Reading Hobbes Backwards

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Leviathan, the Papal Monarchy and Islam

By

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This book is dedicated to my dear Sydney son, Ziyad Latif Springborg; my dear Berlin son, George Daniel Springborg; my dear Berlin daughter-in-law, Else Milena Engel; and my dearest Berlin grandchildren, Leyla Mildred Engel and Luke Robert Engel, so far away in time and space.

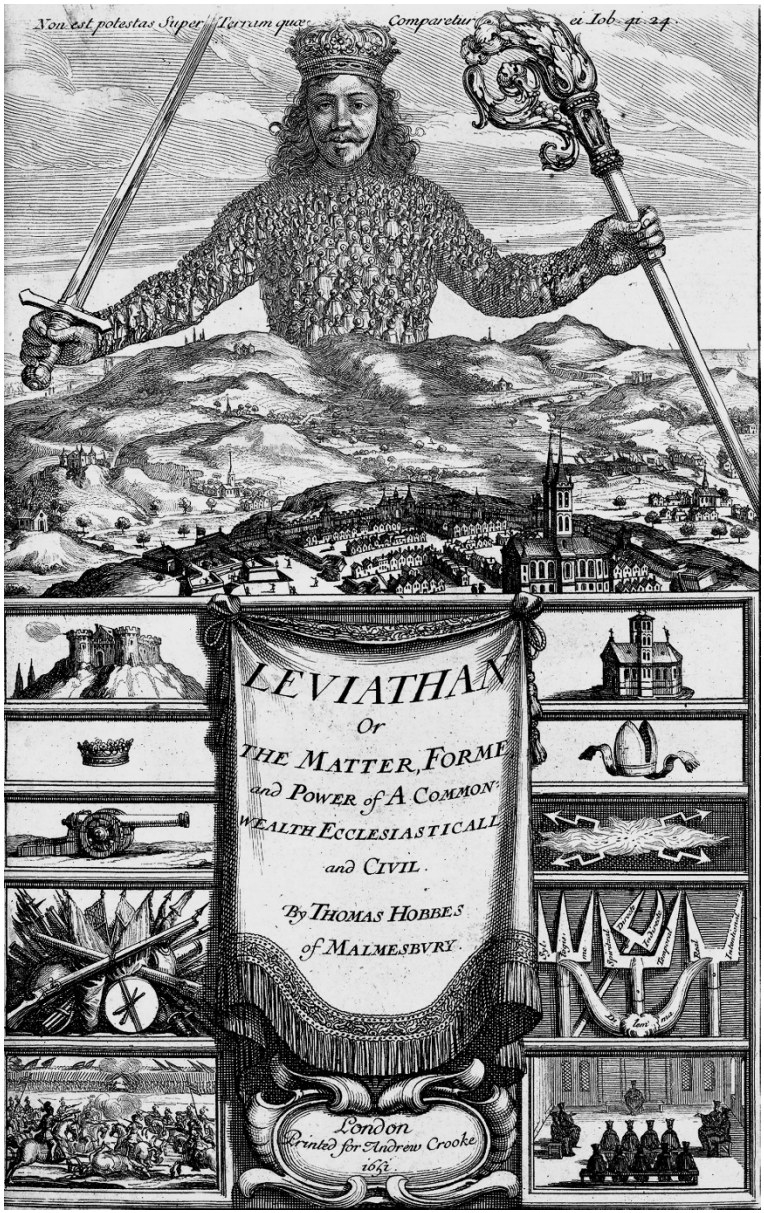
Non est potestas Super Terram quæ Comparetur ei Iob. 41. 24.
LEVIATHAN
Or
THE MATTER, FORME
and POWER of A COMMON-
WEALTH ECCLESIASTICALL
and CIVIL
By THOMAS HOBBES
of MALMESBURY
London
Printed for Andrew Crooke
1651

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

1) Hobbes, Political Surrogacy and 'Precarious Knowledge'

The reception of Thomas Hobbes, author of the famed *Leviathan Or THE MATTER, FORME, and POWER of a COMMONWEALTH ECCLESIASTICAL and CIVIL* (1651),[1] is for very good reason associated with the fundamental question of the rights and duties of subjects to their sovereign under the social contract; a question raised by him in this form for the first time in post-Reformation England. Fortuitously situated at an important juncture in the maturation of the English polity, Hobbes understood the implications of post-Reformation social changes to a remarkable degree, and was able to respond in flawless English prose, translated into Latin for his European audience. For, Reformation England under the Tudors had shrugged off the papal monarchy, as had much of Europe; a Reformation yet to be fully completed in Hobbes's lifetime, but not without punishing wars. The most destructive was the Thirty Years' War of 1618 to 1648, which saw casualty rates in Germany reach levels not approached again until the final days of WWII.[2] France's religious wars of 1562 to 1598 saw between 2 and 4 million people die from fighting or famine, including up to 25,000 in the horrific St. Bartholomew's Day

[1] Because this book covers a lot of ground, it is sign-posted, referenced and cross-referenced so that the chapters can be read independently, including in-text references where possible and footnotes where necessary. This obviates the need for an index, which would be too repetitive to be useful. But it does mean that those who read the book from cover to cover face some unavoidable repetition as I reach back into previous chapters to tie the argument together. Citations to *Leviathan* are to the Curley 1994 edition (giving chapter, paragraph, Head and /Curley pagination), because it cross-references the 1668 Latin *Leviathan* intended for Hobbes's European audience, where they diverge; and because it numbers paragraphs (indicated thus: §) making it possible to find the passage in any edition.

[2] For the broad outline of the Thirty Years' War on which this account relies, see Geoffrey Parker, *The Thirty Years' War* (London: Routledge, 1997); see also Peter H. Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy: A New History of the Thirty Years War* (London: Penguin, 2010). On Hobbes and the Thirty Years' War, see Noel Malcolm's invaluable study, *Reason of State, Propaganda, and the Thirty Years' War: An Unknown Translation by Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

massacre of Huguenots in 1572, concluded when Henry IV, the first French Protestant king, converted to Catholicism in the interests of peace, only to be assassinated by a fanatical Catholic in 1610. Britain had its own civil wars between 1642 and 1651, which saw the execution of Charles I in 1649 and the establishment of the Commonwealth, where 100,000 are said to have died, 4% of the population compared with casualty figures of 2.23% in WWI. [3]

Hobbes, life-long secretary to the great baronial Cavendish family, influential at court and in the Virginia Company, fashioned a theory of sovereignty that would provide a final arbiter in religious matters to end the problem of sectarianism. And it was the problem of sectarianism that consumed him, first in *Leviathan* and then in his spate of works on heresy in the Restoration; including his little-examined long Latin poem, the *Historia Ecclesiastica* (1688), both in its reported early version as *Historia Ecclesiastica Romana*, a *History of the Encroachment of the clergie (both Roman and Reformed) on the Civil Power*, and in its final version as *Historia Ecclesiastica Carmine Elegiaco Concinnata* (*A Church History in the form of an Elegiac Poem*). I pay considerable attention here to the *Historia Ecclesiastica* (cited as *HE* Springborg et al. 2008) read backwards as an indication of Hobbes's intentions in *Leviathan*, and read forwards as an indication of his acute understanding of political surrogacy, and the degree to which the phenomena with which he was dealing were surrogates.[4] For, it is my thesis that Renaissance humanism in the form of classical humanism, as recreated by poets and playwrights with many of whom Hobbes was surrounded in the courts of the Virginia Company and in the Cavendish circles, was itself a surrogate; an attempt to resolve sectarianism, a problem peculiarly associated with the Trinitarian theology defended by the papal monarchy and the millennia old post-Constantine church, by appealing to the Graeco-Roman model of the unitary state and its programme of moral education. Thanks to the efforts of antiquarians and

[3] See Stephen Mortlock, 'Death and Disease in the English Civil War', *The Biomedical Scientist*, 2017: 25-27.

[4] 'Political surrogacy' is my own term to describe the employment of Renaissance classical humanism as an antidote to sectarianism in post-Reformation England. See Springborg 2001a, 'Classical Translation and Political Surrogacy: English Renaissance Classical Translations and Imitations as Politically Coded Texts', *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought,* 5: 11-33. See also Springborg 1997, '*Leviathan*, Mythic History and National Historiography', in *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain*, ed. David Harris Sacks and Donald Kelley (Cambridge/Washington DC): 267–97.

historians of historiography, we are increasingly aware of the degree to which humanist projects were politicized in the post-Reformation era. And this is no mere academic speculation. It turns out that we have excellent material evidence from Hobbes's own circles to show how the social distribution of knowledge was engineered for political purposes. [5]

Hobbes lived at a time when England's relations with Europe were at a critical juncture and when the British Empire, where his theory of sovereignty has for long been seen as governing, was already under construction,. But as Britain's relations with Europe have evolved and the British Empire has been deconstructed, Hobbes's role has accordingly been reassessed. Hobbes scholarship is complicated by twin factors. First, Hobbes was a baronial secretary who was not initially entitled to his own voice, and spoke through commissioned works and surrogate texts; and although living on the cusp of the post-Reformation print explosion, many of those texts were manuscripts. Second, his position was precarious, so that when under indictment for blasphemy by the parliament in the 1660s, Hobbes burned papers that might be found incriminating. As a consequence, modern Hobbes scholarship is bedeviled by manuscripts, a surprising number of which have survived. Not only does Hobbes seem to have brought his own manuscripts and summaries (which have not survived) to the compilation of his major works, but his supporters in Cavendish circles seem to have made manuscripts of his work in progress. And because Hobbes's reputation quickly spread to France where he took refuge with the Stuart Court during the Interregnum, his supporters there made manuscripts also. Only recently have many of these manuscripts been available for analysis. The upshot is that we have not a shortage but a plethora of evidence for the evolution of Hobbes's philosophy. For, the very precariousness of his position as a baronial secretary caused him to advertise his own theories wherever and whenever he could. He engaged in rather obsessive behaviour, inserting his work in progress into whatever vehicle came to hand, favouring epistles dedicatory and high profile genres until, with *Leviathan*, he could have his works printed in his own persona. This evidence enables us to

[5] On the antiquarians and historians of historiography of the post-Reformation era, see especially JGA Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law* (Cambridge, 1957, 1987); and Quentin Skinner 1972/2002, 'Conquest and Consent: Hobbes and the Engagement Controversy'. On Hobbes and his circle engineering the social distribution of knowledge, see Springborg 2015a, 'Hobbes, Donne, and the Virginia Company: *Terra Nullius* and "the Bulimia of Dominium"', *History of Political Thought*, 36, 1: 113-64; and Springborg 2018a, 'Thomas Hobbes and the Political Economy of Peace', *Croatian Political Science Review*, 55, 4: 9-35.

construct a timeline for the development of his philosophy, which matures in fact very early (see ch. 3, 'Drafts, MSs, Letters, Recollections and Boasts: A Timeline'). But it is also fraught with difficulties that only a writer at the nexus of scribal and print publication, who was dependent on commissions, could face – and this is in large measure why we still lack consensus on some of Hobbes's definitive texts, yet to appear in critical editions.

This is the point at which to introduce the reader to the major problem of overlapping texts that scribal publication in the case of Hobbes produced, and how commentators have dealt with it. Deborah Baumgold, drawing on Harold Love's *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth Century England*, argues that it was a feature of medieval and early modern manuscript production that 'texts were unstable because of continual revision by their *authors*', and 'could remain "obstinately in process"' (Baumgold 2008: 832, citing Love 1993: 52-4). Serial composition 'could be expected to breed problems of inconsistency between works as the author's thinking changes and develops over time', she argues. Confining her treatment to the three political works, *The Elements of Law*, *De Cive* and *Leviathan*, she observes: 'When he slotted new material into pre-existing frameworks, Hobbes did not always rework the text in the interest of consistency', making 'consistency problematic within and between the works' (Baumgold 2008: 828). But I see the problem somewhat differently, arguing that Hobbes's philosophical system showed remarkable consistency right from its early development. And indeed as I discuss (ch. 4, section 3, 'Baumgold: Hobbes's Notebook Jottings as Source of Inconsistencies'), Baumgold in her *Three-Text Edition of Thomas Hobbes's Political Theory* (Cambridge 2017), in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary that she herself provides, simply abandons her earlier thesis that Hobbes's work practices of notebook jottings and definitions proved to be a systematic source of inconsistencies and 'muddle' (Baumgold 2008: 82). She now maintains rather that the format of serial composition in both scribal and print publications allowed Hobbes not only to perfect his arguments, but to tweak the different iterations of his grand schema for different audiences 'to support the regime du jour, first the Stuarts, then the Commonwealth' (Baumgold 2017: x).

The problem of serial composition that scribal publication in the case of Hobbes produced was not that of consistency, I argue. And the problem of overlapping texts was due, not to his work practices, which Baumgold proves – despite herself – to have been remarkably successful in producing political texts that read as written to the same script. It was due rather to the precariousness of his position as a baronial secretary, which caused him to advertise his theories wherever and whenever he could, inserting his work

in progress into whatever vehicle came to hand (see ch. 3, 'Drafts, MSs, Letters, Recollections and Boasts) – although not a baronial secretary, I do the same myself, because many of the more detailed articles on which this book draws are published in obscure places and when I die will likely die with me! Moreover Hobbes's texts have titles that often appear to mimic one another – or mimic other texts to which they are expected to be compared. Two cases most likely to cause confusion are the titles of Hobbes's *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic* of 1640, [6] often referred to in shorthand as *The Elements* (see Cromartie 2011), sharing a similar title with the very different work, known as *Elementa Philosophiae* or the *Elements of Philosophy*, [7] the title given to Hobbes's early over-arching tripartite philosophical schema, comprising *De Corpore* (On Body), *De Homine* (On Man) and *De Cive* (On the Citizen). It is an additional source of confusion that the 3 parts of Hobbes's *Elementa Philosophiae* – for reasons he could not control – reached print publication out of order, so that the 3rd part (On the Citizen), *De Cive* 1642/1647, was printed first; while the 1st part, his logic and physics, (On Body), *De Corpore* 1655, was printed second; and the 2nd part (On Man), *De Homine* 1658, was printed last.

In noting that Hobbes's titles appear to mimic one another, we should consider in the first instance, that the titles of his scribal publications were mostly out of his hands, decided by those who commissioned them and who continued to hold the MSs in their houses. We see this in the case of his *Elements of Law* of 1640, a brief for his patron the Earl of Newcastle circulated in the Short Parliament, about which Hobbes could boast, '[o]f this treatise, though not printed, many gentlemen had copies'. [8] For, as we will see, when composing *Leviathan* in Paris in the 1640s, it seems that Hobbes did not have access to a copy. Likewise, titles of MSs made by those who recorded Hobbes's ideas for their own use, were out of his hands, and these include the early drafts and MSs for *De Corpore*, which furnish important evidence for the development of his *Elements of Philosophy*.

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[6] See Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic* (1640, scribal publication), edited by Ferdinand Tönnies (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co. 1889).
[7] See 'Elements of Philosophy: First Section, Concerning Body, Written in Latin, translated into English', in Molesworth, *EW* 12 vols, London, 1839-45, *EW* I: 1-532. (Molesworth is reissued, ed. G. A. J. Rogers, by Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1992.)
[8] See 'Considerations upon the Reputation of Thomas Hobbes', p. 414, cited by Deborah Baumgold in 'The Composition of Hobbes's "Elements of Law"', *History of Political Thought*, 25, 1 (2004): 16-43, at p. 23.

Secondly, however, we cannot rule out that Hobbes himself was complicit in the confusion caused by his titles that seem to mimic one another or the titles of others – in the latter case, cueing the reader by echoing the titles of works by writers he was emulating. In 1624 the Huguenot Pierre Du Moulin's *Elements of Logick* was published, the English translation of his *Elementa logica* of 1598, which eventually saw more than 40 editions and has been rated 'the most popular logic textbook of the age' (Armstrong & Larminie 2004). We should not be surprised to find that Hobbes's 'Logike', as it was tagged, his tripartite systematic treatise *Elementa Philosophiae*, or *Elements of Philosophy*, composed between 1642 and 1658*,* shares a name similar to Du Moulin's *Logick* – a typical Hobbesian method of cueing, as I suggest – and appears to track closely the content of Du Moulin's *Elementa logica*. Early drafts of Hobbes's *Computatio, sive, Logica* (1655/1981),[9] the title under which the first two parts of his *De Corpore* would first appear in print, have survived in MS, already referred to as Hobbes's 'Logike', suggesting to me that they might have been circulated for comment in the late 1630s and early 1640s, bearing this tag precisely with Du Moulin's *Logick* in mind. Marcus Adams (2014a, 2014b) has noted specific items in Hobbes's 'Logike' that are strongly reminiscent of Du Moulin's *Logick* and Martine Pécharman (2016) cites an impressive range of 17th century logic textbooks that would also seem to imitate Du Moulin's best-seller.[10] Du Moulin himself was 'profoundly influenced by the principles of Aristotelian logic', which as a logic professor at Leiden he had taught, and 'considered the logic-based beliefs of the Dutch Reformed church more useful in debate than the biblically based positions of French protestantism' (Armstrong & Larminie 2004); a position with which Hobbes needless to say concurred.

The early drafts and MSs for *De Corpore,* the first part of his *Logick*, are among the most contested items in the Hobbes corpus. First discussed by

[9] See the fine facing page Latin-English edition, *Computatio, sive, Logica: Logic, Thomas Hobbes*; translation and commentary by Al Martinich; with an introduction by Isabel C. Hungerland & George R. Vick, New York: Abaris Books, 1981.

[10] See Marcus Adams, 'Mechanical Epistemology and Mixed Mathematics: Descartes's Problems and Hobbes's Unity', Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh 2014 (henceforth Adams 2014a); Marcus Adams, 'The Wax and the Mechanical Mind: Reexamining Hobbes's Objections to Descartes's *Meditations*', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy,* 22 3 (2014): 403-424, DOI: 10.1080/09608788.2014.893226 (henceforth Adams 2014b); and Martine Pécharman, 'Hobbes on Logic, or How to Deal with Aristotle's Legacy', in *The Oxford Handbook of Hobbes,* edited by Al P. Martinich and Kinch Hoekstra (Oxford University Press, 2016), DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199791941.013.15.

Noel Malcolm in his 'Summary Biography of Hobbes' (1996/2002 : 17-18), the MSs for *De Corpore* comprise three sets of Latin transcriptions and one English translation (the authenticity of the latter, Malcolm queries). The three Latin transcriptions are Chatsworth MS C iv 2 and Chatsworth MS A10, made by Robert Payne; and British Library, Harley MS 6083, fols 71-4, 196-211, made by Charles Cavendish, mathematician and brother of William Cavendish, earl of Newcastle. The Latin transcriptions Malcolm establishes, due to their great degree of overlap and use of characteristic marginal headings summarizing the chapters, must have been made from a master copy, presumably that of Hobbes himself. And it is this master copy to which we assume Sir Kenelm Digby to be referring when he enquires about Hobbes's progress on his 'Logike' in 1637. Turning to Malcolm's description of these surviving MS copies of the 'Logike', the first and smallest, Chatsworth MS C iv 2, 'one small bifolium', is 'a set of notes' on what would become chapter 12 of *De Corpore*, as well as 'part of an early version of chapter 13'; material 'that is covered by MS A10', so earlier than, and perhaps a 'sampling' for, A10; while Chatsworth MS A10, the second Latin transcription, is 'a mini-notebook of 34 folios', which 'corresponds to chapters 1-15 and 17 of a version' of *De Corpore*, plus the chapter titles for chapters 16 and 18 without the text (Malcolm 2002, 'Robert Payne, the Hobbes Manuscripts and the "Short Tract"': 80-145, at 100). MS A10, originally thought to be in Hobbes's hand, Malcolm has established as being in the hand of Robert Payne, Cavendish chaplain and Hobbes's amanuensis, who 'in accordance with Payne's usual practice of recording the sources of his notes', provides his own headings for the two sections of the MS, as 'Logica. Ex T. H', and 'Philosophia prima. Ex T. H.' respectively (Malcolm 2002, 'Robert Payne, the Hobbes Manuscripts' etc.: 80-145, at 100-101).

The transition from scribal publication to print medium, far from reducing uncertainty, added the problem of unauthorized and quasi-unauthorized texts – as in the case of *De Corpore Politico*, an unauthorized edition of Hobbes's *The Elements of Law*, published in 2 parts in London in 1650; and the 'quasi-unauthorized' *Of Humane Nature* of 1650, a pirated edition of the first 13 chapters of *The Elements of Law* which Hobbes nevertheless recommended to his readers in *Leviathan* (*Lev.,* i, §3, 3/6, Curley 1994 edn). Beginning with his 'physicalist' first philosophy, and particularly his optics, Cromartie (2011, '"The Elements [of Law]" and Hobbes's Moral Thinking') points to a confusing jumble of texts from different periods involving different elements of his programme. So, *De Homin*e, published in 1658, drew 'eight of its fifteen chapters from "A Minute or First Draught of the Optics"', a manuscript presented to the Marquis of Newcastle early in 1646 but unpublished (Cromartie 2011: 25). At the same time, the first

13 chapters of '*The Elements* [*of Law*] included a draft *De Homine*'; while 'from Chapter Fourteen onwards, *The Elements* [*of Law*] roughly maps onto *De Cive'* (Cromartie 2011: 26). It is also Cromartie's view that Hobbes's position at the nexus of scribal and print culture, and his need to reprise material that had not yet seen the light of day, account for these overlapping texts (see my ch. 4, 'Interrogating Presuppositions and Judgments', sections 4, 5 and 6 on Cromartie's work). Even *Leviathan*, Hobbes's first published work in his own persona, did not escape the problem of amalgamated texts. Indeed, Baumgold's *Three-Text Edition of Hobbes's Political Theory* is predicated on the overlapping nature of Hobbes's political texts, causing her finally to conclude that *Leviathan* is 'a pastiche of arguments, many of which had been framed over the period of more than a decade' (Baumgold 2017: ix), being prefigured already in *The Elements of Law* and *De Cive*, the first two of the three political works she sees as written to the same text.

Leviathan also presents its own unique problematic, as I discuss at greater length in the next section, and in chapter 5, 'Hobbes's Leviathan has Feet of Clay'. Noel Malcolm, in a brilliant scholarly exercise,[11] has demonstrated that the title *Leviathan* seems to have been given to Hobbes's 'English Politiques' late, used as a figure for 'incorporation' as employed in Jesuit and Capuchin commentaries on the Book of Job, and particularly that of Jacques Boulduc (see ch. 5, sect. 2, '*Leviathan*, the Frontispiece, Jesuit and Capuchin Commentaries', and sect. 3, 'Incorporation and Hobbes's Civil Science'). These commentaries were held in the Minim Fathers' Paris Library, to which Hobbes was given access by Marin Mersenne during his sojourn with the Stuart court in exile, where he wrote *Leviathan*. I further speculate that the title Leviathan – which immediately brought to mind the scaly monster of the Book of Job of Puritan fame – was used by Hobbes as a decoy to deflect from his own account of incorporation and representation that might be seen to endorse the metaphysics of the *corpus mysticum*, and convict him as a supporter of the papal monarchy. (It might also have been designed to further rile the Episcopacy, with whom he was in direct conflict – see Jeffrey Collins 2000). But the vehemence with which Hobbes satirized the church as 'a kingdom of darkness', 'kingdom of fairies', etc., ensured the very name Leviathan became so notorious that it threatened to derail his entire project. Hobbes was immediately excoriated as a heretic and a blasphemist. Surprisingly, his dalliance with the Commonwealth under

[11] Noel Malcolm,. 'The Name and Nature of Leviathan: Political Symbolism and Biblical Exegesis'. *Intellectual History Review*, 17, 1, 2007: 21-58, DOI: 10.1080/17496970601140196..

Cromwell, proved less hazardous, allowing him to rescue his theory of sovereignty from Stuart absolutism by insisting that either the king or parliament could be sovereign. In the Restoration Hobbes reestablished his royalist credentials, and was enlisted by the royalist elite – among them William Davenant (1606-1668), poet laureate and playwright, who pays homage to Hobbes as early as 1650; Edmund Waller (1606-1687), poet and politician, long-standing MP, and Hobbes's friend; and Thomas Rymer (1641-1713), literary critic and Historiographer Royal, probably responsible for the publication of Hobbes's *Historia Ecclesiastica* as an elegiac poem.

If, among his printed books the special problematic of *Leviathan* to which I draw attention has gone unaddressed by the mainstream, Hobbes's posthumously published *Historia Ecclesiastica* (1688), a relatively inaccessible work in Latin verse, has been largely ignored. I freely admit that when our first English translation and critical edition of Hobbes's *Historia Ecclesiastica* was completed (*HE* Springborg et al. 2008), [12] I did not recognize its full significance, or indeed the urgency with which Hobbes treated its survival. But I now believe that an examination of the poem, both in its putative early version as a history of the growth of sectarianism, and its late version, as an exemplar of civic humanism mobilized against sectarianism, supports my thesis of remarkable continuities across Hobbes's long life; and that his contemporaries saw this. The *Historia Ecclesiastica* corroborates my thesis of Hobbes's early epiphany, perhaps as early as his student days at Oxford, of the truth of Aristotle's physics as an account of human perceptual processes; and of his reputation across the continental divide as an anti-sectarian who embraced both local and continental traditions of anti-clericalism. As I will demonstrate from the *Hobbes Correspondence*, Hobbes was seen as fighting sectarianism both Royalist and Republican using humanism, as a form of *Prekäres Wissen*, [13] or

[12] The early English paraphrase entitled Thomas Hobbes, *A True Ecclesiastical History, from Moses to the time of Martin Luther, in verse* (London, 1772), a burlesque, is widely believed to be the work of Charles Cotton (1630-87). On Cotton, an insufficiently recognized figure in Hobbes's larger circle, see Noel Malcolm (2000/2002: 234-58), 'Charles Cotton, Translator of Hobbes's *De Cive*'.

[13] Martin Mulsow has pioneered the concept of *Prekäres Wissen* to describe the hazardous work of early modern antiquarians, historiographers and sceptics operating in the margins, as producers of 'precarious knowledge'. He sees the term having implications for what Germans call *Nichtwissen*, or systematic obstacles to the distribution of knowledge. See Martin Mulsow *Prekäres Wissen: Eine andere Ideengeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2012), translated as *Knowledge Lost* (Princeton 2022). I find 'precarious knowledge' to be a concept of

'precarious knowledge' – to use the term Martin Mulsow (2012) has pioneered for a covert form of early modern intellectual history. Although protagonists did not use the term themselves – therefore seeming to offend against the first principles of *Begriffsgeschiche* (on *Begriffsgeschiche* see Springborg 2003a, 2003b) – they demonstrated clear awareness of their own precarity by the forms of surrogacy they employed. The concept of *Prekäres Wissen* reached me in the late stages of this book, written in Berlin during the Covid lockdown from 2019 to 2022. Curiously, Mulsow does not see Hobbes as an example of *Prekäres Wissen*, despite his recognition of the salience of the Cambridge School in Hobbes studies. Mulsow and his colleague, Andreas Mahler, in their *Die Cambridge School der politischen Ideengeschichte* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010) – *The Cambridge School of Political Intellectual History* (yet to be translated into English) – credit the pioneering work of JGA Pocock and Quentin Skinner of the Cambridge School with an epistemological revolution, by treating early modern philosophers, not as talking heads across the ages, but as engaged activists pioneering political 'languages' to engineer the prevailing distribution of knowledge – in effect what Mulsow (2012) terms 'precarious knowledge' – understanding 'languages' in a Wittgensteinian sense, and taking the notion of 'speech-acts' in an Austinian sense, to indicate authorial intention. [14]

One cannot overestimate the importance of the innovations of the Cambridge School in intellectual history in effecting this 'epistemological revolution', which changed the field of early modern British history.[15] That

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great versatility in the case of Hobbes, beginning with the simple sense in which he is a philosopher of resistance – so, in my essay, Springborg 2014b, 'Hobbes and the Word', addressing a conference on 'Political Resistance and Religious Obedience', I claim Hobbes to be rather a case of the opposite: political obedience and religious resistance. My larger thesis of political resistance in this book addresses Hobbes the philosopher and elegiac poet, mobilizing post-Reformation civic humanism (in the tradition of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and 'the sons of Ben') as a programme of moral education against sectarianism, often disguised as satire or burlesque – vehicles permitting him to own or disown his views, depending on his precarity.

[14] The Cambridge School's great innovation, pioneered by JGA Pocock and Quentin Skinner, was developed at the intersection of the 1960's analysis of the preconditions for social change by historians, anthropologists, sociologists and political scientists (Peter Laslett, Karl Popper, Edward Shils and Eric Hobsbawm, to name a few), and the findings of modern British analytic philosophy, especially the work of J. L. Austin concerning the force of 'illocutionary acts', or words as deeds.

[15] The early analysis of these 'languages' by Justin Champion is particularly noteworthy for his insistence on the framework of sectarianism. See Champion 1992, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken: The Church of England and its Enemies*

said, there is still resistance to seeing what I think of as the early modern 'epistemology of agency' registered in these new 'political languages', even from those who acknowledge the importance of the Cambridge School. Among these is Dmitri Levitin, whose monumental work of scholarship, *Ancient Wisdom in the Age of the New Science*, is designed to resist 'Enlightenment' stereotypes of 17th century philosophy, but also to challenge the view that scholarly work on the history of philosophy in general – and recovering 'the wisdom of the East' in particular – was politically motivated. Levitin rather credits lonely scholars and clerics cloistered in their studies, with scholarship driven by piety and curiosity. Such an account is congruent with Mulsow's (2012), most of whose candidates for 'precarious knowledge' fit just such a description. But it misses the exceptions. For, it is undoubtedly true, as Levitin claims, that most historians of philosophy, as in the case of historians of historiography, were not politically motivated, just because they were not politically connected in what was a highly class-stratified society. However, I believe there is overwhelming evidence for the case I make here for Hobbes and the Cavendish circles, well-connected politically and incentivized by appalling religious wars, to press for a new sovereign political order to achieve peace.

Moreover, the range of the 'languages' the Cambridge School identifies is too circumscribed. The very success of the Protestant Reformation settlement – completed with Hobbes's assistance it must be said– taken together with a curriculum divide between the medieval and early modern periods it brought in train, cause pervasive ignorance about the degree to which Hobbes's own education would have included the medieval Aristotle commentary tradition, given the influence at Oxford of the 'Merton Calculators'. And this is why 'reading Hobbes backwards' is now required. The English Reformation settlement marked a different kind of watershed compared with European post-Reformation settlements, primarily because it coincided with a special sense of Britishness registering a new national self-confidence (see Springborg, 2014a. 'A Very British Hobbes or a More European Hobbes?'). This was due in large part to the rise of empire on the

1660-1730, and Champion 1995. 'Philosophy, State and Religion: Languages of Political Theory in Early Modern England'. For a retrospective analysis of the Cambridge School approach, see the excellent essay by Mark Goldie prefacing the commemorative volume, 'Retrospect: The Ancient Constitution and the Languages of Political Thought' (2019: doi:10.1017/S0018246X180003). I am unable to do justice here to the range of Dmitri Levitin's scholarship (see Levitin 2012, 2015a, 2015b), with much of which I agree, but with whose general resistance to what I call the early modern epistemology of agency registered in these 'languages', I disagree.

back of a form of capitalism pioneered by English chartered trading companies. The first was the Levant Company, registered in 1592 with the approval of Elizabeth I (1533-1603), when the charters of the Venice Company (founded in 1583 to handle the Mediterranean trade), and the Turkey Company (founded in 1581 to handle trade with the Ottoman Empire), expired and the two companies were merged. The Levant Company remained in continuous existence until 1825, and was a very successful chartered company. One of the commodities it traded was Arabic and Persian MSs – witness the law under Charles I mandating that ships of the Levant Company entering the port of London must include Persian or Arabic MSs in their cargo. In Hobbes's lifetime, the Virginia Company of London (founded 1606, defunct by 1624) and its sister company, the Somers Isles Company (1615-84), succeeded in settling colonies in North America and Bermuda that were to change forever the profile of British imperialism – developments ultimately responsible for the hegemony of mercantile capitalism, and of the English language. The Virginia Company's success in the north Atlantic was emulated by the New Zealand Company, under Edward Gibbon Wakefield (1796-1862), to colonize the South Pacific. Founded in 1825, granted a royal charter in 1840, but defunct by 1858, the New Zealand Company planted colonies in New Zealand and was influential in South Australia – warranting Karl Marx's attention in *Capital* (vol. 1, 1867) as proof of the longevity of British imperialism propelled by mercantile capitalism. The demise of the British Empire in the 20th century, marked by institutional rupture in the form of Brexit in the 21st, reveals in plain sight the interlocking nature of the ungodly triangle of colonization, capitalism and slaving, of which Hobbes personally was critical. [16]

Leaving this aside as an issue that the Cambridge School never undertook to discuss – however important in the bigger picture – let us now reconsider

[16] See Springborg 2015a, 'Hobbes, Donne, and the Virginia Company: *Terra Nullius* and "the Bulimia of Dominium"'. See also Springborg 2014d. 'The Bubble and the Pump: Globalization, Complexity, Contingency, and the Financial Crisis', in *Soziologie des Wirtschaftlichen: Alte und Neue Fragen*. Dieter Bögenhold, ed. (Wiesbaden: Springer): 179-98. The 'ungodly triangle' of colonialism, capitalism and slavery, is being played out as we speak in horrendous neocolonial wars that seem to render the creaky post-WWII peace-keeping machinery obsolete. Great minds have addressed these issues, beginning with Marx's *Capital* (3 vols, 1867, 1885, 1894), Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904-5); and more recently Perry Anderson's *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*, and *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, both of 1974, launching the excellent New Left Books series; and his brother, Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* of 1983.

its so-called 'epistemological revolution' for the attention it pays coterie 'languages'. Here there is still resistance to seeing what I think of as the early modern 'epistemology of agency' registered in these 'languages' – even on the part of some who acknowledge the importance of the Cambridge School. It is curious that Mulsow, who really does understand the early modern epistemology of agency, overlooks Hobbes as perhaps the best case of *Prekäres Wissen* to hand. For, to treat Hobbes himself as an example of 'precarious knowledge', I now realize, opens up great vistas allowing us to see classical Renaissance humanism, resurrected in the Tudor and Stuart Reformation by poets and playwrights, as a form of political surrogacy. It is also a very economical way to express the phenomenon with which I am dealing, that of activists promoting social change, sometimes in the commanding heights, like the courts of the Virginia Company or the Cavendish circle with its connexions to the Stuart court both in England and France; and sometimes in the private libraries of antiquarians. Instances of *Prekäres Wissen*, I suggest, can be found in Hobbes's obsession with finding his own voice, as a baronial secretary who up to the publication of *Leviathan* could not reach print under his own name and was very opportunistic in advertising his theories; just as failure to understand *Prekäres Wissen* accounts for the tin ear of Hobbes commentators who do not understand this. It is of immeasurable importance to see the great poets and playwrights of the post-Reformation renaissance, William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and the 'sons of Ben' – some of the very poets and playwrights of Stuart and Cromwellian England, with whom Hobbes and the Cavendishes were closely associated in the Virginia Company – a trading company inexplicably peopled by poets! [17] – as engaged in forms of political surrogacy that enlisted classical humanism against sectarianism and all its punishing consequences; something not yet acknowledged by most scholars, and to which sadly I cannot really do justice here. [18]

[17] See Springborg 1997. '*Leviathan*, Mythic History and National Historiography', in David Harris Sacks and Donald Kelley, eds. *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge University Press: 267-97), where I discuss George Sandys (1578-1644), author of *Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished, Mythologized and Represented in Figures* (1632). George Sandys, colonial secretary and councilor to the new crown colony in Virginia, was the younger brother of Edwin Sandys (1561-1629) a Virginia Company founder, company secretary, and an MP.

[18] But see Quentin Skinner's remarkable *Forensic Shakespeare* (Oxford, 2014), which treats Shakespeare's narrative poem *Lucrece*, 4 late Elizabethan and 3 early Jacobean plays, as crafted to teach the rhetorics of judicial argument, to demonstrate

Nor can I do justice to what I now see as an entirely different possible application of Mulsow's thesis of 'precarious knowledge' (2012), and that is the tradition of 'clandestine philosophy' into which Hobbes was folded in his day as one of the 'three imposters', along with Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) and Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648). Noel Malcolm in his essay 'Hobbes and the European Republic of Letters' (Malcolm 2002: 447-545, at 480-97) undertook a pioneering study of clandestine literature of the 'three imposters' variety, showing it to be a moveable feast that began when Jakob Thomasius, who in 'a "harangue" delivered at Leipzig' in 1670 in response to Spinoza's *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, 'compared Spinoza to Herbert and Hobbes'. Malcolm (2002: 481) notes that '[l]inking Hobbes and Spinoza – and, frequently, Herbert – soon became a commonplace of polemical writing', especially in clandestine literature, where it belonged to the attempt to 'construct a genealogy of modern atheism'. To recognize that clandestine literature was already a thriving tradition of 'precarious knowledge' into which Hobbes was folded, expands the ambit of Mulsow's (2012) concept and is of great significance for my thesis that Hobbes himself was a self-aware, if reticent, practitioner of 'precarious knowledge'.

It also means we must pay enormous tribute to Noel Malcolm, Gianni Paganini (2020, ed, *Clandestine Philosophy*), and Antony McKenna, director of Honoré Champion's book series, 'Free Thought and Clandestine Literature' in which our edition of Hobbes's *Historia Ecclesiastica* (*HE* Springborg et al. 2008) appeared, for excavating the archeology of 'clandestine philosophy'. For, to acknowledge Hobbes as belonging to the tradition of 'clandestine literature' is simultaneously to acknowledge him as a practitioner of 'precarious knowledge', which very few have been brave enough to do. To understand the *Historia Ecclesiastica* as an exercise in clandestine literature is to understand precisely why Hobbes went through the laborious exercise of chronicling the long history of heresies raised by the doctrine of the Trinity, and debates over the ontological status of the three persons ('hypostases') of the Trinity, and whether they were *homousion* ('of like substance') or *homoousion* ('consubstantial') with the Father. As the interlocutor Secundus baldly states it in the poem: 'The Greek word for substance is "hypostasis"; one who says there are three hypostases says there are three Gods' (*HE* Springborg et al. 2008 lines 751-2, pp. 392-3). If Hobbes's anti-Trinitarian arguments in *Leviathan* may seem capricious, no one could characterize the careful exegesis of the Trinity as

'Shakespeare's engagement with an entire tradition of classical and Renaissance humanist thought' (see blurb).

source of sectarianism in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* in this way. And yet even the most percipient commentators on the history of early modern sectarianism fail to do justice to Hobbes's role as a forerunner of a long tradition of anti-Trinitarianism, anti-clericalism, scepticism, and Socinianism that, in the 'Radical Enlightenment', extended to embracing Islam as a civic religion. So, Justin Champion, in *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken* (1992), his excellent account of the attack by Free Thinkers on priestcraft from 1660-1730 as an anticipation of the Enlightenment, misses the extent of Hobbes's contribution, who must shelter behind burlesque and satire to air his views. Even Martin Mulsow, pioneer of the concept of 'precarious knowledge', in his clever 'Socinianism, Islam and the Radical Uses of Arabic Scholarship' (2010), acknowledging a debt to Champion, fails to see it. Here Mulsow gives a sophisticated account of the transfer of Islamic concepts which took on an entirely different function in the 'Radical Enlightenment', where Freethinkers embraced not only Socinianism against Trinitarianism but also the 'authentic monotheism' of Islam, which saw Christ as a prophet, but not as God. Yet Mulsow, like Champion, although gesturing in the direction of Hobbes's contribution to 'Radical Enlightenment' – but failing to muster his own concept of 'precarious knowledge', or the tradition of 'clandestine literature' – cannot give a full account. There is indeed a case to be made for 'reading Hobbes forwards', but only on the basis of an understanding of what it means to read him backwards. We must credit Hobbes's own remarkable sophistication, and his determination to resolve the problem of a sovereign order capable of guaranteeing peace, for his self-projection into the future (see ch. 6, sect. 8, 'Sovereignty', 'Power', 'Good and Evil' and Hobbes's 'Doctrine of Truth').

Upon reflection then, how could Hobbes as a practitioner of 'precarious knowledge' across so many fronts have been missed? How could we not have seen the vilification of Hobbes in the clandestine 'three imposters' tradition as evidence that he was understood to be engineering the social distribution of knowledge in a scandalous manner? And how could Hobbes who understood the realities of political surrogacy, seeing the classical humanism practised by William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, the 'sons of Ben' as well as the poets and playwrights of the Virginia Company to belong to an ambitious programme of moral education, have for so long been missed? The evidence is overwhelming, but has been overlooked, I believe, because we moderns have a tin ear when it comes to thinkers past and the political environments in which they operated, denying them the sophistication and aspirations to political influence we claim for ourselves. The classical humanism of the great poets and playwrights of the Tudor Reformation from the 'golden age' of Shakespeare has been so thoroughly domesticated

by centuries of literary critics and school curricula that it is largely taken for granted. Hobbes's role in the courts of the Virginia Company, [19] where so many of these poets and playwrights congregated, and where he was one of the most regular attendees, should have put paid to this misconception. But it did not, due I believe to failure to interrogate the evidence, based on a refusal to consider the political agency of Hobbes's circle in the Virginia Company; as well as misconceptions about timing; and a failure to appreciate the early development of Hobbes's thinking, for which we have evidence already from Cavendish circles in France in the 1640s. To quite what extent Thomas Hobbes is, fortuitously, personally responsible for the completion of the Protestant Reformation in England begun under the Tudors, is not yet appreciated because of the same failure to read Hobbes backwards – as it is the purpose of this book to show. We shall see in the next sections, and in chapter 5, 'Hobbes's Leviathan has Feet of Clay', how his late decision to name his great classic *Leviathan* almost killed Hobbes's Reformation project; but that he was unexpectedly saved by his dalliance with Cromwell in the Interregnum and his resurrection by Royalists in the Restoration, a very different political climate.

2) Hobbes, the philosopher, renowned in England and France

Hobbes's *Historia Ecclesiastica* is a text critical in addressing Hobbes as an example of *Prekäres Wissen* for a number of reasons that I will briefly list, treating the poem at greater length in the Appendix, 'Hobbes's *Historia Ecclesiastica* shakes off Leviathan', and in the synopsis of the poem that follows. First, it is excellent evidence for my claim that Hobbes developed his philosophical system early, and that in the 1640s he was already paid homage, both in England and France, as an established philosopher with an

[19] For Hobbes's important role in the Virginia Company and Somers Isles Company, see Sébastien Bauer 'Hobbes, Cavendish, and the Bermuda Company', *The Historical Journal* (2024): 1–20, doi:10.1017/S0018246X24000414. Bauer endorses my view that 'Hobbes attended more courts than the number proposed by Malcolm', maintaining that Hobbes was commissioned by Cavendish 'to solve significant problems within both companies'. 'Examining Hobbes's views on monopolies suggests that his political work bears the traces of the experience he accumulated during the 1620s', Bauer argues. Moreover he agrees with me that 'ignoring what he observed leads to misreading what he wrote' in *Leviathan* chs xxii, xxiv, and xxix, about subordinate 'political systems', corporations, ministries, economics, etc. I congratulate Bauer on his careful work that greatly expands on our knowledge of Hobbes's expertise and involvement in affairs of state.

international reputation on political issues critical across post-Reformation Europe. And second, French interest in the poem is evidence for the continuities over Hobbes's long life, and that he is already seen in the 1650s as anticlerical, fighting sectarianism both Catholic and Protestant, Royalist and Republican, by supporting the classical humanism of poets and playwrights as a pacification programme – a project to which his poem, the *Historia Ecclesiastica* in both its early and late forms belongs. Evidence for this project first comes in the early accolade paid to Hobbes by William Davenant, poet laureate, in his Preface to *Gondibert* (1651), and Hobbes's response published with it. Later we have evidence from the Continent in the correspondence of 1657 by Thomas de Martel, a French lawyer; and letters from 1655 and 1664 by François Du Verdus – like de Martel a Cromwell supporter. This correspondence demonstrates recognition of Hobbes already famous in the 1650s for employing humanism as an anti-sectarian strategy. But it has been ruled out as too early, just as the first reports of his *Historia Ecclesiastica* have been ruled out as too early, due to miscalculations regarding dates of composition that we will discuss.

Hobbes's correspondence with the Continental Erastians, Thomas de Martel and François Du Verdus, once reassessed, casts important light not only on his early reputation as a philosopher, but also on the larger question of the political purposes of the civic humanism he endorsed – which could enlist Aristotle on poetics; while at the same time promoting a pan-European Gothic Ur-history based on Tacitus' *Germania*. This humanism is evident in the English chorographical project of Michael Drayton's *Poly-olbion* (published in 1613 in 18 books with notes by Hobbes's friend John Selden), to celebrate indigenous Englishness. It is also evident in Andrew Marvell's *Upon Appleton House* (1651), a republican response to Davenant's royalist *Gondibert* (1650), published together with Hobbes's response. The Country House poem genre, I suggest, was a form of legitimation for Reformation confiscations of monastic properties which, once distributed to aristocrats, were then presented as neo-classical piles of great antiquity, and as such, *sui generis*. It was a genre at which Hobbes also tried his hand, with *De Miribilibus Pecci* (1627/1628), 'On the Wonders of the Peak' District of Derbyshire, site of Chatsworth – his earliest Latin poem, but yet to appear in an English language critical edition. Like the *Historia Ecclesiastica* (1688) in its final form and that poem's early English paraphrase of 1722, *A True Satirical Ecclesiastical History, from Moses to the Time of Martin Luther* in verse, *De Miribilibus Pecci*, was safely cast as a burlesque, so that Hobbes could own or disown its implications, as his precariousness dictated.

Let us review the evidence for the larger picture, Hobbes's understanding of 'precarious knowledge' and the role of classical humanism as a species of political surrogacy. Remarkably specific, this evidence provides us at the same time with an explanation of the change in form of Hobbes's *Historia Ecclesiastica* from an institutional account of the rise of sectarianism to a humanist elegiac poem. [20] Evidence that has nevertheless been overlooked because of misconceptions about dating. We have evidence in Malcolm's *Hobbes Correspondence* that in 1664, [21] François Du Verdus, writing to Hobbes from Bordeaux, 'reports news to him from M. du Prat', 'that you were putting your entire philosophical system into Latin verse, in a style somewhat similar to Hesiod; with whose works you had closely familiarized yourself for that purpose'. Du Verdus offers to translate Hobbes's poem 'into *versi sciolti* [blank verse], like the ones Annibale Caro used in his translation of the Aeneid' – making the impossible boast to translate all of Hobbes's works, which M. Blaeu from Amsterdam promises to send him. Extraordinarily, Noel Malcolm, the extremely learned editor of the *Hobbes Correspondence*, dismisses the possibility that Du Verdus is referring to Hobbes's elegiac poem, the *Historia Ecclesiastica,* suggesting he may be referring instead to the slight poem *De Motibus Solis, aetheris et telluris* (which he admits does not seem to fit either), on the grounds, Malcolm claims, that 'the Latin verse *Historia Ecclesiastica* was not written until Sept-Oct 1671, when James Wheldon received payment for writing it out'.[22]

But this is an error of judgment on Malcolm's part. James Wheldon's receipt for the *Historia Ecclesiastica* marks the *terminus ad quem* for the poem, the

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[20] Note that to give appropriate attribution and avoid confusion between line-numbers and page-numbers, citations to the *Historia Ecclesiastica* given here differentiate between (1) reference to the first English translation and critical edition of Hobbes's *Historia Ecclesiastica* by my team, cited as *HE* Springborg et al. 2008, noting verse numbers and page numbers; and (2) citations to my personal contributions to the edition: (2a) the 7 chapter prefatory essay on text and context (*HE* Springborg 2008, pp.17-267); (2b) Appendix A 'A Survey of MSS and Printed Texts' completed with Noel Malcolm's assistance (*HE* Springborg 2008, pp. 269-79); and (2c) Appendix B, 'Ecclesiastical Sources in the Hardwick Hall Library' which I painstakingly compiled myself from Hobbes's booklist, Chatsworth MS E1A, using bibliographic sources and STC catalogues for the period, long before Richard Talaska's invaluable catalogue (2013), became available.

[21] Du Verdus to Hobbes, [24 July] 3 August 1664, *Hobbes Correspondence*, ed. Malcolm, (Oxford 1994), II: 625 (noted in *HE* Springborg 2008: 91 n.1).

[22] Malcolm, ed., *Hobbes Correspondence*, II: 628n. citing Chatsworth MS Hardwick 19, entry for that date (noted in *HE* Springborg 2008: 94 n.1).

latest date at which it was likely completed, and not the *terminus a quo*, the earliest date at which the project might have been commenced – for which we have several pieces of evidence which I will discuss in greater detail in the Appendix, 'Hobbes shakes off Leviathan, the *Historia Ecclesiastica'*. Variously dated, these reports seem to be describing two version of the poem, the first said to differ from the final printed version by being much shorter, at around '500+ verses' and numbering the lines. Aubrey in his biography of Hobbes in *Brief Lives* speaks of it as having been burned, when Hobbes under parliamentary indictment, destroyed many of his papers:

> In 1659 [Hobbes] wrot, among other things, a poeme in Latin Hexameter and Pentameter, of the encroachment of the clergie (both Roman and reformed) on the civil power. I remember I saw there 500+ verses for he numbred every tenth as he wrote. [23]

To which Aubrey added, 'His amanuensis remembers this poeme, for he wrote them out, but knows [not what became of it]'. Further reports on the poem comprise: 1), Hobbes's Latin prose autobiography, *Vitae Hobbinae Auctarium* of 1672 (*OL* I: xvii), which refers to both *Behemoth* and some 2000 verses having been written around his 80th year (i.e., by 1668), but that the time was not ripe to publish them (*HE* Springborg 2008, p. 86). This report is corroborated by 2), a letter again by his trusted biographer, John Aubrey, Aubrey to Wood of 5 July 1673, which speaks this time of 4000 verses, [24] and once again treats the poem as having been completed. 3) Aubrey's communication with Hobbes's amanuensis James Wheldon, responsible for the fair copy, reports an effort to relocate the poem shortly after Hobbes's death in 1679, preparatory to writing Hobbes's biography. 4) Wheldon replies positively on 16 January 1679/80: 'For those Latine verses you mention about Ecclesiasticall Power, I remember them for I writ them out, but know not what became of them, unlesse he presented them to

[23] John Aubrey, '*Brief Lives,' Chiefly of Contemporaries, set down by John Aubrey between the Years 1669 & 1696*. Edited by Andrew Clark from the Author's MSs, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1898), I: 338 (see *HE* Springborg 2008, p. 84, n. 3).

[24] Aubrey to Wood, 5 July 1673, Bodl. Ms. Wood F.39, f.219, cited by Philip Milton, 'Hobbes, Heresy and Lord Arlington', *History of Political Thought*, 14, 4 (1993): 501-46, at 545 (see *HE* Springborg 2008, p. 87 n. 1). The *Historia Ecclesiastica* in final form, published in 1688, to which Hobbes must be referring in his Latin prose autobiography, comprises in fact 1121 verses, or 2242 lines, which Aubrey, who had clearly not seen the poem in 1673, for some reason doubles rather than dividing, to get 4000 verses.

judge Vaughan, or burned them, as you seem to intimate'. [25] And 5) Aubrey's later report in his biography of Hobbes of trying to track the poem down, including a letter to Hobbes's printer William Crooke, eventually rewarded with the discovery of a MS.[26] Note that reports 1) and 2) of the poem seem clearly, by virtue of its reported length, to refer to the final elegiac version of the poem, which is in fact still referred to as Hobbes's *Historia Ecclesiastica Romana*. But we cannot assume this title indicates an early version of the poem. I suggest rather that it is a generic title to indicate a history of the papal monarchy, because as such it still stands as the title of the final elegiac poem in the surviving MSs: a) MS A, BL Harl. 1844 (which is corrected to the 1688 printed edn); and b) the Grund MS, now held in the Royal Copenhagen Library (Thotts Sml., 4o Nr 213), whose title page reads: 'History of the Roman Church signed by Thomas Hobbes. From my Lord Vaughan's Library, copied in London, George Grund, AD 1685' (see *HE* Springborg et al. 2008: 302-3). The 5 reports of the poem that I have listed are close in date to the receipt for payment of Wheldon's fair copy of the poem, dated Sept-Oct 1671, Malcolm's *terminus ad quem*. And each of them assumes the poem to have been completed. But for the poem's *terminus a quo* – reported by Aubrey in 1659 already as numbering some '500+ verses' – we have to look elsewhere, and here we have material evidence that would satisfy Malcolm's criteria, had he considered it.

François du Verdus, as noted, a long-standing correspondent of Hobbes connected to Thomas de Martel, the anticlerical French lawyer, and Gilles Roberval (1602-75) the mathematician – both associates of Hobbes's patron in Paris, Marin Mersenne – was likely well acquainted with his intentions regarding the Latin poem. Du Verdus, [27] writing to Hobbes in 1655 and 1664, makes two references in his letter of 1664 to suggest that it was the later elegiac version of the poem, to which he was already referring. First, his mention of Annibale Caro (1507-66), the writer of burlesques and satires in blank verse – beginning with the *Ecloga* (1534) and concluding with

[25] Wheldon to Aubrey, 16 January 1679/80, Aubrey in *Brief Lives*, I: 382, cited by Milton 1993: 511 (*HE* Springborg 2008, p. 87 n. 2).
[26] Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, I: 364 (*HE* Springborg 2008, p. 87 n. 4).
[27] Du Verdus, an Erastian and anti-clericalist who had property disputes with the church in Bordeaux, was an early correspondent and admirer of Hobbes: see Du Verdus to Hobbes, 17 Aug. 1656, 23 Nov. 1656, 12 Mar. 1657, *Hobbes Correspondence*, ed. Noel Malcolm, Oxford 1994, I: 299, 325, 367-74 and 454. Note also that Malcolm's 'Biographical Register', *Hobbes Correspondence* II: 908-9, discusses Du Verdus' connections to Martel, Roberval and the Mersenne circle (*HE* Springborg 2008, p. 95 n. 5).

Eneide di Virgilio, tradotta in versi sciolti (1581) – would fit the later version of the poem; and may have been the very reason why Rymer chose to entitle it *carmine elegiac concinnata* – if indeed it was Rymer who made that decision (*HE* Springborg 2008, pp. 93-4). Second, the mention of Hesiod (fl. c. 650-750 BCE), polymath and author of written as well as spoken verse, with whom Du Verdus claims Hobbes had familiarized himself for the purposes of writing it, also suggests the elegiac poem, and not a simple history of sectarianism, as the version to which Du Verdus is referring. The ancient Greek poet Hesiod is significant for a number of reasons. Contemporary of Homer (fl. c. 650-750 BCE), he was the son of a migrant to Boeotia from Cyme, Aeolis in Asia Minor (now Izmir, Turkey). Hesiod, in his didactic poems, the *Theogony*, (c. 730-700 BCE) and *Works and Days* (c. 700 BCE) demonstrates familiarity with Eastern religions, treated at length by Hobbes in his elegiac poem.[28] So, early sections of the final version devote impressive space to Ethiopia, ancient Egypt – and specifically not ancient Israel – as the source of first, the 'origin of the state' (*HE* Springborg et al. 2008, lines 111 to 120, pp. 316-17); second, the 'origin of astrology' (*HE* Springborg et al. 2008, lines 121 to 152, pp. 316-19); and third the 'origin of the arts' (*HE* Springborg et al. 2008, lines 153 to 188, pp. 320-25). But it is worth noting the ambivalence of Hobbes's account and his contempt for the priest-ridden rule of the Ethiopians, where while 'nominally that of the king ... it was the Sophists, those deceivers we've called Astrologers, [who] ruled' (*HE* Springborg et al. 2008, lines 191-2, pp. 324-5). And from here Hobbes's account resumes the satire of the earlier *Historia Ecclesiastica Romana*, lampooning the papal monarchy.

There are other indications that Du Verdus was remarkably well informed. In the very letter in which he offers to translate Hobbes's poem, Du Verdus to Hobbes, [24 July] 3 August 1664, he reports on 'waiting to discover how exactly I can live with our druids in the Kingdom of Darkness'[29]– referring to *Leviathan*, book 4, 'The Kingdom of Darkness'. Mention of Druids may well be a 'coterie reference', signalling his knowledge of the treatises on the gentile religions by the antiquarians, Gerardus Vossius (1577-1649), Philip

[28] See Peter Walcot, *Hesiod and the Near East*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1966, who addresses the fact that since the discovery of cuneiform tablets from Babylonia, Sumeria and the Hittite empire, scholars have noticed similarities between the Biblical creation stories and those of Hesiod's *Theogony*. It is also notable that the 12th century Byzantine scholar, John Tzetzes produced not only a commentary on Hesiod's *Works and Days*, but a biography of the Greek epic poet.
[29] Malcolm, *Hobbes Correspondence*, II: 628 n., citing Chatsworth MS Hardwick 19, entry for that date.