CrossMark

Modern Intellectual History, 12, 1 (2015), pp. 95–120 © Cambridge University Press 2014
doi:10.1017/S147924431400064X

MALCOLM'S *LEVIATHAN*: HOBBES'S "THING"

JEFFREY COLLINS
Department of History, Queen's University
E-mail: collinsj@queensu.ca

The publication of the Clarendon edition of the *Works of Thomas Hobbes* recently entered its fourth decade.[1] The monumental project has unfolded against shifting methodologies in the practice of intellectual history, and the edition's own history exemplifies these shifts. Its first general editor was Howard Warrender, who died in 1985 after a distinguished career as a professor of political theory at the University of Sheffield. Warrender was best known for the *Political Philosophy of Hobbes: His Theory of Obligation*. This influential book offered a deontological interpretation of Hobbes's theory of obligation, according to which the Hobbesian natural laws were to be understood as divine commands. Warrender's book appeared in 1957 and was resolutely textualist in its approach, exploring Hobbes's arguments in isolation and with considerable interpretive charity. His subject was the "theoretical basis" of Hobbes's writing, the importance of which might not be "historically conspicuous."[2]

The first stirrings of the contextualist turn in the history of ideas were felt around this time, in the pioneering scholarship of Peter Laslett, John Dunn, J. G. A. Pocock, and Quentin Skinner. The last figure became the most prominent methodologist of what was eventually known as the Cambridge school. The Cambridge school historians were critical of the textualist interpretive methods that then dominated the study of canonical political theory. Warrender, a stalwart of this approach, did not escape attention. Skinner criticized Warrender for a "historically absurd" reading of Hobbes, which neglected historical milieu and contemporary reception.[3] Warrender replied by defending his preference

1 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Noel Malcolm, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), vol. 1: *Editorial Introduction*; vol. 2: *The English and Latin Texts (i)*; vol. 3: *The English and Latin Texts (ii)*.

2 Howard Warrender, "Political Theory and Historiography: A Reply to Professor Skinner," *Historical Journal*, 22/4 (1979), 931–40, 937.

3 Quentin Skinner, "The Ideological Context of Hobbes's Political Thought," *Historical Journal*, 9/2 (1966), 286–317, 313–17.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

for a "global framework" (with an "inner logic") that would structure the interpretation of philosophical texts. Hobbes produced "writings for all time," and to "consign them to their contemporary milieu, with whatever honours, [was] to bury them."[4]

Warrender's involvement with Oxford's effort to produce a modern critical edition of Hobbes's work (the first since Sir William Molesworth's in the 1840s) removed him from political theory proper and threw him critical editorial work. This genre of writing, in fact, had proven a useful forum for the new Cambridge contextualists. Laslett's foundational revisionist readings of Filmer and Locke appeared not as monographs but as editorial introductions.[5] Pocock produced important new work on James Harrington in an edition of his works.[6]

Warrender was a skilled editor, but was badly hampered by his decision to begin the Clarendon edition with a work not authored by Hobbes, namely the 1651 English translation of Hobbes's *De cive* (which was produced alongside the 1642 Latin edition, also edited by Warrender). On the opaque testimony of Hobbes's biographer John Aubrey, this translation had often been ascribed to Hobbes. But in 1973 H. J. H Drummond announced the discovery of copies of the translation that included a translator's dedication signed "C.C."[7] The question of Hobbes's possible authorship of this translation was a consequential matter, given the considerable number of variations found in it, its appearance within weeks of the publication of *Leviathan* itself, and the fact that it was adorned with illustrations evoking a pious royalism atypical of Hobbes.[8]

Warrender attempted to buttress his attribution with stylistic observations, but by the time his edition appeared, the translation of *De cive* was widely known to be by someone other than Hobbes. His unwillingness to concede this was inexplicable, as was clear from the immediate reception of his edition.[9] Two rising stars of Cambridge's intellectual-history cohort exposed Warrender's judgment on this matter in respectful but decisive reviews. Richard Tuck, writing in *Political Studies* in 1985, pronounced Warrender's attribution a "somewhat willful" and

4 Warrender, "Political Theory and Historiography," 939.

5 See below.

6 *The Political Works of James Harrington*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock (Cambridge, 1977).

7 H. J. H. Drummond, "Hobbes' *Philosophicall Rudiments*, 1651," *The Library*, fifth series, 28 (1973), 54–6.

8 M. M. Goldsmith, "Picturing Hobbes's Politics: The Illustrations to *Philosophical Rudiments*', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 44 (1981), 232–7; Richard Tuck, "Warrender's *De cive*," *Political Studies*, 23/2 (1985), 308–15, 311.

9 Thomas Hobbes, *De cive: English Version*, ed. Howard Warrender (Oxford, 1983), 3–8, and Hobbes , *De cive: Latin Version*, ed. Howard Warrender (Oxford, 1983), 1–13.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

interpretively significant scholarly error.[10] Embedded in this judgment was perhaps a critique of Warrender's impatience with matters of historical detail. Earlier, in a review of October 1984 appearing in the *London Review of Books*, Warrender's judgment had already been questioned by Noel Malcolm, who nevertheless softened his criticism by pronouncing the translation "very good." "Warrender," wrote Malcolm, "need not feel that he has wasted his efforts in editing it so meticulously for this series."[11] One wonders whether Malcolm would stand by this diplomatic assessment today. Whatever the quality of the translation (a point disputed by Tuck and Silverthorne in their translation of 1998[12]), the English *De cive* should not have appeared in the definitive *opera omnia* of Thomas Hobbes.

In this way did Noel Malcolm help to partially and politely discredit the inaugural volume in the Clarendon edition. (Indeed, the English *De cive* seems, at long last, to have been quietly relegated.[13]) It is thus ironically fitting that, following the hiatus caused by Warrender's death, the edition was revived under Malcolm's editorship, alongside that of Skinner, Simon Schaffer and Keith Thomas. As if to buttress the historical credentials of the enterprise, Malcolm revived it not with a formal Hobbesian text, but with a two-volume edition of Hobbes's correspondence. These appeared in 1994 and immediately revolutionized Hobbes studies. Hobbes had destroyed many of his personal papers, and his surviving correspondence had long appeared hopelessly thin. Only 210 letters to or from him were known at the time of Malcolm's edition.[14] It is thus a testament to Malcolm's comprehensive research methods that Hobbes's correspondence has become such a valuable resource. Each letter bristles with informative critical notes, and the whole is capped with a series of short biographies of each of Hobbes's correspondence. The result is an expert tour

[10] Tuck, "Warrender's *De cive*," 312–15; Tuck, *Natural Rights Theories: Their Origin and Development* (Cambridge, 1979), 120, 130–31.

[11] Noel Malcolm, "Citizen Hobbes," *London Review of Books*, 19 (1984), 22.

[12] Thomas Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, ed. Richard Tuck and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge, 1998), xxxvi; see also P. Milton, "Did Hobbes Translate *De cive*?", *History of Political Thought*, 11/4 (1990), 627–38.

[13] In the front pages of Hobbes's correspondence, the 'English' *De cive* remained listed as volume 2 of the Clarendon edition. As late as 2010, in Paul Seaward's edition of *Behemoth* (volume 10 in the Clarendon edition), this remained the case. In the new Clarendon *Leviathan*, however, it has been jettisoned without fanfare. *De cive* occupies volume 2 alone, without mention of an "English" version. Hobbes's early "Elements of Law" is now planned for volume 1.

[14] Malcolm and Mikko Tolonen, "The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes: Some New Items," *Historical Journal*, 51/2 (2008), 481–95, 481–95; see also Jeffrey Collins, "Christian Ecclesiology and the Composition of *Leviathan*: An Unknown Letter to Thomas Hobbes," *Historical Journal*, 43/1 (2000), 217–31.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

through the various cohorts—patrons, clergymen, natural philosophers, and miscellaneous writers—who constituted Hobbes's intellectual milieu.[15]

Meanwhile, alongside his prominent career as a journalist (who else would have occasion to thank *The Spectator* in a scholarly edition of Hobbes's letters?), Noel Malcolm produced a string of important articles. Many of these pieces are now gathered in Malcolm's *Aspects of Hobbes*, and they are of the highest caliber. Thickly researched, they explore hidden interpretive byways to dazzling effect. They opened up such neglected (or unknown) subjects as Hobbes's involvement in the Virginia Company, his immersion in the philosophical circles of Paris, the possible role of anamorphic art and curious optical devices in suggesting the famed title image of *Leviathan*, and Hobbes's role in avant-garde biblical criticism. Stylishly composed, Malcolm's essays represent an enormous investment of labour in scholarly detective work.[16]

All along, Malcolm was establishing his bona fides as a critical editor of unusual discernment. His scholarship at last decisively identified the initial English translator of *De cive*. (It was produced by Charles Cotton, and overlaid with incongruous royalist iconography.[17]) He made several important manuscript discoveries, including a Hobbesian translation of an intriguing reason-of-state propaganda piece dating to the Thirty Years War.[18] *Aspects of Hobbes* contains an essay—"The Printing of the 'Bear': New Light on the Second Edition of Hobbes's *Leviathan*"—which demonstrated Malcolm's admirable skills as a book historian.[19] And when he enters into an established controversy over a contested textual attribution, the controversy has tended to come to an abrupt and decisive end.[20]

Much more could be said, but it should be sufficiently clear why the appearance of Malcolm's edition of *Leviathan* has been eagerly anticipated. Year by year the bibliography of Hobbes scholarship creeps ever longer, but vast amounts of this scholarship are fundamentally interpretive or derivative. New factual information about Hobbes is produced only rarely. So too are original interpretations built on such fresh data. Noel Malcolm provides all of this, and has established himself

15 *The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. Noel Malcolm, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1994).

16 Noel Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford, 2002).

17 Noel Malcolm, "Charles Cotton, Translator of Hobbes's *De cive*," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 61/2 (1998), 259–87.

18 Noel Malcolm, *Reason of State, Propaganda, and the Thirty Years War: An Unknown Translation by Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford, 2007); see also Malcolm , "An Unknown Policy Proposal by Thomas Hobbes," *Historical Journal*, 55/1 (2012), 145–60.

19 Noel Malcom, "The Printing of the 'Bear'," in Malcom, *Aspects*, 338–82.

20 See his thorough poleaxing of the possibility that Hobbes was the author of the so-called "Short Tract." Noel Malcom, "Robert Payne, the Hobbes Manuscripts, and the 'Short Tract'," in Malcom, *Aspects*, 80–145.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

as the most important scholar of Hobbes since the foundational researches of Ferdinand Tönnies in the late nineteenth century.[21]

Furthermore, a proper critical edition of *Leviathan* has been pressingly needed. Given its status as perhaps the most significant work of political thought composed since antiquity, it is remarkable how poorly *Leviathan* has been served by its modern editors. A true critical edition has simply not existed. Most scholarship has been based on mass-produced student editions, or (even more insufficiently) on Molesworth's nineteenth-century edition. William Molesworth, a radical and philosophically minded MP, had been encouraged to undertake this effort by the historian George Grote, himself a devotee of James Mill. His edition was thus produced by a utilitarian and atheistic intellectual milieu naturally inclined to rehabilitate the psychological and political doctrines of Hobbes.[22] Molesworth's edition performed a real service in bringing Hobbes's work into wide circulation, but it was marred by innumerable modernizations, small textual changes, and outright errors. Subsequent modern editions of *Leviathan* have usually attempted to revert to the original 1651 text, but the complicated publication history of *Leviathan* rendered this less than straightforward. Only in 1952, thanks to the bibliographers Hugh Macdonald and Mary Hargreaves, did it become common knowledge that the "1651" edition actually consisted of three separate editions, all marked by different printer's ornaments and thus now known as the Head, the Bear, and the Ornaments.[23] These editions vary, and each edition separately contains in-press variations. Different yet again is the manuscript of *Leviathan*, prepared on expensive vellum and thought to have been presented by Hobbes to the exiled King Charles II, though under what circumstances is debated.[24] Consulting *the* "1651" edition as such is thus a complicated task.

In his introductory survey of modern editions, Malcolm does his best to remain charitable, but he can only do so much. He is compelled to offer a catalogue of insufficient scholarship and sloppy transcription practices. The 2003 edition edited by G. A. J Rogers and the late Karl Schuhmann, which advertised itself as the first modern critical edition, suffers the worst embarrassment.[25] Given the importance of Schuhmann as a student of Hobbes's biography, Malcolm takes no pleasure in this. (One who might is Richard Tuck, whose own

[21] Ferdinand Tönnies, *Thomas Hobbes: Leben und Lehre* (Stuttgart, 1896).

[22] Peter Burroughs, "Sir William Molesworth," *ODNB*.

[23] H. MacDonald and M. Hargreaves, *Thomas Hobbes: A Bibliography* (London, 1952).

[24] Now housed at the British Library as Egerton MS 1910.

[25] G. A. J. Rogers and Karl Schuhmann, *Thomas Hobbes's Leviathan: A Critical Edition*, 2 vols. (London, 2003). Schuhmann died as this edition was going to press.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

edition was itself savaged by Schuhmann and Rogers.[26]) Malcolm systematically exposes this edition, which was produced, amazingly, by collating, rather than original editions, modern ones, on the assumption that these were based on different copy texts and would accurately reflect in-press variations. This method proved dismally incapable of distinguishing seventeenth-century variations from changes introduced—intentionally or otherwise—by modern editors. The Schuhmann–Rogers edition, moreover, is premised on a simply incorrect theory as to the printing history of *Leviathan* and on Hobbes's involvement in textual corrections. Textual changes now known to have been introduced after Hobbes's death, by press correctors, were thus treated as authorial. The "wording of *Leviathan* presented by Schuhmann is not a reliable text" is Malcolm's understated conclusion.[27]

Of the modern editions of *Leviathan*, the most serviceable are those edited by Edwin Curley and Richard Tuck.[28] Both include important critical introductions. The former reproduces significant changes introduced by Hobbes when he translated *Leviathan* into Latin in 1668.[29] The latter accounts for the variations found in the manuscript, presentation copy Hobbes had produced in France. But even these are imperfect. Curley, unawares, deployed a later (and different) edition of the 1668 Latin *Leviathan*. Tuck's edition is marred by a large number of typographical errors.[30]

At this point anyone who has published work on Hobbes relying on modern printed editions should be swallowing hard. For the purposes of scholarship, the Clarendon *Leviathan* will now sweep the field clear. But as badly as we have needed a reliable critical edition of the English text, the most important contribution of Malcolm's edition is its parallel printing, on facing pages, of Hobbes's Latin version of *Leviathan*. His critical apparatus provides a full account of the variations between the two productions, and additions or rewordings found in the Latin version are fully translated. Hobbes's Latin *Leviathan* was not a *literatim* translation but actually a substantial revision, undertaken during the very different political circumstances that he found himself in seventeen years after the original publication of the work. The English *Leviathan* was composed after the regicide of Charles I and fitted for the purpose of polemical combat

26 Ibid., 111–23.

27 Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*, 304–5.

28 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan with Selected Variants from the Latin Edition of 1668*, ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis, 1994); Hobbes , *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge, 1996).

29 Until now, the best effort to account for the Latin variations appeared in François Trincaud's French edition of *Leviathan*, published in 1971. Malcolm has high praise for Trincaud's efforts.

30 Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*, 304–7.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

during the turmoil of the English Commonwealth. The Latin *Leviathan* was produced in the wake of the original work's notoriety, during the restored reign of the Stuart monarchy and the episcopal Church of England. These basic facts about Hobbes's biography and intellectual development have been only partially explored by modern scholars insufficiently equipped with Latin. Malcolm has provided the field with the first complete and reliable translation of the Latin *Leviathan*. This service will transform scholarship on Hobbes. It has, to be sure, made Malcolm's edition long and expensive. The interfacing texts alone fill two volumes running to more than 1,300 pages, with Malcolm's introduction filling an additional volume. Even in paperback, Oxford has priced the set at nearly £100 sterling. But no scholar can spare either the expense or the shelf-space. The Malcolm *Leviathan* is not only definitive but also indispensable.

As a practitioner of the editorial arts, Malcolm has few peers and admits little criticism. He has produced an edition that is surprisingly painless to read, given its complexity. A reader working through the even-numbered pages containing the English text will encounter a large number of discreet, superscripted note markers. These variously indicate passages that were omitted from the Latin text (which is reproduced in full on facing pages), spots where new material was added into the Latin, and passages that were heavily revised by Hobbes for the Latin. All new Latin text is translated at the foot of each page. Also at the bottom of the page, keyed to line numbers, are found the textual variants that mark the three editions of the English *Leviathan*, as well as the manuscript version. Variants between the different Latin editions are also recorded.

Finally, superscripted letters mark Malcolm's own editorial notes, clarifying seventeenth-century terminology or identifying literary allusions and political references. Clearly a conscious decision was made to keep these interventions minimal, in the interest of saving an already bulky text from morbid obesity. His literary and historical comments are useful without being showy or superfluous. "Subjective, interpretative, and digressive notes are excluded," he writes. Certain historical figures "such as Charles I and Julius Caesar" are left unidentified "for fear of insulting the reader."[31]

Enormous thought has gone into the design of this scholarly scaffolding, and the result is a text that can be read with ease, but also studied closely when scholarly inquiry demands. The work required to produce this layered edition must have been stupendous. Malcolm's introductory volume contains significant detail on the structure of his production. These sections, indeed, constitute a small master class in editorial practice. In particular, Malcolm justifies the various standards used in deciding when to promote textual variants into the main text (always

[31] Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*, 322.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

carefully recording alternate wording). Malcolm's copy-text was a deluxe large-paper copy of the Head edition of *Leviathan*. These larger copies were usually produced at the end of the print run for each sheet, and thus contain most in-press corrections. Occasionally he promotes textual variations from other editions. Malcolm has modified his main text where he can demonstrate Hobbes's probable editorial intervention in a variant edition. These changes come entirely from the Bear edition or the presentation manuscript. Hobbes had no role in the production of the Ornaments. Suffice it to say that Malcolm, in promoting changes from the Bear, is scrupulously conservative in surmising that Hobbes (rather than a press corrector or compositor) was author of the change. He has gone so far as to identify which of the Bear edition's printers (there were two, working simultaneously) likely had access to Hobbes's editorial input, and which did not.[32]

Generally Malcolm does not modify text in order to save Hobbes from grammatical error or misquotation (though in the Latin he corrects more freely, as Hobbes's imperfect Latin at times requires salvaging). His interventions are small and cautious, and are certainly not designed to "clarify" or "modernize" Hobbes on a grand scale. Nevertheless, Malcolm knows that he is opening himself up to criticism in relying on the Greg–Bowers approach of textual editing, whereby accidental and substantive features of a text are distinguished.[33] This method underwent significant revisionist challenge in the 1980s, perhaps most notably in Jerome McGann's *Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*.[34] The Greg–Bowers technique, writes Malcolm, with a not untypical undertone of dry wit,

> has been criticized on two grounds; because it depends on a concept of authorial intention (which has been declared outmoded), and because it results in the construction of a "Mischtext", a composite containing elements from different actual texts. To the first criticism the answer must be that while the concept of authorial intention is certainly not unproblematic, only worse editorial problems are generated by attempting to abolish it. As to the problematic nature of a Mischtext: the collation of in-press variants necessarily leads to the creation of a synchronic Mischtext, an "ideal copy" of which may nowhere actually exist; if readers can tolerate this, it becomes harder to see what their objection in principle can be to a Mischtext of the diachronic variety.

The important thing is that Malcolm scrupulously records all variants, so that any scholar requiring knowledge of the state of any given edition can recover the information. In this sense a critical edition is best understood as "an archive of

---

32 Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*, 316.

33 W. W. Greg, "The Rationale of Copy-Text" *Studies in Bibliography*, 3 (1950–51), 19–36; Fredson Bowers, *Bibliography and Textual Criticism* (Oxford, 1964).

34 For discussion see Michael Hunter, *Editing Early Modern Texts: An Introduction to Principles and Practice* (London, 2007).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

textual information arranged on certain organizing principles," which produces both a "reading-version of the text" and a history of the work's evolution. "The anti-Mischtext attitude of some modern theorists can lead only to a slavish reproduction of a single version of the text (as some have explicitly recommended); this implies a rejection of the whole enterprise of textual criticism as it has been practised since the Renaissance."[35]

* * *

Noel Malcolm has participated in the contextualist wave that has swept over and reshaped intellectual history during the past two generations. His scholarship, however, has a different flavor than that produced by the likes of Quentin Skinner, J. G. A. Pocock, Richard Tuck, Anthony Pagden, and others of the so-called Cambridge school. Their work has generally been specifically textual in its approach, efforts to excavate "linguistic context" in a narrow sense. The relevant context is provided by a specific discourse or language of debate. Authors act by deploying or modifying these inherited languages in eventful ways. This sort of work tends to produce scholarship written over long chronologies. It also can sideline more material aspects of a given work's context (the biography of its author, the political setting, the history of the text as a material object, and so forth).[36]

Malcolm's researches have often drawn him in different directions. His Hobbes scholarship is quite biographical. In his introduction, he sidelines what we might understand as standard Cambridge school method. Outside obvious cases, he explicitly avoids asserting "source relationships" between Hobbes and other texts. Such efforts "represent the initial incline of a very slippery slope." Any such inventory of sources would open "floodgates very difficult to close." To "designate all of the forces that may have shaped Hobbes's own ideas is a task which—mercifully—falls beyond the duties of an editor of *Leviathan*."[37] Malcolm goes so far as to cast some doubt on a few recent efforts to map Hobbes's influences.[38]

---

35 Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*, 317.

36 Among their many iterations of this method see J. G. A. Pocock, "The Concept of Language and the *Métier d'Historien*: Some Considerations on Practice," in Anthony Pagden, ed., *The Language of Political Theory in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1987), 19–38; Quentin Skinner, "Interpretation and the Understanding of Speech Acts," in Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, vol. 1, *Regarding Method* (Cambridge, 2002), 103–27.

37 Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*, 324–5.

38 The cases involve Gianfranco Borrelli's argument that Hobbes borrowed metaphors describing unsociable men from Malvezzi's *Discursi* on Tacitus, and the efforts of George Klosko and Daryl Rice to map the influence of Thucydides over *Leviathan*. G. Borrelli, *Il lato oscuro del* Leviathan: *Hobbes contra Machiavelli* (Naples, 2009); G. Klosko and D.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

One senses that Malcolm believes not only that such speculations do not belong in a critical edition, but that they often rely, in and of themselves, on faulty method.

In this sense Malcolm's textual introduction is unlike those produced by, say, J. G. A. Pocock, which were chiefly interested in fixing texts within appropriate languages of debate.[39] A much clearer model for Malcolm is the often forgotten progenitor of Cambridge school contextualism, Peter Laslett. Before he decamped to social history and demography, Laslett produced some major reinterpretations of Robert Filmer and John Locke. These appeared in the seemingly narrow confines of introductions to editions of, respectively, *Patriarcha* and the *Two Treatises of Government*.[40] In both cases Laslett produced highly consequential reinterpretations based not on linguistic contextualization, but on skilled book history. He re-dated both texts. Filmer's, he revealed, was not a product of the regicidal environment that framed his other published works, but had been written in the 1630s. It belonged to a dramatically different context, and was only published for the first time in still a third context (the Exclusion Crisis) in 1679, many decades after Filmer's death. A similar re-dating situated the composition of Locke's *Two Treatises* in the early 1680s. Published in 1689, the work had usually been read as a decorous justification of the bloodless coup of 1688. Laslett exposed it as a much more radical document, produced during the fevered Whig plots to assassinate the Stuarts after the Exclusion Crisis.[41]

Malcolm's introduction to *Leviathan* has no cause to mention Laslett, but it shares something of his method, complete with an effort to reinterpret *Leviathan* through a precise argument about dating. The ever-expanding cohort of book historians has tended to favor social-historical or cultural-historical approaches rather alien to the techniques of intellectual history.[42] But Noel Malcolm's

Rice, "Thucydides and Hobbes's State of Nature," *History of Political Thought*, 6/2 (1985), 405–9.

39 See, for instance, his introduction to Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock (Indianapolis, 1987).

40 Locke , *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge, 1960); Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha and Other Political Writings of Sir Robert Filmer*, ed. Peter Laslett (Oxford, 1949).

41 Both re-datings have been debated and refined, but not substantially rebutted, in the decades since. On the dating of Locke's *Two Treatises* see in particular J. Milton, "Dating Locke's Second Treatise," *History of Political Thought*, 16/3 (1995), 356–90; and more recently David Armitage, "John Locke, Carolina, and the *Two Treatises of Government*," *Political Theory*, 32/5 (2004), 602–27. Pocock comments on Laslett 's importance in "Quentin Skinner: The History of Politics and the Politics of History," in Pocock, *Political Thought and History* (Cambridge, 2009), 123–44, 126–7.

42 For an account of this methodological division see Brian Cowan, "Intellectual, Social, and Cultural History: Ideas in Context," in Brian Young and Richard Whatmore, eds., *Advances*

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

scholarship reveals how essential it is for any intellectual historian to be fully versed in the history of print.

Malcolm's introductory volume to *Leviathan* is organized in two main parts: a "general introduction" situating *Leviathan* within the context of Hobbes's life and work, and a "textual introduction" narrating the history of *Leviathan* as a printed artifact. The second of these two sections could be profitably assigned in seminars on the history of the book. It contains some meticulous detective work, and vastly expands our knowledge of *Leviathan*'s print history and Hobbes's involvement in it. Malcolm gives us the best account we are ever likely to have of Hobbes's composition methods, the process whereby he edited the copy manuscript sent from France to England for printing, and the reasons why the expensive vellum presentation manuscript differed from the printer's copy-text. As the expensive presentation copy is the only surviving manuscript of *Leviathan*, establishing its relative position as a baseline text is important, and required close comparative readings.[43]

More impressive still is the amount of detail excavated by Malcolm on the three separate "1651" editions of *Leviathan*. By closely examining title-page ornamentation and breaks in the ornamental letters within the text (caused by worn printer's blocks), he is able to identify the two printers who collaborated on producing the first Head edition of *Leviathan*. That there were in fact two, working simultaneously, is also established by Malcolm. This demonstrates that the publisher Andrew Crooke was eager for the work to appear quickly. By inspecting the skeleton forms Malcolm establishes how many compositors were likely involved in setting *Leviathan* (between two and four), and from this concludes that Hobbes could not have been correcting each type-set sheet from Paris, as one contemporary (Edward Hyde) reported. Instead, Hobbes almost certainly merely inspected finished sheets after the type set was broken up, for the purposes of compiling errata rather than in-press corrections.[44]

One could go on. The presentation of such intricate research makes for oddly compelling reading, and for a remarkably lucid exposition of the early modern printing process. In general Malcolm vindicates the work of scholars such as Adrian Johns, who have revised our commonsense notion of the "fixity" and "permanence" of print by exposing the haphazard and improvised nature of

in Intellectual History (Houndmills, 2006), 171–88. The present reviewer participated in an interesting, if not entirely successful, effort at rapprochement hosted by Princeton's Center for the Study of Books and Media in 2004. Here J. G. A. Pocock answered the elitism charge implicitly levelled by Robert Darnton at the Cambridge school with a responding charge of philistinism. There the matter basically stood.

43 Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*, 199–209.

44 Ibid., 215.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

hand-press operations.[45] For example, there is no solid reason for assuming that Thomas Hobbes was solely or even chiefly responsible for the capitalizations, italics, and spellings used in the first edition of *Leviathan*.[46] The printing process was very much a collective effort. It was also an evolving one—with in-press corrections ensuring considerable variations between various "finished" copies of the work.

Following Malcolm step-by-step through the printing history of *Leviathan* is not possible here. Suffice it to say that he unearths a great deal of new information about the later Bear and Ornaments editions of *Leviathan*. Though these have been known, from internal evidence, to represent the second and third editions of the work, they were both produced with the date of 1651 and under Andrew Crooke's name. Malcolm has given us enormous information as to the actual date and circumstances of these editions. Through various means of sleuthing—most ingeniously by compiling dates inscribed by owners in surviving editions, and listing the known prices paid for copies of *Leviathan*—he has established rough dates for the Bear (perhaps slightly earlier but not later than 1678) and the Ornaments (perhaps slightly earlier but not later than 1702). In 1651 it would have cost you eight shillings and sixpence to purchase a copy of *Leviathan* in the bookstalls of St Paul's. By 1668 the stalls were no longer an option. *Leviathan* was a scandalous and suppressed work, costing fully twenty-four shillings. This premium whetted printers' appetites, and Malcolm narrates an effort to print *Leviathan* in 1670 that was disrupted by the Stationers' Company and the king's Surveyor of the Press.[47] The appearance of the Bear drove prices down to twelve shillings in the early 1680s, and the Ornaments dampened prices further. By the middle of the eighteenth century a "1651" edition of *Leviathan* could be had for six shillings, less than its original price a century earlier.[48]

The most significant finding of Malcolm's reconstruction of the print history of *Leviathan* is his determination, based on dating and internal evidence, that Thomas Hobbes did authorize some of the changes made to the second edition of *Leviathan* (the Bear). The third edition (the Ornaments) appeared after his death and is thus less relevant to a critical edition. In tracing the subterranean career of *Leviathan* (down to the fate of specific quires of specific editions, the division

[45] Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago, 1998); D. F. McKenzie, *Making Meaning: "Printers of the Mind" and Other Essays*, ed. P. D. McDonald and M. F. Suarez (Amherst, MA, 2002).

[46] Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*, 219–21.

[47] Malcolm has established the likelihood that the Bear edition deployed sheets salvaged from this 1670 confiscation, with the missing sheets printed by the Amsterdam printer Christoffel Cunradus. Hence the two printers involved in the production of the edition, and their differing levels of contact with Hobbes. Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*, 236–40.

[48] Ibid., 231–3.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

of labour among various printers in producing it, and the complicated history whereby copyright in the work was bought and sold), Malcolm also allows us to peer into the commercial practices of the emerging republic of letters. Among his discoveries is that the second edition of *Leviathan* was undertaken by one of Spinoza's printers, and that the third edition shared a printer with John Toland. In these and other ways, Malcolm's scholarship contributes to mapping a corner of the world of heterodox printing on the eve of the Enlightenment. As for the Latin translation, which appeared as part of a collected *Opera philosophica* in 1668 produced by the prestigious Blaeu printing house in Amsterdam, Malcolm reveals that it was full of typographical slips and gross errors of Latin. A cleaned-up second edition was produced in 1670, probably without Hobbes's involvement. This edition was marred by some hilariously inept typesetting, which included the insertion into the text of asterisked queries by the press corrector! Later printings by Blaeu of the Latin translation (in 1676 and 1678) occurred after both the Synod and the Court of Holland had forbidden the printing of Hobbes's work, along with that of Spinoza. Partly for this reason and partly to evade confiscation by the French on their way to the German book fairs, they were printed with a false, English title page.[49]

These details are only an illustrative sample of Malcolm's reconstruction. *Leviathan* was a banned work in the seventeenth century, and we have very little surviving correspondence by Hobbes detailing the fraught circumstances of its publication. That we now know so much of this history is testament to Malcolm's scholarly virtuosity.

* * *

The feature of Malcolm's edition that will perhaps most interest students of Hobbes is his General Introduction, where he presents his own account of the process whereby Hobbes produced *Leviathan*, and his political purposes in doing so. (Here, as will become clear, the present reviewer must declare an interest.) Hobbes, of course, wrote *Leviathan* while in France during the late 1640s. It was printed in 1651, two years after the execution of Charles I, when England was governed as a Commonwealth under the Rump Parliament. During these years Oliver Cromwell was establishing English military dominance over the entire British Isles, destroying any hope that Ireland or Scotland might serve as the staging ground for a Stuart Restoration.

It is a measure of how dramatically *Leviathan* recast the early modern political imaginary, and transcended the Civil War's partisan categories, that

[49] Ibid., 299–300.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

the political purposes of the book have been debated for more than three centuries. Throughout his life Hobbes consistently argued for the superiority of monarchical rule as a constitutional form. Mobilizing a contractual account of abstract sovereignty, however, required him to reject any divine-right, strict constitutionalist, or indefeasible hereditary claims for the exclusive legitimacy of monarchy as a form (and also the claims of any particular dynasty). Modern scholarship on Hobbesian politics in many ways originated when Quentin Skinner influentially investigated the nuances of Hobbes's own theory of allegiance, which emphasized that obedience was due only to sovereigns capable of offering protection to their subjects, but also that obedience could be justly offered to any sovereign who could establish such a capacity for protection in de facto terms (without regard to any conditions of *de jure* legitimacy).

Despite *Leviathan*'s continued preference for monarchy, and its occasional criticisms of the parliamentarians who had resisted Charles I, contemporary readers of all persuasions tended to read the work as inimical to the royalist cause. Friends of the Commonwealth praised it, and the regime's official newssheet excerpted it. The royalist court, with no recorded dissent, read it as a "Rebel's catechism" and banished Hobbes in retribution. Certainly, by the mid-1650s, Hobbes himself was boasting that *Leviathan* had framed the "minds of a thousand gentlemen" to the new regime. After the Restoration, he sang from a different song sheet, and there are certainly features of the text which convey sympathy with the Stuarts. There is, in short, room for debate. Did Hobbes write *Leviathan* as the latest in a line of monarchist writings, designed to serve the cause of Charles I, or prepare the ground for the restoration of the Stuart dynasty under Charles II? Did he write the work to justify obedience to the newly established Commonwealth regime? Finally, might he have considered the possibility that a figure from within the republican ranks would establish a new monarchy?

Convoluting the question is the vast second half of *Leviathan*, correctly characterized by Malcolm as a "substantially new work," in which Hobbes offered fresh theological and ecclesiological theories. This material was long ignored as essentially antiquarian, but in recent years has been investigated with accelerating interest. Hobbes himself consistently pointed to the central importance of this religious material in motivating and shaping *Leviathan*. And much of it—particularly the work's abandonment of the episcopal church, its withering criticism of Presbyterianism, and its accommodation to an Independent church in England—carried profound political implications. Ecclesiastical politics potentially cross-cut secular politics. It is, for instance, possible that he sought a Stuart Restoration alongside an Independent church settlement. (This is, in fact, not as wildly implausible as it may sound. In the complex political negotiations of 1647, some advisers to King Charles found the Independents more pliable than the Presbyterians on matters of church government.) But no theory about the political

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

act represented by *Leviathan* can fail to consider—and indeed foreground—the work's ecclesiology.

Complicating all is chronology. In later years Hobbes sometimes intimated that *Leviathan* had been conceived early in the 1640s, as a response to the initial Parliamentary revolt against Charles I. This is almost certainly not the case, but it is possible that he began the composition of the work before the execution of Charles I in early 1649, even if its entire composition belongs to the post-regicidal, republican period. Either way, many have perceived that the "royalism" of the work fades noticeably in the later, newer portions of the book. Few would dispute that *Leviathan*'s final "Review and Conclusion" openly accepted the arrival of a new constitutional order in England (though with what level of enthusiasm is a matter of dispute). Hobbes's political calculations, in other words, were seemingly flexible during these years of compressed revolutionary change.

Fixing the politics of *Leviathan* is thus no easy task, and requires the alignment of several disparate factors. Much recent scholarship has gravitated toward a more "revolutionary" Hobbes, but Malcolm attempts to apply some counterpressure in favor of a royalist and even Anglican reading. Noting that "the more 'royalist' one takes the political purpose of *Leviathan* to have been, the earlier one may place its original composition," Malcolm makes a somewhat indecisive effort to marginally push back the composition process into the pre-regicidal years. Given the evidence—all detailed by Malcolm—that Hobbes was at work on his natural-scientific writing into 1649, and seems to have dropped this in favor of *Leviathan* only in that year,[50] he can only suggest that Hobbes may have been gathering his "thoughts and materials in a more scrappy and unsystematic way" some years before the "concentrated writing up of *Leviathan*, which perhaps began only in the second half of 1649."[51]

This potentially repositions the intention to compose *Leviathan* to the years of Hobbes's service as mathematics instructor to Prince Charles, heir to the beleaguered King Charles and the presiding figure at the exiled Stuart court. And this, in turn, allows Malcolm to suggest that the work was a response to royalist political "conversation," and perhaps even to a request by the prince that Hobbes "explicate" his political principles. All of this, however, is really quite speculative (Malcolm does not claim otherwise), and it does not amount to the kind of consequential re-dating that Laslett achieved in the cases of Locke and Filmer. In any case, the original conception of *Leviathan* matters less if the text was composed, as Malcolm concedes it probably was, in an exceptionally concentrated way after the execution of Charles I and the abolition of English

50 Ibid., 5–11; the evidence is also investigated to similar effect in Jeffrey Collins, *The Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford, 2005), chap. 4.

51 Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*, 11.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

monarchy. As Malcolm observes, "Hobbes's purposes may have changed over time."[52]

Malcolm, fairly enough, is attempting to account not just for the consistent monarchism of *Leviathan*, but for scattered comments that might be interpreted (and in some cases must be) as sympathetic to the Stuarts themselves. He has thus buttressed his more royalist reading of the book with close textual analysis, but the results are inconclusive. For instance, he notes that in *De cive* Hobbes had conceived of the original political covenant creating sovereigns to have been (at least in some idealized way) the product of a rough "democracy" of assembled individuals.[53] In *Leviathan* Hobbes dropped the use of the term "democracy" to describe this "covenant" of the "multitude." Malcolm reads this as an effort to undermine the "democratic pretensions" of the Rump Parliament that had tried Charles I,[54] but it is not clear why a similar purpose would not have animated *De cive* in the early 1640s, when Parliament's capacity to posture as some sort of foundational democratic assembly was more plausible.[55] In any case, Hobbes's eventual case for submission to the new Commonwealth, as formulated in the later portions of *Leviathan*, had little to do with democratic pretensions and everything to do with the right of conquest, the Stuart's loss of power, and the Rump Parliament's position as de facto sovereign. When considering the origins of sovereignty and the nature of allegiance, the relevant contrast in Hobbesian doctrine is not monarchy against democracy, but the institution of sovereignty by covenant against its institution by conquest.[56] Certain actors of the English Revolution were heavily invested in defending explicit consent as a foundation for sovereignty, but these were the Levellers and Covenanters who constituted the Commonwealth's main critics. The Commonwealth claimed power and demanded allegiance based on conquest, and *Leviathan* worked to justify those claims. It is not clear that the army clique which held sovereignty after the regicide would have found efforts to undermine "democratic pretensions" inimical to their interests. Nor is Malcolm's persistent inference that Hobbes would have read the Rump as a democracy wholly justified. Within Hobbes's constitutional taxonomy,

52 Ibid., 12.

53 Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, 94.

54 Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*, 16–20.

55 Hoekstra, furthermore, has observed that *Leviathan*, in other passages, continued to suggest that commonwealths by institution were originally democratic. Kinch Hoekstra, "A Lion in the House: Hobbes and Democracy," in Annabel Brett and James Tully, eds., *Rethinking the Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2007), 191–218, 212.

56 Hoekstra has chided those inclined to a "democratic" reading of Hobbes for failing to attend to the contrast between sovereignty founded by original agreement and sovereignty achieved by conquest. But the force of this objection works equally against those inclined to attribute a fundamental constitutional monarchism to Hobbes. Ibid., 207–9.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

the regime was much more clearly an "Aristocraticall Common-wealth," perhaps moving toward a reconstituted monarchy or protectorate.[57]

We might also wonder about the political implications of another argumentative shift in *Leviathan*, one analyzed most fully by Quentin Skinner but highlighted here by Malcolm as well, namely the work's reductive definitive of liberty as a mere absence of external, physical impediment. This served, among other effects, to render acts of political consent that were "dictated by fear" perfectly "free" (in that they were physically unconstrained). But again, while the absolutist implications of such a doctrine might jar with stereotypes of what the English Revolution was about, in the actual conditions of the Interregnum these arguments worked more clearly to buttress the Commonwealth and Protectorate, and undermine a royalist cause that was by then heavily invested in its own constitutional legitimacy.[58] Skinner has interpreted the Hobbesian definition of liberty as antirepublican, and Malcolm seems inclined to agree. But to the extent that Hobbes's deflationary account of liberty was designed to buttress absolute sovereignty against limited or mixed accounts, it worked equally as a rebuke to the dominant modes of royalist thought, which found the traditional mixed constitution of England increasingly hospitable as the Commons incrementally accrued unchecked power. And where Hobbes did intend to confute more specifically republican variants of the mixed constitutional tradition, he did not attack defenders of the Interregnum regimes in so doing. As with the Levellers, most of the leading republican writings of the decade were framed as critiques of those regimes and their presumed tyrannical aspirations.

Malcolm also notes, fairly enough, that *Leviathan* contains argumentation—some of it newly urgent in tone—about the illegitimacy of resistance. Much of this, however, trains its fire on the Scottish National Covenant and the original Scottish and Parliamentary resistance of the late 1630s and early 1640s, and is of dubious relevance in assessing Hobbes's political judgments *c.*1649-–50. For instance, Hobbes's statement that "no man that hath Sovereigne power can justly be put to death or otherwise in any manner by his Subjects punished" would do little to clearly fix his political purposes in the aftermath of the regicide. Charles I was at that point in no state to be "defended" (nor, it should be added,

[57] Democracy for Hobbes required that every citizen "have a right to enter" the ruling Assembly, while in aristocracy "certain men" were "distinguished from the rest." England's revolutionary regimes fit the latter description. Only the Levellers envisioned anything like a democratic assembly. For an effort to read Hobbes as a royalist based upon Hobbes's presumed "emotional ties" to aristocracy, see James Hamilton, "The Social Context of Hobbes's Political Thought," *Modern Intellectual History*, 11/1 (2014), 1–29. Hobbes's social views are of themselves an interesting subject, but their value in explaining Hobbes's evolving political views is not here convincingly established.

[58] Ibid., 17–20; Quentin Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* (Cambridge, 2008).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

did he hold "sovereigne power" in 1648–9. He had been reduced to the mere prisoner Charles Stuart, with a royal claim reliant on logics of legitimacy that Hobbes refused to accept).[59] No one has ever suggested that Hobbes intended *Leviathan* as a justification of the Scottish or Irish rebellions, or of the original resistance of the Long Parliament. The debate centers on Hobbes's reaction to the new political universe opened up by the regicide and subsequent abolition of monarchy and the two-house Parliament. Malcolm concedes that Hobbes's "support for submission to the successful rebels was entirely compatible with his denunciation of their original rebellion."[60]

Malcolm writes that Hobbes went "out of his way to defend not just sovereignty in general but monarchy in particular."[61] This is occasionally the case, but Malcolm notes only in passing how obsessively in *Leviathan* Hobbes referred to sovereignty as inhering either in one man or in a "single assembly." He did this occasionally in *De cive* as well, but he does so relentlessly in *Leviathan*, on literally dozens of occasions. The vast majority of these references did not favor monarchs over assemblies but affirmed their equal potential as forms of sovereignty.[62] In general Malcolm is meticulous in presenting evidence, but may shade his readings at times in a pro-monarchical direction that is not fully defensible. For instance, commenting on a passage where Hobbes insisted that the "prosperity of a People ruled by an Aristocraticall or Democraticall assembly" depended not on the constitutional form but on "obedience," Malcolm reads this as an antirepublican blast against those besotted with the Dutch Republic. He omits, however, the very next sentence:

> nor do the people flourish in a Monarchy, because one man has the right to rule them, but because they obey him. Take away in any kind of State, the Obedience, (and consequently the Concord of the People), and they shall not only not flourish, but in short time be dissolved.

The passage, when partially quoted, sounds antirepublican. Fully quoted it is clearly a neutral point about sovereignty, which would, indeed, have struck most royalists as dangerously casual about the sanctity of monarchy.[63]

---

59 Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*, 22.

60 Ibid., 81.

61 Ibid., 22.

62 As Richard Tuck has pointed out, in the preface to the revised *De cive* (1647) Hobbes explicitly insisted on the equal status of monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic commonwealths, and seemed anxious not to be misread as an exclusive monarchist. Tuck, "Hobbes and Democracy," in Brett and Tully, *Rethinking the Foundations*, 171–90, 186. Tuck also lays stress on the distinction between democratic sovereignty and deliberative democratic administration, arguing that only the latter raised Hobbes's ire.

63 Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*, 23; Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Malcolm, 2: 524–6.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

"Hobbes gives the impression," Malcolm claims, "that he is writing with the current situation very much in view—the viewpoint being that of a supporter of Charles I or Charles II at a time when the rebels had secured some power, but before the final outcome was decided."[64] This is fair, but it is in that case important to bear in mind that much of Hobbes's Stuart loyalism was backward-looking, that Charles I was likely dead when Hobbes began composing *Leviathan*, and that the smashing military supremacy of the new regime became ever clearer as the work was composed. It would have been quite evident when the later portions of *Leviathan* were written, which is where we find most of what is new, original, and controversial about the book. Royalists, who were flatly outraged by *Leviathan*, do not seem to have found in the residual royalism of the earlier portions of the book any significant reassurance. And this reaction did not catch Hobbes by surprise. Before *Leviathan* appeared, for instance, he assured the leading royalist Edward Hyde that he would dislike it, and so he did.[65]

Malcolm goes to lengths—always fully conceding the speculative nature of his reconstruction—to present the first portions of *Leviathan* as an effort to advise Prince Charles as he confronted the crises of civil war and regicide. This is not entirely implausible as regards the first parts of the book. But Malcolm's tentative suggestion that Hobbes may have approved of Charles's decision to throw himself (strategically) into alliance with the Scottish Presbyterians is difficult to credit. Charles I had already tried this experiment, to disastrous effect, and Hobbes's hostility to the Scottish Presbyterians ran to almost unfathomable depths. Furthermore, though it is true, as Malcolm argues, that Charles's concessions to the Presbyterians would have been null according to *Leviathian*'s theory of sovereignty (which renders such diminution of sovereignty impossible), it is difficult to see how Hobbes's decision to prepare a publication advertising this fact could have been construed as an act in the Stuart interest. Any strategic duplicity with the Scots (or others) would not have benefited from publicity, particularly with the English reading public. In general the decision to write and publish *Leviathan* in English militates against reading it as an advice book for Charles, and Hobbes had surely decided to publish it by the spring of 1650 and probably considerably earlier. As Malcolm himself notes, the later portions of the text all but expressly side against Charles's Scottish ventures, praising the English Commonwealth for securing "the public peace" and urging its continuance. This was indeed "remarkable, given that Charles II was, at that time, gathering an army

64 Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*, 22.

65 Edward Hyde, *A brief view and survey of the pernicious errors in Mr. Hobbes's book, entitled Leviathan* (Oxford, 1676), 7–8; Hyde to Barwick, 21 June 1651, Bodl. Clarendon MS 61, fol. 206.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

in Scotland to take back his father's English kingdom."[66] Whatever vestigial advice to Charles may have remained in the early portions of *Leviathan* apparently did not strike Hobbes as significant enough to render this argumentative volte-face incoherent.

And as far as *Leviathan*'s comments about monarchy go, Malcolm understands that these cannot be treated as an unproblematic brief for Stuart legitimacy. For example, the constitutional indeterminacy of 1649-–50 could equally well have been resolved by a non-Stuart monarchy. This was in fact widely predicted at the time. There is, to be sure, no decisive evidence that Hobbes wrote *Leviathan* with any particular "new prince" (above all Oliver Cromwell) in view. We can presume that he would not have celebrated such a development in any case, but merely accepted it as a new dispensation. But the possibility has been far too casually dismissed by most historians, who have accepted Hobbes's later defense that he could not have foreseen Cromwell's quasi-monarchical Protectorate several years before its eventual realization in 1653-–4. Malcolm is equally dismissive of this possibility. But Cromwell's possible assumption of the crown was a truism of the context in which Hobbes wrote *Leviathan*, and speculation about this was particularly pitched after his conquests of Ireland and Scotland. (His reception in London after the former achievement was a virtual monarchical triumph.) We find, among the royalist exiles, a pressing expectation that this would occur, and even uncanny predictions that Cromwell would opt for the title of "Lord Protector." Malcolm makes a rare stumble when he describes these as "satirical" and "not serious predictions of an impending constitutional change."[67] This is simply not the case.[68] Furthermore, while Malcolm has combed *Leviathan* very thoroughly for any reference that might be construed as favorable to the Stuarts, he overlooks the striking passage in which Hobbes writes,

> And as a Child has need of a Tutor, or Protector, to preserve his Person, and Authority: So also (in great Commonwealths,) the Sovereign Assembly, in all great dangers and troubles, have need of *Custodes libertatis*; that is of Dictators, or Protectors of their Authoritie; which are as much as Temporary Monarchs; to whom for a time they may commit the entire exercise of their Power; and have (at the end of that time) been oftner deprived thereof, than Infant Kings, by their Protectors, Regents, or any other Tutors.[69]

---

66 Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*, 72.

67 Ibid., 81.

68 The evidence is surveyed in Collins, *Allegiance*, 149–51. To cite but one example, Hobbes's associate Abraham Cowley reported Cromwell's "triumphant" return from Ireland to London. It was believed that Cromwell would have a "new great Title conferr'd upon him (as Protector of the People's Liberty, or some such)." This was clearly a serious report.

69 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 294

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

It is very difficult to imagine that Hobbes wrote this passage without the context of the Rump Parliament in mind. Its application to current circumstances was glaringly obvious. It is worth noting that these comments cap Hobbes's chapter privileging monarchy over democracy, a chapter that Malcolm otherwise treats as an unproblematic support for Stuart rule. Hobbes may not have expected a new English monarch or Protector, but he clearly envisioned the possibility.

In the end, Malcolm winds up offering only a modest revision to the "revolutionary" Hobbes. The most thoroughgoing royalist readings of Hobbes have held that his de facto-ist theory of allegiance was only convenient to the Commonwealth accidentally, due to unforeseen contingencies, and that Hobbes was essentially blindsided by this twist of fate.[70] Malcolm rightly disagrees: "By the time Hobbes wrote his 'Review and Conclusion' . . . it was clear his intention was to show that his own political theory could indeed serve to persuade people to submit to the new régime." This section of *Leviathan* made clear that the old English monarchy had been founded on conquest as surely as the new Commonwealth was. Hobbes advised England's new conquerors to require only "a Submission of men's actions to them for the future," not an "Approbation of all their actions past."[71] Hobbes himself thus reinforced the irrelevancy of his own royalist past in the new revolutionary circumstances. He openly suggested that *Leviathan* was a new "Doctrine" designed to serve a "new Government," and he seemed intent on—in Malcolm's words—deflecting any hostility from those offended by "his criticisms of the original claims and actions of the rebels."

Malcolm's presentation of the religious dimensions of *Leviathan* is on the one hand expert and comprehensive, on the other hand surprisingly indecisive in its conclusions. Of all of the developments in Hobbes scholarship that have transformed the field in the years since the Clarendon edition began, none can rival the explosion of contextual research on his religious views. Each new volume that appears in the series makes this point clearer. Paul Seward's edition of *Behemoth*—Hobbes's Restoration-era history of the Civil War—correctly presents that work as essentially an extended philosophical comment on the nature of religious war.[72] Alan Cromartie's edition of Hobbes's *Dialogue between a Philosopher and a Student of the Common Laws of England* makes clear that this work was fundamentally animated by Hobbes's interest (quite pressing

70 Glenn Burgess, "Contexts for the Writing and Publication of Hobbes's *Leviathan*," *History of Political Thought*, 11 (1990), 675–702; A. P. Martinich, *Hobbes: A Biography* (Cambridge, 1999), 213–15.

71 Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*, 73, citing Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Malcolm, 3: 1135.

72 Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth*, ed. Paul Seward (Oxford, 2010).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

and personal) in the history of heresy law.[73] And even Eric Nelson's edition of Hobbes's translations of Homer foregrounds how significantly his religious and ecclesiastical views shaded the translation.[74] There has, as well, been an expansion of interest in Hobbes's many Restoration "heresy writings," and in his protracted printed dispute with Bishop Bramhall. All of these writings will, in turn, make their appearance in the new Clarendon edition, as will Hobbes's idiosyncratic verse history of the early Christian church (essentially an exercise in deconstructing Trinitarian orthodoxy). As each of these texts appears each will augment the force of the basic point that Hobbes, in *Leviathan* and permanently thereafter, was obsessed with what he took to be the volatile political and intellectual patterns of Christianity.

Malcolm, whose doctoral dissertation concerned Hobbes's "voluntarist theology,"[75] is well versed in this scholarship. His introduction provides a resonant characterization of it. Describing Hobbes's growing obsession with the use of base philosophy to manipulate common delusions in the interest of clerical power, he evokes William Cobbett's obsession with a different system of legal manipulation and class interest, which Cobbett dubbed "the Thing." Malcolm writes of *Leviathan* that "Hobbes's opposition to the 'Thing'—including pretences of inspiration, claims of divine right, and concealments of clerical interest—was clearly a fundamental motive force, and its presence is visible from the earliest chapters of the work onward."[76] Hobbes became convinced that the travesty of scholastic philosophy was "a perfectly rational enterprise, consciously undertaken for the sake of power." *Leviathan* was designed to expose, at last, this conspiracy, and counter its corrupting effects with "true doctrine."[77] Malcolm rightly finds this obsession animating virtually all of *Leviathan*, and constituting its fundamental originality.

It is for this reason jarring to find Malcolm repeatedly insisting that the specifically contextual features of *Leviathan*'s religious chapters are of marginal significance. In particular Malcolm is interested in minimizing Hobbes's consequential decision to abandon episcopacy and endorse the church settlement of the Independents allied with Oliver Cromwell. He concedes that this passage of *Leviathan* is "remarkable," but largely as an inexplicable "anomaly." Hobbes's

73 Thomas Hobbes, *Writings on Common Law and Hereditary Right*, ed. Alan Cromartie and Quentin Skinner (Oxford, 2008).

74 Thomas Hobbes, *Translations of Homer, The Illiad and the Odyssey*, ed. Eric Nelson (Oxford, 2008).

75 Noel Malcolm, "Thomas Hobbes and Voluntarist Theology" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1983).

76 Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*, 87.

77 Ibid., 51.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

"praise of Independency" had the "air of a last-minute adjustment, designed to align his theory a little more closely with the religious preferences of the prevailing power in England." Malcolm goes so far as to doubt Hobbes's "sincerity" in writing these passages.[78]

These interpretations are difficult to sustain. Hobbes's endorsement of Independency is found in a complex passage running to seven hundred words, in which he approves not only of an Erastian Congregational settlement but also of the abolition of both episcopacy and Presbyterianism. The passage, with its intricate presentation of presbyters and bishops as abettors of "praeterpoliticall Church government" tying "knots" upon "Christian liberty," contains not a trace of insincerity.[79] Furthermore, there are other passages of *Leviathan* in which Hobbes presents the primitive Christian church in what we might call a "Congregationalist" manner. Malcolm denies the originality of *Leviathan* on this point, noting correctly that in *De cive* Hobbes had already defined the ancient *ecclesia* as an "assembly of citizens." This is true, but only in *Leviathan* did Hobbes (unlike Grotius) interpret ancient ordination as a "showing of hands" (a congregational election of church officers) rather than a "laying on of hands" (conveying the succession of a clerical caste). Only in *Leviathan* did Hobbes vest the authority of excommunication in "the Assembly of the Christians dwelling in the same city" rather than in the ancient apostles.[80] And only in *Leviathan* did Hobbes deny that the titles of "bishop" and "presbyter" signified anything other than "elder" or "teacher" in the primitive church. In *De cive* these titles marked differed "ranks and offices," but in *Leviathan* they were "but divers names of the same Office."[81] All of these were interpretive points favored by the Congregationalists, and the polemical significance of this was recognized by favorable readers of Hobbes such as James Harrington and Henry Stubbe, as well as hostile ones such as Henry Hammond. Malcolm minimizes these points by arguing that Hobbes did not view the history of the primitive church as "binding." This is, of course, correct, but the primitive church enjoyed enormous prestige and on topics such as heresy prosecution and ecclesial governance Hobbes had a strong tendency to commend the practices of the ancient Christians.[82]

Malcolm also suggests that in *Leviathan* Hobbes continued to present episcopacy as "fairly harmless."[83] But in point of fact Hobbes's doubts about

78 Ibid., 63–4.

79 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Malcolm, 3: 1114–16.

80 Ibid., 796.

81 Hobbes, *De cive*, 222–3; Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Malcolm, 3: 834.

82 For Malcolm's reading, see his *Editorial Introduction*, 60–64; my own is presented in Collins, *Allegiance*, 124–30.

83 Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*, 62.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

episcopacy had been voiced as early as 1641, when—in a letter to the third Earl of Devonshire—he commiserated with the Long Parliament's suspicion of usurping bishops and also with its plan to abolish them.[84] In *De cive* he all but openly blamed the Laudians for triggering the Civil War (a theme he would return to at greater length in *Behemoth*). *Leviathan* derided their divine-right claims on power, associated them with popery, and celebrated their abolition. Hobbes's private correspondence makes clear how much of *Leviathan*'s ostensibly anti-Catholic rhetoric was actually aimed at practices of the English episcopal church. Indeed, it became a truism of the vast anti-Hobbesian polemical literature that (in Edward Hyde's words) *Leviathan* had directed "malice and acrimony" at the episcopal church, even while it was "struggling in its own ruins."[85]

Equally surprising is Malcolm's suggestion that Hobbes's endorsement of Independency for preserving "Christian liberty" supposedly "does not work as part of Hobbes's own argument." There is a vast literature about Hobbes's views on conscience, and no doubt his treatment of the subject could be contradictory. His fear of political resistance justified by conscience never left him. Nevertheless, *Leviathan* did introduce a deferential language of conscience as an internal matter, and argued the folly of attempting to coerce it. Hobbes increasingly associated the coercion of conscience with clerical usurpation, only unwisely advanced by sovereigns inattentive to their own interests. No doubt Hobbes never fully resolved the contradictions of his own position, and his tentative tolerationism often seems narrowly designed to benefit a kind of philosophical freedom to interrogate orthodoxy. But the reference to Christian liberty in Hobbes's endorsement of Independency is not, for those reasons, merely to be treated as "another ground of suspicion."[86]

However "anomalous" they may seem to Malcolm, Hobbes's negative evaluation of episcopacy and his softened position on Christian conscience completely redirected his career. During the Restoration he became locked in perpetual war with the restored bishops, and most of his significant writings during these years are put to fundamentally anticlerical purposes. He mobilized his hesitant tolerationism in a series of important writings on Christian heresy and heresy prosecution. He advanced his unorthdox, anti-Trinitarian theology in several efforts at sacred history. He composed a dialogic history of the Civil War that was so unsparing in its treatment of the bishops that they secured its suppression. Everything he wrote after 1651 unfolded in the shadow of *Leviathan*,

84 Hobbes to Devonshire, 23 July 1641, *Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, 120.

85 Hyde, *View and Survey*, 305.

86 For an astute consideration of these issues see Arash Abizadeh, "Publicity, Privacy, and Religious Toleration in Hobbes's *Leviathan*," *Modern Intellectual History*, 10/2 (2013), 261–91.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

and it hardly matters that certain contextual details (such as his endorsement of Independency) were later regretted or dropped, or that they marked passing phases in Hobbes's evolving political views. Their significance to his intellectual biography remains undiminished.

In short, the treatment of the ecclesial politics of *Levaithan* as a "late adjustment" of dubious sincerity or significance is the biggest and only real misstep in Malcolm's introduction. Malcolm is certainly right that Hobbes wrote *Leviathan* to combat the "Thing" that governed the hearts and minds of Christendom. But if this is so, it is unclear why Hobbes would have been so haphazard and casual about applying this perspective to the new religious context of 1649-–51. Malcolm presents Hobbes as obsessed with the generalized problem of religious governance, but hastily improvisational as an observer of the specific religio-political developments of the English Civil War. These interpretive claims are difficult to align.

Malcolm is, at times, oddly modest about the significance of his efforts to fix the political and religious purposes of *Leviathan*:

> Investigating the political and biographical context of *Leviathan* may help to explain the timing of its composition, and may also elucidate some of its particular features. At most, then, it may go some way towards explaining why Hobbes wrote in the way that he did, and when he did; but it is very far from exhausting the meaning of his work, or from explaining why Hobbes believed that what he wrote was true.[87]

This is an unjustifiably muted characterization of Malcolm's achievements and his own field of research. The value of intellectual history is to locate a text within given moments (the moment of its composition, its publication, its suppression, its reception by a given reader, and so forth). When viewed in such fixed circumstances, the possibilities and hidden implications of the text emerge from beneath the weight of our own interpretive biases. The "meaning" of the work escapes what Quentin Skinner once called our "importunate expectations."

To illustrate the point with a pertinent example, Hobbes's shifting ecclesial politics may strike us today as a fleeting contextual detail, and that, somewhat surprisingly, is how Malcolm portrays them. But they are far more significant than that. They reveal an important truth about the religious implications of those seventeenth-century contractual accounts of sovereignty that so strongly influenced the later liberal tradition. In the right revolutionary circumstances, Hobbes was willing to advertise the utility of toleration and religious atomization for the purposes of absolutist rule. And his hostility to episcopacy demonstrated how powerfully the "liberty of the church" continued to threaten not just the autonomy of individuals, but also the full sway of Leviathan itself. Only in

87 Malcolm, *Editorial Introduction*, 82.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press

given moments, in certain circumstances, can we see Hobbes's project coming together to vindicate, as a package, individual conscience, the abolition of clerical authority, and absolute sovereignty. It just so happens that the circumstances that drove these potentialities of the Hobbesian project together also happened to produce his masterwork. And if we are to accurately view the enduring relevance of *Leviathan*, it is exactly these fleeting contextual circumstances of 1650-–51 that provide the brightest flashes of light. This, finally, is why it is so crucial to resist efforts to dig beneath the historical detail in order to unearth the "essential" Hobbes, the dogged defender of monarchy and bishops who momentarily lost balance in a few "anomalous" passages of *Leviathan*. In perhaps unconscious ways this portrait of the "real" Hobbes serves to keep his disconcerting absolutism at arm's length from our modern political and religious preferences. What Hobbes would have said of philosophy we might say of history: there is no sense in distinguishing the potential from the actual, or the essential from the accidental.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147924431400064X Published online by Cambridge University Press