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"大洋国" 和"政治体系" The Commonwealth ot Oceana and A System of Politics Harrington 哈林顿

Edited by J. G. A. POCOCK

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JAMES HARRINGTON

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and A System of Politics

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Preface

This volume presents the texts of James Harrington's first and last political writings, The Commonwealth of Oceana (1656) and A System of Politics (written c. 1661 and published posthumously in 1700), as they were prepared by the present editor for The Political Works of James Harrington (Cambridge University Press, 1977). The seventeenthcentury spelling, punctuation and paragraph division of The Commonwealth of Oceana were modernized for that edition, as were those employed by John Toland and his printers for The Oceana and Other Works of James Harrington (1700), the edition in which A System of Politics appeared for the first time. In 1977 as now, the intention was to produce an edition for the eye of the modern reader, leaving detailed textual criticism (if thought necessary; none has been undertaken so far) to be performed upon the published originals. (No manuscripts by Harrington are known to exist.) The 1977 edition also contained an introductory and interpretative essay of 150 pages; this has been drawn upon in writing the introduction to the present volume, which is nevertheless a new piece of work.

JGAP

¹ Referred to in this volume as Harrington: 1977.

Introduction

Harrington's life and writings

Not much is known of James Harrington (1611–77) beyond what his published works tell us. There are next to no surviving personal papers or manuscripts of his various writings. Not all of these were published in his lifetime, however; a number of his works, including A System of Politics, are stated by John Toland (1670–1722) to have been preserved in manuscript by Harrington's sister Dorothy Bellingham and published by Toland in the first collected edition of 1700.² These manuscripts no longer seem to exist, and since we know that Toland extensively rewrote the memoirs of Edmund Ludlow before publishing them,³ caution is in order. The Commonwealth of Oceana, on the other hand, was printed in 1656, and most of what we consider Harrington's major works between that year and 1660. In all these cases we can compare what he published with what Toland edited, and find the latter to have been no unreliable editor where printed originals already existed.

But we are also dependent on Toland – together with John Aubrey and Anthony Wood* – for most of our information about Harrington's personal life. He was a country gentleman, of an old family with Yorkist antecedents established in Northamptonshire and Lincoln-

² The Oceana and other Works of James Harrington, with an Account of his Life by John Toland (London, 1700; subsequent editions 1737 – enlarged by Thomas Birch – 1747, 1771).

³ Blair Worden (ed.), Edmund Ludlow: A Voyce from the Watchtower (London, 1978).

John Aubrey, Brief Lives (ed. Oliver Lawson Dick, London, 1958), pp. 124-27; Anthony Wood, Athenae Oxonienses (Oxford, 1848), vol. 11, p. 380.

shire.5 Notwithstanding his criticisms of primogeniture, he was an eldest son with younger brothers; but he remained unmarried until late in life and seems to have played no part in county or national politics, before or during the First Civil War. In 1647, probably at the instigation of his politically active cousin and namesake Sir James Harrington, he became a gentleman of the bedchamber to the captive Charles I, and remained with the King until shortly before the regicide of January 1649. During this period of twenty months, Harrington was personally involved in incidents which were certainly crucial in English history and may be thought significant in his life as a political author. He came face to face with Cornet Joyce when the latter arrived at Holmby House to take possession of the King's person for the Army; this experience did not make a Leveller of him,6 though in Oceana he seems to accept an enlargement of the voting population as extensive as most Levellers desired.7 Among Charles's first requests to Joyce was that he might have the company of Gilbert Sheldon and Henry Hammond, the two most active agents in ensuring the Church of England's survival during the Interregnum and its restoration after 1660; and when Harrington continued attending the King at Hampton Court and Carisbrooke Castle, he must have known of Charles's consultations with these and other divines of the episcopal allegiance - consultations of great significance for later Stuart and Hanoverian monarchy. But this encounter did not make Harrington an Anglican; rather, it must be seen in contrast with the virulent anticlericalism and religious heterodoxy of his writings in the late 1650s. It is curious to visit Carisbrooke and reflect that both Eikon Basilike and The Commonwealth of Oceana may have begun gestation there at the same time.

There is a story⁸ that Charles used to discuss forms of government with Harrington, but would never endure to hear him speak of a republic. The tradition has a whiff of subsequent manufacture, but it is imaginable that they may have talked about Venice; Harrington had been there and admired it, while Charles was determined that a king must be something more than a doge. After Charles was removed from Carisbrooke, Harrington was separated from him by a commission of officers and ministers; there is a tradition that he was present

⁵ Ian Grimble, The Harrington Family (London, 1957).

⁶ Harrington: 1977, pp. 656-58.

⁸ Harrington: 1977, pp. 4-5.

⁷ Below, pp. 75-76.

on the scaffold at Whitehall, but the detailed account written by Edward Herbert, who had been Harrington's companion in attendance on the King, does not mention him. A further tradition states that Harrington had become personally devoted to Charles and suffered acute melancholy at his death. This is wholly possible; Charles could exert personal charm, and the regicide was a traumatic shock to a great many individuals; but it is not reflected at all vividly in Harrington's writings. The value of all these stories is that they remind us how little evidence there is that Harrington or anyone else was a theoretical or doctrinaire republican before 1649. He wrote Oceana less to justify the fall of the English monarchy than to explain it, and this is why the work is important.

We hear nothing more of Harrington for seven years, until he published The Commonwealth of Oceana in September-November 1656, stating in a foreword that he had begun writing less than two years before. Its context then is not the revolutionary transition from monarchy to republic, but the discontents of the Cromwellian Protectorate; and if we think of it as related to the redefinition of the Protector's position by the Humble Petition and Advice and the election of a parliament during the summer of 1656, it falls into company10 with Sir Henry Vane's A Healing Question and Marchmont Nedham's The Excellency of a Free State, which has a slightly better claim than Oceana's to be considered the first programmatic statement of English classical republicanism. Vane was questioned by the Council of State for his writings, and Nedham may have apologized indirectly for his. Nothing links Harrington directly with either Vane or Nedham, and though he had some trouble getting his work printed - his foreword¹¹ mentions a "spaniel questing," presumably a government agent self-appointed or otherwise - the story that he had to appeal to Cromwell's daughter¹² has a strong flavour of fiction.

We have only one account of what led Harrington to compose Oceana. It occurs in a dialogue¹³ printed by Toland under the title The Examination of James Harrington and purporting to be a conversation between Harrington and Lauderdale when he was a prisoner in the

 ⁹ Ibid.
 10 Harrington: 1977, pp. 12-14; J. G. A. Pocock, "James Harrington and the Good Old Cause; a study of the ideological content of his writings," Journal of British Studies, x (1970), 1, pp. 30-48.
 12 Harrington: 1977, p. 8.
 13 Harrington: 1977, pp. 855-59.

Tower in 1662. Assuming it to be Harrington's work (which it probably is), it is still only his account of what he said to his inquisitors concerning events as many as eight years preceding the alleged conversation. In it he says that some of Cromwell's officers urged him to consider a commonwealth, and were told that they did not know what one was. This sounds like Cromwell, and in 1654 - two years before the publication of Oceana - Colonels Okey, Alured and Saunders complained of the Army's loss of status under the Protectorate and were dismissed from command. A lesser figure, Colonel John Streater, also lost his commission in 1654 and set up as a printer of literature on Greek and Roman republics. In 1656 he was to begin, and have some trouble completing, the printing of Oceana.¹⁴ After Cromwell's rebuff of his officers, The Examination of James Harrington continues, "some sober men came to me and told me, if any man in England could show what a commonwealth was, it was myself."15 These need not have been identical with the complaining officers, and the mind may turn to the group of Henry Neville, Henry Marten and Thomas Chaloner, who have been linked with Nedham as early as 1652, when he was writing what became The Excellency of a Free State. The phrase "some sober men" might inspire disrespectful chuckles, since Marten and Chaloner were supposed to be heavy drinkers and religious libertines, but Henry Neville was to be Harrington's close and devoted friend for the rest of the latter's life. It remains unknown to us, however, when or why Harrington acquired the republican learning of which Oceana is full, and there is nothing more (except the text itself) to tell us what he intended by publishing the work in 1656.

The Commonwealth of Oceana attracted attention and criticism, and during the next three and a half years Harrington published a number of further writings, of which The Prerogative of Popular Government (1657) and The Art of Lawgiving (1659) are the most ambitious. ¹⁶ They consist in part of a controversial defence against the most pertinacious of his critics – Matthew Wren, son of the Bishop of Ely¹⁷ – and in part of elaborations of what his theories of government implied for religious authority, theology and philosophy. It is very possible that we have here the strongest force driving Harrington to write and

¹⁴ Harrington: 1977, pp. 6–7, 9–10, 14.

¹⁵ Harrington: 1977, p. 859.

All are printed in full in Harrington: 1977.

¹⁷ Harrington: 1977, pp. 83-89.

publish, ¹⁸ and these works should certainly be read together with those here introduced. In the last phase of his literary activity – between the accession of Richard Cromwell and the restoration of Charles II – Harrington's tracts and pamphlets reflect the death agonies of the English Commonwealth; he opposed Vane and Milton, who still hoped for a rule of the saints, but maintained that unless legislative reform could change the nature of English politics, a reversion to parliamentary monarchy was inevitable. ¹⁹

He was left undisturbed in 1660, but at the end of 1661 was taken into custody, apparently in connexion with the Derwentwater Plot. (At this time Henry Neville left England for some years.) The Examination of James Harrington claims to belong to this episode, and Toland says that the manuscript of A System of Politics survived Harrington's arrest and passed into family keeping. In prison at Plymouth, he underwent a physical and mental collapse of some nature, and after his release lived in retirement at Westminster till he died in 1677. He wrote one essay, The Mechanics of Nature, on the medical and philosophical implications of his condition,20 but apparently nothing more on politics. Nor do we know if he conversed on the subject with Neville or anyone else, though Neville lived till 1694 and in 1682 published Plato Redivivus, a work of some importance in carrying on what we know as the "commonwealth" or "neo-Harringtonian" style in English political discourse. So much for what the facts of Harrington's life may tell us about his authorship of the English republican classic. What it means to call Oceana that must next be considered.

Oceana and English republicanism

There is a real sense in which republican theories were a consequence, not a cause or even a precondition, of the execution of the King and the temporary abolition of the monarchy. If Louis XVI in 1793 was executed for being a king – for being a species of ruler which his condemners had come to consider illegitimate – Charles I

 ¹⁸ Mark Goldie, "The civil religion of James Harrington," in Anthony Pagden (ed.), The Languages of Political Theory in Early Modern Europe (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 197-222.
 ¹⁹ Harrington: 1977, pp. 100-18, 729, 744-45, 797-98; A. F. Woolrych, "The Good Old Cause and the fall of the protectorate," Cambridge Historical Journal, XIII, 2 (1957), pp. 133-61; (intro.), Complete Prose Works of John Milton, vol. VII (New Haven, 1980).
 ²⁰ Printed by Toland, but not in the 1977 edition.

in 1649 was executed for failing to be a king: for exercising his office in such a way as to reduce his subjects to a frenzy of frustration and those who condemned him to the conviction that he was the chief obstacle to the restitution of order and government. There is a level at which it is true that the King was put to death by men who still believed in the kingly office, but it was an appalling paradox that, for this reason, they could not judge the man without abolishing the office; the logic of resistance theory had pointed in this direction, but not all the way. How unwilling they were to act on this imperative is seen in the ordinance abolishing the monarchy which followed the King's execution;21 it appeals only to fact, to the experience of history which is said to have revealed that monarchy does more to divide and destroy the nation than to unite and preserve it, that monarchy does not do what it is supposed to do. Therefore the people are to provide themselves with another form of government; this is not a liberating discovery of democratic principle, but a harsh and painful discovery of what at another moment in English history was to be called "utmost necessity."22 The dissolution of government was an appeal to the de facto before the de jure; monarchy had failed de facto, a form of government de facto was to replace it, and the legal, ethical, political and religious problem now became for many that of by what right the subject might give obedience to a government de facto and not de jure, and by what right such a government might demand obedience.

What we now consider a classic body of English political theory took shape in the attempt to give answers to these questions, ²³ but its contents have little to do with English republicanism and even less with the writings of James Harrington. It stated the problem, and attempted to solve it, in the language of natural and civil jurisprudence: of right, obligation and authority, and of property, nature and knowledge as these terms were defined by the vocabulary of natural and civil law. This language and vocabulary are rightly enough considered dominant and paradigmatic in the foundations of political

A Declaration of the Parliament of England, expressing the grounds of their late proceedings, and of setling the present government in the way of a free state (1649). Harrington: 1977, p. 28.
 In 1688-89; see Keith Feiling, History of the Tory Party, 1640-1714 (Oxford, 1924), pp. 235, 254, 285.

²³ Perez Zagorin, A History of Political Thought in the English Revolution (London, 1954); John M. Wallace, Destiny His Choice: the Loyalism of Andrew Marvell (Cambridge, 1968); Margaret Judson, From Tradition to Political Reality: a study of the ideas set forth in support of the Commonwealth government in England, 1649–1653 (Hamden, Connecticut, 1980).

thought in early modern Europe;²⁴ but in order to understand Harrington, and perhaps republican theory as well, we have to recognize that – to a degree very surprising in an educated Englishman of the mid-seventeenth century – Harrington's text is devoid of the vocabulary of natural law, and (no less surprisingly) of common law as well. He reverts almost unequivocally to an earlier vocabulary, one in which the concepts of property and nature functioned as means of pronouncing that man the political animal was by nature a citizen and not a subject, a creature who used intelligence to define himself rather than to acknowledge binding law. It was this which made Harrington a republican and made it hard for him to be an orthodox Christian.

The premises on which such thinking rested were immensely remote from those at the foundations of normal English political thinking. This is why republican theories are hard to find in England before 1649, and why there were none to which the regicide regime could appeal. The only such theory currently known to scholars was austere, aristocratic, based on a study of Plato's Laws, and very little disseminated outside the family of Philip and Algernon Sidney. We shall see that Harrington's republicanism was of a very different stripe, far more intimately connected with the advent of the de facto problem.

It is to be derived, along one of several lines, from that crucial document, His Majesty's Answer to the Nineteen Propositions of Parliament, put into Charles's mouth in August 1642 by his advisers Falkland and Culpeper. Falkland may have been touched by the Platonic republicanism mentioned above, but what he here helped to frame was a description of English parliamentary monarchy "republican" in the sense that it was Polybian, the description of a mixed government

²⁵ Jonathan Scott, Algernon Sidney and the English Republic, 1623-77 (Cambridge, 1988); Blair Worden, "Classical republicanism and the Puritan Revolution," in Lloyd-Jones et al. (eds.), History and Imagination: essays in honour of H. R. Trevor-Roper (Oxford, 1981), and "The Commonwealth kidney of Algernon Sidney," Journal of British Studies, XXIV, 1 (1984), pp. 1-40.

26 Corinne C. Weston, English Constitutional Theory and the House of Lords (London, 1965); Corinne C. Weston and Janelle R. Greenburg, Subjects and Sovereigns: the Grand Controversy over Legal Sovereignty in Stuart England (Cambridge, 1981); Michael J. Mendle, Dangerous Positions: Mixed Government, Estates and the Answer to the XIX Propositions (Alabama, 1985).

²⁴ Pagden (ed.), The Languages of Political Theory, Quentin Skinner, The Foundations of Modern Political Thought (Cambridge, 1978); Richard Tuck, Natural Rights Theories: their origin and development (Cambridge, 1980); James Tully, A Discourse on Property: John Locke and his adversaries (Cambridge, 1980).

in which monarchy, aristocracy and democracy combined to balance one another. Each of the three was imperfect – including monarchy, which is what was aberrant about *His Majesty's Answer* – having its characteristic vices as well as virtues, which must bring it to corruption if it attempted to function by itself; but the combination of all three would check the degenerative tendency of each. There were two major difficulties about this thesis. In the first place, theocracy was not of its essence; in the second, it did not really allow for the sovereignty of king in parliament, which the language of balance might reinforce but could not describe.

The Answer to the Nineteen Propositions was intended as a warning against civil war; by making king, lords and commons equal in government, it made them equally responsible for maintaining the balance of government. However, civil war did ensue, and the problem in which the Answer was instantly involved was that of ascertaining the subject's duty when two or more legitimate authorities were competing to claim his allegiance at the sword's point. Henry Parker, writing for the Parliament, 27 exploited the Answer's implicit reduction of the king to an estate within his own realm, and went on to argue that Parliament was more truly representative of the subject than the king was, and therefore had the better claim to allegiance. But a deeper insight was achieved by Philip Hunton in A Treatise of Monarchy, when he pointed out that should the components of a mixed government go to war among themselves, no one of them had authority to bind the other two, since if one had that authority, no balanced mixture of equal powers would have existed in the first place.28 From this Hunton drew the conclusion that the individual was obliged to decide for himself; Sir Robert Filmer drew the conclusion of The Anarchy of a Limited or Mixed Monarchy. 29 But anarchy was the objective reality of a state of civil war, and Hunton had gone further than Filmer in anticipating the problem of de facto obedience. By 1650, when the Engagement to obey a kingless (and lordless) government had laid that problem in principle before every adult male, it was possible for Nedham to argue that a civil war between the

²⁷ Henry Parker, Observations upon some of his Majesties late Answers and Expresses (1642);
The Contra-Replicant his Complaint to his Majesty (1643).

Philip Hunton, A Treatise of Monarchy (1643), p. 69.
 Peter Laslett (ed.), Patriarcha and Other Political Writings by Sir Robert Filmer (Oxford, 1949).

components of a mixed government was an appeal to heaven, and that when heaven's judgment was known by the issue of the war, the victor enjoyed the authority of a conqueror over his former partners and the subject was enjoined to obey his sword by all the imperatives existing in the state of nature. Here Nedham took his stand upon juristic ground, and in The Case of the Commonwealth of England Stated (1650) made use of the writings so far published by Hobbes. 30 But his argument presupposed that a mixed government had existed in the first instance, without making it clear why a conqueror should use his unshared authority to restore or establish a form in which it would be limited by being shared with others. In 1651-52 his writings editorials in Mercurius Politicus which he published in 1656 as The Excellency of a Free State - took a republican form³¹ with the argument that England had been conquered by its democratic component, the Army acting with the authority of the representative Commons, which now enjoyed a power legislative like that of Lycurgus, to create a republic in which monarchy, aristocracy and democracy should balance one another more efficiently than they had under king, lords and commons. The hand of Neville, Marten and Chaloner has been detected in these editorials of 1652,32 and the situation they presume to exist in England is that presumed by Harrington in the Second Part of the Preliminaries to Oceana, when he describes Olphaus Megaletor and his victorious army at a moment easier to recall in 1654 than in 1656.33 He goes on to tell the tale of how these heroes met in council to shoulder the task of Lycurgus.

Harrington's republicanism is more Machiavellian than Platonic – the Florentine was an author he deeply admired – because of its concern with the *de facto*. He wanted to know how the English parliamentary monarchy, the government of king, lords and commons, had come to collapse, and he wanted to know what should replace it. He accepted the Polybian thesis that the aim in government was to maintain a balance between the one, few and many, and he accepted the dictum of 1649 that the historic monarchy had never been very good, and had got worse, at maintaining it. This was how he

³⁰ The Case of the Commonwealth, edited by Philip A. Knachel, was published in Charlot-tesville (1969). For its use of Hobbes, see Harrington: 1977, pp. 33-34, and the references there given.

³¹ Harrington: 1977, pp. 34-37.

³² Blair Worden, The Rump Parliament, 1648-53 (Cambridge, 1974), p. 252. ³³ Below, pp. 66-67