



a curadi

Alessandro Arienzo  
Gianfranco Borrelli

# ANGLO-AMERICAN FACES OF MACHIAVELLI

Machiavelli e machiavellismi nella  
cultura anglo-americana (secoli XVI-XX)

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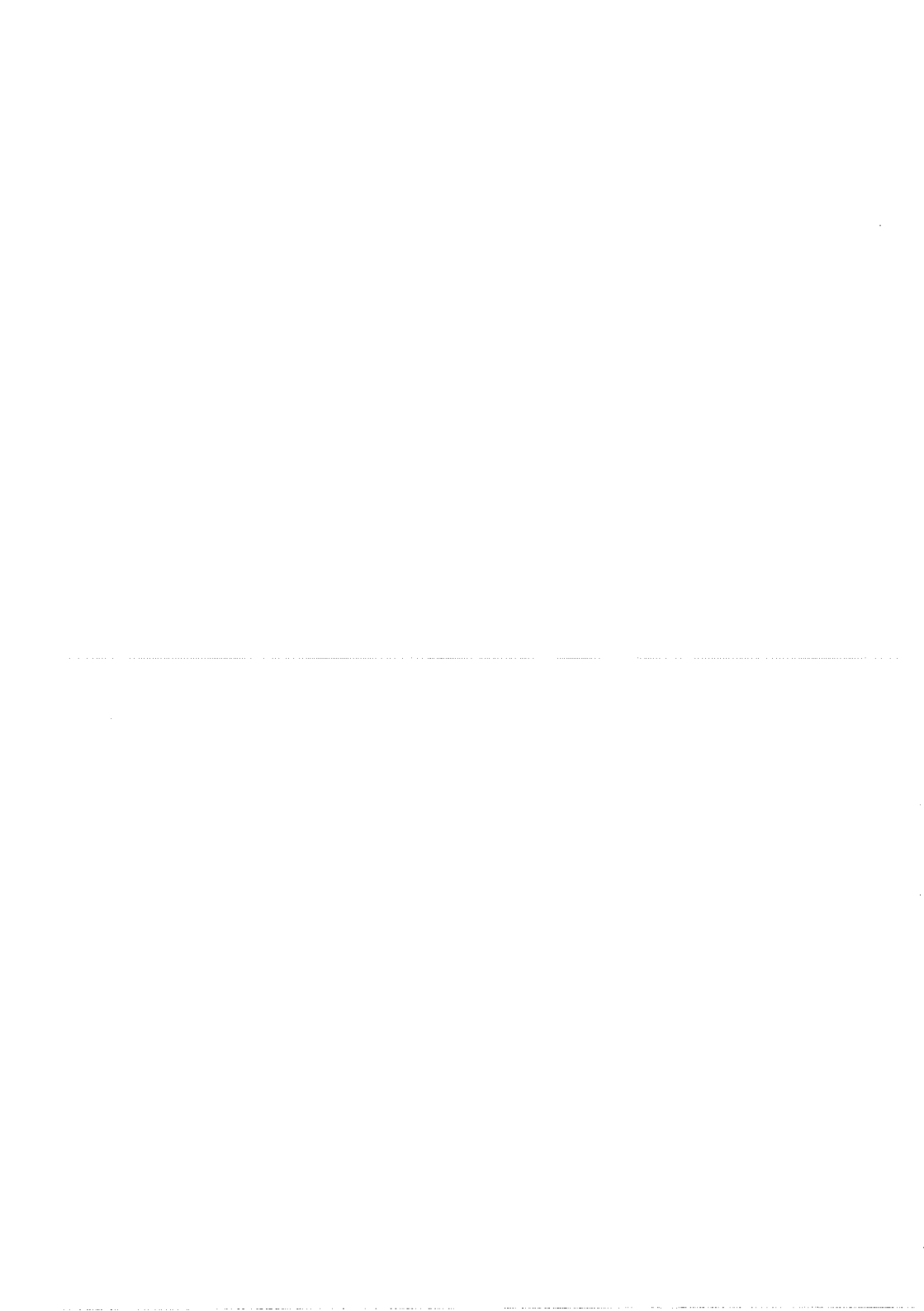
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# The Young Hobbes, the Myth of Rome, and Machiavelli

Daniela Coli

In the political works of Thomas Hobbes Rome is always present as a myth and a model. In *A Discourse of Rome*, which is one of the *Three Discourses* (1620), Hobbes represents Rome as a city marked by a “divine power”, which allowed a continuity of sovereignty throughout time and space, as it produced a system of political and military power during both the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire. Later it was a center of religious and political authority with the Catholic Church and the pope, who crowned the emperors of the Holy Roman Empire. In *Leviathan* (1651) Hobbes describes the papacy as the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire, sitting crowned upon the grave of the emperors and speaking Latin. He also praises Henry VIII and Elizabeth I who expelled the Roman Catholic Church’s representatives and “imported” into England the ancient Roman tradition under which the emperor appointed his own bishops.

In this essay I will show how Hobbes came to conceive this view of the Roman Catholic Church, which he presents in *Leviathan* only after the English civil war. I will explore how, during the reign of James I, Hobbes was cautious in his confrontations with Catholicism, even if the English sovereignty had already begun to display signs of an assimilation between state and religion, similar to that of the Roman emperors. In the “Discourse of Rome”, Hobbes’s explicitly declares that the Roman Catholic Church overturned the Roman Empire, after which the papacy took the place of the empire. Moreover, he compares Catholicism with the religion of Romans and

then the latter with the Church of England. For Hobbes, Roman religion was a national religion that was functional to the state, a model which he desired for England itself. Opposing Roman religion to Catholicism, Hobbes' intention is to draw a comparison between the ancient Romans and the English of his own time. In the "Discourse upon the beginning of Tacitus", Hobbes presents Augustus as the only solution capable of ending the Roman civil war, a kind of war already impending in England during the reign of James I. By examining the political and religious tensions of James's reign in relation to Hobbes' *Discourses*, I will emphasize that the young Hobbes shows a deep knowledge of Machiavellian critique of the Roman Catholic Church and he is influenced by the mythic vision of ancient Rome contained in Machiavelli's *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*. However unlike the Florentine thinker he is against the idea of a republic and in favor of an absolute monarchy.

## 1.

Rome's presence as a myth and model appears throughout Western history. The most famous example is that of the French Revolution and then of Napoleonic France which adopted symbols and styles of the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire. Roman history is also at the core of sixteenth and seventeenth-century England. During the reign of both Elizabeth I and James I, Seneca and Tacitus were two influential authors, even if James held that Tacitus did not merit the fame of a political sage. James was under the influence of Isaac Casaubon, and he thought that Tacitus offered a negative vision of political actions<sup>1</sup>. During the Tudor period, as a result of the influence from Machiavelli's works<sup>2</sup>, which were rooted in Roman

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<sup>1</sup> See J.H.M. Salmon, *Seneca and Tacitus in Jacobean England*, in L. Levy Peck (ed), *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1991, pp. 169-188. On the relationship between Isaac Casaubon and James I, see: W.B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1997, pp. 127-146, and G. Cozzi, *Paolo Sarpi tra Venezia e l'Europa*, Torino, Einaudi 1979.

<sup>2</sup> On the English diffusion and reception of Machiavelli's works, see: F. Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli. A Changing Interpretation. 1500-1700*, London,

history, knowledge of Roman history became widespread and led seventeenth-century England to think, according to Aubrey, that «reputation after death was a matter of the utmost concern, and though few of them went so far as Machiavelli in believing that fame was the only immortality of which the individual was capable, the desire for a good and lasting reputation was [...] general»<sup>3</sup>. In the “Discourse of Rome” Hobbes is full of admiration for ancient Rome and writes:

«[t]he ancient Statues of the Romans, do strangely immortalize their fame; and it is certain that the men of those times were infinitely ambitious, to have their memories in this kind, recorded; and such was the benignity of that people, that they willing yielded to honor their acts, by public expression, and in a kind, to Deify the persons of their worthiest men, which industry of theirs may be gathered by the number of Statues of Cicero, Seneca, Brutus, Cassius, the Horatii, and Curiatii, Cato, and many more, whose virtue, more than their greatness, made them famous. Otherwise if I had only seen the Statues of the most powerful men, and ancient Emperors, I should have thought there had been in those time as great Timeservers, as there be now, when power and authority is more esteemed of than virtue or valor. Yet I think, if ever men of any place, in any time desired to have their names and actions to continue to Posterity, not knowing any farther immortality, these were they, and this one consideration produced better effects of virtue and valor, than Religion, and all other respects do in our days. Certainly, therefore, if they had been as well instructed in Divine, as Moral precepts, no man of any age had ever exceeded them»<sup>4</sup>.

In the “Discourse of Rome” there is, firstly, an explicit declaration that the Catholic Church overturned the Roman Empire and the papacy took the power formerly held by the emperors. Secondly, Hobbes compares the religion of the Romans with Christianity, and lastly, he hints at the Church of England’s assimilation of a type of ancient Roman religion. Contrasting the pagans’ religion with that of

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Routledge & Kegan Paul 1964 and V. Kahn, *Machiavellian Rhetoric From Counter-Reformation to Milton*, Princeton, Princeton University Press 1994.

<sup>3</sup> O.L. Dick (ed), *Aubrey's Brief Lives*, London, Penguins 1987, p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> T. Hobbes, *A Discourse of Rome*, in N. B. Reynolds-A.W. Saxonhouse (ed) T. Hobbes, *Three Discourses*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press 1995, p. 81.

the Roman Catholic Church, Hobbes' intention is to consider the English of his time as similar to the ancient Romans. In *Leviathan* he writes that the Church of Rome is the continuation of the Roman Empire, from whose ruins it was born, a continuity represented by the use of the same language, Latin, and he comes to consider it as a system of hostile power. A passage from the 47<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Leviathan* makes this clear:

«And if a man consider the original of this great ecclesiastical dominion, he will easily perceive that the Papacy is no other than the *ghost* of the deceased *Roman Empire*, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof. For so did the Papacy start upon a sudden out of the ruins of that heathen power. The *language* also, which they use, both in the churches, and in their public acts, being Latin, which is not commonly used by any nation now in the world, what is but the *ghost* of the old *Roman language*?»<sup>5</sup>.

In 1996 Noel Malcolm was cautious about attributing the *Three Discourses* to Hobbes, even though he confirmed that the “Discourse upon the beginning of Tacitus” and the “Discourse of Laws” displayed themes, such as the preoccupation with the civil war, which are central in the theories developed in Hobbes's later works. With respect to the “Discourse of Rome”, Malcolm writes that he is a little surprised by Hobbes' description of Rome, because this type of account of the *Grand Tour* were traditionally exercises performed by the young aristocrats and not by their tutors. But the relationship between Hobbes and William Cavendish was not at all that of a young student and his tutor, as Malcolm explained in the well-known article *Hobbes, Sandys, and the Virginia Company*<sup>6</sup>. Their relationship was based on friendship and work, with Cavendish having already been elected to the 1614 Parliament and Hobbes being his secretary, in addition to their being shareholders of the Virginia Company, which was to be completely dissolved in 1624.

<sup>5</sup> T. Hobbes, *English Works*, first collected and edited by Sir William Molesworth, London, John Bohn 1939, III, pp. 697-698. *Second Reprints*, Scienza Verlag Aalen 1966, III, pp.697-698. From now *English Works* followed by the relative volume.

<sup>6</sup> See N. Malcolm, *A Summary Biography of Hobbes*, in T. Sorell (ed), *The Cambridge Companions to Hobbes*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1996, pp. 13-44, now in N. Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 2000, pp. 1-26, p. 7.



However, the Virginia Company crisis had already struck by 1621, when the Company criticized James's foreign policy in the Parliament, accusing him of providing unsuccessful military support to his Protestant son-in-law in Bohemia, the Palatine Elector Frederick V. As Malcolm notes, William Cavendish played an important role in the 1621 Parliament by circulating copies of the letters received by Fulgenzio Micanzio, which were translated into English by Hobbes, and in which James I's foreign policy was censured<sup>7</sup>. The letters' criticisms caused the King to protest against the Virginia Company's interference into England's foreign policy, which eventually caused the closure of Parliament. Moreover, as Malcolm explains, Hobbes did not like to speak of the first forty years of his life, because during Charles II's Restoration, Hobbes' actions under the reign of James I could have been seen as partly responsible for the Virginia Company's affairs and for the involvement of some of its members in the Civil War. The three sons of Sandys, one of the leaders of the Virginia Company, had been military officials of the Parliament's army and one of the Company's important members had been responsible for the regicide of Charles I<sup>8</sup>. With respect to Hobbes' role within English politics and its relation to Roman history then, the "Discourse of Rome" is not merely a young student's description of Rome nor is it a travel diary, but an original reflection on the significance of Roman history and an attentive consideration of the State of the Church of Rome. In this *Discourse*, with respect to Catholic Rome, the author give us not only the narration of its history, architecture, and the internal workings of the churches and its various religious rites, but also an attentive estimation of the relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the English Catholics, who temporally stayed in the English College. It is clear that the controversies involving James I, Paul V and the Jesuit Bellarmino, the leader of Catholic theology, were intertwined in Hobbes's judgment of the Roman Catholic Church. After the Gunpowder plot of 1605 and the promulgation of the *Oath of Allegiance* in 1606 on the part of James I, and the pope's response which invited the English Catholics to

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<sup>7</sup> See N. Malcolm, *Hobbes, Sandys, and the Virginia Company*, "The Historical Journal", 24, 1981, pp. 297-321, pp. 314-513.

<sup>8</sup> See *Ibidem*, p. 301.

deny the oath, tensions between Catholics and Protestants intensified. Hobbes, a good anti-papist Englishman, alludes to these tensions in the “Discourse of Rome”, with his account of how the Catholic Church was born from the ruins of the Roman Empire, a claim which suggests that it acquired illegitimate power with the Donation of Constantine and the dissolution the emperors’ control. This theory of the Catholic Church’s usurpation of the Roman power was recalled by Lorenzo Valla and his *De falso credita et ementita Constantini donatione* of 1440 had great success in the Protestant world. It was used again by Pierre Du Moulin (“The Papal monarchy was born from the ruins of Roman Empire”) in *Monarchia temporali pontificis Romani*, published as a reply to Bellarmino in 1614, with a dedication to James I. A copy of this book was kept in the Cavendish library, as reported by Johann P. Sommerville<sup>9</sup>. Hobbes will return to this theory in the forty-seventh chapter of *Leviathan* and, according to Sommerville, he did not really say anything very new, if compared to the learned defenders of James, who had returned to the Bible to demonstrate that God never granted the priests or the pope control over sovereign rule<sup>10</sup>. However, Hobbes’ argument of the necessity to abolish the pope’s authority within the affairs of the state could be an extrapolation from Machiavellian theory. Felix Raab observes that Tudor political thought was just beginning to take shape and he shows how Machiavelli was widely read in sixteenth-century England without particularly sophisticated theoretical perspectives: Machiavellian thought was therefore considered to be a useful tool by any ideological perspective<sup>11</sup>. Raab quotes a letter written by Lord Morley to Thomas Cromwell in 1537 who, referring to Machiavelli, discusses what little devotion the Florentines showed to the pope: «Show the very words to the King; his Majesty shall be pleased to see them. I have noted in the margin anything concerning the bishop of Rome. This book of Machiavelli, *de Principe*, is

<sup>9</sup> See J.P. Sommerville, *Thomas Hobbes: Political Ideas in Historical Context*, London, MacMillan 1992, p. 114.

<sup>10</sup> See *Ibidem*, p. 115

<sup>11</sup> See F. Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli*, pp. 8-29. On the English use of Machiavelli’s works, see also V. Kahn, *Machiavellian Rhetoric*, p. 107, where she wrote «Like Gardiner, Raleigh and Bacon realized that Machiavelli offered a rhetoric of political power, one that can be used pro and contra absolute rule, religious belief, or republicanism».

surely a good thing for your Lordship and for our Sovereign Lord in Council»<sup>12</sup>. James I invited many scholars from the Continent to help him in his theological and political controversies; one of these was Isaac Casaubon who arrived in London in 1610 and died in 1614. Also Du Moulin lived in England from 1588 to 1592, having been a student at Cambridge where attended the courses of the theologian William Whitaker and then taught at Leiden where Grotius was among his students. Du Moulin served as James's French correspondent and having supported the Oath of Allegiance, defended the English King against the French Dominican Nicolas Coeffeteau. After the death of Henry IV, Du Moulin returned to England: he was one of the best controversialists of the epoch and criticized both Catholic and Protestant theologians<sup>13</sup>. It cannot go unnoticed that in January of 1614 the papal nuncio in Paris, Cardinal Roberto Ubaldini, wrote to the Cardinal Scipione Borghese, the nephew of Paul V, expressing James 's desire for a general council with the participation of the Catholic bishops, with the purpose of reuniting Christianity<sup>14</sup>. When we analyze the successive activity of James we notice that he supports Du Moulin in the preparation of the Tonneins Synod (from May 2<sup>nd</sup> to June 3<sup>rd</sup> in 1614) and the Dordrecht Synod (from November 1618 to May 1619), which ended with the triumph of the Arminians. Dordrecht ended with the defeat of the Gomarists who were decapitated as Oldenbarnevelt or imprisoned as Grozio. This greatly upsetted Marcantonio De Dominis<sup>15</sup>. We realize how much Hugh Trevor-Roper was right when he maintained that behind the irenic plans and the ecumenism of James, the Church of England desired to become a third force and compete both with the Roman Catholic Church and with the International Calvinist<sup>16</sup>. However, Patterson<sup>17</sup>, criticizes Trevor-Roper's thesis, maintaining that James desired to resolve the

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<sup>12</sup> F. Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli*, p. 49.

<sup>13</sup> See W. B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom*, p. 158.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 146.

<sup>15</sup> See E. Belligni, *Auctoritas e Potestas. Marcantonio De Dominis fra l'Inquisizione e Giacomo I*, Milano, Franco Angeli 2003, p. 236.

<sup>16</sup> See H. Trevor-Roper, *Anglicans and Puritans: Seventeenth Century*, London, Secker & Warburg 1987, p. IX.

<sup>17</sup> See W.B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom*, pp. 153-154.

Protestants' religious and political dispute not to compete with the International Calvinist and the Catholic Church of Rome, but rather to include Calvinism and the Roman Church into a larger union. Despite Patterson's criticism of Trevor-Roper's view, however, the two theses do not necessarily exclude one another. James was the King of Scotland and the Protestant son of a martyred Catholic queen. Therefore, when he took the English crown, he brought hope to both the Protestants and the Catholics for a reunion of Christianity. Certainly, as Trevor-Roper claims, James played the role of a third force in order to appear the protagonist and if he had succeeded in his plan of becoming the representative of the reformed churches and had obtained a reconciliation with the pope, it is evident that the political weight of the English monarch and of Great Britain would have increased remarkably. In fact, in the "Discourse of Rome", while criticizing Catholicism from his anti-papist perspective and confirming a necessary subordination of religion to sovereignty, Hobbes does not present a radical hostility in his confrontation with the Catholic Church, because in 1620 James I desired a reconciliation with the Church of Rome. In 1620 Hobbes did not yet view the Catholic Church as the enemy he presents in *Leviathan* in 1651. Rather, he saw in Catholicism a mighty political power with which it was necessary to come to a reciprocal acceptance and to find a form of political cohabitation – a perspective that he will sustain again during his visit in Rome in the 1630s<sup>18</sup>. In 1620, however, the Jacobean aim to establish a reformed European Church had already encountered some difficulties. If the Tonneins Synod, where James I did his best to resolve the dispute between Du Moulin and Tilenus, ended with some hope for the expulsion from the Protestant heart of the extremists, that of Dordrecht (1618-1619) concluded negatively

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<sup>18</sup> «When Milton and Hobbes visited Rome in the '30», Edward Chaney writes in *The evolution of the Grand Tour. Anglo-Italian Relations Since the Renaissance*, London, Frank Class, 1998 pp. XI-XII, «even if they were Protestant and skeptic, they became familiar with the uses and traditions of that sophisticated society. They accepted invites to academic ceremonies, lunched with the Jesuits of the English College or attended concerts, which were organized by Cardinal Barberini». See also H. Foley (ed) *Record of the Society of Jesus. The Diary of the English College*, London, Burns and Oates 1880, *First Reprints*, Johnson Reprints Corporation, New York, London 1966, vol. VI, p. 593, Hobbes also launched in 1636 with the Earl of Devonshire in the refectory of the English College in Rome.

for the Jacobean hopes of a victory of the moderates. For the wretched band of Arminians in the Netherlands and for James I, who since 1618 had already begun to think of the Spanish marriage for the future Charles I, the triumph of the Gomarists was a setback. At this point, in the Jacobean court there were rumors of an alliance between the Duke of Savoia and the Venetian Republic, and Marcantonio De Dominis, perhaps the source of the indiscretion<sup>19</sup>, entered into the scene. In the Summer 1619 John Bill, the publisher of the king, published the *Istoria del concilio tridentino* by Paolo Sarpi, with a dedication from De Dominis to King James. According to Eleonora Belligni, the introduction of De Dominis to Sarpi's *Istoria* was embarrassing and dangerous for Sarpi in that it constructed «the most severe punishment for the hostility against the Arminians that the author [Paolo Sarpi] together with his religious brother, Micanzio, had demonstrated since the times preceding the council»<sup>20</sup>. The *Istoria* «was transformed into a political instrument that could become a mortal trap for the failing Venetian Republic»<sup>21</sup>. However, after the Dordrecht Synod, for James the dialogue with the Church of Rome became very important. It is in this context that the "Discourse of Rome" comes to be read. Thus it is not possible to ignore the care with which Hobbes named some cardinals well known in England. One of them was Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggio, praised by Hobbes for the magnificence of his beautiful palace, full of ancient statues and paintings of the greatest artists, which was given him by Henry VIII. Another was Cardinal Bandini, who had a beautiful garden «by the Noviceship of Jesuits, towards Santa Maggiore, [had] Statues and Fountains in it, and [was] all vaulted, the better to take the fresh air in the heat of Summer»<sup>22</sup>. The Cardinal Campeggio, who died in 1539 and was a member of the commission that excommunicated the English sovereign in 1553, was the papal ambassador and messenger sent to London by Clement VII to discuss Henry VIII's request of annulling his marriage with Catherine of Aragon. Meanwhile, Cardinal Ottavio Bandini, having been part of a papal commission on the relationships with James I in 1605,

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<sup>19</sup> See E. Belligni, *Auctoritas e Potestas*, p. 236.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 237.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 240.

<sup>22</sup> T. Hobbes, *A Discourse of Rome*, p. 89.

participated to the diplomatic negotiations for the papal dispensation needed for the prearranged marriage of Charles of Galles with the Spanish princess Maria Anna in the period in which *Three Discourses* were published. To underline the manifestation of Hobbes' esteem for Cardinal Roberto Bellarmino, the refined Jesuit theologian and adversary of James I on many issues, we can underline that in the "Discourse of Rome" he is presented as the only possible reformer of the Catholic Church and possibly an interlocutor of James in the much hoped for pacifying council of Christianity, which was certainly thought of again in 1620, when the Spanish marriage seemed the most likely instrument to resolve the main problems of the international political situation.

## 2.

As the author of the *Basilikon Doron* (1599), James I did not, however, have any intention of becoming a new Charlemagne or of founding a new Holy Roman Empire. He was convinced that his position as king and head of the English Church was derived directly from the will of Good, and therefore his project was to place religion at the service of the state and not vice versa. Accordingly, James had to face the resistance of the Catholic theorists, but his major problems came from the Presbyterians and the Parliament. Originally, for Hobbes the Catholics were a minority and therefore did not constitute a threat for England. In *Behemoth*, published in 1679 but written ten years earlier, referring to the Catholics during the reign of James, Hobbes writes: «But though the Romish Religion were now cast out by the law, yet there were abundance of people, and many of the nobility, that still retained the religion of their ancestors, who as they were not much molested in points of conscience, so they were not by their own inclination very troublesome to the civil government»<sup>23</sup>. For Hobbes, the Catholics were only to become a threat through the works of the Jesuits, as happened with the Gunpowder plot: «but by the secret practice of the Jesuits and other emissaries of the Roman Church, they were made less quiet than they ought to have been; and some of them to venture on the most horrid act that even had been

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<sup>23</sup> *English Works*, VI, pp. 188-189.

heard of before, I mean the Gunpowder treason»<sup>24</sup>. When Hobbes wrote the “Discourse of Rome”, contrary to the period in which he wrote *Behemoth*, the civil war and Charles I’s regicide had not yet occurred, and he never mentioned the Gunpowder event. Thus in his description of the English College in Rome, Hobbes notes that, «[t]here is their Colledge, and in the Church be the Tombs of Cardinal Allen, and Parsons»<sup>25</sup> and «upon the walls whereof be set forth in painting, the Martyrdoms (as they call it) of such as suffered persecution, and death, for their Religion in England. And in this, now amongst the rest are Campion, and Garnet, and the Hangman, and Tyborne, as perfectly described as if the were better acquainted with the place, and person»<sup>26</sup>.

Moreover, there is the «lately dead» Jesuit Rector, Father Owen<sup>27</sup>. Thomas Owen served as rector of the English College from 1610 to 1618<sup>28</sup>, succeeding Parsons who died while serving as rector in 1610. Parsons, together with William Allen, who died in Rome in 1594, had organized the Spanish invasion of the Invincible Armada into England in 1588, the same year of Hobbes’ birth. Edmund Campion, after refusing to abjure Catholicism was executed at Tyburn in 1581 and Nicholas Owen was tortured and killed in 1606 during the climax of the hunt for Catholics which followed the Gunpowder plot. Similarly, Thomas Garnet was also executed at Tyburn in 1607. It is significant that Hobbes refers to Campion, Owen, and Garnet as those who «suffered persecution in England» and named Parsons and Allen together without any sense of polemical tension. Parsons and Allen had been protagonists in the event that was difficult for Hobbes to forget: the Spanish attempt to invade England caused his premature birth on April 5, 1588, due to his mother’s fear upon hearing the news of the imminent arrival of

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 189.

<sup>25</sup> T. Hobbes, *A Discourse of Rome*, pp. 91.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>27</sup> See *Ibidem*, p. 192. Hobbes surely knew of his death in 1618, when he wrote or reviewed the “Discourse of Rome” published in 1620. For Hobbes’ travel to Italy see L. Levy Peck, *Hobbes on the Grand Tour: Paris, Venice or London?*, “Journal of the History of Ideas”, 5, 1966, pp. 177-183. For the date of the trip to Italy see N. Malcolm, *Thomas Hobbes. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, available online.

<sup>28</sup> See H. Foley (ed), *Records of the Society of Jesus. The Diary of the English College*, vol. VI, p. 24.

the Armada<sup>29</sup>. Hobbes' decision not to discuss Parsons and Allen's part in the attempted invasion of England is an indication that the *Three Discourses* were conceived from his desire to normalize the relations among the English king and the Church of Rome, as part of the greater project represented by the reconciling Spanish marriage. Moreover, Hobbes was an agnostic, not a fanatic religious man. In 1636, on the eve of the English civil war, he had lunch in the refectory of the English College in Rome with William Cavendish, the son of the deceased second Earl of Devonshire<sup>30</sup>, with Catholic friends and acquaintances, such as Sir Kenelm Digby (1603-1665), one of the first members of the Royal Society, whose father was executed because he was involved in the Gunpowder plot<sup>31</sup>. Springborg notes that Hobbes's humanism «placed him among courtiers and antiquarians for whom *arcana imperii* or state secrets were stock in trade, which in turn put him in the company of George Buchanan, Robert Parsons, William Barclay and Robert Bellarmine, as Filmer astutely observed»<sup>32</sup>. According to Springborg, Hobbes was fascinated with the Roman Empire and with the idea of the pope who came to sit upon the emperor's grave. He sought a "civil religion" with a function similar to that of Catholicism to found a state whose subjects' ears were glued to the lips of their sovereign ruler<sup>33</sup>. In the "Discourse of the beginning of Tacitus", Hobbes' fascination with Augustus, who ended the Roman civil wars, founded the Roman Empire, and established an age of peace, is quite evident. Similarly, James I showed an enchantment with the Roman Empire: he was the first English monarch who portrayed himself as a Roman emperor, crowned with a laurel wreath, on the coinage and medals of his coronation. Moreover, he took the title of 'Emperor of the

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<sup>29</sup> The Armada didn't leave Spain before may 1588, but it's also true that notices about an eventual Spanish invasion were in the air since December 1587 and it's possible to suppose that Hobbes' mother was afraid in the apocalyptic climate of England in spring 1588. On this episode see A.P. Martinich, *Hobbes. A Biography*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1999, pp. 1-2.

<sup>30</sup> See N. Malcolm, *Biographical Register*, in N. Malcolm (ed), *The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1997, vol. 2, p. 805.

<sup>31</sup> See *Ibidem*, pp. 828-832.

<sup>32</sup> P. Springborg, *Thomas Hobbes and Cardinal Bellarmine: Leviathan and 'the Ghost of the Roman Empire'*, "History of Political Thought", 16, 1995, pp. 503-531, p. 508.

<sup>33</sup> See *Ibidem*, p. 510.



British Isles<sup>34</sup>, and thus imagined himself as the emperor of a reconciled Christianity. Clearly, neither James, nor Hobbes were thinking of reconverting England to Catholicism. They desired a political treaty between the Church of Rome and the Church of England and a general unity of Christianity that would give the Church of England, which James I was the head of, religious control over Great Britain. In the "Discourse of Rome", Hobbes, thinking about the situation of England, returns to a discussion on the papacy's illegitimate seizure of power:

«The zeal of this [of Constantine], and some succeeding Emperors, was so well taken hold by the Prelates of Rome, that by degrees they assumed more authority to themselves than was due; the other in a manner before they were aware losing all at Rome but the title. From which pretended power, the Popes now take to themselves supremacy in all causes, through all Kingdoms in the world, and those which were before, their superiors, to be as it were subject, and created by them that were their creatures. Which shows a great contrariety to the pretended arguments of Romanists, for superiority, and rather may be returned upon them, that is their greatness has more risen by encroachment than right»<sup>35</sup>.

In *Leviathan* a frequent argument against Bellarmino is Hobbes' condemnation of Constantine's sudden deception by pope Silvestro I. Also in *Behemoth* he wrote about pope Silvestro I: «it was foul play, not only in a priest, but in any Christian»<sup>36</sup>. Hobbes explains how, after the barbaric invasions «the people of the city of Rome submitted themselves, as well in temporals as spirituals, to their bishops; and then first was the Pope a temporal prince, and stood no more in so great fear of the Emperors, which lived far off at Constantinople»<sup>37</sup>. Again in *Behemoth*, Hobbes reminds us that pope Zaccaria I dethroned Chilperic, king of France, and gave the crown to one of his subjects, Pipin, just as Charlemagne gave back authority on his occupied states in Lombardy to the Church of Rome: «Shortly after, the Lombards having recovered their estate,

<sup>34</sup> See L. Levy Peck, *An Introduction*, in ID (ed), *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, p. 5.

<sup>35</sup> T. Hobbes, *A Discourse of Rome*, p. 72.

<sup>36</sup> *English Works*, VI, p. 177.

<sup>37</sup> *English Works*, VI, p. 178.

Charles the Great retook it, and gave it to the Church again; and Pope Leo the Third made Charles Emperor»<sup>38</sup>. In the “Discourse of Rome” and in *Behemoth* Hobbes declares that the popes usurped a power not for themselves, but for the sovereigns that before Christianity were “episcopus” and had the authority of naming priests. Thus, in *Leviathan*, Hobbes emphasizes that “bishop” and “episcopus” signified “supervisor”. To further demonstrate how the Church of Rome was established upon the ruins of the Roman Empire, in the “Discourse of Rome” Hobbes, unlike the seventeenth-century French Catholic travelers<sup>39</sup>, underlines how the Roman Catholic churches were built over the pagan temples. This is the case of the Churches of Santa Agnese and Santa Costanza, which are described as ancient temples dedicated to Bacchus. On the contrary the mausoleum of Santa Costanza was built in the fourth century by Constance, daughter of Constantine, during a sojourn in Rome between 337 and 350 A.D. Constance had her own mausoleum erected in the hypogeal of the virgin Agnes, martyred during Diocletian’s persecutions between 303 and 313. When in 354 Constance died at Antiochia, her body was moved to the mausoleum she had built in Rome. Hobbes gives credit to a legend of the seventeenth-century that the mausoleum of Constance was originally a pagan temple, while in reality, as an architectural example of Christian assimilation to pagan traditions and perspectives, the basilica of Saint Constance is a masterpiece of Roman mosaic art<sup>40</sup>. Hobbes also suggested that the temple was completely buried and only recently discovered by the Catholics, when in reality Cardinal Alessandro de’ Medici (Leone XI) completed the excavation of Saint Constance in 1600 with an outline of the street that went from the church of Saint Agnes to the mausoleum. Moreover, Hobbes is attracted by obelisks carried to Rome from Egypt and Hobbes recounts to the English reader how one could see Saint Maria Maggiore and Saint Peter, claiming with complete conviction that the great bronze crown contained the ashes of Emperor Adrian. Hobbes was seduced by the ruins of the temples, the arches of

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>39</sup> See F. de Claveson, *Voyage d’Italie (1608-1609)*, Moncalieri, CIRVI 2001.

<sup>40</sup> See M. Schiavo, *Mausoleo di Santa Costanza: la Scoperta dei Valori Dinamici*, in B. Zevi, C. Benincasa, *Venti Monumenti Italiani*, Torino, Edizioni Seat 1984.

triumph, the columns, the obelisks, the Roman statues, but most of all by the fact that Rome eternalized its history in stone and from every angle of the city the onlooker could remember the courageous actions of its most famous men. The fascinating thing about Rome is that in the city's architecture we find the deeds recounted in history books:

«For every man knows, that if in reading an History (only by a Map) the place be observed as well as the action, one's judgment is better strengthened, and consequently much more when a man sees that which others have but by description. They that have read of Antoninus, Trajan, and Vespasian, and find their acts which they have read engraven in Arches, Pillars, and the like, it is hard to express what credit give to the History, and satisfaction to the Reader. And if in this respect, any place in the world deserve seeing, none can sooner claim it than Rome»<sup>41</sup>.

Like Machiavelli, Hobbes was enchanted by ancient Rome.

### 3.

For Hobbes, the English Catholics, although in general faithful to the king, constituted a possible "fifth column" that could be manipulated by the Jesuits, primarily through the practice of confession. Like Luther and Sarpi, Hobbes considered confession to be one of the Catholic Church's most dangerous and coercive instruments. The Council of Trent had made the auricular confession obligatory, while in Elizabethan England it was abolished under article XXV of the Thirty Nine Articles of 1563, like all of the sacraments except the Baptism and Eucharist<sup>42</sup>. Thus, the auricular confession was gradually disappearing in England, so that it was practiced only clandestinely by an elite community, introspective and devoted to their faith<sup>43</sup>. Hobbes' fear regarding a Jesuit plot and the astuteness

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<sup>41</sup> T. Hobbes, *A Discourse of Rome*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>42</sup> See R. Camerlingo, "Pestilent Speeches...Infected Ears": *le Confessioni di Amleto*, in D. Borgognoni, R. Camerlingo, *Le Scritture e le Riscritture. Discorso Religioso nella Prima Età Moderna*, Napoli, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane 2005, pp. 103-127, p. 109.

<sup>43</sup> See P. Marshall, *The Catholic Priesthood and the English Reformation*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1994, p. 33.

of the Jesuits in general was however typical of the culture of his time, influenced by the famous apocryphal book, the *Monita Privata*, circulated in the first half of the seventeenth century, which told of a great Jesuit plot and of the duplicity and the wickedness of this obscure enemy, eventually creating this ‘myth’ of the Jesuits<sup>44</sup>. Paolo Sarpi was obsessed with the Jesuits. In 1608 he wrote to Monsieur de l’Isle:

«The desire to penetrate a little into the mystery of the Jesuits is not an act of curiosity or vanity, but is the most helpful, in fact the most necessary action that I can undertake in this time. I foresee, rather I see them planning together, and I fear that finally we will put ourselves in combat against them, or more so, together we will come to partake in a European and civil war, and I am not without hope, that this anticipated diligence is not held in vain»<sup>45</sup>.

Some historians consider Paolo Sarpi the author of the *Monita Privata*<sup>46</sup> and even if they lack proofs to support their claims, Sarpi’s anti-Jesuit obsession is well-known<sup>47</sup>. Sarpi’s friend, Fulgenzio Micanzio, repeatedly asked king James to make a league against the papacy<sup>48</sup>. Hobbes was not as obsessed with the Jesuits as Sarpi was, and did not believe it was possible to defeat Rome. Rome would have been conquerable for Hobbes only if it was attacked by the Turks and abandoned by all Italian princes, the king of Spain, the king of France, and the emperor<sup>49</sup>.

Moreover, in 1620 Hobbes held that the English king could not allow the Church of Rome to apply its desired right of naming England’s bishops. On the other hand, however, Hobbes thought that the English Reform carried out by Henry VIII had found success specifically because «the common people [...] from a long

<sup>44</sup> See S. Pavone, *Le Astuzie dei Gesuiti. Le False Istruzioni Segrete della Compagnia di Gesù e la Polemica Antigesuitica nei Secoli XVII e XVII*, Roma, Salerno editrice 2000.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 234-235.

<sup>46</sup> V. Frajese, *Sarpi Scettico*, Bologna, Il Mulino 1993.

<sup>47</sup> See S. Pavone, *Le Astuzie dei Gesuiti. Le False Istruzioni Segrete della Compagnia di Gesù e la Polemica Antigesuitica nei Secoli XVII e XVIII*, pp. 235-241.

<sup>48</sup> See R. Ferrini, E. De Mas, *Fra Fulgenzio Micanzio, Lettere a William Cavendish (1615-1628) nella Versione Inglese di Thomas Hobbes*, Roma, Istituto Storico O.S.M. 1987.

<sup>49</sup> See T. Hobbes, *A Discourse of Rome*, p. 94.

custom had been in love with Parliaments»<sup>50</sup> and he considered the Presbyterians more dangerous than the Catholics. In *Behemoth*, Hobbes did not offer a positive judgment of the Reformation from a political point of view, because «this license of interpreting the Scripture was the cause of so many several sects, as have lain hid till the beginning of the late kings's reign and did then appear to the disturbance of the commonwealth»<sup>51</sup>. According to Hobbes, the Presbyterians created conflicts against Anglicanism and this situation produced a state of religious and political anarchy. In the former Catholic universities, the Presbyterians had taken:

«many gentlemen, that did no less desire a popular government in the civil state than these ministers [ Presbyterians] did in the church. And as these did in the pulpit draw the people to their opinions, and to a dislike of the Church-government, Canons, and Common-prayer-book, so did the other make them in love with democracy, by their harangues in the Parliament, and by their discourses and communications with people in the country, continually extolling liberty and inveighing against tyranny, leaving the people to collect of themselves that this tyranny was the present government of the state»<sup>52</sup>.

The preaching of Presbyterian and Puritan ministers, allowing any person of any grade to read and interpret the Bible, the nobles' infatuation with the classical theories that exalted liberty and legitimized tyrannicide caused difficulties in the relationships between James, Parliament, and the people. Accordingly, in order to control a political and religious situation that was always on the brink of a catastrophe, there was a continual need on James's part to restrict the Presbyterian ministers' ability to freely interpret the Scriptures and to find some kind of agreement with the Church of Rome. Indeed, James I had to fight more than one enemy. There was the pope's desire to enact a moral authority over James' conduct, believing he had the right to delegitimize him through excommunication and, on the other hand, there were the Presbyterians attacking his position as head of the Anglican Church and

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<sup>50</sup> *English Works*, VI, p. 186.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 191.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 192.

theorizing the right of resistance to the monarch. In the forty-seventh chapter of *Leviathan*, Hobbes presents James' controversial position between the Catholic Church and the Presbyterians:

«After that certain Churches had renounced this universal power of the Pope, one would expect in reason, that the civil sovereigns in all those Churches, should have recovered so much of it, as before they had unadvisedly let it go, was their own right, and their own hands. And in England it was so in effect; saving that they, by whom the kings administered the government of religion, by maintaining their employment to be in God's right, seemed to usurp, if not a supremacy, yet an independency on the civil power: and they but seemed to usurp it, inasmuch as they acknowledged a right in the king, to deprive them of the exercise of their functions at his pleasure.

But in those places where the presbytery took that office, though many other doctrines of the Church of Rome were forbidden to be taught; yet this doctrine, that the kingdom of Christ is already come, and that it began at the resurrection of our Saviour, was still retained. But *cui bono*? What profit did they expect from it? The same which the Pope expected: to have a sovereign power on the people. For what is it for men excommunicate their lawful king, but to keep him from all places of God's public service in his own kingdom; and with force to resist him, when he with force endeavoureth to correct them? Or what is it, without authority from the civil sovereign, to excommunicate any person, but to take from him his lawful liberty, that is, to usurp an lawful power over their brethren? The authors therefore of this darkness in religion, are the Roman, and the Presbyterian clergy»<sup>53</sup>.

Like James, Hobbes attacks the Catholics and the Presbyterians in *Leviathan*, since both claimed a moral authority over the political power, granting themselves the possibility to delegitimize the sovereign ruler. In fact, Hobbes debated with Bellarmino not so much for religious reasons, but rather for political reasons. For Hobbes, the papacy was the anti-Leviathan: a state working for a universal religion which spoke Latin, rather than a religion working for the good of the English nation. In Jacobean England there was a great political-religious debate regarding legitimacy of sovereignty.

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<sup>53</sup> *English Works*, III, pp. 690-691.

James held that the right to his rule came to him directly from God. His claim to divine right was backed by Robert Filmer, the author of *Patriarcha*, published for the first time in 1680, but written some decades earlier, as Filmer died in 1653. *Patriarcha* held that a king's power was similar to that of a father in a patriarchal family and that God had established the father as the family leader. Filmer debated with Bellarmino and Suarez, who insisted that the king's power was different from that of a father, because the state is not equitable to a single family, but rather it depends upon the community, upon the people. They held that the religious power had the right to excommunicate or to discharge the king<sup>54</sup>. However, because the Presbyterians were a danger for James, Hobbes speaks with respect of Bellarmino during the period of the negotiations for the Spanish marriage. In the *Discourse of Rome* he writes:

«I only saw them once assembled together, and that was in the Pope's private Chapel, at Saint Peter's, upon all Saints' even when the Pope sang Vespers or Evensongs: there were in number of them about 30. I think, all that were then in Rome. [...] Amongst these Cardinals I principally observed two: one for his learning, and that was Bellarmino, a little lean old man; the other was Cardinal Tosco, and he, at the Conclave when this Pope was chosen, was so near being chosen, that many yet think the election went on his side. For 60 he had 45 voices. But when he was set in his Chair, and they coming to adore him, Baronius came in and said: "Will you choose him head of the Church, that cannot speak a sentence without that scurrilous byword of the Lombards (*Cazzo*)?"»<sup>55</sup>.

The other cardinal "observed" by Hobbes is Cardinal Tosco, the opposer of Bellarmino. In the "Discourse of Rome", Hobbes presents Bellarmino to his audience, a small circle of readers, as a knowledgeable man, solitary with a curt look about him – the opposite of the gluttonous, corrupt, and vulgar stereotype that the Protestants tended to have of the Catholic cardinals. Hobbes does the same with Cesare Baronio, the author of the ecclesiastical *Annales*. In reality, Bellarmino represented the ideal "enemy" and desiring to make him known to his readers, Hobbes represented him as a

<sup>54</sup> See J.P. Sommerville, Introduction a R. Filmer, *Patriarcha and other writing*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1991, pp. IX-XXIV.

<sup>55</sup> T. Hobbes, *A Discourse of Rome*, pp. 96-97.

respectable person. In doing so he was sure to describe an “enemy” in a manner which did not make it impossible for him to become “a friend”. Just like Machiavelli, Hobbes knew that politics were nothing more than a game between friends and enemies. Therefore in the “Discourse upon the beginning of Tacitus”, Hobbes demonstrates how Machiavelli’s belief in a balance between appearances and deceit was the beneficial instrument that allowed a state to escape the political tensions that follow the civil war. The real enemy, Hobbes seemed to suggest to his readers, was Cardinal Tosco, an immoral and vulgar man supporting the Counter-Reformation. If hope still existed for a reform of the Roman Catholic Church, according to Hobbes it would have to come from within the Catholic Church, from men like Bellarmino, obstinate defenders of the pope’s authority, but wise and honest. In the “Discourse of Rome”, Hobbes also names Cardinal Bandino, focusing on his garden, full of statues and fountains, and describing it as an ideal place for relax<sup>56</sup>. Cardinal Ottavio Bandini (Octavio Bandino in Latin) who had fought strenuously in the conclave of 1623 against the election of Maffeo Barberini (pope Urbano VIII) was described in Gregory Panzani’s *Memoirs* as cardinal in favor of an English bishop. In 1634, Charles I received Panzani as the first papal emissary to be invited from Rome and in 1636 Hobbes lunched with the Earl of Devonshire in the refectory of the Jesuit English College in Rome, where Charles Cavendish was to return in 1639<sup>57</sup>. The complex and underground relations between James I and the Roman Catholic Church and the possibility of an irenic political-religious project played a decisive role in the internal balances of the Roman Catholic Church, modified by every papal election, and in those of the king of England and Scotland. The relations were so tense, that a plot like the Gunpowder plot could thwart years of diplomatic efforts between the king and the pope. In 1604 James had signed a peace treaty with Spain and the English Catholics had hoped for positive results regarding the status of their religion. The same Roman Catholic Church gave some signs of a pacifying attitude in the conflicts with England when Robert Parsons, the rector of the English College and the organizer with William Allen of the

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 89.

<sup>57</sup> See N. Malcolm (ed) *The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, vol. 2, p. 805.



Spanish invasion, lost his influence in 1604 and was sent to Naples by pope Clement VII, as a sign of independence from the Jesuits. In March 1604 James did the same, both in the *Basilikon Doron* and in his first discourse to the Parliament. He emphasized the diverse relationships that Catholicism and Puritanism shared with respect to the Church of England. After recalling that both religions had some political agitators that he had to repress, James recognized the Church of Rome as «our Mother Church, although defiled with some infirmities and corruptions»<sup>58</sup>. The peace-making language and the situation that seemed predisposed to the treaty were, however, abruptly interrupted by the Gunpowder plot in November 1605. Afterwards, with the death of Pope Clement VIII and the election of Leone XI (whose pontificate lasted only twenty-seven days in April 1605) and then of Paul V (from May 16, 1605 to January 28, 1621), who gave the interdict to Venice, England entered into an epoch full of tension. For the English, however, the possibility of a treaty with the Roman Catholic Church remained open. Only in 1651, when the religious situation had already been set in its course and the Jacobean project of Christian reconciliation was inconceivable given the Thirty Years War and the Westphalia peace, Bellarmino come to be described by Hobbes as an enemy in *Leviathan*. At this point, Hobbes is anti-Catholic not for religious reasons, as Robert P. Kraynak claims<sup>59</sup>, but because the pope represented the founding principle of a rivaling political system of authority, as Patricia Springborg has shown<sup>60</sup>. In the analysis of *Leviathan*'s famous claim, «the Papacy is no other than the ghost of the deceased Roman empire, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof» Springborg rightly concludes that Hobbes was in search of a religion in function of the state and he was against Catholicism for political reasons, because he considered the pope's authority to excommunicate an English king and intervene in English life a subversive power. Hobbes considered Catholicism a subversive religion, the anti-*Leviathan par excellence* for his universalism,

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<sup>58</sup> See S. Tutino, *Thomas Punde, Andrew Willet e la Questione Cattolica all'Inizio del Regno di Giacomo I*, "Cromohs", 8, 2003, pp. 1-15.

<sup>59</sup> See R. Kraynak, *Speculations on the Earliest Writings of Hobbes*, "The Review of Politics", 58, 1996, pp. 813-816.

<sup>60</sup> See P. Springborg, *Thomas Hobbes and Cardinal Bellarmino: Leviathan and "the Ghost of the Roman Empire"*, p. 521.

because, like Machiavelli, he desired a national religion similar to that of the Romans, controlled by the state.

However, Springborg is mistaken when she claims that Hobbes' project was unsuccessful<sup>61</sup>. In the forty-seventh chapter of *Leviathan*, Hobbes repeats Pierre du Moulin's thesis that the papacy was born from the ruins of the Roman Empire, and to sustain this claim, he recalls that the Roman Church is still speaking Latin, the language of the Roman Empire. Therefore the Roman Church was for Hobbes, as he says in the "Discourse of Rome", the Roman sovereignty's new form of government after the fall of Roman Empire<sup>62</sup>. For Hobbes, the Church of Rome is a political enemy, specifically because the papacy is the base of a system of authority capable of unifying the most important European states within the Holy Roman Empire.

With respect to the English sovereignty, however, James I and Charles I were attracted by an alliance with the Habsburgs, the most important European dynasty, and they preferred to ally with them rather than with Calvinists and Republicans. In the *Three Discourses* of 1620, Hobbes had spoken of the Church of Rome as a system of authority with which the English court wanted to negotiate, but in *Leviathan* in 1651 the English civil war and the Thirty Years War had changed the English foreign policy and the Roman Catholic Church became the enemy of the English nation, hunted by Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. Until the crisis of 1640-1642 England's dilemma in foreign affairs had consisted in making an alliance either with Spain, as the Stuarts desired, or with Holland, as the Presbyterians and Parliament preferred. These tensions resolved themselves with Spain's collapse during the War of Thirty Years and with the

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 531.

<sup>62</sup> Hobbes writes at the beginning of *A Discourse of Rome*: «In the sight of any place there be two special Objects, Antiquities, and Greatness, both which none can sooner challenge than Rome: in the very beginning noted for Sovereignty. The continuance of which, in such diversity of governments, as Kings, Consuls, Tribunes, Dictators, Emperors, cannot but show a divine power; for otherwise so many changes might in all likelihood have bred confusion, and so consequently suppressed their rising to so great an Empire: which as the last, so it may be truly styled the greatest that yet the world ever knew, or heard of; obtained only by the valor of this one City, no Commander, and for a long time no Soldier, that came not out from thence». T. Hobbes, *A Discourse of Rome*, p. 71. The historical characteristic of Rome is, according to Hobbes, the capability to maintain its sovereignty and authority in different ways.

emergence of a very active international Protestant politics. In 1642, when Parliament sent its Nineteen Propositions to Charles at York, they asked the king to control the dynasty's political marriage and to align himself with the Protestant nations. The Nineteen Propositions and the first English civil war, which dissolved the Stuarts' foreign political rule, produced the birth of another system of authority whose founding element was the alliance between Great Britain and Holland. Hobbes, a royalist and a patriot, even after the civil war, seeing that the king of England was also the head of the Church of England, did not have doubts regarding the necessity of the continuation of the English monarchy. Thus it is evident that Hobbes was not a pious protestant: his political theory did not have a great concern for God. Rather, God's place in his work is the product of his rhetorical skill. He based *Leviathan* on the metaphor of the contract, a Biblical category which, due to the Protestants' translation of the Bible into English, had become a familiar literary figure in England, and he turned it into a political category.

#### 4.

In the "Discourse upon the beginning of Tacitus", when reflecting on the diverse personalities of Pompey, Crassus, and Cesar and on their ambitions to transform the Roman Republic into a monarchy Hobbes writes:

«Of these Crassus was the most wealthy, Pompey the best beloved of the Senate. And Caesar of most power in the field. Their ambition was equal, but not their fortune, nor their wisdom. For Crassus was slain in the Parthian war, the which he undertook only out of avarice. Pompey, though he affected the Monarchy, yet he took not the course that was fittest for it; for he courted the State, when he knew his Rival had a purpose to use violence, and ravish it. But Caesar knew the Republic to be feminine, and that it would yield sooner to violence, than flattery; and therefore with all his power assaulted and overcame it: and so in him alone remained the strength of all the three till his death»<sup>63</sup>.

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<sup>63</sup> T. Hobbes, *A Discourse Upon the Beginning of Tacitus*, in *Three Discourses*, p. 31-67, p. 36.

Hobbes takes *The Prince's* most famous metaphor, fortune, described as a woman whose conquest often requires force rather than gallantry, and applies it to Pompey's courting of the Senate in the attempt to realize his aspirations towards monarchy, despite his knowledge that Cesar would have used violence rather than gallantry. Accordingly, Cesar, knowing well that the republic was like a woman and that she would give herself up more to violence than flattery, assaulted her with the force and overcame her, remaining the only ruler of the republic until his death. From Hobbes' development of this metaphor and his application of fortune's feminine attributes to the republic, we are able to induce that Hobbes knew Machiavelli well and that he put little faith in the Machiavellian approach to government; on the contrary, he considered the republic a weak form of government. In the "Discourse upon the beginning of Tacitus", in order to describe the history of the Roman monarchy, Hobbes presents a synthesis of the monarchy's first seven rulers. He compares the Roman Republic, after the fall of the monarchy of the seven kings, to a body sick with fever that turns and turns in bed without finding peace: the Romans for Hobbes were desirous of liberty and not knowing in whom they could confide, they were often on the brink of losing their liberty altogether<sup>64</sup>. However, Hobbes' Augustus is a Machiavellian figure. In order to gain control of the monarchy, he assimilated himself to an image the people could desire, because he knew how difficult it would be to accustom a people that was used to live in the freedom of the republic to the ruling of one man. When Augustus came to power Julius Cesar had already dissolved the republic and when power was transferred to the hands of Augustus, he wondered whether he should restore the republic or change it into a monarchy. He chose the second way<sup>65</sup>. Hobbes preferred an absolute monarchy to the

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<sup>64</sup> «After the people had delivered themselves from the authority of Kings, and came themselves to undergo the care of government, they grew perplexed at every inconvenience, and shifted from one form of government to another, and so to another, and then to the first again; like a man in a fever, that often turns to and from in his bed, but finds himself without ease, and sick in every posture. [...] They were jealous of their liberty, and knew not in whose hands to trust it, and were often at the point of to lose it [...]». In T. Hobbes, *A Discourse upon the beginning of Tacitus*, p. 34.

<sup>65</sup> See *Ibidem*, p. 38.

republic, and for this reason there is irony at work in his use of Machiavelli. Figuring the republic as feminine as the latin *fortuna*, Hobbes' intention to demonstrate his own superiority with respect to Machiavelli becomes obvious. Hobbes knew the history of the Florentine republic and the Italian history during Charles VIII's invasion; or, perhaps he acted according to his pride of being English and of belonging to a nation that had expelled the Roman representatives and had begun to form its own empire.

The period in which *Three Discourses* were written corresponds to the most significant years of James's reign, the years in which the tensions and problems that produced the English civil war began to manifest themselves. In the "Discourse of Rome" Hobbes describes ancient Rome and the Catholic Rome of his days. Then, in the "Discourse upon the beginning of Tacitus" he presents Augustus to the English readers as the only solution which could put an end to the Roman civil wars and begin a new epoch of peace and well-being. In the "Discourse of Laws" he reminds his readers that the laws are the bastions and the defense of the people. And in his "Discourse upon the beginning of Tacitus", he continues to emphasize the presence of the ghost of the civil war:

«The manifold miseries that do accompany Civil Wars, and the extreme weakness which follows them, do commonly so deject and expose a State to the prey of ambitious men, that if they lose not their liberty, it is only for want of one that has the courage to take advantage of their debility. And when a mighty and free people, is subdued to the tyranny of one man, it is for the most part after some long bloody Civil War. For civil war is the worst thing that can happen to a State: wherein the height of their best hopes can come but to this, to venture and hazard their own, to overthrow their friends' and kindred's fortunes. And they that are at the worst, have reason to be content with, and wish for any change whatsoever»<sup>66</sup>.

The threat of a civil war is always present in *Three Discourses* and this threat seems to validate the perspectives in historiography that date back the origins of the English civil war to the reign of James I. In fact, when James VI of Scotland rose to the English throne with the name of James I in 1603, England was very different from

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 37.

what it will become after the civil war: it was a monarchy in name and act, as Johann P. Sommerville writes in his book on English politics and ideology from 1603 to 1640. At the beginning of his reign, the king named the members of the Privy Council and with them he maintained an executive power. He chose the members of parliament, like the cortes in Spain and the general states in France, thereby confirming greater authority on the part of the monarchy's decisions: they were instruments working for the will of the monarchy. At the beginning of 1604, however, the members of the House of Commons declared the rights of parliament in the *Apology*. The same themes were discussed in the 1610 Parliament, in the Addled Parliament of 1614, in the Protestation of 1621, in the 1628 Petition of Right, in the Great Remonstrance of 1641 and, finally, during the civil war. These hard encounters between the sovereignty and the Parliament were not, according to Conrad Russell, so much a fight between the Crown and the Parliament or between the court and the country (after the celebrated title *The Court and the Country* by Perez Zagorin) but rather conflicts organized at court by clients and parties in search of power that would mobilize their alliances in the House of Commons in order to achieve their objectives. The Parliament of 1621 was dissolved by James, who tore with his own hands the *Protestation of the Commons' Journal*, because the House of Commons had decided to debate England's foreign policy and in particular the plan to marry the future Charles I with the Spanish Infanta. According to Conrad Russell, at the heart of the 1621 Parliament's breakup were the plots of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham who received great profits from the monopolies. The 1621 Parliament had to investigate the monopolies' activities, and Buckingham feared to be put under charge. For this reason he would have made an agreement with one of his clients, Sir George Goring, to divert the Parliament's discussion to foreign policy and to the subject of the Spanish marriage<sup>67</sup>. In *Court, Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England*, Linda Levy Peck takes the metaphor of the fountain with which, in the *Dutchess of Malfy* John Webster had symbolized the bounty and generosity of the sovereignty in order to underline how this image was used in the

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<sup>67</sup> See C. Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics. 1621-1629*, Oxford, Oxford University Press 1979.

first half of the seventeenth century to celebrate the king as the cause of everything, good and evil<sup>68</sup>. The patronage system changed profoundly with the Scottish James VI's ascent to the English throne. The entrance of the Scottish into the English élite was perceived as an invasion. James I of England increased the number of titles, offices, pensions and honors in order to gratify the Scottish. Economically it was not one of the best periods in English history. There were the unsuccessful colonial experiments in which much hope had been invested – as in the case of the Virginia Company, of which Hobbes and Cavendish were shareholders. Corruption was endemic in England, since there was the problem of the monopolies, the most famous one being that of the merchant adventurers, a privileged company dominated by London merchants who had the wool market all to themselves. Many merchants were against the idea of regulating commercial affairs, a position which they justified with parliamentary laws. In some cases, however, regulations were set by the king for a company or an individual, and these concessions helped the formation of monopolies. This attempt to regulate commerce created numerous frictions, plots, information leaks, corruption, accusations – tensions of every type<sup>69</sup>. James's politics of inventing new titles for selling and increasing the revenues infuriated the members of Parliament. Edwin Sandys, the leader of the Virginia Company after 1619, was the son of the first Bishop of Worcester and became one of the most influential and rich men of the Jacobean period<sup>70</sup>. Sandys was an unprejudiced political leader and defined simony as the selling of baronet titles which helped the king to fill his empty chest<sup>71</sup>. Corruption became the central topic of the early seventeenth century's political rhetoric and according to Levy Peck, Aristotle and Cicero were the true authors underneath the English civil war<sup>72</sup>. Victoria Kahn defined Thomas Hobbes as

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<sup>68</sup> See L. Levy Peck, *Court, Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England*, London, Routledge 1993, pp. 208-221.

<sup>69</sup> See J.P. Cooper, *The Fall of the Stuart Monarchy*, in ID (ed), *New Cambridge Modern History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1970, vol. IV.

<sup>70</sup> See T.K. Rabb, *Jacobean Gentleman. Sir Edwin Sandys. 1561-1629*, Princeton, Princeton University Press 1998, pp. 3-14.

<sup>71</sup> See L. Levy Peck, *Court, Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England*, p. 212.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 218

the political genius of his epoch because no one better than him understood the linguistic causes of the English civil war: Hobbes individualized its source in the religious, political, and linguistic anarchy. In particular, Hobbes complained about the preaching of the Independents and of the Presbyterians, who incited their listeners to interpret Scripture according to their individual consciences. He blamed theories of classic regicide and the abuse of theories of natural law and divine right. Natural law theories were used indifferently in order to guarantee resistance to the sovereign, to legitimize absolute monarchy and also to support the cause for independence from the sovereignty by radical Protestantism<sup>73</sup>. For example, Edwin Sandys used the theory of natural law both to defend the law of property in the 1614 Parliament<sup>74</sup> and to maintain that the «lawe of nature teacheth to repell force with force, and no civil lawe can dissolve the law of nature»<sup>75</sup>. Johann P. Sommerville did not agree with the interpretation of the English civil war as a mere history of power struggles, political intrigues, revenges, interests of every type, even if the intrigues of the court fractions, like that of the Parliament were confirmed with certainty. Sommerville wrote that this analysis could be correct, but he thinks that if the plot of Buckingham succeeded, it happened because «a radical divergence of opinion on the nature and origins of parliamentary privilege had already separated the king from many in the House of Commons»<sup>76</sup>. In *Politics and Ideology in England 1603-1640*, Sommerville analyzes the political pamphlet literature of the Jacobean age and shows how the absolute monarchy's power was first of all legitimized by divine law and this idea was supported by the theory of natural law. Secondly, the theory of natural law was used in opposition to the divine right of kings, to legitimate resistance against royal absolutism and to defend the rights of the Parliament. Therefore Hobbes was correct in defining religious, cultural, and political anarchy as the

<sup>73</sup> See V. Kahn, *Wayward Contracts. The Crisis of Political Obligation in England. 1640-1674*. Princeton, Princeton University Press 2004, p. 135.

<sup>74</sup> See N. Malcolm, *Hobbes, Sandys, and the Virginia Company*, pp. 301-303.

<sup>75</sup> J.P. Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England 1603-1640*, New York, Longman 1986, p. 15.

<sup>76</sup> J.P. Sommerville, *James I and the Divine Right of Kings: English Politics and Continental Theory*, in L. Levy Peck (ed.), *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, pp. 55-70, p. 67.



cause for the civil war, even if he was not the philosopher of the English civil war. The minds behind the English civil war were influential writers of pamphlets and sermons: these writers had more political weight but less insight than Hobbes and Locke, their contemporaries<sup>77</sup>. Hobbes wrote *Leviathan* while he was in exile during the English civil war. With it he intended to offer a theory of political obligation to stop the civil war, the state of nature in which everyone was *homo homini lupus*, the condition that he considered the worst of all evils. Referring to the end of the Roman monarchy at the time of Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, Hobbes writes in the “Discourse upon the beginning of Tacitus” that Tacitus defined liberty as the revolt against the tyranny of the king, but added that he did not intend to suggest that slavery was an implicit condition of monarchy. Hobbes underlined how Tacitus did not refer to the monarchy as a form of sovereignty, but to the conditions occurring when a sovereign, as with Tarquinius Superbus, abused his powers while feigning to not see the violence made by his sons and favorites. In any case, Hobbes explains:

«And this is by the Author entitled, Liberty, not because bondage is always joined to Monarchy; but where Kings abuse their places, tyrannize over their Subjects, and wink at all outrages, and abuses, committed against them by any either of their children, or favorites, such usurpation over men’s estate, and natures, many times breaks forth into attempts for liberty, and is hardly endured by man’s nature, and passion, though reason and Religion teach us to bear the yoke. So that, it is not the government, but the abuse that makes the alteration be termed Liberty»<sup>78</sup>.

Also in the Jacobean period Hobbes is sure that the civil war and the absence of every state – the future “state of nature” – were the worst evil. *Leviathan* is in the first place a work of rhetoric, in the sense of an Aristotelian analysis of the linguistic anarchy increased during the reigns of James I and Charles I Stuart, an anarchy that produced the civil war. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes created a new meta-language for discussing politics. He introduced a new political subject, the individual moved by his passions, the most dominating

<sup>77</sup> See J.P. Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England*, p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> T. Hobbes, *Discourse Upon the Beginning of Tacitus*, p. 33.

of which was the fear of death. With respect to this passion-driven individual, he stipulated the political contract that would take England out of its natural state or civil war. As Hobbes explained in *Behemoth*, written around 1667 but published in 1679 on the eve of the second English civil war, the Reformation itself created a situation of religious and political anarchy. Hobbes considered the Presbyterians responsible for the civil war and they were the religious group that he treated most severely<sup>79</sup>: they were the revolutionaries in support of the courtiers and the merchants that desired to change the status quo. In *Behemoth* Hobbes describes the Presbyterian ministers preaching from the pulpit, giving sermons and reading the Bible with such a theatricality «as that no tragedian in the world could have acted the part of a right godly man better than these did»<sup>80</sup>. The Presbyterian ministers were able to manipulate the faithful to turn against the Roman Catholic Church, touching on all the points that the Anglican bishops had not condemned:

«for the matter of their sermons, because the anger of the people in the late Roman usurpation was then fresh, they saw there could be nothing more gracious with them than to preach against such other points of the Romish religion as the bishops had not yet condemned; that so receding further from popery than they did, they might with glory to themselves leave a suspicion on the bishops, as men not yet well purged from idolatry»<sup>81</sup>.

Moreover, Hobbes remarks how in their sermons the Presbyterians never attacked the merchants:

«they did never in their sermons, or but lightly, inveigh against the lucrative vices of men of trade or handicraft; such as are feigning, lying, cozening, hypocrisy, or other uncharitableness, except want of charity to their pastors and to faithful: which was a great ease to the generality of citizens and inhabitants of market-towns and no little profit to themselves»<sup>82</sup>.

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<sup>79</sup> See R. MacGillivray, *Thomas Hobbes's History of the English Civil War. A Study of Behemoth*, "Annual of the History of Ideas", vol. 31, n° 2, Apr.-Jun., 1970, pp. 179-198, p. 188.

<sup>80</sup> *English Works*, VI, p. 193.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 194.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 194-195.

The Anglican Church, for which the king was the supreme governor as a result of Henry VIII's Act of Supremacy, was the adversary not only of Catholics, but from 1570 during the reign of Elizabeth, was fought also by the Presbyterians, who stood in the Calvinists' footsteps, with texts affirming the legitimacy of resisting the sovereignty that governed tyrannically and impeded the true progress of religion<sup>83</sup>. Catholic cult was prohibited to such a degree that in 1630 the Catholics were not more than five percent of England's population<sup>84</sup> and they were not a great threat. In attempt to counter such a theory of resistance from the attacks of the Catholics and Presbyterians, the defenders of the Church of England professed that they did not always uphold an absolute monarch. For example – as Sommerville underlines – in the *Harborowe for faithful and true subjects* (1559) the bishop of London, John Aylmer, insisted that the English government was not a pure monarchy, but a mixture of a monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. The doctrine of divine right of kings was the orthodoxy only for the clergy of James I. According to Sommerville, many Calvinists and Protestants accepted the idea that the English government was a fact of natural law, but they affirmed that in every society the power to govern had to come from within the community itself. Moreover, the Jesuits Suarez and Bellarmino were convinced that the monarchs had derived their power by transferring control from the Christian community to theirs, while the supporters of James remained firm in their idea that religion had to function as a service for the state. The absolutists, such as Robert Filmer, author of the *Patriarcha*, for whom the law of the king was predetermined by God like that of a father and his children in a patriarchal family, owed much to Bodin, whose work was translated into English by Richard Knolles in 1606, as Sommerville remembers in his introduction to Filmer's book. When James VI of Scotland took the throne of England as James I, expressed his belief in the divine right of kings in *Basilikon Doron*, printed in secret for the first time in 1599 and circulated among the faithful friends and then published in London in March 1603. In the same year, his *Trew*

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<sup>83</sup> See the first chapter of *Divine Right of Kings* in J.P. Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England*.

<sup>84</sup> See R. Clifton, *The Popular Fear of Catholics During the English Revolution*, "Past and Present", vol. 53, 1971, pp. 23-55, p. 34.

*Laws* were also published. The *Basilikon Doron*, translated into Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, German, and Swedish was sent to the Continent and republished in London in 1616. Having read the *Six livres de la république* by Jean Bodin, James entered the arena himself in order to affirm that the law of the sovereign was derived directly from God. and he was with Robert Filmer the most important theoretician of English absolutism. James I was a king and an intellectual and among many controversies he hold one with Cardinal Du Perron, who had attacked (in a discourse presented in 1615) a proposal for a law of the Third State according to which under no situation the king could be de-crowned or an object of resistance. Cardinal Jack Davy Du Perron considered this proposal an unjustifiable transgression to the authority of the pope to remove from power heretic kings. The theory of the pope's indirect power was maintained by many Catholics, including Suarez and Bellarmino. When in 1615 James took part in the debate against Du Perron, he replied that Du Perron and Bellarmino wanted the monarchy to be subject not only to the pope but also to the people and said that he would have supported the divine right of kings against the Catholics and the Protestants<sup>85</sup>. Sommerville seems certain that James' direct intervention in the theological and political discussion had ended with the radicalizing of the political and religious battle, but in 1604 James had already to face the declaration of Parliament's rights and the Gunpowder plot in the following year.

## 5.

James asked the Roman Catholic Church to renounce the pope's authority to delegitimate kings. In 1603 James had already proposed an ecumenical council to Clemente VIII for the reconciliation of Christianity: from this council he asked for the exclusion of the Jesuits, the nonconformist Protestants, and the Puritans. In 1604, James had also signed a peace treaty with Spain. Therefore James' ascent to the English throne appeared to suggest that he would be able to find a solution for the religious tensions in the British Isles and that he would serve as Christianity's peacemaker. The Gunpowder plot

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<sup>85</sup> J.P. Sommerville, *James I and the Divine Right of Kings*, pp. 58-59.

and the Oath of Allegiance of 1606, quickly changed this hopeful outlook. The 1606 interdict to Venice, the attempt on Paolo Sarpi's life in 1607<sup>86</sup>, the assassination of Henry IV of France in 1610, provoked in England a wave of anti-Catholicism and tensions with Rome. However, the conflicts with the pope were not the only difficulties that James had to face, since the king was also expected to confront the Parliament and the hostility of the Presbyterians protesting against the Anglican Church in Scotland and England. «James' supporters», Patricia Springborg writes:

«defended Huguenots while deploring Puritans. They cultivated Princess Elizabeth and her husband Frederick, the Elector Palatine. They were pro-Dutch and anti-Spanish, vehemently protesting the meddling of Spanish (and Italian) Jesuits in British politics, Robert Bellarmine, Francisco Suarez and their English follower, Robert Parsons. Attacking the power to depose princes claimed by Jesuits for the papacy, they appeared in the event more anti-Catholics than in fact they were»<sup>87</sup>.

Hobbes' attitude is not diverse from that of James' supporters. More precisely, regarding the protests against the Roman Catholic Church, Hobbes' position, according to Springborg, was similar to that of Augustine with the Roman Empire: a mix of condemnations and approvals, of blame and desire for a balance of power. Furthermore, Springborg finds that Hobbes' problem with the Roman Catholic Church was similar to that of Polybius with the Roman Empire: Hobbes tried to understand how the Roman Catholic Church arrived at such power and how its power had become legitimized. According to Springborg, the Roman Catholic Church was for Hobbes the anti-Leviathan *par excellence*, since Catholicism constituted the overturning of the state: not a religion in function of the state, but rather a state in function of religion<sup>88</sup>. The main problem for Hobbes, Springborg continues, was to derive a "civil religion" from Catholicism, like that of the ancient empires on which *Leviathan* was

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<sup>86</sup> On James' support to Sarpi after the attempt see E. De Mas, *L'Attesa del Secolo Aureo (1603-1625). Saggio di Storia delle Idee del Secolo XVII*, Firenze, Olschki 1982, pp. 77-78.

<sup>87</sup> P. Springborg, *Thomas Hobbes and Cardinal Bellarmine*, cit., p. 506.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 510.

modeled, because the anti-Anglican developments of Presbyterians and Puritans threatened to destroy the English monarchy<sup>89</sup>. This thesis gathered – as Hobbes understood – that the Reformation in England had caused a series of social, political, and cultural changes which were producing the slow destruction of the monarch's power. In this situation it was understandable how James and his supporters were not truly anti-Catholic, despite their intentions to appear so; they desired to hold a door open to a reconciliatory council of Christianity.

The Parliaments had been created by the kings in order to strengthen their authority and during the reign of Elizabeth no Parliament ever claimed to discuss foreign policy. However, the 1621 Parliament claimed to discuss James' foreign policy and the project of the Spanish marriage which would have fixed a strong alliance with Spain. The 1621 Parliament was an anticipation of what would have happened during the national political crisis due to the Scottish rebellion<sup>90</sup> and Charles I was compelled to convince the Parliament in the autumn of 1640 to obtain finances for combating the rebels. In 1642 the *Nineteen Propositions* were sent from the two Houses of Parliament to the king at York and they exemplify clearly at what point the conflict between king and Parliament had arrived. The problem was to decide under whose domain, the king's or the parliament's, was the foreign policy to be placed. The fifth Proposition declared that:

«no marriage shall be concluded or treated for any of the King's children, with any foreign prince, or other person whatsoever, abroad or at home, without the consent of Parliament, under the penalty of a premunire, upon such as shall conclude or treat of any marriage as aforesaid; and that the said penalty shall not be pardoned or dispensed with but by consent of both the Houses of Parliament»<sup>91</sup>.

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 509.

<sup>90</sup> On the Scottish rebellion, better known as "Bishops' war", because it was born from the refusal of the Common Book of Prayer proposed by Charles I, see: M.C. Fissel, *The Bishop' Wars: Charles I's Campaigns against Scotland. 1638-1640*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1994.

<sup>91</sup> S.R. Gardiner (ed), *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution. 1625-1660*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1906, pp. 249-254, pp. 251-252.

Then, the seventeenth Proposition established that: «your Majesty will be pleased to enter into a more strict alliance with the State of the United Provinces, and other neighbouring princes and states of the Protestants religion, for the defence and maintenance thereof, against all designs and attempts of the Pope, and his adherents to subvert and suppress it»<sup>92</sup>. The Parliament asked for the right to decide on foreign policy and because religion was the language more suited to mobilizing a Protestant nation, it posed its request in religious terms: an alliance with the Protestant nations, Holland against Spain and the pope. However, underneath this ‘religious’ request of the Parliament there were the exigencies of London’s dominating merchants, those who would have been taxed for financing the war. In *Behemoth*, Hobbes confirms London’s decision to support Parliament:

«those great capital cities, when rebellion is upon pretence of grievances, must need be of the rebel party: because the grievances are but taxes, to which citizens, that is, merchants, whose profession is their private gain, are naturally mortal enemies; their only glory being to grow excessively rich by the wisdom of buying and selling»<sup>93</sup>.

The Stuarts’ aspirations were for a foreign policy based on the alliance with the most important European dynasties, the Haubsburgs and the Borbons. Charles I, like James, was also prepared to be reconciled with the pope through a treaty that would bring peace between Christianity and the Roman Catholic Church – not through an attempt to reconvert England and Scotland to Catholicism<sup>94</sup>. According to Simon Adams, the Stuarts’ politics had a logical application in that it represented a solution for the dilemma created after the war of Thirty Years which had constituted the end of European religious and political unity. However, the majority of the Stuarts’ subjects had already chosen an alliance with the Protestant nations against the Roman Anti-Christ<sup>95</sup>. In *A Discourse upon the*

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 253.

<sup>93</sup> *English Works*, VI, pp. 320-321.

<sup>94</sup> See S. Adams, *Spain or the Netherlands? The Dilemma of early Stuart Policy*, in H. Tomlinson (ed) *Before the English civil war. Essays on early Stuart politics and governments*, London, MacMillan Press 1983, pp. 79-101, p. 90.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 101.

*beginning of Tacitus* Hobbes was perhaps thinking of James when he wrote of Rome's history and of the peace that Augustus brought for it:

«They saw that to bear the joke of August, was to be freed of other vexation; and to resist, was to renew the miseries they were lately subject to. When they were much stronger, they could not make sufficient resistance, now they were weak, they can much less do it. Therefore being weary, they could not but be much won with the present ease, and vacancy of War, especially civil war. So Augustus took in this, the best order that can be, to assure a new sovereignty, which, is to afford the Soldier money, the People a good market, and all men ease, and quietness»<sup>96</sup>.

Hobbes' program should not have displeased James I, who had been portrayed as a Roman emperor in the coinage of his coronation and dreamed the reunion of Christendom. In the first part of *Leviathan* Hobbes no longer thinks of Roman history as a means to provide a solution to civil war, but rather proposes the political contract to legitimize the sovereignty to provide peace and well-being without renouncing liberty. In the fourth part of *Leviathan* Hobbes speaks with satisfaction of the newborn colonies of the British Empire and about the end of the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire in England.

For Leo Strauss, who studied Machiavelli and Hobbes and knew *Three Discourses*, Machiavelli's weak point was to believe that for the Italian unification it was necessary to secularize the Church's States. In his opinion Machiavelli wished the appearance of a new Romulus, who could establish a new pagan Rome, destined to become a new center of the world and a new empire<sup>97</sup>. In *Machiavelli's Intention: the Prince*, Strauss observes that Machiavelli did not realize that Rome already existed and therefore he desired to found a third Rome. For Strauss, Machiavelli did not understand that he was also a disarmed prophet like Savonarola. Differently, Felix Raab wrote that Machiavelli was a Florentine diplomat as secularized as the papal governor in Romagna. According to Raab Machiavelli had not understood that the Church of Rome was guaranteeing a

<sup>96</sup> T. Hobbes, *A Discourse Upon the Beginning of Tacitus*, p. 44.

<sup>97</sup> See L. Strauss, *Machiavelli's Intention: The Prince*, "The American Political Science Review", 51, 1957, pp. 13-40.



completely secular system of authority, which was forced to re-spiritualize itself under the criticism of the Reformation<sup>98</sup>. For Mario Praz, the true and mighty Machiavellians were the English and French monarchs like Elizabeth I and Louis XI. A naive Florentine diplomat, Machiavelli had to be also in Hobbes' mind when in 1620 he represented the republic in terms of a feminized *fortuna*, alluding perhaps to the republic in which Machiavelli had been a secretary, which came to an end with the coming back of the Medici to Florence. Differently from Machiavelli, in the last chapter of *Leviathan* the agnostic Hobbes considered the Anglican religion the bond that could hold together a people, a state, and an empire. In 1651 Hobbes understood that the English Reform and the Church of England had produced the birth of a new system of authority capable of competing with the one symbolized by the Roman Catholic Church.

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<sup>98</sup> See F. Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli*, pp. 1-7.

