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HOBBES'S CHANGING ECCLESIOLOGY*

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ABSTRACT. *Readers of Hobbes have sought to account for differences between the arguments of his most influential texts. In* De cive *Hobbes (tepidly) endorsed apostolic structures of spiritual authority, while in* Leviathan *he at last unleashed his vehement anticlericalism. I argue that these disparities do not reflect an identifiable change in Hobbes's ideas or principles over time. Rather, the political context in which Hobbes composed his treatises drastically altered over the course of his writing career, and the Hobbesian theoretical significance of those contextual developments best accounts for some ecclesiological inconsistencies across his oeuvre. There was, throughout the brief and tumultuous period after the regicide during which Hobbes composed* Leviathan*, no sovereign power in England to whom he should defer, and consequently he acquired certain liberties that subjects in a* civitas *forgo. Those included the renewal of his right to wage a 'war of pens' against High Anglican episcopal power.*

> Nam mea vita meis non est incongrua scriptis:
> Justitiam doceo justitiamque colo.[1]
>
> Thomas Hobbes, *Vita carmine expressa*

I

Recent work on Hobbes has employed the language of action, of *doing* rather than *saying*, to emphasize that he reacted to and sought to influence the chaotic political reality of his time.[2] Through renewed attention to rhetoric and context, Hobbes's readers have, among other contributions, located his

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[1] 'For my life is not inconsistent with my writings: / Justice I teach, and justice I cultivate.' My translation. For Hobbes's texts I use Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Noel Malcolm (3 vols., Oxford, 2012) (hereafter *Leviathan*); Thomas Hobbes, *On the citizen*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge, 1998) (hereafter *DC*); and Thomas Hobbes, *English works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, ed. Sir William Molesworth, IV (London, 1969) (hereafter *EW*).

[2] See Quentin Skinner, 'Regarding method', in *Visions of politics*, I: *Regarding method* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 1–7, for development of this distinction.

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arguments within the Engagement Controversy of early Interregnum England;[3] highlighted religious differences between *De cive* and *Leviathan*;[4] excavated Hobbes's increasingly radical Erastianism;[5] and shifted focus to Hobbes's writings on church history and heresy to understand better the 'religious tightrope act' that 'he could not pull off' in his political treatises.[6] This newfound hermeneutic sensitivity has enabled Hobbes's readers to recover his authorial and political intentions, rather than pretend he was interested in answering our own pressing questions or addressing eternal concerns.[7] A major benefit of such readings has been to characterize Hobbes's texts as interventions into profoundly consequential debates concerning church government.[8]

But a puzzle has emerged. On this topic of ecclesiology, Hobbes's most important writings appear to be doing different things. In chapter seventeen of *De cive*, Hobbes endorsed a distinction 'between things *spiritual* and things *temporal*', and argued the former encompass '*mysteries of faith*'.[9] The chapter dramatically concludes that 'the holder of sovereign power in the commonwealth is obliged to interpret holy scripture, when it is a question about the *mysteries of faith*, by means of duly ordained *Ecclesiastics*'.[10] *Leviathan*, by contrast, is unambiguously anticlerical. It makes invidious the distinction between temporal and 'Ghostly' authority, indivisibly fusing these powers and bestowing them upon the civil sovereign – the 'Chief Pastor' of the commonwealth.[11] This was precisely the innovation in Hobbes's argument that disturbed his closest friend, Robert Payne, who wrote to Hobbes throughout the composition of *Leviathan* urging him to abandon it.[12] Visual puns in the texts' respective frontispieces

[3] See e.g. Glenn Burgess, 'Usurpation, obligation, and obedience in the thought of the Engagement Controversy', *Historical Journal*, 29 (1986), pp. 515–36; and Quentin Skinner, 'Conquest and consent in Hobbes and the Engagement Controversy', in *Visions of politics*, III: *Hobbes and civil science* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 281–302.

[4] See Richard Tuck, 'The "Christian atheism" of Thomas Hobbes', in Michael Hunter and David Wootton, eds., *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 111–30.

[5] See Jeffrey Collins, *The allegiance of Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford, 2005). See also J. Neville Figgis, 'Erastus and Erastianism', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 2 (1900), pp. 66–101. I follow Collins in using the word 'Erastian', which denotes the complete subordination of religion to the state.

[6] Patricia Springborg, 'Hobbes, heresy, and the *Historia ecclesiastica*', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 55 (1994), p. 553.

[7] See Quentin Skinner, 'Motives, intentions, and interpretation', in *Visions of politics*, I, pp. 90–102, on this mode of explanation.

[8] For a classic piece on Hobbes's religious thought, see J. G. A. Pocock, 'Time, history, and eschatology in the thought of Thomas Hobbes', in *Politics, language and time: essays on political thought and history* (Chicago, IL, 1989), pp. 148–202.

[9] *DC*, p. 216.

[10] Ibid., p. 233.

[11] *Leviathan*, II, p. 510, and III, p. 852.

[12] See Richard Tuck, 'Warrender's *De cive*', *Political Studies*, 32 (1985), pp. 308–15; and Jeffrey Collins, 'Christian ecclesiology and the composition of *Leviathan*: a newly discovered letter to Thomas Hobbes', *Historical Journal*, 43 (2000), pp. 217–31.

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register this discontinuity. While spiritual iconography hangs above the temporal realm in *De cive*, *Leviathan* depicts the person of the state wielding both the public sword and bishop's crozier.

Richard Tuck deserves much credit for marking this divergence, arguing that *De cive*'s ecclesiology is fundamentally Anglican, and that it was *Leviathan*'s anti-Anglicanism that Hobbes's erstwhile allies found alarming.[13] Others have countered that Tuck exaggerates the break in Hobbes's religious ideas: Jeffrey Collins downplayed this divergence on the grounds that Hobbes's Erastianism had been developing since the early 1640s, but concurs that taken 'as an ecclesiological statement' *Leviathan* 'introduced a host of contextually crucial innovations'.[14] Johann Sommerville portrayed these works as proffering 'much the same doctrine, though it is expressed far more circumspectly in *De cive* than in *Leviathan*'.[15] Lodi Nauta added that although *Leviathan* 'mercilessly' developed lines of argument that *De cive* 'did not spell out', 'there is more continuity in Hobbes's thinking' on this issue 'than a comparison between some isolated passages' may suggest.[16]

The most compelling evidence against Tuck's thesis that Hobbes radically changed his mind between *De cive* and *Leviathan* is that Hobbes had already argued in *The elements of law*, privately circulated in 1640, that 'sacerdotal jurisdiction' resides in unitary sovereigns.[17] Also notably, though *De cive* formulates a semi-autonomous realm of spiritual authority, it slyly circumscribes that realm by making it the sovereign's prerogative to decide which 'things' belong within it.[18] Additionally, Hobbes's careful treatment of the distinction between the *right* and *exercise* of religious authority subtly undermines *jure divino* clericalism, since even in *De cive*'s conceptual landscape a Christian sovereign authorizes the exercise of clerical power.[19]

It seems highly probable that Hobbes did not dramatically change his views on church government between *De cive* and *Leviathan*, considering he had already intimated in *The elements* that bishops possess no independent authority (*Leviathan*'s position), and since the Anglican passages in *De cive* seem aberrational in light of its broader argument. Additionally, many scholars have employed epistolary evidence to demonstrate that Hobbes was anti-Laudian as early as 1641.[20] In sum, *De cive* and *Leviathan* may seem to fall on opposite

[13] See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge, 1996), pp. xxxix–xl. See Richard Tuck, 'The civil religion of Thomas Hobbes', in Nicholas Phillipson and Quentin Skinner, eds., *Political discourse in early modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 120–38.

[14] Collins, *The allegiance of Thomas Hobbes*, p. 120.

[15] Johann P. Sommerville, *Thomas Hobbes: political ideas in historical context* (London, 1992), p. 107.

[16] See Lodi Nauta, 'Hobbes on religion and the church between "The element of law" and "Leviathan": a dramatic change of direction?', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 63 (2002), pp. 587–94.

[17] See *EW*, p. 199.

[18] *DC*, p. 216.

[19] *DC*, pp. 198–9.

[20] See Collins, *The allegiance of Thomas Hobbes*, pp. 80–1.

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sides of the dispute concerning the origins and extent of ecclesiastical power, but the distance between them is undramatic upon closer inspection, and in any case *De cive*'s vestigial Anglicanism appears not only anomalous, but evacuated of any real political significance.

But these answers to Tuck beg further questions. Though the differences between *De cive* and *Leviathan* have been exaggerated, they are undeniably there. Sommerville showed that *De cive*'s early Anglicanism was more apparent than real, but what was the source of that apparition? And while the Anglicanism of *De cive* may have only been 'apparent', it seemed adequately real to Robert Payne, who had prompted Hobbes to authorize an English translation of *De cive* just before expressing Anglican anxieties about *Leviathan*. This is made all the more puzzling when we consider that even this inchoate clericalism is utterly incongruous with *De cive*'s otherwise uncompromising absolutism. I concur with Nauta that Hobbes's early Anglicanism 'was not well integrated into the rest of the arguments'.[21] What we should now consider is that this itself demands explanation.

De cive affirmed the orthodox distinction between *selection* and *ordination* of church ministers. Though the sovereign may select new pastors, Hobbes argued, extant ecclesiastics consecrated them via the 'laying on of hands'.[22] *De cive* thus accommodates an apostolic lineage tracing back to the ascension of Christ. Hobbes believed that the dispute between spiritual and temporal authorities was chiefly responsible for civil wars, and he composed *De cive* to forestall that wretched outcome in England. Why then did he introduce into that work this doctrine, which ineluctably allowed for episcopal autonomy? True, *De cive* gifted these church authorities only the highly attenuated power to teach what the sovereign permits. But what accounts for Hobbes's pronouncement that the sovereign was 'obliged' to rely on them? In his private correspondence from 1641, Hobbes had welcomed the parliament's assault on the Laudian clerical order. So why did he take such rhetorical pains in *De cive* to carve out a space for an independent clergy, a convoluted theoretical move that relied on a highly unstable (and, it seems, unHobbesian) separation of the temporal and spiritual?[23]

That *De cive* proffers a kind of phantom Anglicanism – visible but barely real – is intrinsically confounding. That he would soon exorcise that phantom is more puzzling still. For Tuck is right that Hobbes would purify his absolutism in his masterpiece. *Leviathan* radically undermines 'the imposition of hands', emptying the practice of mystical significance, thereby freeing up the sovereign to exercise undiminished sacerdotal powers.[24] It is a startling fact that *Leviathan*

[21] Nauta, 'Hobbes on religion and the church between "The element of law" and "Leviathan": a dramatic change of direction?', p. 592.

[22] *DC*, p. 223.

[23] It is debatable just how 'unHobbesian' this dualism is, though certainly it seems a violation of Hobbes's metaphysical monism.

[24] *Leviathan*, pp. 774 and 836.

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portrays the civil monarch as a 'Supreme Pastor' who *by divine right* bears the unitary person of the church.[25] So much for the bishops' 'right' to teach.[26]

This discontinuity remains worthy of scholarly inquiry, and so revisiting extant explanations of intertextual difference is worthwhile. Deborah Baumgold has argued that Hobbes's method of serial composition and peripatetic insertion might account for inconsistencies across his oeuvre.[27] But Baumgold has only related that explanation to Hobbes's more secular arguments, and *prima facie* her thesis seems unlikely to illuminate why *Leviathan* is systematically Erastian. Patricia Springborg has argued that certain 'paradoxes' in Hobbes's thought resulted from the position he was put in as a courtier's client.[28] But Hobbes was dismissed from the younger Charles's court for writing *Leviathan*, and so it seems in this instance he was not a very good client. My interpretation intersects most closely with Kinch Hoekstra's. Hoekstra has emphasized Hobbes's 'doctrine of doctrines', the idea that Hobbes's philosophical views were secondary to his overarching political commitments.[29] I extend Hoekstra's insights in two ways: first, by relating them more directly to Hobbes's ecclesiology; second, by showing that whilst he wrote *Leviathan* there was no sovereign in England to whom Hobbes should defer.

Tuck and Collins have helpfully advanced scholarship on Hobbes's changing ecclesiology, though they account for it in different ways. Tuck sought to establish '[t]he great idea Hobbes seems to have had in Paris in the late 1640s' – that a commonwealth could abandon orthodox eschatological doctrines and still remain authentically Christian.[30] Jeffrey Collins located their source instead in Hobbes's intensifying ecclesiological principles, which (he argues) boiled over into a full-blown Erastianism around the time of regicide.[31] Tuck's argument that Hobbes's mind reversed, and Collins's that his allegiances evolved, remain exemplary and compelling counter-arguments to my position, but ultimately they fall short because they cannot quite adequately explain the palpable rhetorical tension between *De cive*'s Anglican passages and its overall argument, nor the gulf between Hobbes's private and public positions in the early 1640s. I revisit their arguments in the third section. It is important to recognize up front that their shared assumption of cognitive change is precisely that – an

[25] Ibid., p. 854.
[26] *DC*, p. 208.
[27] Deborah Baumgold, 'The difficulties of Hobbes interpretation', *Political Theory*, 36 (2008), pp. 827–55; and Deborah Baumgold, 'The composition of Hobbes's *Elements of law*', *History of Political Thought*, 25 (2004), pp. 16–43.
[28] Patricia Springborg, 'The paradoxical Hobbes: a critical response to the Hobbes symposium', *Political Theory*, 37 (2009), pp. 676–88.
[29] See Kinch Hoekstra, 'The de facto turn in Hobbes's political philosophy', in Tom Sorell and Luc Foisneau, eds., *Leviathan after 350 years* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 33–73; and Kinch Hoekstra, 'II – The end of philosophy (the case of Hobbes)', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 106 (2006), pp. 25–62.
[30] Tuck, 'The civil religion of Thomas Hobbes', p. 130.
[31] Collins, *The allegiance of Thomas Hobbes*.

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assumption – even if intuitively plausible. When it comes to the religious differences between *De cive* and *Leviathan*, I think it is misleading.

This article shifts hermeneutic emphasis from the fluidity of Hobbes's mental states to a fundamental transformation in his character as a public being. Tuck's argument both exaggerates the differences across Hobbes's corpus and unjustifiably infers that Hobbes's mind underwent an equivalent reversal. Collins demonstrates that Hobbes's Erastianism overlapped with *De cive*'s composition, but sidesteps the issue of why Hobbes still deferred to the bishops in that very work. It is not enough to dismiss *De cive*'s aberrational Anglicanism, which Hobbes did not withdraw nor even qualify in subsequent editions. We must also explain why the aberration exists.

It is the character of Hobbes's texts as complex speech acts profoundly congruous with the very normativity they construct that I am after in the argument below. To that end, this article not only elucidates Hobbes's theoretical development conceptually and prosopographically, but through vigilant attention to Hobbes as an historical, fully embodied subject-citizen. By doing so, we can better understand the political context in which Hobbes wrote and the unique role he assigned his philosophy in changing it. More to the point, we can illuminate Hobbes's historical *contexts*, for in light of his own political theory we can see that there were fundamentally two.

Through the early 1640s, Hobbes wrote his political treatises as a loyal subject to King Charles I, the sovereign representative of England. At the time of *Leviathan*'s writing, however, the sovereign did not have a head; and so, then, neither did England. Hobbes believed, and *Leviathan* demonstrated, that defeated royalists should submit to the new republic. But he was himself not obliged to do so whilst philosophizing from France, where he was living in exile, since he did not fall within the commonwealth's purview of protection.

The secondary literature has tended to underplay this key contextual disparity. This article affirms not only that Hobbes did in fact assay the turbulence of the Civil War in this way, but that this is a decisive contextual detail to consider when interpreting his political writings and the puzzling differences between them. Whether one lives in a civil or a natural state is, for Hobbes, the distinction that makes all the difference.

We should more systematically investigate what Hobbes felt himself obligated to say and/or refrain from saying across his philosophical writings. Taking stock of that shifting civic subjectivity should better enable us to understand what he felt justified in suggesting, eliding, exaggerating, downplaying, concealing, obfuscating, and widely publishing, and thus enrich our understanding of what he was *doing* as a political actor writing in dangerous times. Through hermeneutic attention to Hobbes as a dutiful political subject who understood himself to be bound (until not) by the same civic duties that he formulated, we can more clearly see the major events and battle lines of this period as he himself must have seen them. In so doing, I think we can better account for

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discontinuities that are perhaps less prominent than some have argued, but still puzzling.

To elucidate the explanatory power of this hermeneutic vis-à-vis the ecclesiological differences between the texts, it is necessary to establish its historical veracity. I pursue that task in the second and third sections below, the former focusing on general contextual details and the latter on the specific institutional contexts of Caroline Laudianism and post-regicidal Independency. In the conclusion, I reflect on the argument's implications. Interweaved throughout is a rumination on some deep concepts that emerge out of this historical exegesis.

II

The central premise of the present argument is that Hobbes understood the defeat, arrest, and execution of Charles to dissolve the *civitas* and liberate him from the duty to conform his utterances to the 'publique Conscience'.[32] In a civil state, 'the measure of Good and Evill actions, is the Civill Law', but in the state of nature '*every private man is Judge of Good and Evill actions*'.[33] Since Hobbes identified civil laws with sovereign commands, when the king was killed public justice died alongside him.[34] When the sovereign speaks, his subjects must uncritically listen, lest a 'diversity of Opinions' render the sovereign 'a mute Person, and unapt… for the government of a Multitude, especially in time of Warre'.[35]

The significance of the regicide is not only historical but theoretical, since only in light of Hobbesian theory can we ascertain the meaning of Charles's beheading according to Hobbes himself. Hobbes began urgently composing *Leviathan* around the time of the king's execution. He completed the main body of that work after a royalist resurgence but before the decisive defeat at Dunbar, and had it published shortly before returning to London and formalizing his allegiance to the commonwealth.[36] We should reflect on the gravity of this volatile period in Hobbesian theoretical terms. For that two-year interim between Charles's execution and *Leviathan*'s publication, Hobbes owed no obedience to England. It was precisely during this period of bleak uncertainty that he composed his *magnum opus*.

That we should interpret the regicide as ushering in a kind of hiatus in sovereignty is not immediately historically obvious. The commonwealth was a functioning government at this time, and thus likely constituted a Hobbesian

[32] *Leviathan*, II, p. 502.
[33] Ibid.
[34] See Mark C. Murphy, 'Hobbes (and Austin, and Aquinas) on law as command of the sovereign', in Al P. Martinich and Kinch Hoekstra, eds., *The Oxford handbook of Hobbes* (Oxford, 2016), pp. 337–56.
[35] *Leviathan*, II, p. 250.
[36] Tuck established this likely timeline. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Tuck, p. xi.

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sovereign.[37] Though this is perfectly plausible for those subjects who remained in England, matters were different for Hobbes. The crucial point is that the state of which Hobbes was a part had come undone while he was in exile, and so *vis-à-vis* England Hobbes existed in a kind of state of nature.

In his dialogical memoir, Hobbes emphasized that he wrote *Leviathan* after the king lost his authority but prior to the Protectorate.[38] *De cive*, by contrast, was written during Charles's waning reign. Before the regicide, boasted Hobbes, he 'was the first that had ventured to write in the King's defence' and was 'amongst very few, that upon no other ground but knowledge of his duty and principles of equity, without special interest, was in all points perfectly loyal'.[39] Because he lived in exile post-regicide, moreover, he avoided coming 'under the protection, first of the Parliament, and then of Oliver'.[40] These biographical details are important in light of Hobbes's theory of obligation, for to be unprotected is *ipso facto* to be unobliged.

Hobbes's defence that he joined the royalist faction out of England and thus, when the revolutionary tide would turn, remained beyond the new sovereign's reach is biographically and historically plausible. Fearing retaliation for his radical royalism, Hobbes fled England for Paris in late 1640, where he began writing the treatise, finalizing the manuscript by November 1641. These were dark days for the king, whose military missteps, High Anglican sacerdotalism, and ambitious Arminian advisers had incited outrage among Scottish Calvinists and English parliamentarians. William Laud, the archbishop of Canterbury, seemed particularly sinister to even moderate anti-royalists, and many parliamentarians of varied commitments feared that he had acquired too much power in settling the contours of public worship.

In May of 1640, financial desperation forced Charles to call the Short Parliament to fund his misbegotten militarism, an institutional necessity that Hobbes emphatically criticized: 'Another division of sovereign power', Hobbes bemoaned, 'gives the supreme power of War and Peace to one man (whom they call the *Monarch*) but not the right to exact money, which they assign to others.'[41] This division 'dissolves the commonwealth, for neither War, if war is necessary, nor the public peace, can be sustained without money'.[42] The newly summoned Long Parliament had taken dramatic steps towards altering the balance of power in its favour – enhancing its power of the purse, restricting the royal prerogative, and prosecuting chief counsellors to the king for high treason. Hobbes advocated the monarchy's cause in these disputes, although this article highlights a rich complexity in the character

[37] Although not necessarily. See Richard Tuck, *The sleeping sovereign: the invention of modern democracy* (Cambridge, 2016).
[38] See *EW*, p. 420.
[39] Ibid., p. 414.
[40] Ibid., p. 417.
[41] *DC*, p. 135.
[42] Ibid.

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of his royalism. While Hobbes's positions on war making and taxation remained relatively static across his oeuvre, his public statement on that other calamitous dispute – church–state relations – was notoriously unstable.

Writing at the onset of war, Hobbes's aim in *De cive* was to supply a defence of the monarchy by publishing his controversial theories for the first time. But Hobbes was not yet at liberty to arrive at conclusions that deviated from civil law, obliged instead to 'patiently put up with some inconveniences' in his 'private affairs' that he likewise implored his readers to endure.[43] Hobbes advised his compatriots to 'measure the Justice of what you are thinking of doing by the laws of the commonwealth, not by the talk or counsel of private citizens'.[44] That entails, Hobbes went on to encourage, shouldering certain 'public burdens' necessary to sustain state order.[45] My argument up to this point is quite simply that he may have taken his own advice.

Mary Dietz has argued that Hobbes was not solely concerned with the material power that sovereigns wield over their subjects, but with the character of the civil subject 'as a more fully dimensional public being' than readers of Hobbes have heretofore emphasized.[46] Hobbesian sovereignty is secured not only by the utilitarian calculations of subject-slaves, nor by a despot's capacity for overwhelming violence, but also by the public-minded virtues and habits of more richly constituted subject-citizens. Dietz's reading thus identifies the normatively robust vision of political subjection underlying Hobbes's theory. I would only add that we should now try to step outside the text to see Hobbes as cultivating in himself and intending to enact publicly the civic virtues that he promoted so passionately. Thus, the regicide also constituted a division between Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury, loyal subject of the king, and Hobbes the individual at utter liberty to speak and act without any sovereign to defer to.

There is good reason to interpret passages on civil dissolution as deeply illuminating of *Leviathan*'s context and Hobbes's situation within it. An important chapter on the causes of civil weakening and dissolution concludes with the following remarks:

> Lastly, when in a warre (forraign, or intestine,) the enemies get a finall Victory, so as (the forces of the Common-wealth keeping the field no longer) there is no farther protection of Subjects in their loyalty; then is the Common-wealth DISSOLVED, and every man at liberty to protect himselfe by such courses as his own discretion shall suggest unto him. For the Soveraign, is the publique Soule, giving Life and Motion to the Common-wealth; which expiring, the Members are governed by it no more, than the Carcasse of a man, by his departed (though Immortall) Soule. For though the Right of a Soveraign Monarch cannot be extinguished by the act of another; yet the Obligation of the members may. For he that wants protection,

[43] Ibid., p. 13.
[44] Ibid., p. 13.
[45] Ibid., p. 14.
[46] Mary Dietz, 'Hobbes's subject as citizen', in Mary Dietz, ed., *Thomas Hobbes and political theory* (Lawrence, KS, 1990), p. 96.

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may seek it any where; and when he hath it, is obliged (without fraudulent pretence of having submitted himselfe out of fear,) to protect his Protection as long as he is able to. But when the Power of an Assembly is once suppressed, the Right of the same perisheth utterly; because the Assembly it selfe is extinct; and consequently, there is no possibility for the Soveraignty to re-enter.[47]

Edward Hyde was clearly right to underscore the Hobbesian constitutive links between sovereignty, subjection, protection, and obligation when he lamented that '*the obligation of Subjects to the Sovereign is understood (he saies) to last as long, and no longer, then the power lasts to protect them*'.[48] Charles's downfall marked a dividing point between a bedridden but still living commonwealth and a state of nature without any common power to unite the multitude into one person. The precise moments at which sovereignty dissolved and was reconstituted are (and were) contestable, but the execution of the king undoubtedly removed any semblance of monarchical protection. And as Clarendon correctly ascertained, this captures only half the regicide's significance, for the removal of protection is concomitantly freedom's inauguration. For royalists back home, that meant the freedom to submit to the new republic. It was up to the Rump to win the people's uniformity by purveying protection. Writing as he was from France, Hobbes could view these events with a certain theoretical boundlessness.

But Hobbes's location in French territory raises additional theoretical complexities, considering his acerbic assault on Catholicism in *Leviathan*. Simply by virtue of occupying France, Hobbes may have felt obligated to its sovereign, but juridically he was no Frenchman.[49] In any case, King Louis XIV would not reach the age of majority until months after the publication of *Leviathan*. Though Louis would eventually outlaw 'Reformed' religion throughout his kingdom, the broadly tolerationist Edict of Nantes was in effect during Hobbes's time in France.

Another difficulty remains. Hobbes counted the dissolution born of civil war as an example of the state of nature,[50] and textual evidence suggests that Hobbes took himself to be writing *Leviathan* under such conditions.[51] But Hobbes was not living in a nasty state of nature at this time; he was living in Paris. Did Hobbes, whilst ambling about Parisian streets and cavorting with powerful royalists (including as tutor to the second Charles in Saint Germain), feel himself to be living in conditions of natural liberty?

[47] *Leviathan*, II, p. 518.

[48] Edward Hyde, *A brief view and survey of the dangerous and pernicious errors to church and state, in Mr. Hobbes's book, entitled Leviathan* (Oxford, 1676), p. 90.

[49] Arash Abizadeh has argued that authority and territory are not intrinsically linked in Hobbes's theory of proprietary sovereignty. See Arash Abizadeh, 'Sovereign jurisdiction, territorial rights, and membership in Hobbes', in Martinich and Hoekstra, eds., *The Oxford handbook of Hobbes*.

[50] *Leviathan*, II, p. 194.

[51] Ibid., III, p. 708.

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We should see Hobbes's state of nature not as an historical setting antecedent to civilization's rise, nor as a rationalist thought experiment, but as omnipresently impinging on the moral order of the state, and in *extremis* collapsing the *civitas* into a multitude lacking common purpose. The state of nature cannot be understood without reckoning with that other limit concept, undivided sovereignty. Carl Schmitt remarked that '[t]he sovereign representative person is only the soul of the "huge man" state'.[52] Quentin Skinner has added that this soul is 'the *anima* that serves to unify and hence to animate the disunited members of the multitude by speaking and acting in their name'.[53] Just as Charles's soul left his body when he died, the soul of sovereignty had around the time of regicide departed the body politic, leaving behind no ready gateway through which it might re-enter.

Charles's downfall liberated Hobbes to rely on his own discretion and resources, and consequently he acquired freedoms that the king had perhaps imprudently restricted. As I show in the third section, among these was the liberty to put forth his vehement anticlericalism. Hobbes believed that human conflict relates to 'the war of the pens' no less than it does to that of 'the sword'.[54] In *Leviathan*, Hobbes could do battle against any foes whom he ascertained jeopardized the people's safety and inhibited the re-establishment of lasting order. Because there was no longer any English sovereign commanding his obedience, his choice of weaponry was unconstrained in that battle by legal bounds.

This does not mean that *Leviathan* is lacking in dramatic irony or sly rhetoric (it most certainly is not),[55] but that Hobbes's duties at the time of writing comprised only those derived from prudence and natural law. We should not take the argument of that sophisticated text *prima facie*. We *should* work to understand the exact character of its author's constraints, which from Hobbes's theoretical perspective had been transformed by the death of the sovereign-representative. Hobbes was thrown back on his private opinions and rhetorical resources, no longer able to derive protection from a monarch who no longer *was*, and thus liberated to perform a range of linguistic actions.

This interpretation helps explain the affective disjuncture between *De cive* and *Leviathan*. 'The central puzzle' about *Leviathan*'s religious chapters, Tuck observes, 'can be described as one about their emotional intensity'.[56] Why is *De cive* more restrained than *Leviathan*? It cannot be that Hobbes was then more bashful, willing as he was to defend opinions that, measured in friends and finances, proved terribly and predictably costly. Hobbes listed the following

[52] Carl Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the state theory of Thomas Hobbes: meaning and failure of a political symbol* (Chicago, IL, 2008), p. 34.

[53] Quentin Skinner, *Hobbes and republican liberty* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 290.

[54] *DC*, p. 5.

[55] See e.g. David Johnston, *The rhetoric of Leviathan* (Princeton, NJ, 1986); and Quentin Skinner, *Reason and rhetoric in the philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge, 1997).

[56] Tuck, 'The civil religion of Thomas Hobbes', p. 132.

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groups whom he expected his book to offend: 'Churchmen', 'Sectarians', 'lawyers', 'those whose project this book opposes, and those whose sensibilities are invariably offended by any difference of opinion whatsoever'.[57] Expanding this group even further, Hobbes later remarked that *De cive* contained 'a political theory which offends the opinions of almost everyone'.[58] Hobbes was, however, prohibitively concerned that certain of his arguments might upon publication present a danger to civil order. In the preface to the second edition, Hobbes revealed that he 'refused to allow what I had written to be made public immediately, and took the trouble to distribute to friends a few privately printed copies, so that after testing other people's reactions, I might correct, soften and explain anything that seemed erroneous, harsh or obscure'.[59]

It was not an aversion to controversy that prompted Hobbes privately to test *De cive*'s arguments. Few thinkers in Hobbes's time (or ours) felt fully comfortable with his unvarnished absolutism or apophatic theology, and so neither will it do to declare that he was in any meaningful sense an 'opportunist'. Rather, Hobbes was unwilling to put forth publicly any opinions that might weaken the commonwealth, and so he confined himself to what was permitted of him as a conscientious subject-citizen. We should be mindful that Hobbes initially circulated both *The elements* and (in Latin) *De cive* among his personal associates, and refrained from publishing *Behemoth* after failing to secure Charles's endorsement. By contrast, Hobbes widely published *Leviathan* in English out of a London publishing house, even as his most trusted acquaintances expressed justified concern about its argument. While it is expected of scholars to account for Hobbes's decision to present that text to a predictably displeased Charles II, what is more remarkable is that he went on to publish it anyway.

Harold Love has shown that Hobbes's earlier preference for manuscript composition and distribution served as 'a means by which ideologically charged texts could be distributed through the governing class…without their coming to the knowledge of the governed'.[60] For Hobbes, that method of distribution served more accurately to circulate manuscripts among a circle of friendly intellectuals without revealing their arguments to the wider citizenry. Baumgold highlighted that Hobbes 'seems to have drawn a modern distinction between manuscript and print production, and counted only the later [sic] as publication'.[61] These details are significant because Hobbes believed 'it is utterly essential to the common peace that certain opinions or doctrines not be put before the citizens'.[62] For an author who regarded himself not as a 'partisan' but as

[57] *DC*, p. 15.
[58] Thomas Hobbes, *Correspondence*, I: *1622–1659*, ed. Noel Malcolm (Oxford, 1998), pp. 157–8.
[59] *DC*, p. 14.
[60] Harold Love, *Scribal publication in seventeenth-century England* (Oxford, 1993), p. 177.
[61] Baumgold, 'The difficulties of Hobbes interpretation', p. 839.
[62] *DC*, p. 80.

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'one who has a passion for peace', this conception of the tight connection between antagonistic discourse and imminent war entailed the duty not to delegitimize the sovereign in speech, nor tolerate those who did.[63] It seems likely based on the publication histories of these earlier works, Hobbes's theory of obligation, and hermeneutic respect for Hobbes as a subject-citizen acting during the English Civil War, that he was unwilling at that time to publish too widely his provocative political treatises until after 'privately' measuring their civic integrity.

By contrast, Hobbes conceded of *Leviathan* that he 'know[s] not how the world will receive it, nor how it may reflect on those that shall seem to favour it', indicating a conspicuous absence of writerly caution.[64] Though he was sixty-three years old, *Leviathan* was Hobbes's first political work that he had widely published in his compatriots' vernacular, good evidence that he hoped it would find a wide English audience. This is remarkable given its controversial content, which dedicated royalists regarded as an unacceptable *volte face*.[65] To those who found *Leviathan*'s arguments troubling, Hobbes allowed them simply to declare him 'a man that love my own opinions, and think all true I say'.[66] His 'own opinions' were precisely those he was newly liberated to publish.

In sum, the composition of *De cive* unfolded against the backdrop of a constituted *civitas*, which demanded from Hobbes public deference to its policies. But that vessel soon would shatter, the soul of sovereignty would spill out, and Thomas Hobbes would transpose from a subject contained within the walls of civil law to a freely moving purveyor of provocative – and dangerous – opinions.

III

In this section, I relate the intertextual disparity highlighted in the introduction to the contrasting character of Hobbes before and after regicide, which I elaborated in the second section. I have established that English laws bound Hobbes before the regicide, though not after. But what precisely was required by those artificial chains – and what opinions did they shackle?

As overviewed in the first section, *De cive*'s aberrational episcopalianism, though it denuded the clergy of meaningful authority, was sufficiently proximate to Anglicanism to be puzzling. This ecclesiology stood in theoretical tension with the text's absolutism, and was tactically indefensible given the discord wrought by Caroline Laudianism. But Hobbes's argument may have *in practice* been aligned with his fundamental principle that acknowledging sovereign pronouncements was an incontrovertible duty of subjects. In *De cive*, Hobbes declined to do battle against a clerical order that he would later unreservedly

[63] Ibid., p. 15.
[64] *Leviathan*, II, p. 4.
[65] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Tuck, p. x.
[66] *Leviathan*, II, p. 6.

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excoriate. One possible explanation is that he forbore from doing so out of deference to the public person of the state.

Throughout his more orderly reign, James had skilfully preserved clerical rule, delegating moderate powers to Anglican ecclesiastics while more or less respecting his kingdom's entrenched Presbyterianism. Upon succeeding to the throne, his son would handle these matters with much less tact, inciting controversy in Scotland that proved devastating to the crown's authority in England. The conflicts that would directly fan the flames of war thus related significantly to liturgical disputes, and Charles and Laud invited derision for their imposition of a highly formalistic church order, scandalously 'popish' in the minds of their detractors. What we should recognize is that these were ecclesiological preferences that Hobbes, on both prudential and theoretical grounds, likely always abhorred, but did not yet aim in his publications to undermine explicitly.

If it is puzzling that *De cive* deferred to 'ecclesiastics', we should consider that its author's king was idiosyncratically captivated by clerical rule. Charles's own ecclesiology thus may have constituted a legal constraint on Hobbes's public theorizing. Hobbes later defended himself in the third person against accusations of atheism on precisely these grounds, explaining he held 'Religion to be a Law', and thus did he 'condemn the maintenance of any of his Opinions against the Law', '*for he submitted to the Laws, that is to say, to the King's Doctrine*'.[67]

A Hobbesian sovereign rules by legal precepts when they are 'promulgated clearly, so that there can be no excuse for ignorance'.[68] In 1628, Charles prefixed a declaration to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, reaffirming their legal status. The Articles put a distance between Catholicism and Anglicanism while defending against Puritan attacks. Charles reiterated the necessity, on pain of execution, of treating the Articles as literal, proclaiming that they 'do contain the true Doctrine of the Church of England agreeable to God's Word' and that

> no man hereafter shall either print, or preach, to draw the Article aside any way, but shall submit to it in the plain and full meaning thereof: and shall not put his own sense or comment to the meaning of the Article, but shall take it in the literal and grammatical sense.

Of utmost importance to the king was that where controversies over scripture arose, 'the Clergy in their Convocation is to order and settle them'. The Declaration warned that no 'publick reader' in the universities 'shall affix any new sense to any Article, or shall publickly read, determine, or hold any publick Disputation, or suffer any such to be held either way' or 'print any thing either way, other than is already established in Convocation with

[67] My italics. *EW*, p. 425.
[68] *DC*, p. 172.

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our Royal Assent'. Hobbes's absolutism could theoretically have allowed acceptance of this precept, with the caveat that Charles had arbitrarily gifted to the clergy a de facto religious authority. But the Articles explicitly disclaimed this principle, denying that 'Princes' *qua* civil sovereigns had ever been given 'the ministering either of God's Word, or the Sacraments'.

Thus was *De cive*'s legal-institutional context, wherein Hobbes assented to Anglican principles even as he otherwise articulated the perspective of an earnest Erastian. Hobbes was willing to contradict himself philosophically so as to avoid falling into more deeply entangling self-contradictions as a subject-citizen. Had Hobbes instead attacked these principles, he would thereby have undermined those arrangements that he had authored as a party to the civil covenant. In the *Critique du de mundo de Thomas White*, written in 1643, Hobbes emphasized that 'it must not be thought that the articles of faith are [philosophical] problems; they are laws, and it is inequitable for a private individual to interpret them otherwise than as they are formulated'.[69] Hobbes was unwilling to attack publicly the very authorities that he likely believed the king had unwisely empowered, unpopular ministers who emboldened the sovereign's enemies and diminished his glory. Hobbes knew his place, as he always did, and it was never a subject's place to second-guess His Majesty. Rather, it was the duty of all subject-citizens to help preserve the peace by defending the king.

Even a cursory glance over the table of contents corroborates that Hobbes felt himself liberated to expand vastly his treatment of religious issues in *Leviathan*. But it may seem a step too far to portray Hobbes as having been 'shackled' in the early 1640s. *De cive* too had offended religious authorities.[70] The reaction to *Leviathan*, however, was even more incensed. Hobbes did wisely take the advice of his friend the chaplain Payne, tempering the ferocity of his assaults on Anglican bishops (and later regretting that he had 'suffered the Clergy of the Church of England to escape'),[71] but the logic of Hobbes's new arguments against Bellarmine plainly extended to cover reformed clerical orders.[72] And *Leviathan* did single the English bishops out with great drama, declaring that they 'sliely slip off the Collar of their Civill Subjection, contrary to the unity and defence of the Common-wealth'.[73]

The contemporary reaction attests to *Leviathan*'s intensified anticlericalism. In a letter to the former bishop Matthew Wren, Henry Hammond famously labelled the work 'a farrago of Christian atheism'. Edward Hyde, Hobbes's former friend, evidently considered the new book sufficiently anti-royalist to

[69] Quoted in Tuck, 'The civil religion of Thomas Hobbes', p. 126.

[70] Jeffrey Collins, 'Thomas Hobbes, "father of atheists"', in Wayne Hudson, Diego Lucci, and Jeffrey R. Wigelsworth, eds., *Atheism and deism revalued: heterodox religious identities in Britain, 1650–1800* (Farnham, 2014), pp. 25–44.

[71] Quoted in *Leviathan*, I, p. 37

[72] See Patricia Springborg, 'Thomas Hobbes and Cardinal Bellarmine', *History of Political Thought*, 16 (1995), pp. 503–31.

[73] *Leviathan*, III, p. 854.

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advocate that Hobbes be 'punish'd in the highest degree, and with the most severe penalties'.[74] Hyde got his way, and Hobbes, a longtime courtier, was banished from Charles's orbit. Richard Steward inveighed from the pulpit against *Leviathan*'s secular argument that obedience was contingent on protection, a position which legitimized submission to the new, episcopacy-outlawing regime. In 1652, Marchamont Nedham reported in the *Mercurius Politicus* the insight of a well-connected royalist that Hobbes 'was rejected' from the court for being 'prejudicial to the Church'.[75] The theologian John Bramhall, Hobbes's old sparring partner (and first on John Aubrey's list of Hobbes's 'chief antagonists'),[76] was present in Paris at the time of Hobbes's castigation, and was likely involved in the conspiracy to oust Hobbes.[77] Overviewing sermons delivered after 1651, Timothy Raylor concluded that *Leviathan* 'was attacked at court as inimical to the royal interest by Anglican clerics'.[78]

After the Restoration, Hobbes defended *Leviathan*'s ecclesiology from attacks by re-emboldened Anglicans, sometimes by hand-waving away its anticlericalism. It is understandable that he felt the need to do so, considering the House of Commons had introduced a bill against 'atheistical' writings that condemned *Leviathan* by name. The ecclesiological differences between *De cive* and *Leviathan* may be less pronounced than some have argued, but they evidently mattered to the ecclesiastics and old royalists who first read them – and to Hobbes himself. It therefore seems likely that Hobbes's anticlericalism was, in the words of a most eminent scholar, 'clearly a fundamental motive force' for writing *Leviathan*.[79]

This interpretation addresses the historical problem that Hobbes composed *Leviathan* at all. It cannot be that Hobbes was merely aiming to ingratiate himself to the new republic. *Leviathan* is in some ways a monarchical treatise, purged of *De cive*'s latent democratic elements,[80] and boldly defensive of Charles against the rebels who deposed him – incomprehensible textual details if seen as a Cromwellian treatise. The composition of *Leviathan* is made all the more puzzling when one considers that Hobbes had recently published the textually similar *De cive*. Having already annotated that work, Hobbes declined when prompted in 1646 to revise further its re-release, sending 'just one page of corrections to typographical errors, and declaring that, otherwise, "I have nothing to add or subtract."'[81] Hobbes also declined to authorize both an English translation of *De cive* and a republication of the political parts of *The*

[74] Quoted in ibid., I, p. 96.
[75] Ibid., I, p. 99.
[76] Simon Webb, *Aubrey's brief lives: omnibus edition* (Langley, 2017), p. 160.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Timothy Raylor, 'The Anglican attack on Hobbes in Paris, 1651', *Historical Journal*, 53 (2010), p. 164.
[79] *Leviathan*, I, p. 87.
[80] *DC*, p. 96.
[81] Ibid., I, p. 2.

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elements, both of which had made a splash among the continental intelligentsia, even as he likely oversaw a French translation of *Leviathan* as quickly as he composed it. Additionally, *Leviathan*'s composition interrupted the final writing stages of the first volume of Hobbes's natural philosophy, *De corpore*, which his friends anxiously awaited, and to which Hobbes was intensely devoted. Why then did Hobbes hurriedly compose and swiftly publish another general theory of politics? Put simply, this was his fleeting moment to do so.

This argument improves upon Tuck's and Collins's respective readings that Hobbes's ideas reversed and allegiances evolved over time. This is most clearly seen if we turn again to the evidence of Hobbes's correspondence. Tuck is sensitive to Hobbes's legal context, but because he is entangled in the assumption of cognitive change he nevertheless poses the 'last question' about the presumed change in Hobbes's religious views: 'why did this happen?'[82] After parenthetically acknowledging that in the early 1640s Hobbes 'privately' voiced a disdain for Anglican principles that 'at the same time' he publicly endorsed, Tuck transitions to explaining Hobbes's 'change' in thinking between *De cive* and *Leviathan* by reference to his intellectual milieu.[83] It is curious that Tuck should assume Hobbes's mind changed even while acknowledging that Hobbes privately voiced trenchant criticisms of Anglicanism in the early 1640s, which he passed over in *De cive* and would publicly propound in *Leviathan*. We might instead adopt the opposite inquisitive mode, asking why Hobbes's published ecclesiology is apparently discontinuous, even as he was privately consistent on that topic.

Collins's revisionist history reconciles Hobbes's Erastianism with his support for Independency, generally but (Collins argues) erroneously regarded as uniformly hostile to magisterial control over civil religion.[84] 'If this study has a fulcrum point', Collins reports, 'it is the moment after the execution of Charles I, when Thomas Hobbes saw in Oliver Cromwell a scourge of the clergy and a champion of unified state power.'[85] As the Independents rose to power, Hobbes came to see them as the most likely faction capable of crushing the episcopacy. It was the very moment of regicide, in Collins's telling, when Hobbes transferred his allegiances.

Collins points most notably to the 1641 letter from Hobbes to the earl of Devonshire, wherein Hobbes 'expressed jarringly candid sympathy with the Long Parliament's efforts to dismantle the Laudian church'.[86] But instead of asking why Hobbes offered a comparatively less forceful critique of Laudianism in *De cive*, Collins uses the letter as evidence that the seeds of Hobbes's Erastianism had been growing since the early 1640s, finally

[82] Tuck, 'The "Christian atheism" of Thomas Hobbes', p. 129.
[83] Ibid., p. 130.
[84] See Jeffrey Collins, 'The church settlement of Oliver Cromwell', *History*, 87 (2002), pp. 18–40.
[85] Collins, *The allegiance of Thomas Hobbes*, p. 7.
[86] Ibid., p. 80.

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flowering around the time of regicide. Collins's argument is, like Tuck's, extremely illuminating, and in important respects undamaged by my own. But we should reflect further on the synchronic disparity between Hobbes's personal versus published views. Why was Hobbes privately – and alarmingly – anti-Laudian, even as he publicly sided with 'duly ordained ecclesiastics' on the very issue dividing Anglicans from Erastians? Collins plausibly dismisses *De cive*'s ostensible Anglicanism as aberrational. But the problematic disjunctures between textual part and whole, and between Hobbes's epistles and *De cive*, are more comprehensible if we recognize that Hobbes hewed to two rhetorical standards – one public, the other private – at that time.

Where Collins sees the moment of regicide as coincident with the culmination of Hobbes's political trajectory towards Erastianism, I see it as a liberating moment in light of Hobbesian theory. It was not that Hobbes for the first time fully agreed with parliament's Erastian faction, but that he was *thrown back* on an anticlericalism that he had previously maintained *in foro conscientiae*. Throughout the 1640s, Hobbes seems to have been a more radical defender of kingly power than even his sovereign, the king of England.[87]

If we acknowledge that pre-regicide Hobbes was duty-bound to forbear from criticizing Caroline-era clericalism, then the discontinuity between *De cive*'s convoluted ecclesiology and *Leviathan*'s straightforward Erastianism makes perfect sense, even without positing that Hobbes's principles intensified. The historical Hobbes more visibly emerges. The exegetical *explanandum* dissolves. Furthermore, one can sense in *De cive* a subterranean Erastianism, bubbling just beneath the surface of the text though never fully bursting through, as though this pugilist of the pen whose mind was always pressing forward was for reasons undisclosed here holding back. Consider the following passage, which disrupts Hobbes's discussion of more secular matters:

> [A]ll Princes believe that the kind of opinions people hold about God and the kind of worship they offer him are of the highest significance for their *eternal salvation*. On this assumption, one may question whether sovereigns and the ministers of sovereign power in a commonwealth (whoever they may be, whether one man or several) are not offending against the law of nature, if they do not ensure instruction in the doctrine and practice of the worship which they themselves believe is indispensable to the citizens' *eternal salvation*, or if they permit a contrary teaching or practice. It is evident that they are acting against conscience and, so far as they can, are intending the citizens' eternal damnation. For if that was not their intention, I do not see why (being sovereign and uncompellable) they would allow teachings and practices among their citizens which they believe will damn them. But we will leave this problem aside.[88]

[87] Hobbes similarly criticized Constantine, Charles's analogue, for conceding interpretive authority to Catholic Fathers. See Thomas Hobbes, *Historia ecclesiastica: critical edition, including text, translation, introduction, and notes*, ed. Patricia Springborg (Paris, 2008), p. 403.

[88] *DC*, p. 144.

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This is a knotted passage. After highlighting that nothing less than the eternal felicity of civil subjects may depend on the sovereign seizing control of religious doctrine and practice, Hobbes 'leave[s] this problem aside', inelegantly transitioning to less otherworldly concerns. When *De cive* returned to these questions of political theology, Hobbes defended the Anglican doctrines of apostolic succession and *jure divino* pastoral power, arguments profoundly incongruous with Hobbes's private opinions at the time, the general political attitude of that text, and the substance and tone of his later *Leviathan*. As this passage and Hobbes's correspondence suggest, I think there was much more in *De cive* than meets the reader's eye: Hobbes had already worked out the whole design of his impassioned anticlericalism, but was loathe to put forth those subversive opinions.

This historical exegesis thus emphasizes a rank ordering of Hobbes's political commitments. Hobbes had long believed that civil sovereigns should assert absolute authority over church governance, exerting an extensive power over religious vocabularies and sacraments. But that preference was subordinate to his commitment to acknowledging the king's sovereign judgements. For if the sovereign representative was himself an Anglican, so then was that great gladiator in the international arena – the fictive person of the state. But by the time Hobbes wrote *Leviathan*, matters had momentously altered. An oft-quoted passage from that work substantiates these points:

> But because this doctrine [that God's kingdom is an earthly commonwealth] (though proved out of places of Scripture not few, nor obscure) will appear to most men a novelty; I doe but propound it; maintaining nothing in this, or any other paradox of Religion; but attending the end of that dispute of the sword, concerning the Authority, (not yet amongst my Countrey-men decided,) by which all sorts of doctrine are to bee approved or rejected; and whose commands, both in speech, and writing, (whatsoever be the opinions of private men) must by all men, that mean to be protected by their Laws, be obeyed. For the points of doctrine concerning the Kingdome of God, have so great influence on the Kingdom of Man, as not to be determined, but by them, that under God have the Soveraign Power.[89]

We learn important details from this passage: that Hobbes felt himself to be putting forth controversial views on religion; that he did so in order to help resolve an ongoing civil war 'not yet amongst [his] Countrey-men decided'; that civil sovereigns are the rightful interpreters of all doctrines within their commonwealths; that regardless of their individual opinions subjects should defer to their sovereign (if there is one) on these matters; and that it was precisely the dispute concerning spiritual and temporal authority that at the time of *Leviathan*'s writing persisted unresolved. As I have argued, it was precisely this issue that Hobbes seems to have considered himself newly liberated to address candidly. He made use of this unique moment to propound his radical Erastianism, able at last to do so without violating his most cherished civic duties.

[89] *Leviathan*, III, p. 708.

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IV

In this article, I have sought to contribute to our growing understanding of the contextual character of Hobbes's political theory and partisan purposes. I have argued that we should take Hobbes more seriously as himself a subject-citizen self-consciously bound (until not) to the civil laws of England. I am not suggesting that Hobbes spoke the unblemished truth for its own sake in *Leviathan*, and lied under duress in *De cive*. Hobbes's *telos* as the author of *De cive* was to protect his sovereign. As the author of *Leviathan*, his aim was to help fashion order, and to that end he was newly liberated to lay out religion's proper place in his theory of undivided sovereignty. In both instances, he acted on the basis of a will towards peace. Interpreting Hobbes in this way carries the benefit of acknowledging that he did not likely exempt himself from his own demanding theory of obligation, and helps us draw out the theoretical significance of key events and contextual details.

In the conclusion to *Leviathan*, Hobbes observed that he had offered 'some new Doctrines' which 'in a State where the contrary were already fully determined' would be 'a fault for a Subject without leave to divulge, as being an usurpation of the place of a Teacher'.[90] Robert Payne had privately warned Hobbes, upon learning of those innovations, that there was a time to expound the truth and a time to hide it, and that the post-regicidal period was a time for the latter.[91] Hobbes must have thought his friend was only half right. Addressing why he felt newly justified to offer these arguments, Hobbes explained that 'in this time, that men call not onely for Peace, but also for Truth' he could rightly 'offer such Doctrine as I think True, and that manifestly tend to Peace and Loyalty'.[92] He was, he famously went on to say, offering 'New Wine, to bee put into New Cask, that both may be preserved together'.[93] That old Anglican wine had corroded the vessel of the state.[94] It was now time to prepare a wine better suited to the commonwealth to come.[95]

There are some important implications for Hobbes studies if the central thesis of this article is correct, for there are other developments in Hobbes's theory worth reflecting on. The argument advanced here might help us distinguish more generally between those inconsistencies resulting from intellectual development and those best explained by the collapse of royal sovereignty. It is notable that the first article of the Church of England mandates orthodox trinitarianism, and that *Leviathan*'s theory of the trinity is both new and utterly

[90] Ibid., III, p. 1139.
[91] Tuck, 'The "Christian atheism" of Thomas Hobbes', pp. 112–13.
[92] *Leviathan*, III, p. 1139.
[93] Ibid., III, p. 1139.
[94] Hobbes elsewhere used the metaphor of vessels containing faith. See Hobbes, *Historia ecclesiastica: critical edition, including text, translation, introduction, and notes*, ed. Springborg, p. 403.
[95] For an essay on Hobbes's hopes to craft a Christianity conducive to commonwealths, see Sarah Mortimer, 'Christianity and civil religion in Hobbes's *Leviathan*', in Martinich and Hoekstra, eds., *The Oxford handbook of Hobbes*, pp. 501–19.

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bizarre.[96] This perplexing innovation (Moses the father, Jesus the son, and apostles the Holy Ghost) owes much to that work's new theory of personation, and is utterly absent from earlier writings, and so was likely just an instance of Hobbes improving his arguments. Alternatively, he may have long held such views on the subject, but kept them private before the regicide.

The Articles also set forth an explicit doctrine of substance dualism. *Leviathan* rejects that view, denying the very coherence of non-material beings (leaving one to ponder the ontological status, indeed metaphysical possibility, of God). As we have seen, *Leviathan*'s monism played a foundational role for its Erastianism, since by denying the ontological distinction between body and soul Hobbes could more persuasively eviscerate the political divisibility of temporal and spiritual powers. *Leviathan*'s unapologetic materialism also equipped Hobbes to reject orthodox conceptions of heaven and hell, where immaterial souls were thought to reside eternally, and which frightened civil subjects into submission to the clergy. Might Hobbes have deliberately downplayed this central feature of his metaphysics prior to the regicide?

This article seriously reaffirms the exegetical importance of alterations to Hobbes's juridical character over time. While I have homed in on the regicide to mark periods before and after the collapse of royal sovereignty, there are other temporalities worth demarcating. When Hobbes defended *Leviathan* after the Restoration, he must have felt himself to be in an impossible rhetorical position. Looking back on that great work, it was his task to defend a plainly anticlerical argument while conforming to the restored religious settlement. In general, scholars have been attuned to this biographical detail. But by better understanding the motivations of Hobbes's conformity, which stemmed from his sense of civic duty, we can avoid related explanations (e.g. self-regarding 'opportunism') that fail to account for Hobbes's concomitant willingness to generate controversy and hurl invective at powerful enemies.

Of course, many scholars have already helpfully illuminated the differences between *De cive* and *Leviathan*, relating Hobbes's theoretical evolution to his method of composition, tumultuous context, and intellectual biography. Their arguments are illuminating but incomplete. What I have argued here is that Hobbes's ecclesiology did not change because his mind did, but because the political world in which he acted and which he had hoped to help uphold was dissolved during that brief period of time that he composed his masterpiece.

[96] See Arash Abizadeh, 'Hobbes's conventionalist theology, the trinity, and God as an artificial person by fiction', *Historical Journal*, 60 (2017), pp. 915–41.

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