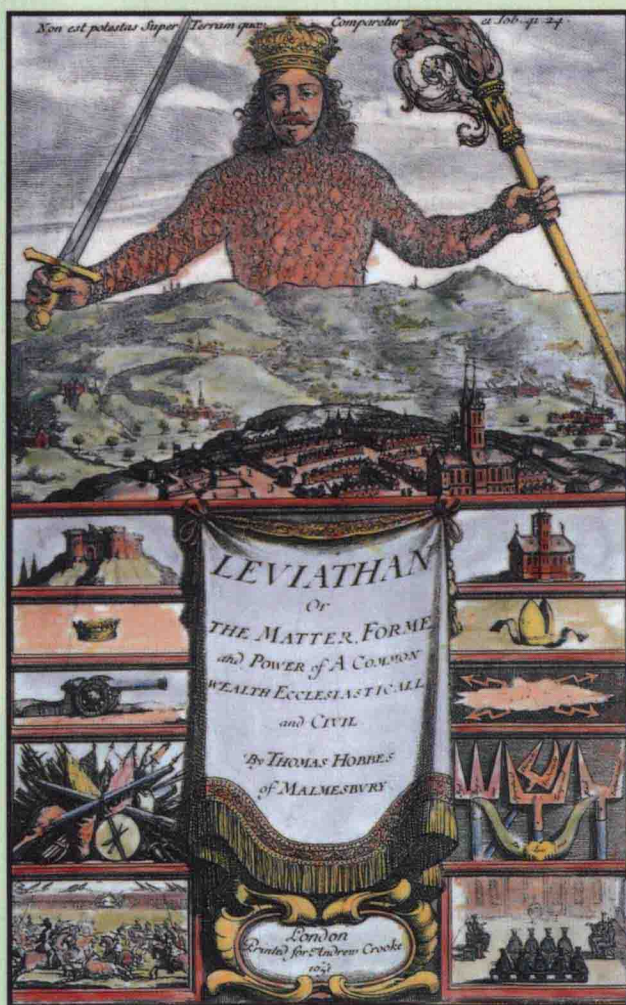


LEVIATHAN

THOMAS HOBBES



EDITED BY
RICHARD E. FLATHMAN AND DAVID JOHNSTON

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

LEVIATHAN

This Norton Critical Edition of arguably the greatest work of political theory written in the English language contains the bulk of Hobbes's treatise, including all chapters except those which are of interest primarily to professional historical scholars. To make Hobbes's sometimes archaic prose more accessible to students, the editors have included explanatory annotations throughout.

"Backgrounds" includes writings on Hobbes's life as well as selections from his responses to criticism of the book. Also included is a selection of those criticisms and other reactions to the work by Sir Robert Filmer, James Harrington, Bishop Bramhall, Edward Hyde (the earl of Clarendon), Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Montesquieu, and Henry Sidgwick.

"Interpretations" collects eight of the most important assessments of Hobbes and *Leviathan* written in the last forty years, including writings by Leo Strauss, Michael Oakeshott, Johann P. Sommerville, Richard Tuck, Jean Hampton, David Johnston, George Kateb, and Richard E. Flathman.

This text of *Leviathan* is based on the 1909 Oxford University Press edition, which in turn was based on one of the most fully corrected copies of the text that was widely available to readers in the seventeenth century. The editors have also noted variations between this text and other authoritative editions.

A Selected Bibliography, Selected Glossary of terms used frequently in *Leviathan*, and Index of Authors.

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HOBBS

**THE
ELEMENTS
OF
LAW
NATURAL
AND
POLITICAL**

**CRITICAL
EDITIONS**

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

Thomas Hobbes
LEVIATHAN



AUTHORITATIVE TEXT
BACKGROUNDS
INTERPRETATIONS

Edited by

RICHARD E.
FLATHMAN

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

DAVID
JOHNSTON

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



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LEVIATHAN

AUTHORITATIVE TEXT

BACKGROUNDS

INTERPRETATIONS

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Preface

Hobbes wrote the bulk of *Leviathan* during the closing phase of a civil war and completed the work soon after the war had come to a decisive end. In many respects the book bears the marks of its origins in the particular circumstances of that war and the long string of events that preceded it. But *Leviathan* is also, and was intended to be, a book for the ages. It deals with themes and topics that have been with us since the beginning of recorded history and are likely to remain significant for as long a time as we can foresee. Moreover, few thinkers in the history of political thought have been Hobbes's equal as a shrewd observer of political events, and none has ever exceeded him in boldness of argument. For these reasons *Leviathan* is widely regarded as the greatest work of political theory ever composed in the English language and one of the greatest in any language.

Leviathan is not, however, an easy book to read, both because Hobbes's arguments are challenging and because his language is sometimes archaic and unfamiliar. The task of grasping Hobbes's argument is one that the reader must accomplish on his or her own, but this edition will ease the burden imposed by Hobbes's seventeenth-century prose by explaining the meanings of words that are unusual or archaic and by identifying references that are likely to be unfamiliar to modern readers. For the most part, these explanations appear in footnotes and only at the first occurrence of an unfamiliar term, but we have also provided a brief glossary that includes terms Hobbes uses repeatedly.

A large part of the text of *Leviathan* consists of arguments from Scripture addressed to a seventeenth-century audience that considered the Bible to be the written Word of God and, hence, to be at least as authoritative as any argument based on reason. These arguments were crucial to the aims that led Hobbes to write and publish *Leviathan*, but they are far less accessible to modern readers than they were to Hobbes's contemporaries. In any case, it is not necessary to read through the whole of Hobbes's Scriptural exegesis to understand the central points he was making. Accordingly, we have deleted from this edition several chapters that are most likely to seem esoteric to modern readers, mainly from Part Three. At the same time, we have retained the chapters from Part Three that are essential to an understanding of Hobbes's argument, particularly chapters thirty-two, thirty-three, thirty-seven, and forty-three.

Our edition is based on the version published by Oxford University Press in 1909, a version in turn based on a "standard paper" copy of the genuine first edition of *Leviathan*, known among scholars as the

“Head” edition (because of the ornament that appears near the bottom of the title page). Various copies of this first edition are not identical, because some incorporated more of Hobbes’s corrections than others, but the 1909 edition was made up from one of the most fully corrected copies and, for this reason, is superior to most modern editions, including the edition edited by C. B. Macpherson and published in 1968 by Penguin Books. We have also compared the text on which our edition is based with a “large paper” copy of the genuine first edition — from which both Richard Tuck’s 1991 edition (Cambridge University Press) and Edwin Curley’s 1994 edition (Hackett Press) are derived — as well as with the manuscript copy of *Leviathan* in the British Museum (cataloged as British Library MS Egerton 1910). Tuck is undoubtedly right to assert that the large paper edition is even more fully corrected than the standard paper copy upon which our edition is ultimately based. But large paper copies were available to very few readers in the seventeenth century; the standard paper version, in one edition or another, is the one to which most readers have, until very recently, had access. For these reasons we have chosen the standard paper version as the basis for our edition. In any case, few of the variations among these versions are significant. Where potentially significant variations occur, however, we have included them in our text. *Additions* to the standard paper copy are enclosed in brackets, with their source (either the large paper edition or the manuscript version) indicated in a footnote. Where *alternative* passages occur, we have enclosed the relevant passage in brackets, and the alternative passage is given in a footnote, together with its source. The numbers enclosed in brackets in the margins of the text give the page numbers of the Head edition of 1651.

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The Text of
LEVIATHAN



LEVIATHAN,
OR
The Matter, Forme, & Power
OF A
COMMON-WEALTH
ECCLESIASTICALL
AND
CIVILL.

By THOMAS HOBBS *of* Malmesbury.



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