Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* has found itself at the centre of two recent scholarly trends, the study of early modern theorists who attempted to describe the political structure of the divinely ordered "Hebrew republic,"[1] and the growing interest in "civil religion" as a crucial category in the history of political thought.[2] By examining the role of the ancient historian Flavius Josephus in the general context of political hebraism and in Spinoza's writings more specifically, this paper will explore "in what way is Spinoza part—or would he have wanted to be considered a part—of the Hebrew revival?"[3] Josephus (and the intellectual trend of "Josephism") turns out to be an ideal prism through which to view Spinoza both as a participant in, and more importantly, a critic of, "political hebraism," and as the decisive theorist of what (largely negative) lessons the Hebrew state might hold for the institution of civil religion in the liberal state.

1. "Josephism" and the Dutch Context of Political Hebraism

Before treating Spinoza's explicit engagement with the "Hebrew Republic" in the *TTP,*[4] it is necessary to understand the intellectual and historical context of the work, which was bound up in the gradual growth of "political Hebraism" and the reception of its central author, Josephus. For early modern theorists of the Hebrew republic, the Jewish historian was an unofficial *lieblingsautor,* serving as a "*trait d'union* between Biblical writings and classical authors."[5] Josephus' popularity makes a great deal of sense given the way in which "[he] presented the history of the Jewish Commonwealth attractively in the language of classical political philosophy."[6] Understandably, Josephus played a natural role in the phenomenon of "Christian Hebraism," non-Jewish scholars in early modern Europe studying Judaism, its languages and textual sources.[7]"Political Hebraism," the

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1 For an introduction to the field, see the works collected in Schochet *et al.*; the now-defunct journal *Hebraic Political Studies;* Laplanche; Neuman; and Meirav Jones' introduction to Schochet *et al.,* pp.viii-xix.

2 See recent volumes by Beiner; Weed and Von Heyking (eds,).

3 Asked by Smith, p. 1218

4 Abbreviations used: *TTP* for *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, *AJ* for *Antiquitates Judaicae*, and *CA* for *Contra Apionem*. Citations to the *TTP* will be to work, book, and page in the Gebhardt edition of the *Opera* Volume III with translations from the Israel/Silverthorne translation. All other translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

5 Blatt, pp. 40-100, c.f. e.g. Burke, "Tacitism", p. 149 and Lembi, pp. 279

6 Boralevi, pp. 255, quoted approvingly in Dunkelgrün, pp. 216.

7 Among the most important studies are Manuel and for the Dutch context, Katchen.

recent coinage for a subset of this trend particularly concerned with the ancient political organisation of the Jews, has received special attention. A key question for these writers is the reconciliation of classical categories of government (monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, mixed) with the biblical proof texts (an area in which Josephus offers much guidance).[8]

One of the first such authors, Carlo Sigonio, called the original Hebrew state an "aristocracy" where "God himself was in command" or at least where the state was "ruled by the law of God."[9] This state, however, later turned into a monarchy, where law was "the whim of the ruler" and God was a more uncertain presence.[10] This reading was challenged by a censor of the Inquisition , who seemed to see in this account of decline, and perhaps in the very model of the Hebrew state, the threat of Protestant political thought.[11] Indeed, several elements of Sigonio's argument, the critical view of monarchy (with particular reference to Josephus and 1 Samuel 8), the attempt to identify divine authority with *law* rather than with any single human figure or political body, appeared in part or in whole in Protestant texts on the same topic, texts that were put to very clear anti-monarchical and anti-papal uses.[12] It should therefore be no surprise that political Hebraism was welcomed with particular enthusiasm in the Calvinist and republican Netherlands.[13]

The idea of the Netherlands as a "new Israel" manifested itself not only in popular plays and political addresses (both key elements of the culture's "hebraic tint"), but also in the successful Dutch adoption of the genre of political Hebraism.[14] Hugo Grotius' *De republica emendanda*

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8 See Rajak, pp. 589 *et passim.*

9 Sigonio, *The Hebrew Republic*, p. 27, reflecting *AJ* IV.283, where Josephus seems to gesture at the common concerns of classical political theory. Josephus' meaning there seems to be that the laws *themselves,* insofar as they reflect the rule of God, are in fact the "aristocracy." C.f. Ligota, "L'histoire à fondement théologique: la République des Hébreux," in *L'Ecriture Sainte*, pp. 149-167.

10 Sigonio, *loc. cit.*

11 Sigonio, *The Hebrew* Republic, pp. xxxi.

12 1 Samuel 8 has the Israelites request a king from Samuel, invoking Divine displeasure. See Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic,* especially pp. 23-68. It seems clear that Sigonio was at least cognisant of his Huguenot contemporary Cornelius Bertram's efforts. Bartolucci, pp. 32-33.

13 Oz-Salzburger, pp. 103ff.

14 The oft-quoted description is C. Busken Huet's, as found in Dunkelgrün, "Neerlands Israel," pp. 204 See also Bodian, *passim* and Schama,pp. 93-126. Schama and others have seen identification with the Israelites as a unificatory political moment, while Bodian and Rosenthal ("Why Spinoza Chose the Hebrews," pp. 231-40) have averred, stressing the multifaceted way in which different political factions and religious groups (including radical strains) approached and appropriated biblical material.

(c.1601?) was a "very practical proposal" for solving the problems of the factious newborn Dutch republic through imitation of the divine model of the early Hebrew state.[15] The work relied heavily on the classicised interpretation of biblical political history found in Sigonio, and even cited the same passages from Josephus and Samuel to explain the mixed-aristocratic government of the Hebrew state. Besides a more open political agenda, an important difference between *De republica emendanda* and its predecessor was the open use of the word "theocracy" to describe the Hebrew republic.[16] . The attitudes and formulations of *De republica emendanda* can also be found, in less concentrated form, throughout writings Grotius published in his own lifetime, especially *De imperio,* a copy of which Spinoza owned.[17] Grotius' application of the tools of political Hebraism to a specifically Dutch political context and his particular attention to Josephus' use of "theocracy" in *CA* II.185, may be seen as a move towards the work of the man who *did* in fact "form from [theocracy] a theoretical *concept*" for the first time since antiquity, Petrus Cunaeus.[18] If Grotius returned Josephus' *word* to the foreground, Cunaeus would think most clearly about precisely what it meant for God to have "the rule and the power" in terms of institutions, laws, and historical innovation.[19]

Cunaeus studied Greek and Latin at Leiden,[20] and it is possible, although improbable that Cunaeus may have known of his friend Grotius' treatise (it is certain that Grotius read Cunaeus). Indeed, Grotius may very well have been an influence on Cunaeus' first major work, his *De*

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15 Grotius, *De republica emendanda.* Although the work's authorship is not entirely certain, the very good reasons for assigning to Grotius as well as the work's political/historical context are explained in Eyffinger's introduction to the bilingual edition of the text in *Grotiana* 5, as well as in his article "Grotius' *De republica emendanda* in Context," pp. 92ff.

16 See Bartolucci, "The Influence of Sigonio's 'De Republica Hebraeorum,'" pp. 200-203 *et passim.*

17 See Eyffinger's introduction in *Grotiana*. For instance, c.f. *De iure bellum ac pacis* (ed. Richard Tuck) I.4.ii: "The Israelites were but lately come out of the Theocracy; and though GOD, in Compliance with their imprudent and obstinate Demand, had granted them a Change of that happy Form of Government into a Human Monarchy, he did not thereby divest himself of the Right of making the immediate Choice of their Kings, when he pleased."

18 An accomplishment mistakenly attributed to Spinoza by Balibar (*Spinoza and Politics* p. 45). See *Ibid.* and Grotius, *De republica emendanda* par. 5: "I think therefore that to this matter [i.e. the Dutch political situation], which was in fact unknown to these men of old, we should rather apply a new term, one which was actually coined most appropriately by Josephus, a man who was as knowledgeable in the history of his native country as he was intimate with the finesses of a foreign language. Josephus was the first to call this form of government 'theocracy'..." C.f. also Bk. VI of Sigonio, *op. cit*. and *De republica emendanda* pars. 30-34.

19 C.f. the phrase in Josephus' original introduction of the term in *CA* II.165-6: ...θεῷ τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ τὸ κράτος.

20 See Eyffinger's introduction, pp. xixff and Katchen, pp. 37-55

republica hebraeorum (1618).[21] Cunaeus was not at all shy about placing himself squarely within the burgeoning tradition of Hebrew Republic texts, writing privately to Grotius that "in pursuing these studies, my knowledge of Hebrew has been of great help, as compared to Sigonio's ignorance in these matters" while noting that "two very learned men – Carlo Sigonio and Cornelius Bertram – have dealt at length with this subject."[22]

A great deal of what is new in Cunaeus' text has to do with his innovative use of Hebrew sources, in particular Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah.*[23] Also "regarded by his colleagues as one of the leading contemporary authorities on Josephus," it is unsurprising that Cunaeus made much more extensive and systematical use of Josephus than had heretofore been done.[24] For the first time, Josephus' own theoretical work, *CA* II, was at the centre of an understanding of the Hebrew polity. Cunaeus' epigraph came from Josephus' enumeration of that polity's good qualities, which Josephus took great pains to connect to the unique *theocratic* nature of the constitution.[25] This theocracy, for Grotius a rather abstract concept, a state where the "highest and only authority belonged to God," became, in Cunaeus' hands, a detailed constitutional process.[26] "Because [Moses] wanted to found a republic that would be the most sacred in the world, he handed supreme authority over to God."[27] Theocracy, for the first time, becomes a conscious decision. Moses acted exactly as a Greek νομοθέτης should, and thus exactly as Josephus portrayed him.[28] Cunaeus, like Josephus, made the Aristotelian connection between rule by God and rule of law: "Moses decreed that everything should be done according to laws" to ensure "the most important thing of all, i.e. the permanent stability of the laws."[29] His account follows Josephus' phrasing uncannily.[30]

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21 See Eyffinger's introduction, pp. xxix-xxxvii as well as "Grotius' *De Republica Emendanda* in Context" pp. 72-73.
22 Cunaeus, *The Hebrew Republic,* pp. xxxiii-xxxiv and p. 7.
23 See Katchen, *ad loc.*
24 Ziskind, "Petrus Cunaeus on Theocracy," pp. 237. He also "definitely intended to produce an annotated edition of his beloved Flavius Josephus, the author who was central to his research throughout." (Eyffinger, "Introduction" pp. xxv). He burned the draft of this edition, it appears, sometime before his death (Ziskind, *loc. cit.*).
25 Cunaeus, *The Hebrew Republic*, pp. 8 (*CA* II.17).
26 Grotius, *op. cit.* pars. 5-6
27 *The Hebrew Republic*, p. 12
28 See, for instance, Feldman, "Moses and Lycurgus."
29 *The Hebrew Republic* pp. 13. C.f. *CA* II.145-46, echoing Aristotle' *Politics* 1326a30: ὅ τε γὰρ νόμος τάξις τίς ἐστι, καὶ τὴν εὐνομίαν ἀναγκαῖον εὐταξίαν εἶναι.
30 See *CA* II.149, and, for the importance of Moses' *role*, the use of the word ἀναθείς in II.166

If the "essence of Moses' laws, their meaning, and the reasons behind them" all point towards a government where God had the power, but invests that power in laws, then *who* should maintain and interpret the word of the divine Executive? This was the central problem of theocracy. Yet, for all his elaboration of the relationship between Moses, God, and the Law, Cunaeus never tackled the question head on. He referred to it obliquely, noting that "the kings...were in charge of religious practices" but commented equally on the impressive power of the Levites.[31] He also noted that "once [the Levites] had acquired supreme power... they violated the distinction between sacred and profane."[32] Why are these references, which would seem to point to a preference for secular control over the religious sphere, so scattered and oblique? The answer lies within the political context within which Dutch political Hebraism came of age. As can be seen from his subtly imploring dedication to the "Mighty States of Holland and West Frisia," Cunaeus wished to present ideas to be "adopted for their own use."[33]

Caspar Barlaeus, a humanist in the circle of Grotius and Cunaeus, took this to mean that despite any clear opinion, Cunaeus was taking an "Erastian" position akin to the one that was by that point associated with Grotius. According to this view, secular authority needed to have sovereignty over the priests. The very Josephan abhorrence of στάσις (civil strife) was another way of suggesting a unified secular authority, governed by law rather than priest.[34] Eric Nelson has recently pointed out that Erastus himself had "Josephan" commitments, suggesting that there may have been a detectable "Erastian" valence to the frequent use of Josephus and specific passages in his work.[35] Cunaeus denied any such intent, and in fact, deleted a draft section of the work that would have discussed the relationship between state and synagogue in detail.[36] Both Grotius and Cunaeus did their work on the Hebrew Republic in the troubled years leading up to the Synod of

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31 *The Hebrew Republic* p. 58
32 *The Hebrew Republic* p. 64
33 *Ibid.* p. 6, emended.
34 Eyffinger, "Hugo Grotius' *De republica emendanda* in Context" pp.73-75 as well as his "Introduction," p.xxxv.
35 Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, pp. 92-96. This is what will be meant by "Josephism" below.
36 Eyffinger, "Introduction," p. xxxv and Nelson, *loc. cit.*

Dort[37]. While *De republica emendanda* only gestures as his future position, Grotius became a well known partisan of the Remonstrant cause, as certain attitudes towards the role of the Orthodox Calvinist church's place in political life grew inseparable from dogmatic positions on matters of predestination and grace.[38] It is probably due to the explicitly Arminian implications of the text that it (and others of the period) remained unpublished in Grotius' lifetime.[39] Cunaeus decided to publish, but without the explicit political content he had originally intended. What was left could be easily mistaken for an antiquarian document rather than a guide for modern politics, and was for over 350 years.[40]

The failure of the Remonstrants effectively "halted the flow of republican writing in the tradition of Grotius and Cunaeus."[41] Only in the preface of the first Dutch translation of the *Leviathan* (1667) by Spinoza's friend Abraham Van Berkel did the theoretical strain traced above, the Josephan reading of theocracy as ideal government, reappear.[42] Once again, a particular reading of Josephus was adduced to support an anti-monarchical, Republican-minded work of political philosophy which had harsh words for the clergy as a political entity.[43] The fact that this was a preface to the *Leviathan* is in no way coincidental. Hobbes' influence on Dutch political thought was tremendous, especially on Spinoza, and Hobbes himself shows important similarities with the Josephan tradition of political Hebraism (despite his lack of Hebrew). [44] In *De cive,* Hobbes separated "*Divine civill Lawes*...peculiar to the civill government of the Jewes, his peculiar people"

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37 For the dating of Grotius' early works, see Eyffinger, *De republica emendanda*, pp. 5-55

38 See Nobbs, *Theocracy and Toleration*, pp. 25-108

39 See especially pars. 6-27. Eyffinger, "Hugo Grotius' *De republica emendanda* in Context" pp. 99-102

40 Eyffinger, "Introduction," pp. xxxvii-xl. Cunaeus has precisely one mention each in such monumental works as Schama's *Embarrassment of Riches* and Israel's *The Dutch Republic*.

41 Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, p. 700

42 "For, after the Jews had dismissed θεοκρατία (as Josephus coined their state in praise of his fellow compatriots) or government by God, and in imitation of other peoples had chosen and been given a king...damnation and destruction, and the persecution they have suffered from others...resulted from this" Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan: of van de stoffe, gedaente, ende magt van de kerckelycke ende wereltlycke regeeringe,* trans. A. van Berkel, Voor-reden. My great thanks to René Koekkoek for allowing me to see his translation of the passage. For Van Berkel and Spinoza, see Schoneveld, *Intertraffic of the Mind,* p. 40

43 Schoneveld, *Intertraffic of the Mind,"* pp. 46-47. Even if this does not strike the reader as Hobbes' goal in the *Leviathan*, it is fairly clear from the context of translation and the preface what Van Berkel's reasons for the translation were.

44 Nelson, *op. cit.* pp. 122-5. In Letter L to Jarig Jelles, 2 June 1674 (*Correspondence of Spinoza,* p. 269) where it is clear that both Spinoza's close friends and Spinoza himself saw the *TTP* as a work in close dialogue with Hobbes. See McShea's *The Political Philosophy of Spinoza,* pp. 137-155 and in Noel Malcolm, "Hobbes and Spinoza."

from "*naturall* [law]...which God hath declared to all men."[45] He nevertheless found the former to have significance as an example of general political principles, using the "fourth philosophy" and covenantal history mentioned in Josephus to show that even the divine law must operate by principles of covenant and absolute sovereignty.[46]

Nelson would appear to be right in identifying an abiding tradition of Josephan political Hebraism with a certain set of shared texts and commensurable viewpoints that stretched from Sigonio (and, in a sense, Erastus) to Van Berkel's translation of Hobbes.[47] One might even be justified in naming this a "Josephist" tradition, since there is ample documentation to suggest the ways in which citing an author like Tacitus could stand in for certain political and intellectual commitments, especially in the Dutch Republic of the seventeenth century.[48] Like Tacitism, this putative "Josephism" allowed for the creation of national myth, of the Netherlands as a "new Israel" with the potential for a divine government,paralleling the concomitant "Batavian myth", where Dutch political identity was traced back to an ancient Germanic tribe using terms and concepts "found" in Tacitus.[49] Even if one remains skeptical about the possibility of "Josephism", it should be clear that by the time Baruch Spinoza came of age, Josephus and the constitutional problem of theocracy, far from being forgotten, were playing a major role in Dutch intellectual life.[50]

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[45] *De cive,* XIV.4 (p. 171 in *De Cive: The English Version*)

[46] *De cive* XVI.1,9 (pp. 200-1, 205) quoting Josephus in Antiquities I.7 and 18.2. Nelson makes the case that this particularly anticipates the lengthy Erastian arguments in part three of *Leviathan*.

[47] Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, pp. 88-138.

[48] Tacitism is a modern designation (coined by Toffanin in 1921) for a certain politically minded use of Tacitus (often as a stand in for Machiavelli and a harsh "reason in state" position) in the early modern period. See Burke's two articles, "Tacitism" and "'Tacitism, scepticism, and reason of state." Also, Momigliano, "The First Political Commentary on Tacitus", and, for a Dutch context, Haitsma Mulier, *The Myth of Venice*.

[49] Of course, not all those who subscribed to the Batavian myth were what contemporary historians would call "Tacitist," just as not every Tacitist in the Netherlands wrote on the Batavian myth. Both Campos Boralevi and Dunkelgrün note the parallel, but without making the equation between Tacitus and Josephus. The literature on the Batavian myth is just as legion (so to speak) as that on "Neerlands Israel." The classic study is I. Schöffer, "The Batavian myth during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries." but see also Schama's chapter, *op. cit.* pp. 75-82.

[50] This makes rather problematic a common understanding of Spinoza' critique of religion, that Spinoza "was the first writer to make systematic use" of theocracy, adapting Josephus' term as a way of linking his political system to his unique "god-intoxicated" metaphysics.The wording is Balibar's (*Spinoza and Politics,* p. 45), but the claim is found in Feuer, *Spinoza and the Rise of Liberalism,* p. 120 (where he calls Josephus "forgotten") and in Ward, "Spinoza and the Critique of Theocracy" as well.

2. Spinoza's Critique of "Josephism"

Although one of his school teachers, Menasseh ben Israel, was a correspondent of many of the leading Hebraists of the day, including both Cunaeus and Grotius, the most likely place for Spinoza to have been introduced to political Hebraism was in the house of Franciscus van Enden, his Latin teacher.[51] Between the cosmopolitan environment of Van Enden's school and Spinoza's subsequent semi-attendance at Leiden, it is virtually inconceivable that he did not pick up some familiarity with the published political writings of Grotius and the biblico-political writings of Cunaeus, the foremost Hebraist of his day. Some have even seen traces of those writings more or less clearly in the *TTP*.[52] Frustratingly, while Spinoza's modest library contained a complete set of Josephus, books by other Leiden Hebraists and *theological* Erastian works of Grotius', no "Hebrew Republic" books are to be found to back up such assertions with any certainty.[53]

As for Josephus, he was certainly not a forbidden author in the cosmopolitan Amsterdam community, and he may even have been one of the first classical sources to which Spinoza was exposed.[54] There was every reason for an Orthodox Jew (or, as has been shown above, Christian) to feel comfortable with Josephus. The apologetic fireworks of *CA* were devoted expressly to maintaining the historicity, antiquity, and reliability of the biblical texts and attempting to show the compatibility of Jewish *religious law and custom* with Greek conceptions of political life, all the

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[51] Roth, "A Life of Menasseh ben Israel" p. 168. For Van Enden's role in Spinoza's political education see Gullan-Whur, *Within Reason*, pp. 129-135 or Nadler, *Spinoza*, pp. 107-111.

[52] See Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, pp. 324-25, Richard Tuck, *Natural Rights Theories,* p. 142, and Popkin*, loc. cit.* Strauss suggests a connection between Cunaeus and two passages in Books XVII and XVIII of the *TTP.* Frustratingly, he only lists the passages in an appendix and does not treat them at length. Tuck raises the possibility of Spinoza's familiarity with political Hebraism through Selden, but acknowledges that this is impossible to prove. Popkin connects the Hebraic focus of the *TTP* to Cunaeus, but, as noted above, doesn't make a serious case.

[53] With the exception, perhaps, of Hobbes' *De cive.* Spinoza had reference works by the Vossii, L'Empereur, and Buxtorf as well as Grotius' *De satisfactione* and *De imperio.* There are also two works of the brothers de la Court, famed polemicists who used Hebrew Republic arguments when useful, such as their justification for republicanism in *Fables, Moral and Political,* where an allegory about the people of Israel ends with the pertinent lesson "..nor indeed can there be any other Lord or King than God Almighty..." pp. 22-23, 100-1. All references to Spinoza's library have been taken from the inventory in Freudenthal *et. al*., *Die Lebensgeschichte Spinozas*, pp. 120-200. Preus also makes the important point that there are arguments in the *TTP* addressed to writers *not* found in his personal library. "A Hidden Opponent in Spinoza's 'Tractatus'" pp. 363-4.

[54] For the evidence of Josephus in the writings of Rabbis Menassah ben Israel and Isaac Aboab da Fonseca, see Schatz, "Messianism in the Jewish-Christian Context" p. 246 and Katchen, *op. cit.,* p. 117. Klever muses that he may have been introduced by one of his first "corrupters", Uriel da Costa. *Spinoza Classicus*, pp. 253-254

while combining biblical and classical citations to both ends.[55] Given the tension between this orthodoxy and the heterodox views for which Spinoza is known, it should come as no surprise that the only major study of Spinoza and Josephus concludes that Josephus "is a central author and implicit focal point for Spinoza's denial [of sacred history and election]."[56] The methodological grounding of constitutions and their study, and area where Josephus was so important to earlier scholars, represents the point where Spinoza simultaneously enters and exits the tradition of political Hebraism.

To understand this paradox, Spinoza's method must itself be understood. "By 'God's direction,'" he innocently notes, "I mean the fixed and unalterable order of nature or the interconnectedness of [all] natural things."[57] The significance of his ensuing definition of fortune ("nothing other than the direction of God inasmuch as he governs human affairs through external and unforeseen causes")[58] hinges on whether the reader has caught on to the way in which language in the *TTP* will not behave as it might in ordinary writing. From these two sentences, the alert reader must remember that all references to divine governance or even influence must be taken as facets of an inalterable natural order. This sets the stage for Spinoza's particular approach to the interpretation of human (and more specifically Jewish) history: "...[The] Hebrews excelled other peoples in merely one thing: they conducted the affairs that affected their security of life successfully and overcame great dangers...Their election and vocation therefore lay only in the success and the prosperity at the time of their commonwealth."[59]

Spinoza's vocabulary, in which every term of general causality or intentionality (including the divine instantiations of those concepts) must be traced back to nature, demands an interpretation of history where material measures are the only metrics, and where endurance against the

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[55] On the first point see *CA* 1.1-7 (referencing *AJ* 1.3), on the second see *AJ* 4.184 and especially *CA* 2.188 (δὲ τελετῆς τινος τῆς ὅλης πολιτείας οἰκονομουμένης). It is no wonder that Josephus was so beloved by early modern Christian writers, indeed, he sounds like one of them!

[56] Proietti, *La città divisa*, p. 15

[57] *TTP* III (p. 45)

[58] *TTP* III (p. 46)

[59] *TTP* III (pp. 47-8)

contingency of nature is the only form that political flourishing can take.[60] A proper historical attitude was not unrelated to Spinoza's innovative approach to biblical hermeneutics.[61] This method was also the perfect means by which Spinoza might appear to be "friends" with an orthodox source (Josephus), while actually meaning the opposite from him. At the end of Book Six, Josephus' statement that a miracle may have happened "by itself" (κατὰ ταὐτόματον) and yet still in accordance with the will of God, is taken as a support for Spinoza's own critique of miracles. Josephus was using Stoic terminology to make an explicitly *theistic* point, that all appearances in nature represent the hidden action of the divine will. Only someone paying careful attention to the difference between his "divine will" and Spinoza's would recognise the radical disagreement between source and critic.[62]

The initial *lesson* which emerges from Spinoza's subtle method is the discovery of the entirely *political* character of the virtues that engender material welfare (in common parlance, divine election). "In fact nothing else is promised in the Bible in return for their obedience but the continued prosperity of their state and the other good things of this life; while, conversely...they are threatened with the ruin of their polity and severe hardship."[63] If one reads the Biblical narrative in accordance with this materialist, proto-historicist hermeneutic, it will be clear that the lessons of land theology concern the freedom and political state of a people "and the manner and means by which they acquired it," and the human laws [*leges*] through which a society is made "more stable and less vulnerable to fortune."[64] If the laws were able to keep the people free and in the land, they were successful, (i.e God was satisfied). God's favour extends only as far as Israel's political

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60 Compare the famous 25th chapter of *The Prince* to Spinoza's elucidation of how careful planning might best fortune in *TTP* III (p. 47): "...et idcirco illa societas securior erit, et magis constans, minusque fortunae obnoxia, quae maxime ab hominibus prudentibus, et vigilantibus fundatur, et dirigitur..." Spinoza could not have expected even the best educated among his readership to have known the actual metaphysical positions concomitant with this line of reasoning, but he does expect the reader to understand which statements, in light of the hermeneutic principles set out above, must be reinterpreted and re-understood. For the view of causality behind these principles, see *Ethica* IV (Gebhardt vol. II, p. 208).

61 Spinoza himself makes this clear in *TTP* VII. See Preus, *Spinoza and the Irrelevance of Biblical Authority* and Frampton, *Spinoza and the Rise of Biblical Criticism,* pp. 203-30 (and pp. 55-60 for an interesting comparison with the "heterodox limits" of some of the political Hebraists).

62 *AJ* II.347 (*TTP* VI, p. 96). On this point see Attridge, p. 98

63 *TTP* III (pp. 48)

64 *TTP* III (pp. 49): Again, c.f. *The Prince* XXV.

stability. This may be contrasted with Josephus' well-known avoidance of the political implications found in biblical "land theology", an avoidance paralleled by the Rabbis, and later picked up and absorbed into the Josephist tradition.[65] Josephus explains away the loss and gain of the land as another stage in a *moral* cycle of reward and punishment, with each event involving a direct instance of divine intervention in the *religious* election of Israel.[66]

If divine favour, which is to say natural success, consists in political virtue, then any nation might master the forms of excellent laws and government. "No individual Jew considered apart from his society and state [i.e. political forms] possesses any gift from God beyond what other men have...the true gentile prophets...also promised the same election to the faithful of their peoples."[67] Keeping in mind the special meaning of election, the stakes of political life for all peoples at all times thus becomes perfectly clear. Election, "regards only [a nation's] polity and [its] material interests (since this is all that can distinguish one nation from another)..."[68] A crucial element for Spinoza's argument (and one that he may have borrowed from Hobbes or Bodin) is that the all Mosaic laws that are *not* discernible by universal reason "are the public laws of the country."[69] The language that Spinoza uses for this, "'*leges Mosis, quia publica jura patriae erant*" is close to a favourite formulation of Josephus, the πατρίοι νόμοι ("ancestral laws") of the Jews. Josephus' use, however, is explicitly meant to have a non-political, religious meaning, invoking the ancestral religious traditions recognised across the ancient world (and especially in Rome).[70]

Spinoza's materialist interpretation of history is entirely incommensurate with the mix of ancient historiographical technique and proto-rabbinic sacred history found in Josephus. This may

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65 See Nelson's chapter on agricultural laws and political Hebraism, which focuses on the way authors the biblical account of the land was "seen through the prism of rabbinic commentaries" as well as Josephus. *op. cit.* pp. 57-87

66 Established in Amaru's "Land Theology in Josephus."

67 *TTP* III (pp. 50,56)

68 *TTP* III (pp. 57)

69 See also similar language in Book XVII (p. 206). Each scholar has a pet theory as to where this element comes from. Nelson is sure it must come from Hobbes (see *The Hebrew Republic*, pp. 128-35), while Pines makes an interesting case that it may be found in Bodin in the same "historical" framework of pre/post-polity in which Spinoza places it (see "The Jewish Religion After the Destruction of Temple and State," pp. 222-226).

70 D.R. Schwartz, *Studies in the Jewish Background of Christianity,* pp. 29-43. This interpretation seems to have been more or less confirmed by Bernd Schröder's much more extensive study of the concept of πατρίοι νόμοι in Josephus and other Hellenistic sources in *Die "väterlichen Gesetze"*

seem strange given that Josephus is the second most frequently cited author in the *TTP*, but when counted up and analysed, those citations are usually matters of factual corroboration, most often to prove a biblical inconsistency or provide historical evidence.[71] In the two places a contemporary reader would most expect to find Josephus, the treatment of theocracy and the history of the decline of the Hebrew state, he is completely absent from Spinoza's work. This is highly significant given that one of the crucial elements of the "Josephism" posited above is the reliance on Josephus in constitutional discussions and for theoretical innovations. To this end, Spinoza references neither *AJ* IV nor *CA* II, the central texts for political Hebraism. There is not even a reference to the stand-in biblical text relied upon by Hebrew Republic and Remonstrant authors alike, 1 Samuel 8.[72] Before even reaching the account of the Hebrew republic, Spinoza's strictly *political* interpretation of biblical and Israelite history resting on his *material* hermeneutic, distanced him from almost every "political Hebraist" as well as from their favourite ancient source.[73]

Just as Spinoza uses Josephus as an alternately positive and negative presence, his treatment of theocracy has a similarly ambiguous relationship to the Hebrew Republic tradition as a whole.[74] Spinoza broadly endorses certain positions and terms that were familiar tropes of political Hebrasim, but his argument taken as a whole sharply undermines the ground of such earlier studies. The opening pages of the seventeenth chapter of the *TTP* set the tone for this subtle project, as Spinoza tilts at political "stratagems" involving divine assistance devised by other rulers before proceeding to discuss the "stratagems divine revelation formerly taught Moses."[75] Through juxtaposition of Moses with the moral assiduity of Greek civilisation and the perceptive apothegms

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71 Klever, *Spinoza Classicus*, p. 256. He and Proeitti (*op. cit.* p. 48) list four major uses of Josephus: 1. As a historical source (*TTP* pp. 140, 146); 2. as a witness for contradictions in Scripture (*TTP* pp. 133, 135, 143, ann. 22); 3. To contribute evidence to the materialist interpretation of Scripture and historical events (*TTP* pp. 42, 96, 223).

72 See Nelson on "Republican exclusivism," *The Hebrew Republic*, pp. 23-56.

73 The notable exception to this is Bodin. See Pines' *"*The Jewish Religion After the Destruction" p. 224 *et passim*.

74 This may explain the bifurcation in the secondary literature between those who see Spinoza's treatment as exemplary (e.g. Smith, pp. 149-151; Levene, and Rosenthal) and those who see it mainly as a critique, either political or philosophical (Feuer, *Spinoza and the Rise of Liberalism,* pp. 115-120; Ward, "Spinoza's Critique of Theocracy" and Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, pp. 243-255.).

75 The Latin does not have the word "stratagem", but the sense of the juxtaposition is served well by Silverthorne and Israel's translation. c.f. *TTP* XVII (p. 205): "Et ad hunc modum Monarchae ad sui imperii securitatem alia excogitaverunt...in hunc finem olim divina revelatio Mosen docuit."

of Latin historians, Spinoza has gestured at a trope of political Hebraism, and then reversed it, effectively throwing the real value of Mosaic "stratagems" into doubt before they have even been addressed.

The way in which Spinoza chooses to characterise the development of the Jewish polity is almost equal parts social contract theory and political Hebraism. The beginning of Israelite political history sounds similar to the "state of nature" account of the origins of society described in the previous book of the *TTP*. "After the Hebrews departed from Egypt...they were not bound by compact to anyone; rather they regained the natural right to all that they could get, and everyone was once again free to decide whether [he] wanted to retain this right or give it up..."[76] Many have noted this connection, as well as the follow up, that, out of this "natural state", the Hebrews decided "to transfer their right to no mortal man but rather to God alone." Spinoza is explicit that "this undertaking...was made in the same way that we conceived above it is made in an ordinary society."[77] This can now be understood in two ways, first is the way in which the Hebrew contract with "God" is indeed a political moment of the clearest sort, second is the way in which this contract is *ordinary*, that is to say, the careful reader should be aware that a contract with God is an impossible contract, a contract with *nature.*Who the actual partner may be in terms of a naturalistic/critical understanding is as yet unclear, for Spinoza makes his crucial clarification, "that God has no special kingdom among men except through those who hold power"[78] only some two chapters later.

Spinoza designates this form of political organisation with a special name – *theocracy,* "since its citizens were bound by no law but the Law revealed by God."[79] This is a key word in Dutch "Josephism" and a crucial moment in any Hebrew Republic account, the moment of constitutional description. The most immediately striking thing about this use of the word is the

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[76] *TTP* XVII (pp. 205)
[77] *TTP* XVII (pp. 205). See Beiner.
[78] *TTP* XIX (pp. 228, emphasized and repeated with identical wording at 231, through Israel and Silverthorne translate *imperium* the first time as "sovereignty" and the second time as "power.")
[79] *TTP* XVII (pp. 206)

absence of any external reference. Spinoza acts as if the word were his own invention. In other cases where he disagrees with his source text, Spinoza has no difficulty using the ambiguities built into his hermeneutic language to work out an acceptably ambiguous compromise. Theocracy would seem to be an ideal candidate for this. “Handing power over to God” would mean one thing in Josephus' language and quite another in Spinoza's (where, as he will describe, it can approximate the way in which democracies orient themselves correctly toward nature and natural right). Certainly this double meaning is the reason Spinoza chooses to use the term in the first place. A possible explanation for Spinoza's avoidance of any citation may be that the intellectual context for the term would be all too clear in a reader's mind – Josephus' theocracy is Cunaeus' Hebrew Republic.

The significance of this passage to the argument itself may be found in the sentence immediately following: “These things were more opinion than reality...for in reality the Hebrews retained absolutely the right of the government...”[80] Spinoza is being obscure. On the one hand, he clearly wishes to show how the biblical founding moment of the Israelites might be reconciled with and exemplify an account of founding moments he has posited in theory, the account of transferal of right. On the other, he flatly denies that this actually took place, placing it in the realm of “opinion”, a term of fundamental opposition to philosophical truth. As with the “foundation of the state”, so too with its form. In the *next* consecutive sentence, Spinoza seemingly ignores his own admission that the transfer of right was fictitious and proclaims that the Hebrews “all gave up their right, equally, as in a democracy.” A parallel is clearly implied between democracy, Spinoza's favoured regime, and the original state of Hebrew politics, only to be undermined by subtle hints of profound disapproval for that “highly problematic concept,” theocracy.[81] Gershon Weiler similarly makes a philosophical argument that Spinoza's “theocracy” is different in the way that the term is exposed to

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[80] *TTP* XVII (pp. 206)

[81] For a careful analysis of this, Ward, “Spinoza's Critique” p. 7 *et passim.* For Spinoza's favourable attitude towards democracy, see *TTP* XVI, esp. pp. 199-200, as well as treatment in McShea, *Spinoza's Political Philosophy,* p. 68ff

the principles of real political life, and it proves, even in its best form, inferior to the rational state.[82]

It is not entirely fair to speak of a unitary "theocracy" for (Polybius-like) Spinoza presents his Hebrew republic as a changing series of governments. After the pseudo-democratic founding comes the first *real* transfer of right, with the creation of Moses as Sovereign.[83] The third distinct stage in the development of the Hebrew theocracy (after Moses' death) might usefully be called the "Erastian theocratic moment", a paradoxical title Spinoza himself might have enjoyed, as it denotes a structure of rule that separates the sovereign power from religious authority (a crucial difference from the unitary model above, where legitimacy derives from divinity) while still maintaining the putative primacy of God in the State. Spinoza is at pains to maintain that this form is indeed still neither "democratic, aristocratic or monarchical, but rather theocratic."[84] Crucially it is this *second* theocracy that Spinoza compares to the "situation of the States General of the United Netherlands,".[85] It is certainly no coincidence that this "Erastian theocracy" is the one linked to the Netherlands, for Erastianism in its mature form is the attitude towards the relationship of Church and State most famously advocated by Dutch Josephists, including the Collegiants of Spinoza's circle.[86]

The introduction of the "Erastian" theocracy may lend some support to the reading given above.[87] This theocracy has none of the positive similarities to a theoretical democracy that were assigned to it above, and consequently, Spinoza has no problem hinting at its connection to the concept of theocracy commonly compared with the Dutch republic. After the lengthy description of

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82 *Jewish Theocracy* pp. 86-110. This study is, in a sense, an attempt at an historical proof for Weiler's philosophical instincts.

83 "By proceeding thus, they plainly abolished the first covenant and absolutely transferred their right...to Moses." *TTP* XVII (pp. 207)

84 This depiction of theocracy, and the entire Hebrew political project as requiring *new* constitutional terminology is precisely the move made by political Hebraists who either modified existing Greek terms or, like Spinoza, used Josephus' neologism. *TTP* XVII (pp. 208)

85 For an example of a reading too eager in its attempt to map on this account to an approval of contemporary Dutch politics, see Feuer, *Spinoza and the Rise of Liberalism,* pp. 117-120.

86 i.e Meijer, Van Berkel, and others committed to the Erastian republican position in either a sense either Josephist or otherwise. See Nadler, *Spinoza,* pp. 171-4.

87 This is not the only schema of "multiple Hebrew Republics" in Josephus. Klever counts three, while Ward also notes similar shifts. The most intriguing account of these shifts may be in Beiner, *Civil Religion*, Ch. 11. Beiner does an excellent job of making the necessary comparisons between Spinoza's "civil religion" and Hobbes'.

the workings of the state, Spinoza casually suggests that the litany of positive qualities he has described, the loyalty of troops, the courage of the populous, are all factors "whose impact stemmed from opinion alone."[88] There is only one factor the "Erastian state" that Spinoza endorses unabashedly, and that is the attitude towards property and possession, all else in the state, far from being fitting for emulation only "appeared to be freedom rather than slavery"[89] in the eyes (and opinions) of its subjects. In placing this imperfect, yet ostensibly republican and "Erastian" state immediately before the collapse of the Israelite commonwealth, it is hard not to view this emphasis on theocracy as a rebuke of putative theocratic models of earlier political Hebraists and a warning about contemporary Dutch politics.

When Spinoza's account of the Hebrew polity is read as a whole, the founding act of the Hebrew republic, the unified and egalitarian surrender of right to "God", only *apes* the way the best regime might envision its founding. It is the gap between the actuality of democratic equality and the inability of the Israelites not to revert to the more familiar vision of sovereignty found in Mosaic leadership that makes the Hebrew republic tragic rather than exemplary, and it is this gap that makes the project of recovering such a republic and its laws (or ideals) confused and perhaps dangerous. There was indeed a brief moment of proto-democracy that "might have lasted forever", but its failure, traceable to its very "theocratic" structure, means that "no one can now imitate it, and it would not be wise to try to do so."[90] This is a subtle coda to the ongoing critique of the traditional Hebrew republic narrative. An annotation meant by Spinoza to clarify the text only drives home this point. "Those who do not pay attention to the different political arrangements of the Hebrews, at different times, but rather imagine them all to be one, thus become entangled in all sorts of difficulties."[91] It is possible to read this as both a condemnation of those who would make a new theocracy *and* as criticism of those who would view the theocracy of the past as a model for the

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88 *TTP* XVII (pp. 215)

89 *TTP* XVII (pp. 216)

90 In Weiler's words theocracy "is not only impossible 'at the present day', but it is also undesirable" *of itself*. (*op. cit.* pp. 98-99) *TTP* XVIII (pp. 221)

91 *TTP* Annotation 38 (p. 267), to be inserted precisely in the middle of the discussion on the "Erastian theocracy", p. 210

toleration of the present.[92]

3. Governance and Method

If Spinoza was not a "Josephist," why did he write in the idiom of the Hebrew republic? After all, close at hand was the language of Tacitism with which to engage both contemporary Dutch politics and broader problems. Surely Spinoza's own sympathies would seem to lie with the skeptical rationalism of Tacitus and Machiavelli.[93] There have been three general scholarly answers to this question. One is that the exemplary use of the Hebrew Republic and theocracy must be read within the story of Dutch political history, the battles between Remonstrants, Orthodox Calvinists, Statists and Orangists that so often made recourse to Hebraist terminology.[94] This approach has some truth to it, but does no justice to the unique philosophical complexity of the "Hebrew Republic" sections of the *TTP* among the many contemporary liberal critiques of the *predikanten.*[95] If Spinoza had wanted to write a critique of a political position, he need not have been so philosophically and intellectually involved.[96] There is something deeper at stake than merely demonstrating why the simple comparison between the Netherlands and the Israelite state might not work.[97] The intellectual and, more importantly, methodological thrust of the *TTP* suggest that Spinoza was writing not only for his enemies, but his political allies who had made their own use of Hebraic imagery, the Remonstrant political Hebraists and their tradition.[98] One recent semi-

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92 C.f. Weiler, *Jewish Theocracy* pp. 3-23 and 86-110.

93 On Spinoza's Tacitism, see Wirszubski, "Spinoza's Debt to Tacitus"; Proietti "Adulescens luxu perditus"; pp. 210-57; Strauss, *op. cit.* Appendix 2; and Klever, "Imperium Aeturnum," p. 1-15. See allso Beiner.

94 Feuer, *Spinoza and the Rise of Liberalism*, pp. 117-120. C.f. Popkin, *The Third Force in Seventeenth Century Thought*, pp. 165-6

95 It is obvious that Spinoza's work must be seen in opposition to the Calvinists. (Schama, *op. cit.* p. 381). It is only when one compares Spinoza's work to contemporary efforts by his own "republican" friends (e.g. Lodewijk Meijer's *De jure ecclesiasticorum*) one understands how different in type his work is from theirs.

96 Also mediating against this position is the famous fact of Spinoza's stated opposition to translating the *TTP* into the vernacular in Letter XLIV to Jarig Jelles, 17 February 1671 (*Correspondence of Spinoza,* p. 260), a fact that may not only represent his political caution in the wake of the affair of the Koerbagh brothers but also, followed as it is by the comparison to Thales (*ibid.* p. 261), may suggest the *philosophical* nature of Spinoza's project.

97 Rosenthal, "Why Spinoza Chose the Hebrews" p. 210

98 C.f. Menachem Lorberbaum's acute phrasing of the general principle of the *TTP*: "The problem of political theology as Spinoza conceives of it is therefore conflictual, seeking to retrieve as much as possible from the historical religions for the very purpose of undoing the institutions their beliefs traditionally supported." ("Spinoza's Political Problem," pp.170).

acknowledgement of this has been to treat Spinoza as odd man out in political Hebraism.[99] Eric Nelson calls Spinoza's vision of Hebrew politics "deflationary" while simultaneously claiming Spinoza for the "conventional Erastians," though failing to reconcile this with Spinoza's own radical views on God (or indeed government). If there have been some attempts to strike a balance between Spinoza's clear philosophical use for the Hebrew Republic and the obvious significance of the uniquely "Hebraic" context of his time and place, even the most successful of these have more or less avoided the particular aspect of Josephus and his theocratic legacy.

A provisional answer to this question may be reached by examining the way in which theocracy is grounded on *opinion* rather than reason. "Instability does not spring from reason" Spinoza begins the *TTP* by saying, "but from passion alone."[100] Every time a form of government, a law, or a rule fails, by this reasoning, it can be traced back to the passions.[101] Theocracy *seems* like a democracy, but where the latter is formed by an agreement of men "compelled as they were by necessity and guided by reason,"[102], the former, grounded on demonstrations of "God's astounding power"[103] which, in the best of cases would rely on the exercise of prophetic imagination that is "capricious and changeable" and therefore derived from the passions.[104] The same basic schema holds true for the "Erastian theocracy" Both Josephus and the authors who so faithfully follow him may support causes that Spinoza agrees with, such as toleration, or secular sovereignty, but if the reasoning behind these concepts is fundamentally based on a system grounded in"inspiration," Spinoza cannot, it would appear, endorse it.[105] Just as Spinoza was found to disagree with Josephus'

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[99] Neuman, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70 and Nelson, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55,125-137. For a cogent critic of Nelson, see Smith, "The Hebrew Republic", *loc. cit.*

[100] *TTP* Preface (p. 6)

[101] For instance the fall of the original "democratic" theocracy, which fails because of the "terror" and "astonishment" of the masses (*TTP* XVII, p. 206).

[102] *TTP* XVI (p. 193)

[103] *TTP* XVII (p. 205)

[104] *TTP* I (p. 29) As Strauss points out, "Theocracy is thus the form of state that best corresponds to imaginative-emotive life" (*Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, p. 237). i.e. it may be the best of governments not founded on a rational understanding of natural right.

[105] See Cunaeus, *The Hebrew Republic*, p. 163." Since it is my goal that everything I do should be dictated by reason...I think we ought to look for the kind of evidence that is beyond dispute...unless they have been pointed out elsewhere under the inspiration of the Messiah." Hobbes might have agreed with Spinoza, but he does not say so outright.

method of interpretation, he points out, in the guise of a commentary on the "Hebrew Republic," the insurmountable problems in using that "Republic" (which Spinoza views as having been more legend than fact in any case) as a model for ideal or actual politics.The opposite of this passionate theocracy is the "rational state," which "proves to be the most natural, and also the most powerful.[106]" This should come as no surprise when placed in the context of Spinoza's method, grounded as it was in a system of *natural* explanation. This state matches what Spinoza calls "the supreme law of nature," namely for each thing "to persist in its own state so far as it can."[107] The rational thing persists, because it has the closest relationship to the "eternal order of the whole of nature" (in vulgar language, substance, or the divine).[108] This rational government will be a democracy, which "aims at living for its own ends"[109] The individual natural right to act out one's desires is magnified on the societal level. Yet the law of nature is preserved, because in a democracy one not only gives up power, but receives it back, and is therefore not "alienated" from it.[110] One state works through rational action, the other through obedience grounded on mystification.

Spinoza's ends may be read as more or less compatible with others in his circle or others who sought to use the Hebrew republic to Erastian or Republican ends (the subjects of Nelson's book and the "Josephists" of this study). What is undeniable and important in Spinoza's treatment of the Hebrew Republic is his application of a rational, critical methodology to the study of the historical Hebrew polity. Spinoza wrote as a political Hebraist precisely to point out the tenuous ground underpinning any state that idealised a form of government tied to the passions, while still speaking with in a comfortable, religious idiom, similar to that used by more conventional liberal thinkers to combat extreme versions of the theocratic message. Perhaps the best example of how Spinoza differs from even his closest predecessors may be found in a juxtaposition of his Hebrew theocracy with that of Hobbes. Spinoza shares a number of crucial philosophical assumptions with

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106 Strauss, *op. cit*. p. 243
107 *TTP* XVI (p. 189)
108 *TTP* XVI (p. 191)
109 *Tractatus Politicus* V.6
110 The word is the translators'. C.f. *TTP* XVI (p. 193): "...sine ulla naturalis juris repugnantia..."

Hobbes. His account of the original contract has even been described as "what [Hobbes] should have said had he been consistent."[111] Yet even if he agrees with Hobbes that a Hebrew theocracy would be have God as the Sovereign, and even if he clearly found much to like in the Erastian sections of *De cive* (and, if he read it, the longer treatment in *Leviathan*), by repeating the arguments, acknowledging their excellent points, and *still* rejecting them, Spinoza goes beyond a marginal attempt at "deflation." The audacity of his insistence on the necessity of *how* the argument is expressed and on the method that grounded it, over and above particular political/theoretical positions, may even have reached Hobbes himself.[112] The boldness of Spinoza's departure from previous "liberal" writing was certainly not lost on the Dutch Hobbesians. *True* "conventional Erastians" like Lambert van Velthuysen, who might have otherwise been expected to embrace the *TTP,* feared the text precisely for its method.[113]

To provide a tentative answer to the question that inspired this project, it seems that there is evidence, textual and historical, to suggest that Spinoza *did* play a part in the story of political Hebraism. He was sigularly skeptical towards political reform when in religious guise; and he alone among "political Hebraists" insisted on such methodological consistency, even in the realm of religion. It was this rigour that later came to characterise radical forms of modern political thought.[114] For Spinoza, the only way to ensure the safety of the state is to ensure not only the form of government, but also the abstract principles of reason behind that government. It must be left to further research to determine how directly Spinoza's critique might have contributed to the end of "Hebrew Republic" arguments by the early 18th century. In any case, Spinoza's project may be said

[111] McShea, *The Political Philosophy of Spinoza* p. 138.

[112] A view supported by the famous story in Aubrey's *Brief Lives*: "When Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* first came out, Mr. Edmund Waller sent it to my lord of Devonshire...[Hobbes] told me [Spinoza] had outthrown him a bar's length, for he durst not write so boldly." See the careful analysis of this passage and their relationship as heterodox thinkers in Edward Curley's invaluable "I Durst Not Write So Boldly or How to Read Hobbes' Theological Political Treatise"

[113] See Velthuysen's letter (Letter XLII, 24, January 1671 in *Spinoza's Correspondence* pp. 239-53) where he notes Spinoza has "laboured to free his mind from every superstition...he has gone too far in the opposite direction..." (p. 239). Throughout the letter Velthuysen makes continuous reference to the way arguments derive from Spinoza's "adherence to his [philosophical] principles" (pp. 241, 244). Spinoza particularly liked this critique and even asked Velthuysen to reprint it publicly given his "love of truth" and the "singular fairness of his mind" (Letter LXIX, August 1675, *Spinoza's Correspondence* pp. 335-336).

[114] See Balibar, and, more widely, any Althusserian interpretation of Spinoza (e.g. those in Montag and Stolze)

to be wonderfully Janus-faced in the way it looks back on (and dismantles) an old tradition while simultaneously preparing the way for a new one.

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