

Despite the realistic attitude adopted by More in the passage above, those same lines pave the way for the possibility that even a condition of vice can be turned into a challenge for a fruitful and virtuous regeneration of individual characters and societies. Indeed, although society itself and the political system designed to control it are vitiated by the existence of uneducated people, a new system of education might operate a significant change. It is for this reason that the second book of *Utopia* lays particular emphasis on the need for a humanistic education (made by liberal arts and the learning of classics in particular) for both religious¹⁵ and political leaders, as well as for children and adults¹⁶.

¹³ Citation of this poem is taken from Wegemer and Smith, *A Thomas More Source Book*, p. 237.

¹⁴ Quoted from Wegemer and Smith, *A Thomas More Source Book*, p. 176.

¹⁵ Cf. D.L. Masterson, 'The Educational Contributions of Sir Thomas More', *Journal of Thought*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (1997), pp. 25-36, pp. 26-28. The author speaks of More's letter contained in *In Defence of Humanism*, where More himself provides the portrait of a truly evangelical humanist.

¹⁶ Cf. Masterson, *Educational Contributions*, pp. 28-29. As the author explains with reference to the second book of *Utopia*, in the island of Utopia children and older adults sit together at the meal table, listening to readings conducive to virtue and conversating on the same topics, thus developing

Provided that peace and stability in the Island of Utopia are not a primeval and universally shared condition, but rather the outcome of planned education for the whole civic body, it becomes evident that its foreign policy could not be based on expectations of reciprocal loyalty, collaboration, and adherence to a single code of ethical and political justice between States. The possibility of establishing and preserving pacific relations with other States appears to be practicable, but actualization of such a condition cannot be guaranteed in principle. What is more, the process of foundation of Utopia, by implying the conquest and subjugation of native people¹⁷, as well as special practices of colonisation and warfare¹⁸, would seem to make political and territorial powers by themselves external to the Utopian project subservient to the needs of the latter – thus triggering a process that would undeniably undermine the possibility of an equal treatment to be secured at the international level.

In order to better understand the strategies adopted by More's utopian project in matters of foreign politics and identify the peculiar nature of his doctrines, a preliminary survey of the theoretical approaches adopted by two among the most notable authors of early 16th century, Machiavelli and Erasmus of Rotterdam might be useful. Given that the two authors set the basis for two internationalist schools of thought marked by strong methodological distinctions, respectively the realist and the idealist (or "liberal") ones, the main philosophical underpinnings of More's innovative approach might emerge in their distinctive traits by way of a comparative analysis with their opposed models of international relations.

III. MACHIAVELLI'S ETHICS AND POLITICS. SEPARATE DEONTOLOGIES?

Being one of the founding fathers of classical realism, Machiavelli contends that politics, both at a domestic and at an international level, is inextricably characterized by inescapable and endemic conflict. Despite the existence of a sharp academic disagreement over the real nature of his political project, it is generally assumed that, on his view, a leader's commitment to politics involves the possibility of entering the dimension of evil – i.e. a possibility that would entail the violation

their capacity for critical thinking and reasoning. Also, as Masterson notes (p. 34, footnote n. 31), the humanistic curriculum prescribed for the whole citizenship of Utopia presents impressively strong resemblances with the education that More himself received at Oxford University.

¹⁷ As Jackson suggests after recalling the foundation of Utopia (which was a peninsula before being transformed into an island by the intervention of the king), «[T]his peninsula was not terra nullius, for there was a resident population living there. It was these natives that Utopus and his soldiers conquered. To write of conquering is to imply conflict with bloodshed and perhaps death» (M. Jackson, 'How 'Utopian' is the Foreign Policy in Thomas More's Utopia?', *The European Legacy*, Vol. 27, No. 1(2022), pp. 57-67, p. 60).

¹⁸ Utopia, 209-211. Citations of *Utopia* are taken from Logan et al, Utopia.

of generally held ethical principles, such as reciprocal loyalty and respect of promises and/or covenants. Such violations, although unjustifiable in the light of generally accepted paradigms of ethical justice, might appear legitimate as necessary steps towards the achievement of established political goals (such as the preservation and aggrandizement of power). In our view, this is not to say that Machiavelli is trying to outline the fundamentals of an innovative morality – i.e. one in the light of which *any* political action would be justified from an ethical standpoint¹⁹, nor that he means to identify a *structural* separation between morality and politics – which would imply the possibility of justifying *politically* what would be otherwise condemnable *morally*²⁰. As we believe, Machiavelli conceives of politics as the possible theatre of dramatic situations for prospective statesmen who, *in exceptional cases* – i.e. cases in which a conflict emerges between the maximisation of political goals and the use of (ordinary) morality – ought to behave in the domain of politics with no concern for the latter²¹. Only in those exceptional cases, (would-be) statesmen should realize that politics presupposes a different dimension of duty from the one at the basis of ordinary ethical behavior. This is why

¹⁹ A discussion of the impressive number of scholarly interpretations on the matter goes outside the scopes of this paper. Suffices it to say that some do not believe that Machiavelli is separating the field (and the inner rationality of) politics from the one of morality. To the contrary, they contend that Machiavelli is outlining a radically new “political morality”. Among them see for instance Leo Strauss, who, although labelling Machiavelli as “teacher of evil”, discussed the virtue of the prince in terms of intrepidity of thought and grandeur of vision (L. Strauss, *Leo, Thoughts on Machiavelli* (Chicago, 1958), pp. 9, 13). Strauss believed that Machiavelli, as “the founder of modern political philosophy”, discovered “a whole new moral continent” (L. Strauss, *What is Political Philosophy?* (Glencoe, IL, 1959), p. 40. The sentence is cited in D. Johnston et al., *Machiavelli on Liberty and Conflict* (Chicago and London, 2017), p. 11). See also Quentin Skinner, who argues that the Machiavellian’s prince does not dispense with the notions of “good” and “evil” (Q. Skinner, ‘Machiavelli and the Misunderstanding of Princely Virtù’, in Johnston et. al., *Machiavelli on Liberty and Conflict*, pp. 139-163). Indeed, what he needs to give up is not moral virtue, but only the traditional and ordinary view of moral virtue. For a different view among the same subset of scholars, see Knoll, who proposes that, although Machiavelli does not appear to work out a real distinction between the inner rationality of politics and that of morality, this would not necessarily imply entering the dimension of moral evil. As he contends, Machiavelli would rather view politics in the light of an approach akin to a form of contemporary utilitarianism. If it were, so, this would mean that those political actions that are thought to violate traditionally accepted standards of ethical conduct would still be justified on an ethical level (M. Knoll, ‘Machiavelli’s Consequentialist Ethics of Responsibility’, *History of Political Thought* Vol. 40, No. 4(2019), pp. 631-648).

²⁰ On this point see G. Giorgini, ‘Machiavelli: The Drama of Politics and its Inherent Evil’ in T. Nys-S. de Wijze (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Evil* (London-New York, 2019), pp. 55-69, pp. 55-56. An author who notably established a necessary separation between politics and morality in Machiavelli’s thought is Benedetto Croce. On the autonomy of the two spheres see B. Croce, *Politics and Morals* (Translated by Salvatore J. Castiglione) (New York, 1945 [1925]), p. 59.

²¹ On the “tragic” interpretation of Machiavelli’s thought see G. Sasso, *Niccolò Machiavelli. Storia del suo pensiero politico*, (Bologna, 1993). Cf. Giorgini, *Machiavelli: The Drama of Politics*, p. 55.

they might be led by necessity to commit actions that collide with moral and/or religious imperatives, and to opt for the lesser evil²².

As an individual attitude, realism might rely on awareness that political agency addresses morally complex contexts, i.e. situations that call for a separation of deontology into two different domains: a political and an ethical one. By taking responsibility for their political role through a steady commitment to public service, virtuous statesmen would adopt a realistic approach in giving up the possibility and the hope to use moral qualities in circumstances in which morality and politics collide. A virtuous and realistic political activity presupposes that, in cases in which the actualisation of political goals occurs at the expenses of ethical ones, the former sphere duty ought to be prioritized²³.

Political realism, being understood in terms of an ability to analyze political reality²⁴ in its factual nature, requires special attention to inclinations, possibilities, and limits of human beings. The realistic outlook on mankind that Machiavelli seems to endorse might be ideally located between a totally optimistic and a radically pessimistic anthropological view²⁵. Against the utopian image of an intrinsically benevolent and altruistic mankind, a negative view portrays human beings as irremediably competitive and inclined to reciprocal conflict for the preservation and aggrandizement of their private interests. As an alternative between the two approaches, a realistic one might consider humans as self-centered and inclined to private pursuits, but also as individuals capable of cooperative action. In that light, war between humans would appear to be a lurking and real danger, but it would not qualify an ontological propensity to evil.

A similar approach might help to clarify Machiavelli's view of international relations. Provided that, in his thought, politics is an autonomous dimension of duty with respect to morality, the separation between the two spheres and their respective deontology will appear even stronger in the domain of inter-state confrontation, where laws and treaties are replaced by force. As Marco Cesa suggests with reference to Machiavelli's *Words to Be Spoken on the Law for Appropriating*

²² Cf. Giorgini, Machiavelli: The Drama of Politics, p. 55.

²³ Cf. Giorgini, Machiavelli: The Drama of Politics, pp. 55-56 and 67, footnote 3. The author quotes by way of example a passage of Machiavelli *Florentine Histories*, III, 7, in which the magistrates of Florence who fought against Pope Gregory XI are praised for prioritizing the welfare of their homeland over the wellbeing of their souls.

²⁴ On the idea of realism as a scientific approach see G.B. Mindle, 'Machiavelli's Realism', *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 47, No. 2(1985), pp. 212-230, p. 213: «The key to Machiavellian realism is not his willingness to condone the effective use of military force or even his proclamation that fidelity to what men call virtue cannot always guarantee political success; rather, it lies in his determination to sever once and for all the connection, heretofore taken for granted, between realism and moderation, between political science and a method of analysis that begins with the world as we first perceive it, with what is ordinary and typical».

²⁵ On this aspect and see M. Knoll, 'Machiavelli's realistisches Menschenbild und seine Rechtfertigung des Staats', *Philosophy and Society*, vol. 29, No.2(2018), pp. 182-201.

Money, Machiavelli draws a neat distinction between intra- and inter-state affairs. As he claims:

‘among private individuals, laws, contracts, and agreements make them keep faith, but among sovereigns only force does’ (2.1.1. translation?)²⁶.

As Cesa argues,

From the outset, then, the two fields are presented in different terms: at home, relations among citizens are regulated by the law, but abroad, relations among states are regulated by force. This crucial insight runs throughout Machiavelli’s major writings; it is no exaggeration to claim that it accounts for most of his views on international politics²⁷.

If, in special situations, statesmen are required, in the name of a supposed “political deontology”, to violate the ethical code generally adopted in ordinary domestic contexts, a realistic recognition of the tendency of each state to pursue self-interest in international relations will lead each not only to show caution and mistrust towards other States, but also to qualify certain attacks and defensive attempts as “honourable”, which is to say, as “ethically acceptable”. This concept is clearly expressed in a passage of the *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy*, precisely III, 40, in which Machiavelli says:

‘although deceit is detestable in all other things, in the conduct of war it is laudable and honourable’.

As Cesa suggests, a similar discourse applies to the passion of ambition:

‘Ambition’ too receives a different treatment depending on the context. At home, ‘ambition’ usually has a negative connotation, as it is often associated with the pursuit of individual goals at the expense of the common good; laws and institutions keep it in check. But abroad, things change. Not only is external ambition free of constraints, but, in the form of expansion, it becomes almost a necessity. In addition, it is functional to the achievement of some collective good; as such, it contributes to the consolidation and the prosperity of the state²⁸.

As it seems, the need of survival, preservation of power and accumulation of resources might be explained by Machiavelli as tentative forms of adaptation to a political reality where both individuals and States are – and take themselves to be – holders of concrete and contingent interests. As it might be supposed, Machiavelli does not endorse the view that mankind is inherently inclined to commit evil, nor does he believe that statesmen with ambitions of power and self-

²⁶See M. Cesa, *Machiavelli on International Relations* (Oxford, 2014), p. 2.

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸Cesa, *Machiavelli on International Relations*, p. 3.

aggrandizement are necessary prone to injustice. On the other hand, the sheer possibility that one State might be betrayed by another State commits both States and their leaders to beware of reciprocal enmity²⁹. This is why they would be ready to adopt certain lines of agency that would otherwise be taken to violate the common standards of morality.

Interdependence between States is not ruled by supernational political entities. To the contrary, the distinctive individual independence of the main actors of the modern international systems commits them to pursuing their self-interest, and to take the possibility of pacific collaboration into account only as an instrument for the maintenance or self-aggrandizement. In fact, a realistic approach would recognize the potential for reciprocal collaboration and, all the same, preserve the idea of a correlation between politics, State-power and individual interests. That same idea, in a realistic perspective, is supposed to guide decisions not only in exceptional conditions in which cooperation is not possible, but also in ordinary contexts, in which the inclination to personal ambition, reciprocal injustice and less frequent use of rational motivations represent a persistent threat to reasonable cooperation³⁰.

IV. ERASMUS AS A CHAMPION OF IDEALISM

As a Renaissance humanist, Erasmus of Rotterdam played a crucial role in recovering not only Greek and Roman ancient culture, but also the original messages of early Christianity. Those theoretical domains, being canvassed and explored in their potential intersections and aspects of reciprocal compatibility, are employed by the author as intellectual resources able to revitalize the fields of education, literature, and religion in modern European society³¹. Erasmus, as well as and the circle of humanists gathered around him in an ideal “republic of letters”, cultivated ambitions of religious, intellectual, and cultural reforms, being committed to the elaboration of ethical and epistemological foundations for peaceful societies and collaborative inter-state relations. Understood in broad terms, humanism rejected the medieval assumption of an unchanging and transcendent ontological foundation for history, social institutions, and political settings³². Differently from other forms of humanism, however, the Erasmian one stood out for its tendency to situate itself apart from concrete sociopolitical contexts. In this respect, unlike

²⁹ Giorgini, *The Drama of Politics*, p. 61. Cf. Benner (E. Benner, *Machiavelli's Ethics* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford, 2009, p. 193), who claims: «I suggest that Machiavelli's statements about human badness are best understood as cautionary and regulative judgments».

³⁰ Cf. D. Ilodigwe, 'Machiavelli and the Limits of Realism in International Relations', *Journal of International Relations and Foreign Policy*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2019), pp. 20-38, p. 28.

³¹ See Dewald, *Europe 1450 to 1789*, p. 60. Cf. H. Yoran, *Between Utopia and Dystopia. Erasmus, Thomas More, and the Humanist Republic of Letters* (Plymouth, 2010), p. 1.

³² Cf. Yoran, *Between Utopia and Dystopia*, pp. 3-4.

other humanists, he refused to embrace both traditional social standards and existing city-states as standpoints for his proposed normative characterisation of justice. In fact, as Yoran suggests, «the Erasmian humanists, as universal intellectuals, spoke on behalf of a non-yet-existent Christian and humanist commonwealth. Erasmus's and More's political and social writings clearly attest to this»³³. What is more, «the Erasmian humanists emphasized that government should be founded on mutual understanding between the rulers and subjects, based in turn on common values of reason and morality»³⁴.

Differently from Machiavelli, Erasmus is animated by strong peace-oriented culture and cosmopolitan needs. Being a zealous defender of the possibility of a cooperation between states based on loyalty and reciprocal respect, he believes that war should be fought and expunged from social and political relationships – as it is well known, he fully subscribed to the idea expressed by the Latin phrase *dulce bellum inexpertis* (war is sweet for those who have not experienced it)³⁵. In his view, virtuous politics would rule out conflict at both a domestic and an international level, and peace would be qualified not only as a moral, but also as a realistically implementable political ideal – one whose feasibility relies on a more “positive” conception of humanity. The perspective of putting war to an end – which is generally taken to be Erasmus' most prominent concern³⁶, is justified by an approach that might be qualified as “idealistic”. Idealism, which moves from a more positive conception of mankind than realism, makes room for the possibility that war can be stopped through legislative measures (e.g. by way of international arbitration or supranational institutions), activities of liberalisation of politics like the transformation of States from monarchic to republican-democratic forms of government), or simply through trade³⁷. Erasmus' main concern, then, is to find ways to make politics “moral”. In his view, war depends in the first place on the will of single sovereigns to overwhelm each other. Educating regents to concern for common good as opposed to an arbitrary will to power, as well as guiding them to the profession of authentic Christian values and to the cultivation of human dignity, will foster peace (especially between Christians – for war between them is for Erasmus a real scandal)³⁸.

³³ Yoran, *Between Utopia and Dystopia*, p. 7.

³⁴ Yoran, *Between Utopia and Dystopia*, p. 169.

³⁵ See Erasmus' commentary of that Latin proverb in his *Adagia*.

³⁶ Cf. E. Garin, *Introduzione a Erasmo* (San Domenico di Fiesole, 1988), pp. 7-54. See also L. Firpo (ed.), *Erasmo da Rotterdam. Il Lamento della Pace* (Torino, 1967), pp. 7-24; R.H. Bainton, *Erasmus of Christendom* (London, 1969); L.E. Halkin, *Erasme* (Paris, 1987); J-C. Margolin, *Erasme par lui-même* (Paris 1965); J-C. Margolin, *Guerre et paix dans la pensée d'Erasme* (Paris, 1970).

³⁷ Cf. A. Panebianco, *Guerrieri democratici* (Bologna, 1998), p. 47-56.

³⁸ See for instance Erasmus's adherence to the Latin phrase “*dulce bellum inexpertis*”, in *Against War* (1097: especially 55-57).

To this goal, in 1516 (nearly two years after the composition of Machiavelli's *Prince*) Erasmus published his *Institutio principis christiani*, a text dedicated to Charles V, King of Spain and Lord of the Netherlands, who would have become Emperor in 1530. In the book, which combines pedagogical and political interests, Erasmus provides normative indications on how to be an efficient and ethically excellent Christian prince. The virtuous ruler is characterized as a man who, although educated in relation with his fellow citizens³⁹, stands out for the ability to perform a paternal role towards his own people. As Erasmus claims for instance in *Institutio* 1,67:

« Bonus princeps non alio animo debet esse in suos cives, quam bonus pater familias in suos domesticos», « Princeps quid aliud est quam medicus rei publicae» («A good prince ought not to have a different attitude toward his citizens, than a good householder toward his household». Our English translation).

The cultivation of peace is in the first place a prerogative of the ruler, who is praised by Erasmus for the practical capacity to express his knowledge, culture and virtuous habits in an institutionally framed reality. Unlike in Machiavelli's thought, the normative characterisation of ruling power for Erasmus is not functional to the preservation and/or aggrandizement of rulership itself. In his view, the imperial dignity which Charles will soon happen to take on, is supremely relevant only as the widest platform for the ruler's exercise of the role of promoter and guardian of peace⁴⁰. At the same time, the good prince will exert through institutional channels an educative activity able to instill responsibility in citizens.

As Erasmus maintains, virtuous sovereignty ought to produce a public action able to instill in people the seeds of a moral, religious, and political renewal. This, in its turn, would have peace as its main target. In some passages of his works, he also stresses that the role of arbitration played by clergymen is essential to the cessation of hostilities, and he also contends that, at a theoretical level, it would contribute to a legitimisation of idealistic goals and methods in international relations⁴¹. The only form of war that Erasmus accepts, as Garin writes, is the one

³⁹On this aspect see F. De Michelis Pintacuda, 'L'*Institutio principis christiani* di Erasmo da Rotterdam', *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome* vol. 99, n. 1(1987), pp. 261-273, pp. 270-271. At p. 271 the author quotes the following sentence from Erasmus' *Institutio principis christiani* (3,6): «*equidem optarim principem natum et educatum apud eos, quibus sit imperaturus, quod optime coeat et coalescat amicitia, quoties a natura proficiscitur initium benevolentiae*» («Indeed, I would wish for a prince to be born and brought up among the people he is to rule, for friendship develops and consolidates best whenever good will springs from nature»; our English Translation).

⁴⁰ Cf. De Michelis, "*Institutio principis christiani*", p. 265. As the author suggests in her article, the prince's dignity relies on the practical and public effects of his political and pedagogical role.

⁴¹See Erasmus, letter n. 288 to Anthony van Bergen: «It is the proper function of the Roman pontiff, of the cardinals, bishops, and abbots, to settle disputes between Christian princes; this is where they should wield their authority and reveal the power they possess by virtue of men's regard for their holy of-

«against vices, against sins, against faults, not against the Turks»⁴². A similar view would be justified by the fact that Erasmus himself did not concentrate on existing conflicts between Christians and the so-called “infidels”, but rather on the possibility of a conversion of the latter through their encounter with Christians and their attitude – notably shaped by adherence to principles of universal love, altruism, and reciprocal service. After all, even among the Turks, as Erasmus writes, there are men closer to Christianity than most of us are⁴³. Ultimately, if morality and politics, for Machiavelli, are two different and methodologically autonomous universes of meaning – which implies that the ‘tragic’ nexus between war and politics is not embedded in moral discourse, for Erasmus, vice versa, war is morally condemned, and an absolute correspondence between morality and politics is required for virtuous Christian behavior, in the domain of citizenship as well in that of rulership. In the light of a similar normative framework, the social and political divisions identifiable between peoples (both in and outside Europe) appeared of little significance in comparison with the unity that shared Christendom could engender⁴⁴.

On the other hand, it is worth noting that, despite Erasmus’ statements of principle, his pacifist cosmopolitanism (expressed in his desire to evangelize both princes and the whole world) is not free from limits and contradictions. In fact, while criticizing the principle of holy war, Erasmus does not always have a peaceful attitude towards the pagan Turks⁴⁵. A notable example of this attitude is found in a pamphlet written in 1530, *A Most Useful Discussion Concerning Proposals for War Against the Turks, Including an Expositon of Psalm 28*: (also entitled *De bello Turcico*). In his commentary on Psalm 28 contained in the treatise, Erasmus states that, as the Turks were approaching Wien, he acknowledges that it might be legitimately asked whether war against them should be declared or not. Here Erasmus stresses the absurdity of totally denying Christians the right to make war and contends that this right legitimately relies on the magistrate’s right to punish offenders⁴⁶—an argument which he explicitly rejected in his *Against War*. Erasmus concludes by arguing that it was necessary to respond to the Turks with arms, because not doing so would be equivalent to handing over the Christian republic

lice» (Tr. Mynors et al. in *The Correspondence of Erasmus. Letters to 142 to 297. 1501 to 1514*. Annotated by Wallace K. Ferguson, in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 2 (Toronto and Buffalo, 1975), p. 281.

⁴² Garin, *Introduzione a Erasmo*, p. 19. Our English translation.

⁴³ Cf. Erasmus, *Against War* (D.B. Updike (ed. by), Erasmus. *Against War*. With an Introduction by J.W. Mackail, (Boston, 1907), pp. 56-57.

⁴⁴ Cf. P. Den Boer, *The History of the Idea of Europe* (London, 1995), p. 37; D. Boucher, *The Limits of Ethics in International Relations Natural Law, Natural Rights, and Human Rights in Transition* (Oxford, 2009), p. 56.

⁴⁵ Cf. L. Scuccimarra, *I confini del mondo. Storia del cosmopolitismo dall’Antichità al Settecento* (Bologna, 2006), pp. 179-187.

⁴⁶ Cf. Yorán, *Between Utopia and Dystopia*, p. 212, note 83.

to very ferocious enemies and abandoning our brothers, oppressed by their unworthy slavery⁴⁷. This admission by Erasmus, at any rate, should not be read as a rejection of his own idealism. To the contrary, his realistic observations (which do not certainly justify inclinations to glory and self-aggrandizement by individuals and States) might contribute to a reflection on the importance of preserving peaceful inclinations and intentions even in problematic cases.

As Erasmus states for instance in the work at issue,

If Christians wish to fight, cries Luther, let them fight the invisible enemy in their midst with the sword of the spirit. 'To speak my mind openly, I should as unwillingly take up the sword against the Turk as against my Christian brother⁴⁸.

As Alan Ryan suggests with reference to Erasmus' supposed idealistic intentions, «if Christians wish to fight, they should fight the Turks; but even that they ought not to be too hasty to do, seeing that there is no point in defeating the Turks if we cannot institute a Christian peace»⁴⁹. In this respect, as we believe, Erasmus's approach to international relations does not resolve itself into a utopianism totally detached from a consideration of the problematic nature of reality. Still, it not only retains an ethical basis, but also preserves the possibility of a homogeneity of conduct between the domestic and the inter-state dimension of political interactions.

V. THOMAS MORE ON THE UTOPIAN PROJECT. A LESSER-EVIL MORALITY?

Having offered a few (and certainly non-exhaustive) suggestions on the approaches of Machiavelli and Erasmus on peace and war in domestic and international relations, we are now able to start discussing Thomas More's approach in the light of the two normative paradigms of realism and idealism. Admittedly, the themes of war and peace are not, at least at a first reading, so central in More's *Utopia*. In the first book, the author denounces the injustice that seems to pervade

⁴⁷See Erasmus, 'A Most Useful Discussion Concerning Proposals for War Against the Turks, Including an Expositon of Psalm 28': «What man is there with a little spirit left who would not rather meet his end in battle than endure humiliating slavery under those barbarians? The Jews are in a better case among us than the Christians among the Turks, who treat them less like humans than like packhorses» (tr. Baker-Smith in D. Baker-Smith, 'A Most Useful Discussion Concerning Proposals for War Against the Turks, Including an Exposition of Psalm 28', in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 64, (Toronto and Buffalo, 2005), pp. 257-258). Erasmus is ideally replying to those who believe that it is easier to be a Christian under Turkish rule than under Christian princes or the Roman pontiff (p. 257).

⁴⁸Erasmus, *A Most Useful Discussion*, p. 211.

⁴⁹A. Ryan, *On Politics. A History of Political Thought from Herodotus to the Present* (London, 2012), p. 288.

the English and, more extensively, the European society of his time (only in the second book he proceeds to outline the underpinnings of a just society). Notably, he diagnoses the prevailing social evils. Theft and begging, combined with wandering, appear as ordinary and widespread phenomena. To defend themselves against these evils, institutions often punish crimes with the most severe penalty, i.e. death. The problem, however, is not so much to prosecute crimes and condemn them as to understand their causes⁵⁰.

As More explains through the words of Raphael Hythlodæus, poverty is the primary source of those evils. In fact, the ultimate reason of the crimes lies in the forced urbanisation of populations, who had to leave the countryside after the institution of the so called “enclosures”, i.e. norms which authorized a transformation of cultivated lands into lands for sheep farming. A further reason is the return by mutilated soldiers from the front, who are described as unable to do anything but steal or roam. War, in this respect, affects the life and habits of common people. In a similar fashion, the power politics practiced by the kingdoms of Europe had profound consequences on political oppression, the militarisation of life, and the extremely serious sacrifices that the population had to suffer due to war devastations. In short, the entire political and social structure must stand in the dock. That state of things is not certainly to be attributed to man's alleged wickedness (unlike what Machiavelli used to say precisely in the same years). Politicians, i.e. rulers and aristocratic classes, rather than acting according to the common interest, do so on the basis of particular interest. Among these special interests, a leading role is played by power politics, which is pursued primarily by rulers through the instrument of war.

To put an end to injustice, not only the structure of society, but also the foreign policy of each State must change. For the purposes of the present essay, suffices it to say that, in his disapproval of power politics, More condemns the expansionist aims of the sovereigns of his time. The institution of the monarchy is primarily responsible for this state of affairs: the rulers' morality (which he carefully distinguishes from the morals of the ruled) has transformed the international community, usually characterized by benevolence, into an arena in which treaties of alliance

⁵⁰ The problem of theft is addressed by Hythlodæus in the context of the narration of a debate he had taken part in at the table of Cardinal John Morton. As Hythlodæus points out, «The penalty is too harsh in itself, yet it isn't an effective deterrent. Simple theft is not so great a crime that it ought to cost a man his head, yet no punishment however severe can restrain those from robbery who have no other way to make a living!» (p. 57). Hythlodæus contends that milder forms of punishment would be not only morally just, but also expedient. More seems to agree with Hythlodæus on the idea that the problem of theft cannot be solved by punishing thieves, given that theft stems mainly from poverty, which, in its turn, is the outcome of a plurality of intersected social factors.

are stipulated with the not too tacit implication that they will be violated shortly thereafter⁵¹.

Unlike Machiavelli, who, as we have suggested in this essay, justifies the ruler's need to enter the dimension of evil and injustice from the point of view of a distinctively political deontology, More seems to condemn (expressing a tacit agreement with Hythlodæus) the conduct generally practiced by princes, taking it to be reprehensible from a moral perspective. As Hythlodæus states for example in Book II of *Utopia*, showing the impossibility of an alternative justice freely practicable by the plebs,

Thus people are apt to think that justice is altogether a humble, plebeian virtue, far beneath the dignity of kings. Or else they conclude that there are two kinds of justice, one for the common herd, a lowly justice that creeps along the ground, hedged in everywhere and encumbered with chains; and the other, which is the justice of princes, much more majestic and hence more free than common justice, so that it can do anything it wants and nothing it doesn't want (pp. 199 and 201)⁵².

The idea that the virtues of a ruler might differ from those of ordinary people had already been explored by various political writers in the late fifteenth century, and it found its most notable expression in Machiavelli⁵³. However, what Machiavelli seems to justify on the level of sheer political deontology (which is to say, one in tension with the dictates of a morality based on loyalty and mutual respect) is regarded by More as unacceptable from a moral point of view. The same condemnation is expressed by Hythlodæus, who suggests by relying on empirical observation that

most princes apply themselves to the arts of war, in which I have neither ability nor interest, instead of to the good arts of peace. They are generally more set on acquiring new kingdoms by hook or crook than on governing well those they already have (53).

⁵¹ More, *Utopia*, cit., pp. 103-105. In this case, as it seems, More anticipates the so-called «commitment problems» addressed by Fearon (J.D. Fearon, 'Rationalist explanations for war', *International Organisation*, Volume 49, Issue 3(1995), pp. 379-414).

⁵² Quo fit ut iustitia tota videatur aut non nisi plebea virtus et humilis quaeque longo intervallo subsidat infra regale fasugium, aut uti saltem duae sint, quarum altera vulgus deceat, pedestris et humirepa, neve usquam saepta transilire queat, multis undique restricta vinculis, altera principum virtus quae, sicuti sit quam illa popularis augustior, sic est etiam longo intervallo liberior, ut cui nihil non liceat nisi quod non libeat).

⁵³ Cf. Logan et al., *Utopia*, p. 201, footnote 102. With reference to the virtue of common people see G.M.A. Logan, *The Meaning of More's Utopia* (Princeton, 1983), p. 78, footnote 42 and Q. Skinner, *Skinner, Quentin*, 1978. *The foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol. I: The Renaissance (Cambridge, 1978), p. 163. Both authors mention Guicciardini, who (similarly to Machiavelli in his Discourses) complains that the Florentine's people lifestyle is "such that everyone wants very much to be rich", and that "this appetite makes men pursue their personal advantage without respect or consideration for the public honor and glory".

By saying so, Hythlodæus dwells on the mercenary armies (“hired soldiers”), who suffocate and paralyze, with their very presence, European countries, in particular France and England.

The context in which these thoughts of Hythlodæus are expressed is a debate between him and Thomas More on whether a wise scholar should join a sovereign’s council and give appropriate advice. Unlike More, who expresses his support to that possibility⁵⁴, Hythlodæus believes that a scholar could not commit himself to practical politics for the impossibility to produce a real change in the rulers’ attitude by sheer advice, especially in virtue of the fact that, in the existing structure of society, both rulers and citizens are motivated by sheer self-interest⁵⁵. This is why it would be more profitable for him to devote himself to a contemplative life⁵⁶.

In Hythlodæus’ view, the impracticability of a good education in the existing society finds its premise in the idea that only a full reconstruction of society from the roots up might successfully serve the purpose. In a constant cross-reference between idealism and pragmatism, More makes explicit reference to a classical *topos* of political realism, i.e. the idea of “the lesser evil”. In fact, he portrays himself as a man who believes that a paradigm of absolute ethical perfection, both individual and collective, should be abandoned. Putting aside a substantial agreement between More and Hythlodæus on the need to criticize modern European society from an ethical point of view, the dialectical tension between the two characters seems to express itself on the terrain of an idealism that More does not appear to accept without reserve⁵⁷. If this is so, a plausible reading of More’s *Utopia*

⁵⁴ As Skinner argues (Foundations, pp. 216-217), More (both as a character of his *Utopia* and as a real scholar) is intrigued by the possibility of giving advice to the sovereign (thus following a distinctively humanist tradition, like Erasmus). At the time in which he wrote the first book of *Utopia*, he seemed to have been considering an invitation to join the council of King Henry VIII.

⁵⁵ Cf. J.H. Hexter, *More’s Utopia: The Biography of an Idea* (Princeton, 1952), IV, ci.

⁵⁶ *Utopia*, p. 53: “You are twice mistaken, my dear More”, he said, “first in me and then in the situation itself. I don’t have the capacity you ascribe to me, and if I had it in the highest degree, the public would still not be any better off if I exchanged my contemplative leisure for active endeavour”.

⁵⁷ On this aspect see J. Nendza, ‘Political Idealism in More’s “Utopia”’, *The Review of Politics*, vol. 46, No. 3(1984), pp. 428-451, especially at p. 429. As the author explains, some scholars believe that More sees *Utopia* as a truly desirable model of political organisation (independently of the possibility of actualising it). Others, instead, see inherent contradictions in the functioning of *Utopia* and, rather than taking them as flaws of More’s construction, regard them as evidence of More’s awareness of the limits of *Utopia*. Among the representatives of the first group of scholars see Hexter, *More’s Utopia*, especially at p. 57, and E.S.J. Surtz, *The Praise of Pleasure*, (Cambridge (MA), 1957). Representatives of the second interpretation are Johnson (R. Johnson, *More’s Utopia: Ideal and Illusion* (New Haven, 1969), who takes More’s *Utopia* as a display of irony and refuses to take it as a serious work of political philosophy, and Lewis, who describes *Utopia* as “a book whose real place is not in the history of political thought so much as in that of fiction and satire [...]It becomes

would not incautiously identify the plan of an ideal society illustrated by Hythlodæus as More's own view in matters of the good society. As we shall see, the evident discrepancy between cultivation of peace at a domestic level and the justification of war at an inter-state level might not be explained in terms of separate deontologies, like in Machiavelli's case. Such a discrepancy can rather be interpreted as evidence of the inability of a purely idealistic approach to defend the feasibility of a transformation of society by way of a cooperative interaction between virtuous intellectuals and politicians. A similar case might be made to frame the reality of international conflicts and justify war from an ethical, and not simply from a political, point of view.

VI. WAR IN HYTHLODÆUS' UTOPIAN CONSTRUCTION. FROM A "BEASTLY PHENOMENON" TO A MORALLY LEGITIMATE PRACTICE

As we have seen so far, Hythlodæus firmly and repeatedly rejects the possibility of a successful transformative action of intellectuals in political practice. By so doing, he responds to a realistic solicitation by More which is worth exploring. As Hythlodæus explains, direct intervention of virtuous scholars in politics by scholars would prove totally unfruitful on two grounds, respectively a practical and a theoretical one. In the first place, rulers would never accept proposals for a deep transformation of society in educational terms – which Hythlodæus presents as the only chance for a positive political change. This would imply the necessity of intellectuals to put themselves on the same level as those who make the world unjust and warlike. From a theoretical point of view, a further reason to reject involvement of virtuous intellectuals in politics relies on Hythlodæus' inclination to identify the morally good and the expedient. This tendency, which is typical of Erasmian humanism, finds its roots not only in a strategy of identification of the ancient values of *honestas* and *utilitas* (a tendency which Cicero himself pursued by appropriating Stoic insights)⁵⁸, but also in an intellectual approach that, by pro-

intelligible and delightful as soon as we take it for what it is—a holiday work, a spontaneous overflow of intellectual high spirits, a revel of debate, paradox, comedy and (above all) of invention, which starts many hares and kills none" (C.S. Lewis, Clive S., *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama. The Oxford History of English Literature, III* (Oxford: 1954), pp. 167, 169). A different stance is endorsed by Logan (*Meaning of More's Utopia*), who, although refusing to believe in a full identification of More's ideas with those expressed by Hythlodæus, contends that *Utopia* is a work of serious political-philosophic import. Logan argues that *Utopia* would express More's tendency to show the limits of Erasmian Christian humanism by way of a narrative which combines utopianism (which might be found in Hythlodæus' narration) with aspects of *realpolitik*. For a richer survey of scholarly views on the relation between Hythlodæus and More see Avineri 1962: 278-83.

⁵⁸ Cf. Logan et al., *Utopia*, xxvii.

fessing abundance by models of absolute ethical perfection, precludes the possibility of justifying “second-best” political undertakings.

More’s perplexity with regard to Hythlodæus’ approach revolves around the idea of a commonwealth that would always act morally *in a supposedly best possible way* and attain the highest expediency at the same time. This does not mean, however, that he adheres to a specific interpretation of Machiavelli’s view on the relationships between politics and morals in the domestic sphere, i.e. one supposedly based on the existence of two separate deontologies; nor could he reasonably subscribe to a Machiavellian model of international relations, i.e. one in the light of which war would be justified as “honorable” on the basis of its ability to contribute to both the princes’ ambitions of glory and inclinations to the aggrandizement of their states.

To better understand More’s authentic view on the relationship between ethics and politics, it might be useful to consider the following passage of the first book of *Utopia*. Being Faced with Hythlodæus’ objection to becoming an adviser to some prince, More points out that, although giving up the possibility of a commonwealth in which citizens are at the same time virtuous men, anyone who knows the political and social reality of the time should not abandon the State to itself. On the contrary, one should contribute, even indirectly, to reducing evil. As More replies to Hythlodæus:

But there is another philosophy, better suited for the role of a citizen, that takes its cue, adapts itself to the drama in hand and acts its part neatly and appropriately. This is the philosophy for you to use. [...] So go through with the drama in hand as best you can, and don't spoil it all just because you happen to think of a play by someone else that might be more elegant. “That’s how things go in the commonwealth, and in the councils of princes. If you cannot pluck up bad ideas by the root, or cure long-standing evils to your heart’s content, you must not therefore abandon the commonwealth. Don’t give up the ship in a storm because you cannot hold back the winds. You must not deliver strange and out-of-the-way speeches to people with whom they will carry no weight because they are firmly persuaded the other way. Instead, by an indirect approach, you must strive and struggle as best you can to handle everything tactfully – and thus what you cannot turn to good, you may at least make as little bad as possible? For it is impossible to make everything good unless all men are good, and that I don't expect to see for quite a few years yet’ (p. 97).

We might wonder, then, whether the case of inter-state war can be framed in terms of a necessity that, far from being amoral, might be interpreted in the light of a “lesser-evil morality” framework. If this is the true stance endorsed by More, this would imply a substantial disagreement with Hythlodæus. As Hythlodæus believes, war is never a necessity. It is rather the offspring of a choice between different options:

However that may be, though, I certainly cannot think it's in the public interest to maintain for the emergency of war such a vast multitude of people who trouble and disturb the peace: you never have war unless you choose it, and peace is always more to be considered than war (61, 63).

In his view (and, in all likelihood, also in More's view), peace should be the main interest of European sovereigns, who, by contrast, appear to be concerned only with extending their territories. As Hythlodæus believes, European rulers should be inspired in their political agency by the wisdom of the Acori. Those people, after the military conquest of a new territory, one over which their king had some hereditary right, realize that governing another people is a too onerous task. This is why they compel their ruler to adopt a radical decision: he should choose either one or the other kingdom, as no one would have wanted a half-king. Alternatively, Hythlodæus takes the Macarese people as a role model. Their king, very wisely, solemnly swore on the very day of his inauguration not to keep in the treasury but 1000 pounds of gold, as that sum would have been sufficient to defend the kingdom from possible aggressions and, all the same, it would in no way have allowed wars of conquest or invasions by foreign peoples (94, 96).

As Hythlodæus maintains, war is a senseless thing, which depends on the calculations of short-sighted and greedy ruling elites. Either a sudden change of paradigm takes place, or the world it will keep getting worse and worse. After such radical criticism in the first Book of *Utopia*, one would expect that, from the point of view of the international community, an alternative, more peaceful world should be structured, i.e. one based on bonds of mutual friendship between peoples and States. Indeed, it is only to a very small extent that it is so.

In the second book of *Utopia*, in a chapter emblematically entitled *Military Practices (De re militari)*, Hythlodæus sets the record straight: the Utopians are peaceful as a result of their having achieved justice – which is a guarantee of peace – through the abolition of private property⁵⁹, and they detest war to the highest degree as a truly beastly thing. However, they should not find themselves unprepared if war is needed:

They utterly despise war as an activity fit only for beasts, yet practised more by man than by any other animal. Unlike almost every other people in the world, they think nothing so inglorious as the glory won in battle. Yet on certain assigned days both men and women carry on vigorous military training, so they will be fit to fight should the need arise. But they do not easily commit themselves to war, if not with a view to protecting their own

⁵⁹ A treatment of the issue of the abolition of private property in the Utopian regime goes outside the scopes of the present paper. We refer readers to F. Raschi, 'Pace e guerra in «Utopia» di Thomas More', *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* vol. 9, No. 1(2016), pp. 64-91.

land, driving invading armies from the territories of their friends, or liberating an oppressed people (Non temere: capi assumunt tamen, nisi quo aut suos fines tueantur, aut amicorum terris infusos hostes propulsent, aut populum quempiam tyrannide pressum miserati (quod humanitatis gratia faciunt) suis viribus tyranni iugo et servitute liberent) (201, 203. Our translation, slightly modified).

Logan's translation of "non temere capes sunt tamen" is "they go to war only for good reasons". In our opinion, a more literal translation, which considers the adverb "*temere*" as indicating "haphazardly", or "with ease and enthusiasm", might imply that Hythlodæus is not justifying war as a morally sound choice – although he is clearly saying that there are valid reasons for Utopians to engage in war. This idea would fit with the fact that, despite the fundamental pacifism of Utopia, its citizens are reportedly faced with the possibility of warlike necessities.

Having established that utopians do not wage war for trivial and thoughtless reasons (which implies that they abhor the wars of conquest and offensive wars), at least three cases of "war for good reasons" are admissible for Utopians: (1) to defend their borders; (2) to repel enemies whether they have invaded friendly territories or, (3) to free a people oppressed by a tyrannical form of government. A self-defense war is one of the cases admitted by the medieval *bellum iustum*: the response to an injury (or *peccatum* or *culpa*) is a just cause of war. At the time of the composition of *Utopia*, More's undisputed authority in matters of justification of war was still San Thomas, for whom war is legitimate if it is declared by legitimately constituted authorities, if there is a just cause (that is, precisely, a fault on the part of those against whom war is waged) and, finally, whether the requirement of the *recta intentio* is present (i.e. if war is waged for the sake of the promotion of good and avoidance of evil: essentially, revenge for its own sake is not allowed)⁶⁰.

To extend the possibility of waging war to cases where one's friends and allies are wronged might seem an undue stretch, but it is still understandable, especially given the importance of the ideals of "alliance" and "friendship" in the Utopian regime. In fact, "friends" and "allies" are those states that either have benefited from Utopia or are governed by magistrates of the Utopian Republic itself (197). In this light, it is understandable that an insult that affects them would deserve the same type of sanctions war that the inhabitants of Utopia, if attacked *in propria persona*, would expect their rulers to issue. As it is easy to assume, a similar posi-

⁶⁰ See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, XVI, *Secunda secundae*, quaestio n. 40, *Whether it is always sinful to wage war?* (in Saint Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica. Complete Edition*, translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London, 2014), pp. 5719-5720): «In order for a war to be just, three things are necessary. First, the authority of the sovereign by whose command the war is to be waged [...] Secondly, a just cause is required, namely that those who are attacked, should be attacked because they deserve it on account of some fault [...] Thirdly, it is necessary that the belligerents should have a rightful intention, so that they intend the advancement of good, or the avoidance of evil».

tion risks dramatically to expand the possibilities for military intervention of a political community, especially in a context like the international, in which too many interests are involved.

The third cause for just war introduced by Hythlodæus, on the other hand, constitutes an absolute novelty in internationalist thought: Utopians can fight a war *out of pity* for a people oppressed by tyranny and, by so doing, establish freedom from oppression and slavery. This way of justifying war, if examined in the light of the times More writes, is nothing short of revolutionary. We might assume that a Stoic ideal of universal philanthropy – one notably praised by Renaissance humanists⁶¹ – is here intersected with a conceptualisation of war as an appropriate course of action. Further grounds of Stoic inspiration for legitimisation of certain wars can be traced in relation to Hythlodæus' discussion of colonisation. On the one hand, the activity of colonisation of new territories prospected in the utopian project seems to respond to needs for demographic rebalancing that do not necessarily contemplate war as an inevitable course of action. The needs of Utopia do not have absolute priority over those of the colonized people. To the contrary, Utopians cannot take advantage of lands occupied by others:

And if the population throughout the entire island exceeds the quota, they enrol citizens out of every city and plant a colony under their own laws on the mainland near them, wherever the natives have plenty of unoccupied and uncultivated land (135, 137).

Hythlodæus defends the legitimacy of activities of colonisation which, besides avoiding the violation of already cultivated lands, are undertaken by an endemically peaceful and cohesive republic like Utopia. The main effect of such undertakings – in case the colonized people willingly accept them – is not only an extension of the same values and institutions of the motherland to other territories and peoples, but also a homogenisation of cultures and lifestyles which creates one single people. If applied outside national borders, values such as justice, solidarity, moderation and philanthropy – i.e. the same cultivated by Utopia at a domestic level – seem to cohere with Stoic principles. It is also for this reason that, as we might suppose, colonisation finds moral legitimacy. That same idea, however, would justify warlike reaction against people unwilling to accept customs and institutions of the motherland. The thought of a network of solidarity and justice that extends over and above the borders of the Utopian Republic would also act as a basis for moral condemnation of those people who do not make use of the resources provided by their territories. Waste of goods and the refusal to put them at disposal of other human beings would cause legitimate wars. As Hythlodæus for instance claims in the second book of *Utopia*:

⁶¹See Logan et al., *Utopia*, especially xxxii and 45.

For by their policies the Utopians make the land yield an abundance for all, though previously it had seemed too poor and barren even to support the natives. But those who refuse to live under their laws they drive out of the land they claim for themselves; and against those who resist them, they wage war. They think it is perfectly justifiable to make war on people who leave their land idle and waste yet forbid the use and possession of it to others who, by the law of nature, ought to be supported from it (137).

As Theodore Ruysen points out, Hythlodæus' theory presents itself as a curious mixture of humanitarian idealism and British realism⁶². We should not forget that More's composition of *Utopia* takes place at a time at which England, alongside the Iberian Peninsula, has energetically committed itself to the conquest of the New World. More has Hythlodæus move from repudiating war as a beastly phenomenon to legitimizing wars of conquest of underpopulated and economically underdeveloped territories. War, once presented as detested by Utopians, ceases to be seen in its beastly nature, and becomes a necessary step in the search for the supreme goal of universal well-being. Indeed, the export of the utopian ideal (being uprooted from any local determination) of *res publica* is a worthy cause of war⁶³.

Of course, Hythlodæus does not directly present the wars legitimized in *Utopia* as wars of conquest. However, the intervention of Utopians in international politics is far from being limited or sporadic. In fact, the Utopian community engages in trade with other peoples to enrich itself. With a positive balance of trade, it pays the mercenaries (the so-called *Zapoletes*) (209) and tries to instigate revolts and targeted killings in the enemy kingdoms. As Luigi Firpo writes, the Utopians love peace without refusing war. Indeed, they are always ready to wage a defensive war, as well as to help oppressed people. The solidarity experienced at a domestic level between people who treat each other as equal and ignore social conflicts generates unity of views and intentions. Such unity turns into an "expansive impulse", buttressed by the conviction of being entitled to a moral primacy in virtue of the ideal of fraternal collectivism cultivated inside the Utopian Republic. That ideal would deserve to be spread throughout the world by means of commerce, persuasion, and even weapons⁶⁴.

As it seems, Hythlodæus' narration of the "happy island" (*eu-topia*)⁶⁵ presents it as a radiating center of civilisation. In his view, *Utopia* deserves a special interna-

⁶² Th. Ruysen, *Les sources doctrinales de l'internationalisme*, Tome Première, *Des origines à la Paix de Westphalie*, Paris, 1995, p. 229.

⁶³ See M. Cacciari, *Massimo, Grandezza e tramonto dell'utopia*, in M. Cacciari and P. Prodi (eds.), *Occidente senza utopie*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2016, pp. 61-136, p. 76.

⁶⁴ See Firpo, *Erasmus da Rotterdam*, p. 15.

⁶⁵ See the "six lines on the island of *Utopia* written by Anemolius, Poet Laureate, and Nephew to Hythlodæus by his sister" used by More at the beginning of the book: «No-Place'? was once my name, I lay so far; But now with Plato's state I can compare, Perhaps outdo her (for what he only

tional role in virtue of its being a model of authentic freedom of equality, being not only the best commonwealth, but «indeed the only one that can rightfully claim that name» (p. 241). Its neighbors, being aware of the political and moral superiority of Utopia, will autonomously give themselves political constitutions inspired by it. Moreover, since Utopia has already freed several states from tyranny, many of these societies will promote the safety of their own states by borrowing Utopian magistrates, these being appreciated for their virtues (197). Notably, Utopia does not stipulate treaties of alliance. There is a higher covenant, which is the one "of nature" that closely binds all peoples. What really matters is the «kinship of nature» (201), given that the treaties generally stipulated by princes are not faithfully kept» (201). As Hythlodæus explains,

A treaty implies that people divided by some natural obstacle as slight as a hill or a brook are joined by no bond of nature; it assumes they are born rivals and enemies, and are right in trying to destroy one another except when a treaty restrains them. Besides, they see that treaties do not really promote friendship; for both parties still retain the right to prey on one another, insofar as careless drafting has left the treaty without sufficient provisions against it. The Utopians think, on the other hand, that no one should be considered an enemy who has done no harm, that the kinship of nature is as good as a treaty, and that men are united more firmly by good will than by pacts, by their hearts than by their words (201).

In essence, Thomas More seems to prefigure for Utopia the role of actor and at the same time that of "third party" in international politics – one who wants to make the international system homogeneous from a juridical point of view and, at the same time, by moralizing war customs and practices.

VII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The idea that the Republic of Utopia defends strategies of moralisation of politics also in the context of international relations emerges not only from the alleged importance that ideals of virtue and philanthropy have for the political organisation at issue, but also from Hythlodæus' admission that it is necessary to avoid excessively bloody wars. In the first place, it is worth noting that, in general, the only thing Utopians try to get through war is «to secure what would have prevented the declaration of war, if the enemy had conceded it beforehand» (205). Clearly, war is not seen by itself as a desirable thing; however, a morally legitimate war would be a "second-best alternative" to an ideal condition of peace. Hythlodæus, in this

drew In empty words I have made live anew In men and wealth, as well as splendid laws): "The Good Place"? they should call me, with good cause (p. 19).

sense, might frame war as a relatively desirable good. Still, the need to minimize violence is constantly affirmed. As he points out,

The Utopians are not only troubled but ashamed when their forces gain a bloody victory, thinking it folly to pay too high a price even for the best goods (205).

This is why the Utopians legitimize deception. Given that violence and death are prerogative of wild beasts, (205), machination, however unfair, might be accepted not only as a means to reduce the risk of human loss. It would also be a distinctively *human* strategy.

We could therefore conclude that, although a morally legitimate war is far from an ideal condition, two modes of warlike conduct are justifiable. The first, deceit, would be justified by reasons of utility and minimisation of deaths, as well as by consideration of human dignity parameterized to the realm of beasts. The second, i.e. violence, would be justifiable as the only alternative to deceit, whenever the latter were practically unfeasible. What is more, violence would be defensible in the light of its supposed pedagogical value. As Hythlodæus indeed suggests,

[I]f it is not possible to achieve these goals with deceit, they adopt decisive strategies like never before: «, they try to take such bitter revenge on those who provoked them that they will be afraid ever to do it again» (205).

It must be said that, within such a framework, the inclination of the Utopians not to strike civilians (the unarmed) remains. In fact, they ruthlessly kill only the spies and fighters who did not oppose the surrender (and enslaving the other fighters). In the narration provided by Hythlodæus, the mass of the population ("the crowd that does not fight"; 217) has nothing to fear, except for the payment of war expenses (expenses which, of course, are assigned to the vanquished). Strategies of reduction of human losses include the use of clergymen in warfare. This is a road that, at that time, proved itself to be quite innovative. While in the wars of the early sixteenth century Churchmen not only justified war, but sometimes placed themselves at the head of the armies⁶⁶, the priests of Utopia placed themselves in the midst of the rival armies to prevent useless massacres:

With hands raised to heaven, they pray first of all for peace, and then for victory for their own side, but without much bloodshed on either part. Should their side be victorious, they rush among the combatants and restrain the rage of their own men against the defeated. If any of the enemy see these priests and call to them, it is enough to save their lives; to touch the flowing robes of a priest will save all their property from confiscation (233).

⁶⁶ One might for instance think of Julius II, the so-called "warrior-pope", who scandalized Erasmus, as we learn from his dialogue *Julius Excluded from Heaven*, written in 1514.

We are not given to know with certainty what Thomas More's position is in relation to the justification provided by Hythlodæus for the use of deceit and violence, nor can we ascertain whether More would approve of wars conducted on the basis of a presumed and self-proclaimed moral and political superiority of the utopians over their neighbors – an assumption that might risk to generate a proliferation of conflicts masked by “philanthropic” reasons. Also, it would be extremely difficult to establish is whether More agrees with Hythlodæus in believing that, for the Utopians, when it is not possible to obtain the results achieved with cunning, it is preferable to have the mercenary soldiers (i.e. the Zapoletes) fight. That strategy, in Hythlodæus’ view, implies a lower consideration for the life of the mercenaries than that the respect given to the life of the Utopians. The latter justify the risk to send mercenaries to death on ethical reasons: «As for how many Zapoletes get killed, the Utopians never worry about that, for they think they would deserve very well of mankind if they could sweep from the face of the earth all the dregs of that vicious and disgusting race» (211). Only in case that neither the mercenaries nor the auxiliary troops of Utopia’s friends are available, it will be necessary to resort to Utopians themselves for war actions (211).

Despite the impossibility to establish with certainty the extent to which More might accept Hythlodæus’ paradigm of ethically acceptable wars, it would not be implausible to suppose that he would positively accept the Utopian inclination not to harm civilians and to minimize human losses. In that case, Hythlodæus’ view of a second-best alternative to a condition of absolute peace could be considered by More as a “lesser evil”. We might also assume that the author of *Utopia* himself, in crafting Hythlodæus’ fictional narration, means to intersect Christian humanist views (such as Erasmian ones) with issues of *Realpolitik* that stand in need of justification. While More might not endorse each of the two approaches taken in isolation from one another, the possibility that he believes in a compromise between the two is not to be ruled out. On the one hand, we might suppose, as Quentin Skinner notably does⁶⁷, that More is crafting Hythlodæus’ utopian paradigm (as well as his justification of war in specific cases) as a possible normative experiment which combines two separate traditions of humanist political thought: one affiliated with Roman Stoic thought and a distinctively Scholastic one. On the other hand, if we assume (as we do) that More engages in a dialectical confrontation with Hythlodæus without fully identifying his own views with the contents of Hythlodæus’ illustration of the Utopian regime, we might hypothesize that the latter’s treatment of “just wars” does not fully coincide with More’s position on the matter. Specifically, More could question the capacity of Christian traditions of humanist political thought to account for the problem of war without incurring into unwanted practical consequences, such as a germination of conflicts conducted

⁶⁷ Cf. Skinner, *Foundations*, pp. 255-262. For a discussion of Skinner’s views cf. Logan et al., *Utopia*, ix-x.

in the name of philanthropic reasons, the justification of deceit in international relations, and a defense of the superior dignity of virtuous people with respect to other human beings.

Assuming the plausibility of this working hypothesis, there would be valid reasons for thinking that More's view on war in international relations would not subscribe either to a paradigm of just war of scholastic origin or to a model of military intervention supposedly justifiable on Stoic grounds. The fusion supposedly established by Hythlodæus between Scholastic and Stoic elements, however original and innovative, could simply offer one among many bases for a conceptualisation of war which, although practicable, More might only partially accept. Against the backdrop of these interpretive difficulties, we suggest that More's paradigm of the "lesser evil", which he explicitly adopts to justify intervention of virtuous scholarship into politics, might open the way for the possibility that, in his view, war can occasionally be admitted not only as inevitable, but also as a desirable option, if compared to the alternative of state-destruction by external powers.

To conclude, the illustration of a variety of paradigms of international relations might help to better frame the complexity and the potentially innovative character of Thomas More's position on war. Despite our inability to grasp the extent of More's agreement with the Utopian positions expressed in his own book, we might safely assume that, like Machiavelli, More appears to defend a realistic approach. More's supposed realism, however, appears to be rooted in an ethical paradigm which, in line of principle, preserves the importance and the priority of virtue, justice and solidarity as the grounds of solid and well-functioning States. Also, assuming (as we do) that Machiavelli admits the possibility of pursuing two separate deontologies in the domestic sphere, i.e. a moral and a distinctively political one, we could say that More would propose an alternative paradigm, i.e. one which, although preserving and defending the priority of a moral deontology, allows for the possibility of a departure from an Erasmian ideal of perfect peace and accepts "lesser-evil" cases. Within that framework, in More's view, war in international relations could be justified without necessarily accepting to the Machiavellian conclusion that war among states might be "honourable", but still preserving the idea that the justification of war is still "moral". On the other hand, some degree of affinity might be identified between More and Erasmus on the need to root international politics in justice and, if we assume that More accepts some of Hythlodæus's views, even philanthropy. However, unlike Erasmus, who appears unable to justify war within a moral paradigm of international relations that remains substantially peace-oriented, More would still be able to make war compatible with morality. The dialectical confrontation he establishes with Hythlodæus is, in essence, an invitation for the reader to explore and assess an alternative to traditional paradigms of international relations, in which realism and idealism are not mutually exclusive possibilities.

REFERENCES

- Avineri, Schlomo, 1962. "War and Slavery in More's Utopia", *International Review of Social History* 7 (1962), pp. 260-90.
- Baker-Smith, Dominic (ed.), 2005. *A Most Useful Discussion Concerning Proposals for War Against the Turks, Including an Exposition of Psalm 28*, in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 64, Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press.
- Bainton, Roland H., 1969. *Erasmus of Christendom*, London: Macmillan.
- Benmer, Erica, 2009. *Machiavelli's Ethics*. Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Boucher, David, 2009. *The Limits of Ethics in International Relations Natural Law, Natural Rights, and Human Rights in Transition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cacciari, Massimo (2016). *Grandezza e tramonto dell'utopia*, in M. Cacciari and P. Prodi (eds.), *Occidente senza utopia*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2016, pp. 61-136.
- Cesa, Marco, 2014. *Machiavelli on International Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Croce, Benedetto, 1945 [1925]. *Politics and Morals* (Translated by Salvatore J. Castiglione), New York: Philosophical Library.
- De Michelis Pintacuda, Fiorella, 1987. "L' *Institutio principis christiani* di Erasmo da Rotterdam", *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome* 99(1), pp. 261-273.
- Den Boer, Pim, 1995. *The History of the Idea of Europe*, London: Routledge and The Open University.
- Dewald, Jonathan (ed. By), 2004. *Europe 1450 to 1789. Encyclopedia of the Early Modern World*, Volume 1. Absolutism to Coligny. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Firpo, Luigi (a cura di), 1967. Erasmo da Rotterdam. *Il Lamento della Pace*, Torino: Utet.
- Garin, Eugenio, 1988. *Introduzione a Erasmo*, San Domenico di Fiesole: Edizioni cultura della pace.
- Giorgini, Giovanni, 2019. *Machiavelli: The Drama of Politics and its Inherent Evil* in T. Nys-S. de Wijze (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Evil*, London-New York: Routledge, pp. 55-69.
- Halkin, Léon-E., 1987. *Erasme*, Paris: Fayard.
- Halpin, David, 2001. "Utopianism and Education: The Legacy of Thomas More Source", *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 3, pp. 299-315.
- Held, David, 1989. *Political Theory and the Modern State. Essays on State, Power, and Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hexter, Jack H., 1952. *More's Utopia: The Biography of an Idea*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Ilodigwe, Damian, 2019. *Machiavelli and the Limits of Realism in International Relations*, *Journal of International Relations and Foreign Policy*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 20-38.
- Jackson, Michael, 2022. "How 'Utopian' is the Foreign Policy in Thomas More's Utopia?", *The European Legacy*, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 57-67.

Johnson, Robbin, 1969. *More's Utopia: Ideal and Illusion*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Johnston, David, Urbinati, Nadia and Vergara, Camila (eds.), 2017. *Machiavelli on Liberty and Conflict*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Knoll, Manuel, 2018. "Machiavelli's realistisches Menschenbild und seine Rechtfertigung des Staats", *Philosophy and Society*, vol. 29, No.2, pp. 182-201.

Knoll, Manuel, 2019. "Machiavelli's Consequentialist Ethics of Responsibility", *History of Political Thought* Vol. 40, No. 4, pp. 631-648.

Lewis, Clive S., 1954. *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama*. The Oxford History of English Literature, III. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Logan, George M., 1983. *The Meaning of More's Utopia*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Logan, George M. Adams, Robert M. and Miller, Clarence H., 1995. *Thomas More, Utopia, English text and Translation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lupton, J.H. (ed.), 1895. The Utopia of Sir Thomas More. In Latin from the edition of March 1518 and in English from the first edition of Ralph Robinson's translation in 1551 with additional translation, introduction and notes by J.H. Lupton, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Margolin, Jean-C., 1965. *Erasme par lui-même*, Paris: Editions de Seuil.

Margolin, Jean-C., 1970. *Guerre et paix dans la pensée d'Erasme*, Paris: Aubier.

Masterson, David L., 1997. "The Educational Contributions of Sir Thomas More", *Journal of Thought*, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 25-36.

Matteucci, Nicola, 1993. *Lo stato moderno*, Bologna: Il Mulino.

Mindle, Grant B., 1985. "Machiavelli's Realism", *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 47, No. 2, pp. 212-230.

Mynors, Rober Aubrey Baskerville, and Thomson, Douglas F.S. (tr.) (1975). *The Correspondence of Erasmus. Letters to 142 to 297. 1501 to 1514*. Annotated by Wallace K. Ferguson, in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 2, Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press.

Nendza, James, 1984. "Political Idealism in More's "Utopia"", *The Review of Politics*, vol. 46, No. 3, pp. 428-451.

Panebianco, Angelo, 1998. *Guerrieri democratici*, Bologna: Il Mulino.

Passerind'Entreves, Alexander, 1967. *The Notion of the State. An Introduction to Political Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pierson, Christopher, 1996. *The Modern State*, London and New York: Routledge.

Raschi, Francesco, 2016. "Pace e guerra in «Utopia» di Thomas More", in *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* vol. 9, No. 1 (monographic issue: "Governare la paura"), pp. 64-91.

Ryan, Alan, 2012. *On Politics. A History of Political Thought from Herodotus to the Present*, London: Penguin.

Ruyssen, Theodore. 1995, *Les sources doctrinales de l'internationalisme, Tome Première, Des origines à la Paix de Westphalie*, Paris: PUF.

Sasso, Gennaro, 1993 (first published 1958). *Niccolò Machiavelli. Storia del suo pensiero politico*, Bologna: Il Mulino.

Scuccimarra, Luca, 2006. *I confini del mondo. Storia del cosmopolitismo dall'antichità al settecento*, Bologna: Il Mulino.

Skinner, Quentin, 1978. *The foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol. I: The Renaissance, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Skinner, Quentin, 2009. "A Genealogy of the Modern State", in *Proceedings of the British Academy* 162, pp. 325-370.

Skinner, Quentin, 2017. *Machiavelli and the Misunderstanding of Princely Virtù*, in Johnston, David, Urbinati, Nadia and Vergara, Camila (eds.), *Machiavelli on Liberty and Conflict*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 139-163.

Strauss, Leo, 1958. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Strauss, Leo, 1959. *What is Political Philosophy?*, Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.

Surtz, Edward, S.J., 1957. *The Praise of Pleasure*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Saint Thomas Aquinas (2014). *The Summa Theologica. Complete Edition*, translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, London: Catholic Way Publishing.

Updike, Daniel B.(ed.) (1907). *Erasmus. Against War*. With an Introduction by J.W. Mackail, Boston: The Merrymount Press.

Wegemer, Gerard B. and Smith, Stephen W. (eds.), 2004. *A Thomas More Source Book*, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press.

Yoran, Hanan, 2010. *Between Utopia and Dystopia. Erasmus, Thomas More, and the Humanist Republic of Letters*, Plymouth: Lexington.