

# THOMAS HOBBS AND CARDINAL BELLARMINE: LEVIATHAN AND 'THE GHOST OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE'

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'The controversies betwixt *Rome* and the *Reformation* are long since beaten out of the pit, by other combatants of their own brood', Hobbes's Epistle to the Reader, prefacing *Of Liberty and Necessity* (*EW*, Vol. 4, p. 232).

## I

### Hobbes on Religion

The degree to which early modern theory of the state was focused by papalist theory is still underestimated, despite the recent fine scholarship of Francis Oakley and Johann Sommerville.<sup>1</sup> Thomist and Jesuit theories of *imperium* perplexed and provoked major political theorists from Filmer to Locke and a host of lesser known thinkers including Henry Foulis and Mary Astell. There were two reasons for this. The first and general reason is that scholastic theory had syncretized the political philosophy of the greats from Aristotle through Cicero to Augustine. There was not much in the way of antique sources that lay untouched by it, and even the Protestant reformers shared more than they cared to admit. If Platonism stood a little outside the tradition, this may have been the reason why Renaissance mirrorists turned to it, producing predictably absolut-

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<sup>1</sup> Johann P. Sommerville's perceptive treatment of Hobbes and Bellarmine in *Thomas Hobbes: Political Ideas in Context* (London, 1992), pp. 113–19, complements his overview of papalist theory and Anglican responses in his *Politics and Ideology in England, 1603–40* (London, 1986), pp. 189–203. On the perceived convergence of presbyterianism and popery on the power to depose kings, see Sommerville's 'From Suarez to Filmer: a Reappraisal', *Historical Journal*, 25 (1982), pp. 525–40; and J.P. Sommerville's Introduction to his edition of Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha and Other Writings* (Cambridge, 1991), esp. pp. xv, xxi–xxiv. On the medieval roots of consent theory see Francis Oakley, 'Legitimation by Consent: the Question of the Medieval Roots', *Viator*, 14 (1983), pp. 303–35; and F. Oakley, *Omnipotence, Covenants, and Order* (Ithaca, 1984), esp. pp. 48–91.

ist theory for upstart princes.<sup>2</sup> But even they layered their *étatist* theories on the bedrock of Aristotelianism as Kristeller and others have demonstrated.<sup>3</sup>

The second and specific reason is that deep background theoretical contexts were revived by the direct intervention of the papalists, Robert Bellarmine and Francisco Suarez, in the debate over James I's oath of allegiance as part of a Counter-reformation strategy to reconvert England. This produced concerted defensive action by James and his courtiers in the form of specific rebuttals to the Jesuits and a general project of church-history writing, to which Thomas Hobbes contributed.

Hobbes's religious doctrines set an insoluble puzzle for us because of his insistence on official conformity but private freedom of belief.<sup>4</sup> As a strategy this was not very sensible, putting him, like his follower Daniel Scargill, in the position of never being believed.<sup>5</sup> Apart from some ambiguous remarks

<sup>2</sup> See Alison Brown, 'Platonism in Fifteenth Century Florence and its Contribution to Early Modern Political Thought', *Journal of Modern History*, 58 (1986), pp. 383–413.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'Augustine and the Early Renaissance', *Review of Religion*, 8 (1944), pp. 339–58; P.O. Kristeller, 'The Scholastic Background of Marsilio Ficino', *Traditio*, 2 (1944), pp. 257–318; P.O. Kristeller, 'Humanism and Scholasticism in the Renaissance', *Byzantion*, 17 (1944–5), pp. 346–74: all reprinted in P.O. Kristeller, *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters* (Rome, 1969), pp. 355–72, 35–97 and 553–83.

<sup>4</sup> Among the most famous and hard-hitting of the many tens of contemporary items on Hobbes's religious doctrines, still sunk in relative obscurity, see John Bramhall, *Castigations of Mr. Hobbes his last animadversions, in the case concerning liberty and universal necessity; With an appendix concerning the catching of LEVIATHAN, or the great whale* (London, 1658, STC B4215); and Alexander Ross, *Leviathan Drawn out with a Hook* (London, 1653). For a review of the reception of *Leviathan*, see Samuel I. Mintz, *The Hunting of Leviathan: Seventeenth Century Reactions to the Materialism and Moral Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes* (Cambridge, 1962). For accounts which take seriously Hobbes's overall religious project see: J.G.A. Pocock, 'Time, History and Eschatology in the Thought of Thomas Hobbes', in *Politics, Language and Time* (London, 1973); Leopold Damrosch, Jr., 'Hobbes as Reformation Theologian: Implications of the Free-will Controversy', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 40 (1979), pp. 339–52; Gary Shapiro, 'Reading and Writing in the Text of Thomas Hobbes', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 18 (1980), pp. 147–57; Peter T. Geach, 'The Religion of Thomas Hobbes', *Religious Studies*, 17 (1981), pp. 549–58; Joel Schwartz, 'Hobbes and the Two Kingdoms of God', *Polity*, 18, no. 1 (1985), pp. 7–24; Benjamin Milner, 'Hobbes on Religion', *Political Theory*, 16, no. 3 (1988), pp. 400–25; Arrigo Pacchi, 'Some Guidelines into Hobbes's Theology', *Hobbes Studies*, 2 (1989), pp. 87–103; Joshua Mitchell, 'Hobbes and the Equality of All under the One', *Political Theory*, 21, no. 1 (1993), pp. 78–100.

<sup>5</sup> See 'The Recantation of Daniel Scargill Publicly made before the University of Cambridge in Great St. Maries, July 25. 1669'. Hobbes wrote his own observations on his follower Scargill which have not survived, as John Aubrey notes in '*Brief Lives*', chiefly of *Contemporaries, set down by John Aubrey between the Years 1669 & 1696* (2 vols., Oxford, 1898), Vol. 1, pp. 360–1.

Hobbes made about believing in witches,<sup>6</sup> and an interest in the supernatural that his letters disclose,<sup>7</sup> we have White Kennett's report to substantiate Hobbes's own observation that the root of religion is fear. Kennett, as a Whig, does not give a very good account of Hobbes, characterizing him as 'a great Coward' riddled with fear who yet supported absolute monarchy. This is the same towering man who lived to the age of ninety and was referred to by Charles II as a 'beare to be bayted',<sup>8</sup> of whom Kennett relates that he 'could not endure to be left in an empty House', not even the palatial houses of his patron, the Earl of Devonshire, and that 'whenever the Earl removed, he would go along with him, even to his last Stage from *Chatsworth* to *Hardwick*, when in a very weak Condition, he dar'd not be left behind, but made his way upon a Feather Bed in a Coach, tho' he survived the Journey but a few days'.<sup>9</sup>

That ecclesiology and the history of religion were central to Hobbes's concerns we know from his works and from the company he kept. Employed by William Cavendish, later Earl of Devonshire, more or less continuously from 1608, the year he graduated from Oxford, Hobbes moved in circles close to James I and later Charles. Members of these overlapping circles promoted the Stuart cause and the grander strategies of James which included union of the English and Scottish realms and the pacification of Ireland. Like James they emulated Henry IV of France, his programme of Christian unification and moderation, and to this end aspired to rewriting the history not only of the realm but also of its national church.<sup>10</sup> While the national history project was stunningly brought to completion by William Camden, Michael Drayton and John Speed, not always to James's satisfaction,<sup>11</sup> Hobbes, who produced a

<sup>6</sup> *The Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle*, recorded by Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, ed. C.H. Firth (London, 1886), p. 198, reports Hobbes admitt[ing] that 'though he could not rationally believe there were witches, yet he could not be fully satisfied to believe there were none, by reason that they would themselves confess it, if strictly examined'.

<sup>7</sup> Hobbes's close friend, the Catholic Kenelm Digby, reported to him in secrecy supernatural events at the Ursuline convent in Loudun possessed by 'Devils'. See *Thomas Hobbes, The Correspondence*, ed. Noel Malcolm (2 vols., Oxford, 1994), Vol. 1, pp. 42–9, Letter 25, January 1637, with an enclosure dated 27 January 1636.

<sup>8</sup> Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, Vol. 1, p. 340.

<sup>9</sup> White Kennett, *Memoirs of the Family of Cavendish* (London, 1708), p. 16.

<sup>10</sup> See Kevin Sharpe's magisterial account of the Cotton library as forum for the antiquarian courtiers and their exchanges of materials, sometimes secret and sometimes seditious: Sharpe, *Sir Robert Cotton, 1586–1631, History and Politics in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1979).

<sup>11</sup> William Camden's Latin chorography *Britannia* (1594) — English'd by Philémon Holland in 1637; John Speed, *History of Great Britain . . .* (1611); Michael Drayton, *Poly-olbion* (1612). The Latin text of Camden's *Annales* (1615, trans. Darcie 1625), for

continuous stream of works on religion, late in his life completed the church history project with *Historia Ecclesiastica*, a 2242-line Latin poem. Mimicking the titles of Eusebius and the Venerable Bede, but more closely resembling a Lucianic burlesque or the satire of Donne, it might not have pleased James either, had he lived to see it.

James's supporters defended Huguenots while deploring Puritans. They cultivated Princess Elizabeth and her husband Frederick, the Elector Palatine. They were pro-Dutch and anti-Spanish, vehemently protesting the meddling of Spanish (and Italian) Jesuits in British politics, Robert Bellarmine,<sup>12</sup> Francisco Suarez<sup>13</sup> and their English follower, Robert Parsons.<sup>14</sup> Attacking the power to depose princes claimed by Jesuits for the papacy, they appeared in the event more anti-Catholic than in fact they were. For instance Hobbes, who in 1636 is recorded to have dined in the refectory of the Jesuits' English College in Rome with his patron the Earl of Devonshire,<sup>15</sup> numbered among his close friends the

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instance, was said to have been toned down at James's request on events in Scotland concerning Mary Queen of Scots.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621), produced the definitive defence of papal power, *Disputationes de Controversiis Christianae Fidei adversus hujus temporis Haereticos* (3 vols., 1581, 1582, 1593), which called forth many Protestant rebuttals, including that of Thomas Hobbes. In 1589 he was required by Sextus V to accompany a papal delegation to France, following the murder of Henry III. Created a cardinal by Clement VIII in 1599, he was, after 1605, retained by Pope Paul V to defend the Church in its battle with schismatic civil powers in Venice, France and England. In the case of England his interventions were signal, involving him in public criticism of James I for his severity on Catholics in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot, and a posthumous rebuttal of the work of William Barclay denying the temporal power of the Pope, published in 1610 as *De Potestate summi Pontificis in rebus temporalibus*

<sup>13</sup> Francisco Suarez, S.J. (1548–1617), author of *Defensio fidei catholicae et apostolicae aduersus anglicanae sectae errores* (Coimbra, 1613). Suarez asserted papal supremacy against the divine right of kings and the oath of allegiance instituted by James I in 1606.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Parsons (1546–1610), was an English Counter-Reformation Jesuit, who in 1580 was appointed by the Pope to campaign against Elizabeth and Protestantism. He made many converts among the gentry, but when his fellow Jesuit, Campion, was taken and executed, Parsons fled to Normandy where he printed several books in defence of the cause, and then to Spain where he established the English colleges of Valladolid and St. Omer for the training of English missionaries, and assisted the attempted invasion of England by King Philip. Following the failure of this attempt he turned to preventing the succession of King James I, in 1592 publishing anonymously his *Elizabethae, Angliae Reginae Haeresin Calvinianam Propugnantis, Saeuissimum in Catholicism sui regni Edictum . . .* under the pseudonym of Andreas Philopater. In 1594 he published *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crowne of England . . .*, using for this publication the name of R. Doleman, a secular priest who hated Parsons as much as Parsons hated him. The chief purpose of this work was to support the title of the Infanta against that of King James, by arguing that the authority of monarchs is derived from the people.

<sup>15</sup> See *Thomas Hobbes Correspondence*, ed. Malcolm, Vol. 2, p. 805.

Catholic amateur scientist, astrologer and diplomat extraordinary, Sir Kenelm Digby, who may personally have underwritten the publication of the Latin *De Cive*.<sup>16</sup> More seriously, Hobbes was an interlocutor with the Catholic priest Thomas White, with whom his doctrines were bracketed by the committee of the House of Commons charged with convicting them of heresy.<sup>17</sup> The Earl of Arlington, Charles's Secretary of State who came to Hobbes's aid in this matter, and perhaps King Charles himself, were dissembling Catholics. In fact, as the examples of Edward Howard, Hobbes's correspondent,<sup>18</sup> and John Donne demonstrate,<sup>19</sup> those who had most to hide protested the loudest. For some of them enjoyed (or suffered) close Jesuit connections and their backgrounds often included strong recusant elements.

The young John Donne for instance, known as an 'ultramontane', that particular brand of pro-papist, anti-Gallican Catholic generally most abhorred by Hobbes, appears to have converted to the Church of England with reluctance, under pressure from James, being immediately rewarded with a chaplaincy to the king. Donne's mother had been a relative of Thomas More, two uncles were Jesuits and his brother Henry had died in prison as an accomplice of William Harrington, a seminary priest. Donne's education was Romanist and he was known to have advised Thomas Morton, later Bishop of Durham, author of the anti-Catholic *Apologia Catholica* of 1604. Morton's *Catholic Appeal* reveals unusual knowledge of current Jesuit thinking,

<sup>16</sup> See the Introduction to Thomas Hobbes, *De Cive, The Latin Version*, and Thomas Hobbes, *De Cive, The English Version*, critical editions by Howard Warrender (Oxford, 1983). Digby, whose father had been executed for his role in the Gunpowder Plot and who was sent by the Court to lobby the Pope in 1639 to raise support for Charles among Scottish Catholics, was in 1642 imprisoned at the instigation of Secretary Vane, who wrote that Digby was making unseasonable proposals to Charles I. He was freed by the intervention of Queen Anne of Austria, the French Queen Regent in 1643, but not before he was asked to testify regarding Laud's purported ambition to acquire a Cardinal's hat, which he denied. His property was confiscated and he removed to Paris. It was there among the exiles that Hobbes undoubtedly got to know him well.

<sup>17</sup> As recorded in the *House of Commons Journal* for 17 October 1666, demanding power 'to receive information touching such books as tend to atheism, blasphemy and profaneness, or against the essence and attributes of God, and in particular the book published in the name of one White and the book of Mr. Hobbs called "The Leviathan", and to report the matter with their opinion to the House'. Hobbes had denied incorporeal substances, White the natural immortality of the soul. See Thomas Hobbes, *Thomas White's 'De Mundo' Examined*, trans. Harold Whitmore Jones (Bradford, 1976).

<sup>18</sup> See *Thomas Hobbes Correspondence*, ed. Malcolm, Vol. 2, pp. 704–5, Letter 184.

<sup>19</sup> Hobbes was acquainted with John Donne, although how closely we do not know. At a meeting of the Virginia Company in November 1622, attended by Hobbes in his capacity as secretary to Cavendish, Donne preached a famous sermon. See Noel Malcolm's fine essay, 'Hobbes, Sandys and the Virginia Company', *The Historical Journal*, 24 (1981), pp. 297–321, esp. pp. 298, 303.

probably gained from Donne — for whose views we have evidence in *Pseudo-Martyr*, his case against recusants, and *Biathanatos*. In 1614 Donne sent a copy of *Biathanatos* to Edward Herbert, Lord Cherbury, Hobbes's antiquarian acquaintance; and in 1646 Donne's son sent a copy of the first edition to William Cavendish, the Earl of Newcastle, observing that the Earl had seen the book years earlier in the library of Sir Gervase Clifton.<sup>20</sup> Clifton had hired Hobbes to tutor his son, and it was therefore likely that Hobbes had seen it too. Donne's satire of the Jesuits, *Ignatius His Conclave*, of 1610, pitted him with James I, Thomas Morton and Lancelot Andrewes against Bellarmine, as part of a government campaign to divide recusant Catholics.<sup>21</sup> Written as a Menippean satire after Seneca's *Pumpkinification of Claudius* and Erasmus' *Julius Exclusus*, it undoubtedly appealed to Hobbes who was writing his own burlesque, the Latin *De Mirabilibus Pecci Carmen*, from 1626 to 1627, heavily dependent on Roman models.<sup>22</sup>

Hobbes's humanism, to which this poem attests, placed him among courtiers and antiquarians for whom *arcana imperii* or state secrets were stock in trade, which in turn put him in the company of George Buchanan, Robert Parsons, William Barclay and Robert Bellarmine, as Filmer astutely observed.<sup>23</sup> As amanuensis to Francis Bacon around 1623, Hobbes was a conduit for Bacon's views to Paolo Sarpi and the Venetians, who in 1606–7 had engaged in their own controversy with Cardinal Bellarmine. More generally, Hobbes fell heir to Bacon's project to accomplish by means of natural philosophy, optics, geometry, and eventually rhetoric and politics, the purification of Christianity that internal reform had failed to provide. By this time Descartes, Mersenne and the Royal Society had each in their different ways undertaken to rewrite the arts and sciences, as a vindication of universal Christianity in schism since the Reformation. The Christian reform of manners and mores was an important plank in the Stuart programme; and so was pacification of the masses riven by religious sectarianism to the point of civil war. There is little in Hobbes's agenda that departs from these humanist goals. At the end of his life, as at the beginning, he is to be found translating a Greek epic historian and writing the

<sup>20</sup> *Thomas Hobbes Correspondence*, ed. Malcolm, Vol. 2, p. 821.

<sup>21</sup> See *John Donne Selected Prose*, ed. Helen Gardiner and Timothy Healy (Oxford, 1967), pp. 59–65 and comments, p. 59, on which I rely.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *De Mirabilibus Pecci: Being the Wonders of the Peak in Darbyshire*, in English and Latin; the Latin by Hobbes, the English by 'a Person of Quality' (London, 1678; Folger Library 159640). See Patricia Springborg, 'Hobbes's *De Mirabilibus Pecci Carmen*, and Cavendishian Family Politics' and 'Hobbes, Jonson and Cotton, Poets of the Peak', unpublished essays.

<sup>23</sup> Filmer, *Patriarcha*, ed. J. Sommerville, p. 3. See also Patricia Springborg and Patricia Harris Stäblein, *Hobbes's Country House Poem: 'De Mirabilibus Pecci Carmen'*, translation and commentary (forthcoming).

history of the church, in Latin, projected by James more than half a century earlier to confound priestcraft and denaturalize heresy.

There are, however, important differences between Hobbes's early and late works. The political urgency of *Leviathan* bespeaks suspension of belief in the power of humanists to discipline the court. Charles I's unconstitutional fiscal and ecclesiastical programme had opened the polity to fracture by parliamentarians which allowed centrifugal forces and polarizations, like that between papist and presbyterian, to play themselves out. Charles could be construed as suffering the consequences of a doctrine that James had long predicted. If the deposing powers of the papalists, defended by Spanish Jesuits as by Italian canon lawyers, had brought the assassination of his hero, Henry IV of France, his successor was to suffer the regicide James had long feared for himself. Bellarmine's<sup>24</sup> personal intervention into English political discourse on the subject of the oath of allegiance to James occasioned Hobbes's extensive treatment of his views.

If Hobbes's religious project matured alongside his political, it ended as it began, an extension of the great project of James I to reinvent the polity on secure historiographic foundations. Hobbes's particular contribution lay in trying to form from Christianity a civic religion like that of the great empires on which his *Leviathan* is modelled; an aspiration that also lay at the birth of Anglicanism. We have hints enough in the sources Hobbes invokes in *De Mirabilibus Pecci Carmen* for the provenance of his views: Virgil, fabricator of foundation myths and servant of the empire; Horace, the anti-war poet who moved from pastoral idyll to imperial eulogy as he came closer to Augustus; the burlesquing Syrian Lucian, who catalogues the absurdities of the oriental cults; and Lucan, the mordant poet of civil war. A sentimental attachment to the ethic of primitive Christianity, expressed in the 'Narration Concerning Heresy' and reexpressed in *Leviathan*, may come closest to religious conviction on Hobbes's part.<sup>25</sup> For his purposes at least it would do, lending the virtues of faith, hope and charity to an imperial project of Augustan peace.

<sup>24</sup> See Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology*, pp. 197–9.

<sup>25</sup> 'Narration Concerning Heresy', in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. Sir William Molesworth (11 vols., London, 1839–45) (hereafter *EW*), Vol. 4, pp. 388–9. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 46, pp. 478–9. But in his long Latin poem, the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Hobbes ridicules the early Christians, an easy prey for the pagan philosophers, who passed off on them their sophistical wares. See Thomas Hobbes, *Historia ecclesiastica carmine elegiaco concinnata*, ed. with a preface by Thomas Rymer (London, 1688; STC H2237); English paraphrase, *A True Ecclesiastical History From Moses to the time of Martin Luther, in Verse* (London, 1722; Folger Library B1244.H5.Cage), lines 1–30, 1688 edn., pp. 1–2, 1722 edn., pp. 1–3; lines 320–50, 1688 edn., p. 16, 1722 edn., pp. 23–4; and lines 385–460, 1688 edn., pp. 19–22, 1722 edn., pp. 28–33. A new translation is in preparation by Patricia Springborg and Patricia Harris Stäblein, *Hobbes's 'Historia Ecclesiastica': a Critical Edition* (forthcoming, 1998).

Hobbes's attitude to the Roman Catholic Church was rather like St Augustine's attitude to the Roman Empire: it is the subject of mixed opprobrium and approbation, condemnation and emulation. To make a further comparison, Hobbes's question of the Roman Catholic Church was the same as Polybius' question of the Roman Empire: by what means did it acquire such power, and how did it legitimize it?<sup>26</sup> These were critical questions for early modern mirrorists, as Machiavelli's close attention to Polybius indicated. If the Pope sat crowned on the gravestone of the Roman Empire, he represented one in a long line of sovereigns with something to teach the new Prince. In Hobbes's case the lesson was more salient for the fact that the English Reformation had put civic religion on the immediate agenda. But Catholicism represented the great reversal of *raison d'état*: it constituted a state in the service of religion rather than religion in the service of the state. It was the great anti-Leviathan on which his writings turned.

Hobbes's answer to the Polybian question concerning the foundations of 'Romish' power was, in short, 'the doctrine of essences'. The sure footing on which Catholicism had grounded its theocracy was, like the empires of the Babylonians and pharaohs, a hegemonic metaphysics guarded by a priestly caste. This is the burden, I believe, of Hobbes's investigations of the ancient oriental cults, and particularly the ancient Egyptians, on the subject of which he shared similar views to those of his friends, the antiquarians John Selden and Lord Herbert of Cherbury.<sup>27</sup> If Hobbes set out to ground the early modern nation state on the New Science this was religiously motivated as well, for the New Science represented an anti-metaphysics. The one point at which all of Hobbes's writings coalesced was in rebutting the doctrine of essences. It was this doctrine on which the central rituals of Catholicism — like the antique religions, a religion of ritual rather than of texts — were based. The Mass, Catholic Baptism and Confirmation, Extreme Unction — the sacraments central to this religion of mysteries — were all informed by doctrines about the meta-morphic nature of substances. The instability of matter, viewed under a metamorphic aspect, had its analogue in the instability of opinion, the instability of language, and the variety of modes of expression and communication, including rhetoric.<sup>28</sup> Until these were all regularized commonwealth and citizens could not be.

<sup>26</sup> See Frank Walbank, *Polybius* (Berkeley, 1972), pp. 179–82.

<sup>27</sup> For Hobbes's evinced extensive interest in pharaohs and fairies, 'Gentilism' and the occult, see Patricia Springborg, 'Hobbes's Biblical Beasts: *Leviathan* and *Behemoth*', *Political Theory*, 23, 2 (1995), pp. 353–75; and Patricia Springborg, 'Hobbes, Heresy and the *Historia Ecclesiastica*', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 55 (1994), pp. 553–71.

<sup>28</sup> See Quentin Skinner's recent fine essays 'Thomas Hobbes: Rhetoric and the Construction of Morality', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 76 (1990), pp. 1–61; and his F.W. Bateson Memorial Lecture, 'Moral Ambiguity and the Renaissance Art of Eloquence', *Essays in Criticism*, 44 (1994), pp. 267–92.

Hobbes's project lay in providing stability to the world of language and morals, while eschewing a metaphysics of certitude of the 'doctrine of essences' type. To fix the meanings of everyday language so that the ears of subjects were chained to the lips of the sovereign, to use the great metaphor Hobbes invokes from Lucian's *Heracles*, was a work of artifice.<sup>29</sup> To create the 'Artificiall Chains, called *Civill Lawes*', the ligaments of 'Artificiall Man, which we call a Common-wealth', was a scientific project.<sup>30</sup> It required the technical and unequivocal use of language and the elimination of freely-held opinions.

But to base linguistic stability on a nominalist epistemology was quite an achievement, if Hobbes could pull it off. The Catholic Church had the great advantage of having quarried the rich realist seam of ancient philosophy on which to found doctrinal certitude. Hobbes's project, worthy of Hellenistic scepticism and its early modern advocates in the new scientists, was at once to admit ethical relativism and then, for reason-of-state purposes, to set out to eliminate it.<sup>31</sup> He founded his project on a set of central axioms. First, if the meanings of words are decided by convention then it is up to authority to stabilize them or there is no meaning. Second, nominalism and essentialism are incompatible: a theory of essences cannot be derived from a convention-based theory of language. Third, nominalism and ethical relativism give no sanction to an independent church, or any set of doctrines derived independently of state authority. What are the implications then for the Holy Book and the status of Christ the Word Incarnate? Hobbes maintained that the Book is closed and the life of Christ an unexamined life until a sovereign interpreter is sanctioned. How did all of this sit with his recognition that the Church of England was constitutionally established, and that Anglicanism subscribes to the thirty-nine articles and the Nicene Creed?

Hobbes's answers to these questions, which may be seen to drive his entire philosophical project, are to be found in three areas. His philosophy of lan-

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, or the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge, 1991), p. 147. See Quentin Skinner, 'Thomas Hobbes on the Proper Signification of Liberty', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 40 (1990), pp. 121–51, esp. p. 137.

<sup>30</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1991 edn., p. 147.

<sup>31</sup> The link between Hobbes's metaphysical worries about linguistic instability and the capacity of the 'new science' to provide a 'new realism', based on an empirical and materialist epistemology and ontology, is brilliantly made by Quentin Skinner in his, 'Thomas Hobbes: Rhetoric and the Construction of Morality', pp. 1–61; and Quentin Skinner, '*Scientia civilis* in Classical Rhetoric and in the Early Hobbes', *Political Discourse in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Nicholas Phillipson and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 67–93.

guage, resurrecting medieval nominalism as it does, is the first.<sup>32</sup> According to this name fixing is a sovereign activity. The attributes of God and the realm of the numinous are inaccessible to human reason. The best we can do is to honour Him, and in the conduct of worship the sovereign is high priest. Hobbes's various attempts throughout his life to redefine the terms of orthodoxy and heterodoxy and rewrite the history of heresy represent a second area.<sup>33</sup> His confrontations with the doctrines of his opponents represent the third. Of these, the debate with Bramhall, Bishop of Derry, referred to by Cromwell as the 'Irish Canterbury' to class him with the High Church Laud,<sup>34</sup> Hobbes's response to his friend the Catholic priest Thomas White's *De Mundo*,<sup>35</sup> and his answers to Cardinal Bellarmine are the most extensive.

Hobbes's theology shows that he had done his homework. Not only could he apply humanist techniques of biblical criticism but his knowledge of ecclesiology was extensive. His commentary on the Nicene Creed, his analysis of liturgical practices and history of Church proclamations in the 'Narration Concerning Heresy', the *Historia Ecclesiastica* and in the Latin Appendix to *Leviathan*, testify to his theological competence.<sup>36</sup> Hobbes's prefatory remarks to Bramhall on *Questions concerning Liberty, Necessity and Chance* speak of his acquaintance with the writings of 'the Schoolmen or metaphysicians' about whom he complained: '[their] writings have troubled my head more than they should have done, if I had known that amongst so many senseless disputes, there had been so few lucid intervals'.<sup>37</sup> Bellarmine, to whom he addresses

<sup>32</sup> See Dorothea Krook, 'Thomas Hobbes's Doctrine of Meaning and Truth', *Philosophy*, 31 (1956), pp. 3–22; Margreta de Grazia, 'The Secularization of Language in the Seventeenth Century', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 41 (1980), pp. 319–20; and G.A. Padley, 'The Seventeenth Century: Words versus Things', in *Grammatical Theory in Western Europe 1500–1700: The Latin Tradition* (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 111–53, esp. pp. 141 ff. For a more detailed study of the relation between Hobbes's epistemology and theology, see Patricia Springborg, 'Hobbes on Religion', in the *Cambridge Companion to Hobbes*, ed. Tom Sorrell (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 346–80.

<sup>33</sup> Principally in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*; the 'Narration Concerning Heresy', in *EW*, Vol. IV, pp. 388–9; the *Dialogue of the Common Laws* (written around 1666), about half of which concerns the English law of heresy; and the 1668 Appendix to the Latin *Leviathan*.

<sup>34</sup> George Wright, 'Thomas Hobbes: 1668 Appendix to *Leviathan*', *Interpretation*, 18 (1991), p. 339, n. 18.

<sup>35</sup> See Hobbes, *Thomas White's 'De Mundo' Examined*, trans. Jones.

<sup>36</sup> On Hobbes's use of humanist exegetical techniques see Henning Graf Reventlow, *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia, 1985), pp. 194–222, esp. pp. 212 ff.

<sup>37</sup> *EW*, Vol. 5, p. 342, cited by Wright in his Introduction to the '1668 Appendix to *Leviathan*', p. 343.

more attention than all the medievals put together, Hobbes bends to his purposes.

## II

### Bellarmino, the Pope and ‘the Ghost of the Roman Empire’

Being a courtier’s client — a role barely credited to this insubordinate man — placed Hobbes in the awkward position of attacking thinkers the general contours of whose political theory he shared. The important distinction made by Hobbes between authorization and consent is a legacy of scholastic theory which sought to distinguish between God as the author of the power of office and the right of the community to designate an incumbent. If the papalists Bellarmine and Suarez took the more radical position that only a community could authorize the transfer of power from a community to a ruler, Hobbes fell back on the older scholastic position that vests power to authorize with the author (in this case God), leaving only the designation of an incumbent to popular choice. It was precisely this distinction that Hobbes’s finely crafted theory of simultaneous authorization and consent in the moment of social contract sought to preserve. Hobbes’s extension of contract theory to the recesses of household and family is not necessarily inconsistent. Scholastic theory held, correspondingly, that entry to the estate of marriage can only be divinely authorized, as recognized in the marriage vows, but that the choice of incumbents could be left to consent, as registered in the marriage contract. Hobbes’s ‘sexual contract’<sup>38</sup> may amount to no more than this, and if he enlisted the Laws of Natural Reason as sanctions in place of Natural Law, his contemporaries were not deceived.

Thomas Hobbes could never be accused of popular sovereignty for his theory of social contract. But John Locke, who was more Aristotelian than Hobbes in the power he credited to pre-political social institutions, gave an account of right to resistance and the power of consent which stood him accused by those writers who saw a convergence between Papist and proto-Whig theory. This became a burning issue in the aftermath of regicide given the fears of Restoration royalists that James II would suffer the fate of Charles I. The carefully documented account by Henry Foulis of the convergence between papalist and presbyterian theories of the right of resistance was only one of many that elaborated arguments made by Filmer and responded to by Locke.<sup>39</sup> Filmer had denied Aristotle’s distinction between household and realm because it was used

<sup>38</sup> Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Cambridge, 1988). On marriage and scholastic theory see Margaret Sommerville’s magisterial *Sex and Subjection: Attitudes to Women in Early-Modern Society* (London, 1995).

<sup>39</sup> See Henry Foulis, *The History of the Wicked Plots and Conspiracies of Our Pretended Saints* (Oxford, 2nd edn., 1674 [Wing F1643]); and Henry Foulis, *The History of the Romish Treasons and Usurpations* (London, 1681 [Wing F1641]). Mary Astell, who

by papalists like Suarez to deny Royal patriarchalism;<sup>40</sup> but Locke for just that reason reinstated it. Filmer had accused Bellarmine of ‘mak[ing] God to be the immediate author of a democratical estate’,<sup>41</sup> an exaggeration with which Hobbes, to put distance between himself and the Jesuits, would probably have agreed. Filmer, as filtered through the Exclusion Crisis, was read as an opponent of popular sovereignty, with which scholasticism had infected Presbyterianism and even main-line Protestants like Buchanan and Locke.

Bellarmino had made his name in the case of the Venetian interdict and Hobbes’s arguments owe a surprising debt to the Venetians and to other supporters of James, as Johann Sommerville has demonstrated.<sup>42</sup> So for instance, Pierre Du Moulin, in a work held in Hobbes’s patron’s library, declared that ‘[t]he Papal monarchy was born from the ruins of the Roman Empire’, creating an image of the papacy which Hobbes by superior phraseology made his very own, as ‘the *Ghost* of the deceased *Romane Empire*, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof’.<sup>43</sup> On the immateriality of Bellarmine’s distinction between direct and indirect powers, also the subject of comment by William Barclay, Du Moulin had observed that in the deposition of a king it meant as little as offering him death by the axe rather than by the sword. Hobbes simply observed, ‘Power is as really divided, and as dangerously to all purposes, by sharing with another an *Indirect Power*, as a *Direct One*’.<sup>44</sup> Hobbes translates Du Moulin’s metaphor for the irrelevance of such a hierarchy of powers. He substitutes for Du Moulin’s Platonist argument that to rank the arts of cooking lower than those of medicine does not entail the rule of doctors over cooks, the structurally similar if more virile argument that although ‘the art of a Sadler’ is subordinate to ‘the art of a Rider’, it does not follow that ‘every Sadler is bound to obey every Rider’.<sup>45</sup>

The axiom on which Hobbes’s theory of ecclesiastical power is founded was his chief point against the Church of Rome: that the Church does not constitute the Kingdom of God. Ecclesiastical power is non-governmental: ‘There is therefore no other government in this life, neither of State, nor Religion, but

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accuses Locke and the Whigs of Papist-Presbyterian Resistance theory, draws heavily on Foulis. See Mary Astell, *An Impartial Enquiry into the Causes of Rebellion and Civil War in this Kingdom* (London, 1704), pp. 24–8, citing Foulis, *The History of Romish Treasons* (Bk. 2, ch. 3; 1681 edn., pp. 75 ff.).

<sup>40</sup> Sommerville, Introduction to *Patriarcha*, pp. xx–xxi.

<sup>41</sup> Filmer, *Patriarcha*, ed. Sommerville, pp. 5–6.

<sup>42</sup> Sommerville, *Thomas Hobbes*, p. 115, from whom the following examples are taken.

<sup>43</sup> Du Moulin, *Monarchia temporalis pontificis Romani* (1614; STC 7335), p. 311; Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Bk. 4, ch. 47; 1991 edn., p. 480.

<sup>44</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 42; 1991 edn., p. 396.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 1991 edn., pp. 396–7.

Temporall.<sup>46</sup> Order is an outward thing and secular, and the church was perversely secular if it claimed for order more than a functional value. Hobbes's argument against the secularity of the Church of Rome involved him in a refutation of the scriptural defence it uses, the philosophical realism in terms of which its theology is argued, and the Gentile customs and habits that it had institutionalized. The Church of Rome had misinterpreted Scripture to find there a mandate for the establishment of an ecclesiastical governmental system, he maintained. It had been misled by the philosophical realism of the Greeks into believing that hierarchy is symptomatic of some intrinsic order; and it had been remiss in integrating profane institutions and customs into its tradition in the name of historical continuity. These were chief among Hobbes's charges against the Church of Rome:

we cannot say, that therefore the Church enjoyeth (as the land of Goshen) all the light . . . wee are therefore yet in the Dark. The Enemy has been here in the Night of our naturall Ignorance, and sown the Tares of Spirituall Errors; and that, First, by abusing, and putting out the light of the Scriptures: For we erre, not knowing the Scriptures. Secondly, by introducing the Daemonology of the Heathen Poets, that is to say, their fabulous Doctrine concerning Daemons, which are but Idols, or Phantasms of the braine . . . Thirdly, by mixing with the Scripture divers reliques of the Religion, and much of the vain and erroneous Philosophy of the Greeks, especially of Aristotle. Fourthly, by mingling with both these false, or uncertain Traditions, and faigned, or uncertain History.<sup>47</sup>

To lay the charge that the Church of Rome misinterpreted Scripture, producing a defence of the Church as the Kingdom of God, Hobbes turned to the arguments of Robert Bellarmine set out in the third part of Bellarmine's canonical defence of the Catholic Church against Protestantism, the *Disputationes de Controversiis Christianae Fidei Adversus Huius Temporis Haereticos* (1581–92).<sup>48</sup> Cardinal Bellarmine had, since the publication of his

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, Bk. 3, ch. 39; 1991 edn., p. 322.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, Bk. 4, ch. 44; 1991 edn., pp. 417–18. Richard Tuck in a recent important essay on 'The Civil Religion of Thomas Hobbes', in *Political Discourse in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Nicholas Phillipson and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 133–4, suggests Denis Petau ('Petavius'), *Theologicorum Deorum* (Paris, 1644–), *Prolegomena*, Ch. 3, as a source for this argument. Petau was admired by Grotius, Gassendi and Mersenne.

<sup>48</sup> Hobbes's references (*Leviathan*, Ch. 42; 1991 edn., pp. 378 ff.) are to the third part of the *Disputationes: Tertia Controversia Generalis de Summo Pontifice* (Ingolstadt, 1590), Vol. 1, coll. 582 ff. There are further references to Bellarmine's *Tertia Controversia* (*ibid.*, Vol. 1, col. 596) and to his *Sexta Controversia* (*ibid.*, Vol. 1, coll. 1779–85) at *Leviathan*, 1991, edn., Ch. 42, p. 341 and Ch. 44, p. 434, respectively (see Richard Tuck, *Leviathan*, 1991 edn., p. xlix). See Robert Bellarmine, *The Power of the Pope in Temporal Affairs A Reply to William Barclay*, trans. G.A. Moore (New York, 1930).

*Disputations*, rapidly been taken for the voice of Rome on matters of doctrine, and especially on the powers of the Pope. So, for instance, William Whitaker, Master of St John's College and Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, in 1588 produced his *Disputation on Holy Scripture against the Papists, especially Bellarmine and Stapleton*, taking Bellarmine as the papal spokesman because 'he handled these questions with accuracy and method' and because his arguments contained 'the very marrow of popery'.<sup>49</sup> At Oxford, Dr John Reynolds, who later initiated the project of the Authorised Version, took a temporary lectureship for 'the confutation of Roman tenets', giving a course of two hundred and fifty lectures *Adversos Pontificos Imprimis Bellarminium*, which ran over fifteen years. Beza and Laud also wrote against Bellarmine, who personally engaged with James I in the controversy over the Oath of Allegiance, and whose *De Potestate Summi Pontificis in Rebus Temporalibus* (1610), was written specifically against the teaching of William Barclay, a Catholic whose work, written before, but published after the oath was drawn up, appeared to recommend the taking of the oath.

As a representative of the papacy however, Bellarmine was an extremely moderate one. In fact Sixtus V in 1590 had the first volume of his *Disputations* placed on the Index because it contained so cautious a theory of papal power, denying the Pope a temporal hegemony. Bellarmine did not represent all that Hobbes required of him either. On the contrary, he proved the argument of those who championed the temporal powers of the Pope faulty. As a Jesuit he tended to maintain the relative autonomy of the state, denying the temporal powers ascribed by radical papalists and Augustinians.<sup>50</sup> Their argument was generally framed as a syllogism: Christ, who possessed direct temporal power as both God and man, exercised it on earth; the Pope is the vicar of Christ; therefore the Pope possesses and may exercise direct temporal jurisdiction.

<sup>49</sup> Cited in J. Broderick, *Robert Bellarmine: Saint and Scholar* (Westminster, Md., 1961), pp. 67–8. As a sample of the voluminous literature in response to Bellarmine consulted, see also, *The Tocsin or Watch-Bell, sent to the King, Queen, Regent Princes of the Blood, to all the Parlemants, Magistrates, Officers and Loyall Subjects of France. Against the Book of the Pope's Temporal Power not long sent forth by Cardinal Bellarmine, Jesuite* (London, 1611); Edmund Dalton, *Doubting's Downfall, first proving the communitie of the Saints assurance, secondly disproving Bellarmine's and his Fellows false allegations and frivolous exceptions against that Truth* (London, 1624); J. Du Moulin, *Accomplishment of the Prophetes or the third Book in defense of the Catholic Faith contained in the book of the high and mighty King James I by the grace of God King of Great Britain and Ireland, against the allegations of R. Bellarmine Coeffeteau and other doctors of the Romish Church* (trans. London, 1613); and the influential *Richard Baxter's Answer to Dr. Owen's Twelve Arguments about Divine Worship detected: wherein is given Exact Parallel between the Distinctions and Answers Bellarmine and other papists use Against Protestants and about Worship: and Mr Baxter's Distinctions and Answers to Dr. Owens Arguments* (London, 1684).

<sup>50</sup> Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England*, pp. 195–6.

Bellarmino simply denied that Christ had exercised the temporal power, which as God, it is true, he possessed. Moreover, he drew up and circulated a list of patristic passages collected under the title *De Regno Christi quale sit*, to prove to the Pope the orthodoxy of his position.

Hobbes's view that the Kingdom of God is not of this world is a view to which Bellarmine would also have subscribed, endorsing Hobbes's argument that Christ will resume his Kingdom only after the general Resurrection.<sup>51</sup> It is conceivable, given Hobbes's restricted definition of the Kingdom of God as a temporal regime of direct divine rule, that Bellarmine would have further agreed that the Church is properly speaking only 'an earnest' of that Kingdom. But Hobbes makes the distance between him and his opponents, Catholic and Puritan, as wide as possible; first by defining the Kingdom of God territorially; and then by accusing them of subscribing to such a definition; which was simply untrue.

Even the Augustinian notion of *Civitas Dei*, that 'the Church now on earth is both the Kingdom of Christ, and the Kingdom of Heaven',<sup>52</sup> was not at odds with a theory that the literal Kingdom of God was in suspension. The significance of the threefold distinction made in medieval doctrine between the Church militant, the Church suffering and the Church triumphant, was a distinction between the work of earthly preparation and the reward of heavenly inheritance. It is true that this doctrine set out the divisions of Christ's Kingdom according to location rather than to a time scale — the Church militant composed of the faithful on earth, the Church suffering those in purgatory, and the Church triumphant, those enjoying the beatific vision — lived in three spheres simultaneously. According to Augustine's doctrine, on which Protestantism heavily leaned, the Second Coming was an event in the life of the eternal Kingdom of God, already established at the Resurrection with the founding of the Church militant.

But Hobbes too saw the Second Coming as an event in a continuum to which the preparatory work of the Church belonged as 'an earnest of the Kingdom of God', a 'Kingdom of Grace' constituted by the Godly who have already been naturalized into the heavenly kingdom by Baptism. Moreover, the Catholic Church made an even greater qualitative difference than Hobbes would allow between the temporal life of a Christian in the Church and the life of a Soul in heaven. Differences of detail aside, when the Roman Catholic Church claimed to be the Kingdom of God it was, in Hobbesian terminology, claiming to be 'an earnest of that Kingdom', if that meant a temporal kingdom of God's elect. Puritan sects which hoped for the imminent reign of the Saints on earth did see their Churches as inaugurating a temporal kingdom, however. Perhaps for this reason, Hobbes found Beza's assertion on the Calvinist side, that the Kingdom

<sup>51</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Bk. 3, ch. 41; 1991 edn., p. 335.

<sup>52</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *City of God*, Bk. XVIII, ch. 2.

of God began at the Resurrection, more of a worry. Hobbes admitted it was difficult to prove scripturally that this kingdom had not begun with the Resurrection. Here he must be taking the kingdom of God as the term was usually understood, since there was no question of the Kingdom of God of his restricted definition having begun at the Resurrection: the elect were not to be seen living the deathless life of angels yet.

The nuances of Bellarmine's theory were not lost on Hobbes, any more than they were on Sixtus V. Hobbes ignored the fact that Bellarmine, no more than he, could tolerate the notion of the Pope as Christ's lieutenant commanding a temporal Empire, treating the doctrine of direct and indirect powers as a front for papal imperialism. Moreover, he refused to consider seriously Bellarmine's answer to the question whether ecclesiastical government should be monarchy, aristocracy or democracy, that it should be none of these but mixed. He ruled the question out of order by referring to his own definition. The issue of whether the Church's power is properly that of a monarchy, aristocracy or democracy, he settled by pointing out that the question does not apply since the power of a pastor is not sovereign, but the power of a school master. To the further question, where sovereignty does in fact reside, a theory of mixed government is never the answer because sovereignty, by definition one and indivisible, is vested in the person charged with commanding or legislating.

Having ruled the question out of order, Hobbes then assumed that Bellarmine had answered it in favour of papal monarchy and not mixed government; or that one amounted to the other. Hobbes explains at the end of the chapter on Ecclesiastical Power that he would not have subjected Bellarmine's arguments to such scrutiny had they been 'his, as a Private man, and not as the Champion of the Papacy, against all other Christian Princes, and States'.<sup>53</sup> Perhaps rightly. Mixed government theory in the Church, promulgated by the Conciliarists, had been as academic as it later was with Harrington, and never really practicable. Moreover, if Bellarmine was not an overt supporter of Papal absolutism, as Mariana and Spanish Jesuits were,<sup>54</sup> he supported his case for a Papal constitutional monarchy on the same traditional scriptural defence, long accepted as a defence of the Papacy as an absolute monarchy.

The real problem for Hobbes, as it becomes apparent in the Fourth Book of *Leviathan*, was a clash of jurisdictions between Pope and King which, according to his theory and Bellarmine's, should never occur. The Papacy was anti-Leviathan to Hobbes, even if the Pope was not anti-Christ, as he insisted

<sup>53</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Bk. 3, ch. 42; 1991 edn., p. 402.

<sup>54</sup> Juan de Mariana (1536–1624), *de Regi & Regis Institutione*, Bk. I, ch. 6; Suarez, *Defensio fidei catholicae et apostolicae*.

he was not.<sup>55</sup> To denaturalize his power he felt he must deprive the Pope of both his temporal and spiritual authority; in challenging the scriptural defences Bellarmine put up, he was launching a frontal attack on this authority.

Hobbes gives a reappraisal of the texts that Bellarmine used to produce support for three arguments central to his case: that the foundation of the Church is faith in Christ, and not papal monarchy; that the power of the Church is properly a teaching power, and not the exercise of jurisdiction; and that the jurisdiction the Pope has hitherto exercised was not given by God, but delegated by the Emperors of Rome. When Bellarmine turned from arguing the appropriate form of government for the Church according to reason, to justifying the form of government established in the Church, he took the celebrated text Matt. 16: 18, 19; ‘Thou art Peter, And upon this rock I will build my Church’. Hobbes challenged Bellarmine’s interpretation, referring back to verse 15 in which Christ asked of the apostle ‘Whom say yee that I am?’ to which Peter in the name of all had replied ‘Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God’. The foundation of the Church is a belief in Christ, then, and not the leadership of Peter, Hobbes maintained.<sup>56</sup> The promise of Christ, ‘I will give thee the Keyes of Heaven, &c.’, was made to all the apostles. They all had the keys to the Kingdom in that they could all forgive and retain sins, although Peter on this occasion was designated to represent them.<sup>57</sup>

The text on which Papal infallibility is based, recording Christ’s promise to Peter that his faith will not fail and that his work is to strengthen faith in others, Hobbes took as support for his assertion that the spreading of faith, and not the extension of ecclesiastical government, was the proper work of the Church. The text ‘Feed my sheep’, was not a command to legislate but to teach.<sup>58</sup> Christ’s assurance: ‘as my Father sent me, so I send you’, Hobbes took to be a confirmation of this, and not a guarantee of papal authority. The command, ‘Obey your Leaders, and Submit your selves to them, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account’, was not a warrant for the commanding powers of pastors.<sup>59</sup> The distinction between teaching and governing lies precisely in teaching being pastoral, not political, something that bishops would do well to remember, who ‘deny to have received their authority from

<sup>55</sup> In *Leviathan*, Bk. 3, ch. 42; 1991 edn., pp. 381 ff. Hobbes, addressing Bellarmine’s *Disputationes*, claims: ‘In the third Book, he handleth the question whther the Pope be Antichrist. For my part, I see no argument that proves he is so, in that sense the Scripture useth the name: nor will I take any argument from the quality of Antichrist, to contradict the Authority he exerciseth, or hath heretofore exercised in the Dominions of any other Prince, or State.’

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 1991 edn., pp. 379–80.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 380–1.

<sup>58</sup> John 21: 16, 17, cited in Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1991 edn., pp. 384, 386.

<sup>59</sup> Heb. 13: 17, cited in Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1991 edn., p. 390.

the Civill State; and sliely slip off the Collar of their Civill Subjection, contrary to the unity and defence of the Commonwealth'.<sup>60</sup> Christians should heed the warning of St John to be critical of their pastors, and '[n]ot to beleeve every Spirit, but to try Spirits whether they are of God, because many false Prophets are gone out into the world'; another of Hobbes's shots at the Bishops.<sup>61</sup>

Hobbes maintains that Bellarmine tried to press a central claim: 'that our Saviour Christ has committed Ecclesiasticall Jurisdiction immediately to none but the Pope';<sup>62</sup> a claim that Hobbes categorically denied:

this whole Dispute, whether Christ left the Jurisdiction to the Pope onely, or to other Bishops also, if considered out of those places where the Pope has the Civill Sovereignty, is a contention *de lana Caprina*: For none of them (where they are not Sovereigns) has any Jurisdiction at all.<sup>63</sup>

It was an argument that Bellarmine could have turned around, but did not, to claim for the Pope temporal as well as ecclesiastical power. Popes and Bishops do not have jurisdiction, Hobbes argued:

For Jurisdiction is the Power of hearing and determining Causes between man and man; and can belong to none, but him that hath the Power to prescribe the Rules of Right and Wrong; that is, to make Laws; and with the Sword of Justice to compell men to obey his Decisions, pronounced either by himself, or by the Judges he ordaineth thereunto; which none can lawfully do, but the Civill Sovereign.<sup>64</sup>

So Leviathan of the frontispiece, wielding the crozier and the sword: if not one, then not the other. This is what the marriage of the two heads of the eagle really meant, as Rousseau, who realized that their separation opened the state to civil war, percipiently observed: 'the philosopher Hobbes alone has seen the evil and how to remedy it, and has dared to propose the reunion of the two heads of the eagle'.<sup>65</sup> The Biblical texts Hobbes brought to bear to support this

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 374. The 'Collar of their Civill Subjection' may be an allusion to 'the collar of truth' in ancient Egypt, of which Hobbes tells such a strange story in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* (lines 240–80, 1688 edn., pp. 12–14; 1722 edn., pp. 17–19), taken from Diodorus Siculus, Book 4, and repeated in *Behemoth* (*EW*, Vol. 6, pp. 278–9). But it might also be the Roman *iugum uxoris*, the yoke (or collar) of political subjection to which the Romans themselves were forced miserably to submit at the Caudian Forks. A nice Hobbesian joke.

<sup>61</sup> John, I Epist., chap. 4, ver. 1, cited by Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1991 edn., p. 390.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 391.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 391–2.

<sup>65</sup> J.-J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, trans. Richard W. Crosby (Brunswick, Ohio, 1978), Bk. 4, ch. 8, p. 96. For analysis of the frontispiece of the 1651 edition of *Leviathan*, see

argument depended on making a necessary connection between Christ's not being a sovereign while on earth, and the Pope and Bishops therefore not being entitled to a jurisdiction. Turning to the Old Testament, Hobbes held the fact that Moses had the entire sovereignty 'proveth that all Bishops receive Jurisdiction when they have it from their Civill Sovereigns';<sup>66</sup> an argument that, once again, depends on indefensible extrapolation from the peculiar Kingdom of God to the Kingdom of God in suspension. The force of this argument is difficult to assess. Is it that jurisdiction, by definition or according to the natural law, properly belongs to the sovereign, but that he can delegate it if he wishes? If so, it is a curious argument that takes no account of traditional theories of the inalienability of sovereignty, to which in other places Hobbes seems to subscribe. If all jurisdiction, including ecclesiastical, is a necessary function of the sovereign, and if Christ's mission did not require the exercise of a jurisdiction, on what grounds was the sovereign then permitted to delegate it?

### III

#### The Doctrine of Essences and the Kingdom of Darkness

It would be a mistake to think that Hobbes's account of Bellarmine's scriptural defence of papal power was made chiefly in the interests of Christian enlightenment. The Pope was significant to Hobbes as the keystone of a rival system of authority, and it was with the Pope as ghostly Emperor of the Kingdom of Darkness that he was most concerned. Bellarmine in the *Power of the Pope* had argued that the Pope had supreme ecclesiastical authority directly by God-given right, but supreme temporal power only indirectly. Hobbes made the counter assertion that, insofar as the Pope has temporal power at all, he has it *de facto* as a gift from the Roman Emperors, and not *de jure divino*; and insofar as he has spiritual authority outside his lands, he has it on false pretences. 'It is notoriously known', Hobbes said, that 'the large Jurisdiction of the Pope was given him by those that had it, that is, by the Emperours of Rome.'<sup>67</sup>

Bellarmino had declared that one power is subordinate to another, either by virtue of having been derived from it or, alternatively, 'because the purpose of one is subject to and subordinate to the purpose of the other'.<sup>68</sup> Of the alterna-

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Keith Brown, 'The Artist of the *Leviathan* Title Page', *British Library Journal*, 4, no. 2 (1978), pp. 24–36; Arnold A. Rogow, *Thomas Hobbes: Radical in the Service of Reaction* (New York 1986), pp. 156–60; A.P. Martinich, *The Two Gods of Leviathan* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 362–5; and Patricia Springborg, 'Hobbes' Biblical Beasts, *Leviathan* and *Behemoth*'.

<sup>66</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1991 edn., p. 392.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 393.

<sup>68</sup> Robert Bellarmine, *The Power of the Pope in Temporal Affairs*, trans. C.A. Moore (New York, 1930), p. 25.

tives, Hobbes chose to argue that the spiritual power is subordinate to the temporal by derivation, where Bellarmine argued that temporal power was subordinate to the spiritual by function. Hobbes argued that the Pope had authority in the gift of the Roman Emperor, whereas Bellarmine argued that he had it from God by virtue of the priority of the spiritual order over the temporal.<sup>69</sup>

In Augustinian fashion, Bellarmine distinguished the city of God, the Church, from the city of man, the state. It was because the two orders were distinguishable that there could, properly speaking, be no clash of temporal and spiritual jurisdiction:

the ecclesiastical and political commonwealth could be called two and one; since they are distinct and they can be found to be separated, yet when they come together in the one body of the Church, in such a way as one is subordinated to another that they are two parts, and one total.<sup>70</sup>

Hobbes attacked Bellarmine's argument for being fallaciously analogical. He denied that one could infer a subordination of powers from a subordination of purposes, rejecting the whole edifice of Aristotelian distinctions between final, efficient and formal causes, in terms of which the inference was made:

One Power may be subordinate to another, as the art of a Sadler, to the art of a Rider. If then it bee granted, that the Civill Government be ordained as a means to bring us to a Spirituall felicity; yet it does not follow, that if a King have the Civill Power, and the Pope the Spirituall, that therefore the King is bound to obey the Pope, more than every Sadler is bound to obey every Rider.<sup>71</sup>

Hobbes's insistence that subordination of purpose does not entail subordinate power, not only denied Bellarmine's premise but cut across a whole tradition of analogical argument since Plato, who argued in *The Sophist* and *The Statesman* for the subordination of powers according to function. Philosophical justification for analogical argument took the form of the doctrine of essences, according to which even such abstract concepts as an art or power were deemed to exist in pure form as subsistent entities in a divinely ordained hierarchy. But refutation of the doctrine of essences was what Hobbes's nominalist philosophic system was geared to accomplish. Correspondingly, Hobbes rejected the traditional view of society as a hierarchically ordered totality composed of a series of competencies. According to the Church's official social doctrine, Christendom was a single organic entity administered

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 177–8.

<sup>71</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1991 edn., pp. 396–7.

in separate temporal and spiritual jurisdictions, in which each citizen, like the members of a human body, had a function and preordained status. Hobbes denied the relevance of all these distinctions. He conceded Christendom had once been united, although in the person of the Emperor not the Pope; but held that since its dismemberment each nation state, separately, constituted an autonomous body politic headed by the divinely ordained sovereign, God's lieutenant. His materialism could not easily accommodate collectivities, unless reduced to the one-on-one agreements of the social contract. So the term 'body politic' was really no more than a literary conceit,<sup>72</sup> and Leviathan, the artificial body politic of the Introduction, an automaton constructed of grinding wheels and cogs, is a spoof on all organic theories of state. It is not altogether clear that Hobbes gets away with this particular sleight of hand, however, and the whole notion of Leviathan and Behemoth, their biblical referents and employment to signify mighty collectivities, whether beastly or not, is an affront to iconoclastic Protestantism and its literal reading of texts, as well as to his own materialist epistemology.<sup>73</sup>

For Hobbes tries to have it both ways. The point of mystical body language, in which Bellarmine's argument is framed, was not an anatomical analogy but the juristic fiction that society, so conceived, constituted a legal body which must be regulated by authority. Just the use Hobbes made of it. Medieval corporation theory, from which Hobbes's theory of the body politic as a corporation was derived,<sup>74</sup> was assumed by Bellarmine. He asserted the right of the Pope to wield temporal power in the case of a breakdown of authority in civil war or schism, on corporation theory premises.

Ernst Kantorowicz, in his discussion of the development of medieval theories of the state, points out that the continuity of the realm had from medieval times been preserved by the fiction that in a time of interregnum Christ steps in as interrex.<sup>75</sup> The fiction had in some cases been explicitly formulated: 'In the first year after the death of King Rudolf, while Christ rules hoping for a

<sup>72</sup> See George Watson, 'Hobbes and the Metaphysical Conceit', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 16 (1955), p. 559.

<sup>73</sup> See Springborg, 'Hobbes' Biblical Beasts', for a discussion of the provocations Hobbes's use of Leviathan, and the use of Behemoth he proposed to John Bramhall, pose for Protestant Biblical commentary. The conflicts between Hobbes's materialist epistemology and orthodox theology are discussed in Patricia Springborg, 'Leviathan and the Problem of Ecclesiastical Authority', *Political Theory*, 3, no. 3 (1975), pp. 289–303.

<sup>74</sup> See Patricia Springborg, 'Leviathan, the Christian Commonwealth Incorporated', *Political Studies*, 24, no. 2 (1976), pp. 171–83.

<sup>75</sup> Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, 1957), pp. 334–6.

King . . . ’ ‘ . . . while Christ rules expecting a King’.<sup>76</sup> It was used by Pope John VIII during the imperial vacancy following the death of Louis II and before the coronation of Charles the Bald in 875; and as late as 1528 the formula had been used in the Florentine republic. The role that such a concept suggested for the Pope did not go unnoticed. Kantorowicz remarks that the theory ‘became politically a threatening reality when the Pope began to claim for himself the right of transcendental interrex and to assume as *Vicarius Christi* a position of overlord over secular dominion in times of an interregnum’.<sup>77</sup>

As might be expected, this turn coincided with the period of growing papal dominance in the struggle between Papacy and Empire. Innocent III laid claim to imperial rights during a vacancy in the Empire, and Innocent IV generalized the claim, declaring that not only the Empire, but other kingdoms as well, returned to the true Lord on earth, the Vicar of Christ, on the death of a King. Later the claim had been extended to allow the Pope to excommunicate heretical Kings who endangered the unity of Christendom by the threat of schism. It was a theory ‘the practice hereof hath been seen on divers occasions’, Hobbes declared, whose views on excommunication are one of the more novel aspects of *Leviathan*.<sup>78</sup>

as in the Deposing of *Chilperique*, King of France; in the Translation of the Roman Empire to *Charlemaine*; in the Oppression of *John King* of England; in Transferring the Kingdome of *Navarre*; and of late years, in the League against *Henry* the Third of France, and in many more occurrences.<sup>79</sup>

Bellarmino’s doctrine of the *perfecta communitas* was even more problematic because it was structurally so similar to the absolutist doctrine Hobbes hoped to press on behalf of the king, with the important difference that the papalist argument gave priority to the power of the community over its rulers.<sup>80</sup> That the consent of a community validated the power of kings both were agreed. That consent of itself could not empower the transfer of power from the community to its representative, both were further agreed, for the power of the community was not itself created by consent. The transfer of power from people to kings was divinely authorized but transacted by right of designation and consent. On the basic distinction between authorization and consent, for which Hobbes is so famous, he falls back on earlier scholastic arguments.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 335.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> See Sommerville’s excellent discussion in *Thomas Hobbes: Political Ideas in Context*, pp. 127–33.

<sup>79</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 42; 1991 edn., pp. 395–6.

<sup>80</sup> See Sommerville, ‘From Suarez to Filmer’, p. 528.

Where he differs from the Jesuits, and where Locke oddly restores the papalist plank, is in denying a *perfecta communitas*, empowered to designate rulers and change their designation, whose interests take logical priority over that of its government. Hobbes substitutes for the perfect community the detested mob, construing the state of nature as a state of war, to deny any political entity residual rights that it might press against a sovereign. Hobbes's chief objection to papalist communitarianism represented by Bellarmine was that, not content to create an autonomous spiritual commonwealth, it advanced claims to secular power on behalf of its lords over the governors of the temporal commonwealth:

Every Common-wealth (because it is supposed to be perfect and sufficient in it self,) may command any other Common-wealth, not subject to it, and force it to change the administration of the Government; nay, depose the Prince and set another in his room, if it cannot otherwise defend itself against the injuries he goes about to doe them: much more may a Spirituall Common-wealth command a Temporall one to change the administration of their Government, and may depose Princes and institute others, when they cannot otherwise defend the Spirituall Good.<sup>81</sup>

It is true that Suarez, Mariana and a long line of mainly Jesuit papal apologists had specified conditions under which rebellion was permissible that defined regicide as something else.<sup>82</sup> By claiming so much, the papalists had invited a declaration of war from the princes of the temporal kingdoms. For, as Hobbes pointed out, if the Roman Church could wage war against nations to defend its claims as a perfect community, nation states could certainly return fire to protect the autonomy of their national communities. It would be a war of God's Lieutenants against the Prince of the Kingdom of Darkness.

How could the papacy ever prosecute such a war on all fronts? It did it by the most economical of means, by a propaganda war, the medium being metaphysics, the message the power of the dark, satanic kingdom; of ghosts and ghouls, witches and fairies, in which the Papacy revelled:

Besides these sovereign powers, *Divine* and *Humane*, of which I have hitherto discoursed there is mention in Scripture of another power, namely . . . that of *the Rulers of the Darknesse of this world . . . the Kingdome of Satan*; and . . . *the principality of Beelzebub over Daemons*, that is to say, over Phantasmes that appear in the Air: for which cause

<sup>81</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1991 edn., p. 398, italicized in the original to indicate quotation.

<sup>82</sup> Suarez asserted papal supremacy against the divine right of kings and the oath of allegiance instituted by James I in 1606, defending Bellarmine (*Defensio fidei catholicae et apostolicae aduersus anglicanae sectae errores*, Bk. 3, ch. 3, §3) and affirming '[t]hat if a King of a Lawful Title and Possession govern tyrannously, then that the People, by their Parliament, may depose him' (*ibid.*, Bk. 6, ch. 4, §15).

Satan is also called . . . *the Prince of the Power of the Air*; and because he ruleth in the darkness of this world . . . *the Prince of this world*: And in consequence hereunto, they who are under his Dominion in opposition to the faithful, (who are the *Children of the Light*), are called the *Children of Darknesse* . . . For seeing Beelzebub is Prince of Phantasmes, Inhabitants of his Dominion of Air and Darknesse, and these Daemons, Phantasmes, or Spirits of Illusion, signify allegorically the same thing. This considered, the Kingdome of Darknesse, as it is set forth in these and other places of the Scripture, is nothing else but a *Confederacy of Deceivers*, that to obtain dominion over men in this present world, endeavour by dark and erroneous Doctrines, to extinguish them in the light, both of nature, and of the gospel; and so to dis-prepare them for the Kingdome of God to come.<sup>83</sup>

Allegory once again, but this time with feeling, as Hobbes employs apocalyptic language to indict the Roman Church, arch-fiend of the Kingdom of Darkness. No matter that the metaphysical basis for allegory was ruled out by Hobbes's nominalism, if not by Protestant demands for a literal interpretation of the Bible. Hobbes does not hesitate to indulge in allegorical interpretation himself, if his peculiar usage of the terms *Leviathan* and *Behemoth* is anything to go by.<sup>84</sup> Certainly Hobbes showed himself less than consistent on the matter, reproving William Davenant who had rigorously condemned omens and allegories in Homer, Virgil, Spenser and Tasso, on the basis of Hobbes's own metaphysics and epistemology.<sup>85</sup> To state Hobbes's position very briefly: he asserted that medieval realists had erred by following Plato and Aristotle in believing that for every noun, simple, collective or abstract, there must exist some corresponding thing. Things do not come with names, Hobbes observed. Names were no more than convenient symbols used by men to identify or refer to conception of things. The name does not refer to the object of perception directly, but to our own conception of it. But because the perceptions of sane men concur, all things being equal, it is possible, by referring to the names which identify things, to communicate. 'The use of words is to register ourselves, and make manifest to others the thoughts and conceptions of our minds', Hobbes asserted.<sup>86</sup> The appropriateness of names, and the truth of assertions made by calculating with names, persists as long as the things to which the

<sup>83</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1991 edn., p. 417.

<sup>84</sup> Springborg, 'Hobbes' Biblical Beasts'.

<sup>85</sup> See, 'The Author's Preface to his much honour'd Friend Mr Hobs', by Sir William D'Avenant, and Hobbes's Answer, in *Gondibert: an Heroick Poem* (London, 1651; STC D325).

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 441.

names refer last, and in the relation that the assertions describe. This Hobbes spelled out in his answers to Descartes:

The triangle in the mind comes from the triangle we have seen, or from one imaginatively constructed out of triangles we have beheld. Now when we have once called the thing (from which we think that the idea of the triangle originates) by the name triangle, although the triangle itself perished, yet the name remains . . . But the nature of the triangle will not be of eternal duration, if it should chance that triangles perished . . . whence it is evident that essence in so far as it is distinguished from existence, is nothing else than a union of names by means the verb is. And thus essence without existence is a fiction of our mind . . . <sup>87</sup>

Medieval theorists had produced demonology where they believed they were philosophizing and theologizing. This was due to their failure to see, in the first place, that speculation on the nature of God and the Christian mysteries of faith was inappropriate; and in the second, that in appropriately philosophical matters philosophical realism was an untenable position to hold. Consequently, they had developed fantastic doctrines concerning the immortality of the soul, the significance of the Lord's Supper, the after-world, the properties of angels and spirits, the nature of sacraments and what the terms holiness and sacredness imply. These doctrines were not only false but seditious, Hobbes maintained, justifying his refutation of them in a political treatise thus:

But to what purpose (may some man say) is such subtilty in a work of this nature, where I pretend to nothing but what is necessary to the doctrine of Government and Obedience? It is to this purpose, that men may no longer suffer themselves to be abused, by them, that by this doctrine of *Separated Essences*, built on the Vain Philosophy of Aristotle, would fright them from Obeying the Laws of their Countrey with empty names; as men fright Birds from the Corn with an empty doublet, a hat, and a crooked stick. For it is upon this ground, that when a Man is dead and buried, they say his Soule (that is his Life) can walk separated from his Body, and is seen by night amongst the graves.<sup>88</sup>

#### IV

#### Ghosts, Ghouls, Souls and Transubstantiation

The real butt of Hobbes's argument was not ghosts and ghouls, or the omens and portents of primitive religion, but the power of the Pope and the metaphysi-

<sup>87</sup> Hobbes's Objections to Descartes, published in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, ed. Haldane (Cambridge, 1934), Vol. 2, pp. 60–78, §14.

<sup>88</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Bk. 4, ch. 46; 1991 edn., p. 465.

cal doctrine of essences, transubstantiation and the Mass, by which he propagated it:

Upon the same ground they say, that the Figure, and Colour, and Tast of a peece of Bread, has a being, there, where they say there is no Bread: And upon the same ground they say, that Faith, and Wisdome, and other Vertues are sometimes *powred* into a man, sometimes *blown* into him from Heaven; as if the Vertuous and their Vertues could be asunder: and a great many other things that serve to lessen the dependance of Subjects on the Sovereign Power of their Countrey. For who will endeavour to obey the Laws, if he expect Obedience to be Powred or Blown into him? Or who will not obey a Priest, that can make God, rather than his Sovereign, nay then God himselfe? Or who, that is in fear of Ghosts, will not bear great respect to those who can make the Holy Water, that drives them from him? And this shall suffice for an example of the Errors, which are brought into the Church, from the *Entities*, and *Essences* of Aristotle: which it may be he knew to be false Philosophy; but writ it as a thing consonant to, and corroborative of their Religion; and fearing the fate of Socrates.<sup>89</sup>

The calumny against Aristotle, that he complied with the necromancers for fear of state retribution by the priests, was false, as Hobbes surely knew. ‘Aristotle was of course sensible enough to leave Athens when he came to fear the fate of Socrates; he was not wicked enough to write what he knew to be false’.<sup>90</sup> It was smart of Hobbes to implicate Aristotle in the doctrine of incorporeal substances, more famously Platonist; for if the Platonist doctrine of the immortality of the soul informed the Lateran council decrees of 1512, Aristotelian doctrines had informed the somewhat different conception of the council of Vienne.<sup>91</sup> In this symptomatic passage Hobbes attacked not only central Catholic doctrines of transubstantiation and the immortality of the soul. His reference to ‘Vertues . . . sometimes *powred* into a man, sometimes *blown* into him from Heaven . . . that serve to lessen the dependance of Subjects on the Sovereign Power of their Countrey’, was a direct assault on the Protestant doctrine of Grace, equally implicated in the seditious dogma of incorporeal substances.

Defining the attributes of God for the purposes of worship, an activity distinguishable from philosophical speculation about his nature, was a sover-

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> See Hannah Arendt’s comment on this passage from *Leviathan*, in ‘Truth and Politics’, in *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York, 1968), p. 297, n. 3, cited by Wright, ‘Thomas Hobbes: 1668 Appendix to *Leviathan*’, p. 343, n. 44.

<sup>91</sup> Wright, ‘Thomas Hobbes: 1668 Appendix to *Leviathan*’, pp. 328–9.

eign prerogative. This Hobbes as a Socinian, committed to the view that the attributes of God were beyond the scope of human reason, may have truly believed.<sup>92</sup> In any case, it was his only way out of the dilemma posed by his materialist philosophy and sensationalist psychology, on the one hand; and the requirement of Anglicanism to subscribe to the Nicene Creed, whose items included subscription to Christ's nature as *homoousian*, or 'one with the Father', the Ascension of Christ into heaven, and resurrection of humans from the dead, on the other. Hobbes was quite precise: the King as state priest was 'honouring' God, not defining him.<sup>93</sup>

because words, (and consequently the attributes of God), have their signification by agreement and constitution of men, those Attributes are to be held significative of Honour that men intend shall be so; and whatsoever may be done by the wills of particular men, where there is no Law but Reason, may be done by the will of the Common-wealth, by Lawes Civill. And because a Common-wealth hath no Will, nor makes no Lawes, but those that are made by the Will of him, or them that have the Sovereign Power; it followeth that those Attributes which the Sovereign ordaineth, in the Worship of God, for signes of Honour, ought to be taken and used to such, by private men in their publique Worship.

It was a prerogative usurped by the Church of Rome, doing religion a double disservice in perpetuating heathen demonology, idol worship and strange ceremonial practices. The Papists had been led into idolatry both by taking fictions for things, according to the realist doctrine of universals, and by integrating profane customs into its tradition. The political significance of this profanity concerned Hobbes most. It was because the demonology of the scholastics was used to bolster the Papal hierarchy that it was so dangerous. The remark voiced by William Prynne concerning bishops, that 'their Hierarchy . . . not their Popery was the ground work of the treachery and enormities . . .', might have been made by Hobbes.<sup>94</sup>

The problem of hierarchy had bedevilled politics for long enough. Marsilius had argued that a hierarchy was justified on functional grounds only, as an institutionalized chain of command. But the question was disputed long into the seventeenth century. The *merum imperium* debate among civil lawyers revolved on the question of whether subordinate magistrates had their powers

<sup>92</sup> For Hobbes's debt to Socinianism, for which Locke was unjustly more famous, see Peter Geach, 'The Religion of Thomas Hobbes'; and John Marshall, 'The Ecclesiology of the Latitude-men 1600–1689: Stillingfleet, Tillotson and "Hobbism"', *Journal of Ecclesiological History*, 36 (1985), pp. 407–27.

<sup>93</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 31; 1991 edn., p. 253.

<sup>94</sup> Quoted by William M. Lamont, *Marginal Prynne 1600–1669* (London, 1963), p. 78.

by virtue of rank, or whether they had them in gift of the King as a property.<sup>95</sup> It was essential to Bodinian and Hobbesian theories of sovereignty, that the notion of intrinsic powers attaching to authorities by virtue of their position in a hierarchy should be abolished.<sup>96</sup> Hobbes, knowing that the structure of authority set up by the Roman Church collided head on with national sovereignty in church and state, hoped to persuade his readers that the Papal edifice was a gigantic and long-lasting hoax. It is for this reason that he makes so much of the conceit that the Papacy is the ghost of the Roman Empire:

For, from the time that the Bishop of Rome had gotten to be acknowledged for Bishop Universall, by pretence of Succession to St. Peter, their whole Hierarchy, or Kingdome of Darknesse, may be compared not unfitly to the *Kingdome of Fairies*; that is, to the old wives' *Fables* in England, concerning *Ghosts* and *Spirits*, and the feats they play in the night. And if a man consider the originall of this great Ecclesiasticall Dominion, he will easily perceive that the *Papacy* is no other than the *Ghost* of the deceased *Romane Empire*, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof: For so did the Papacy start up on a Sudden out of the Ruines of that Heathen Power.<sup>97</sup>

The notion would have had some appeal to those who took seriously the suggestion that the Pope was anti-Christ, the whore of Babylon seated on the seven hills mentioned in the book of Revelations.<sup>98</sup> But this was a proposition Hobbes himself denied. A proficient enough exegete, he knew that St John was in fact referring to the declining Roman Empire and, only by an unwarrantable allegorical extrapolation, could he be taken as prophesying the corruption and demise of the papacy. Hardly more warrantable was Hobbes's claim that the Pope was a Fairy, King of Fairieland, although perhaps more credible in popular culture inhabited by widespread belief in the supernatural in all its forms. In *Leviathan* Chapter 2, Hobbes remarked of witches that their trade 'was neerer to a new Religion, than to a Craft or Science'.<sup>99</sup> The same Hobbes who so roundly dispatched demonology in all its forms in the fourth part of *Leviathan*, 'Of the Kingdom of Darkness', mocking at the kingdom of fairies and goblins conjured up by those who subscribed to 'incorporeal substances', could still be found reflecting on the existence of witches, suggesting that those

<sup>95</sup> M.P. Gilmore, *Argument from Roman Law in Political Thought 1200–1600* (Harvard, 1961).

<sup>96</sup> See Julian H. Franklin, *Jean Bodin and the Sixteenth Century Revolution in the Methodology of Law and History* (Columbia, 1963).

<sup>97</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1991 edn., p. 480.

<sup>98</sup> C.H. McIlwain, *The Political Works of James I* (Cambridge, 1918), pp. xiv–v.

<sup>99</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 2; 1991 edn., p. 18.

who doubted their existence first ought to consult them!<sup>100</sup> Hobbes is caught once more on his own hook. His allegories and parables, satirical or not, are incompatible with his materialist epistemology and metaphysics; and so are the religious doctrines of the Nicene Creed that he professed. What were his contemporaries to think of a man whose word could not be trusted, even by himself?

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<sup>100</sup> Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (London, 1971), pp. 518–19, citing *The Life of William Cavendish*, by Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, ed. Firth, p. 198.