



Divulging Utopia: Radical Humanism in Sixteenth-Century England (Massachusetts Studies in Early Modern Culture)

David Weil Baker

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A study in intellectual history and the history of the book, this work examines the humanist movement in sixteenth-century England and traces the reception of a single work, Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), in relation to that movement. Scrutinizing translations, popularizations, "anti-Utopias," and theological debates, David Weil Baker makes the case that the humanists of the English Renaissance were themselves reading More's *Utopia*, Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*, and other works of Continental humanism in far more politically radical ways than scholars have generally recognized. In particular, during the Reformation and the later controversies to which it gave rise, "Utopia" became a code word for the goals of Protestant extremists, including the dreaded Anabaptists. More broadly, the communism of More's imagined society became associated with the Protestant use of the printing press to disseminate vernacular editions of the Bible and other crucial religious texts and to make this formerly restricted "interpretive property" available to a broader readership.

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