

剑桥政治思想史原著系列（影印本）

CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

# 源于圣经的政治

## *Politics Drawn From Holy Scripture*

Bossuet

博絮埃

Edited by

PATRICK

RILEY

中国政法大学出版社

雅克士 - 本尼吉 - 何尔沃  
JACQUES - BENIGNE BOSSUET

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源于圣经的政治  
*Politics drawn from  
the Very Words of  
Holy Scripture*

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BOSSUET

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# 剑桥政治思想史原著系列

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在政治理论领域，“剑桥政治思想史原著系列”作为主要的学生教科丛书，如今已牢固确立了其地位。本丛书旨在使学生能够获得从古希腊到20世纪初期西方政治思想史方面所有最为重要的原著。它囊括了所有著名的经典原著，但与此同时，它又扩展了传统的评价尺度，以便能够纳入范围广泛、不那么出名的作品。而在此之前，这些作品中有许多从未有过现代英文版本可资利用。只要可能，所选原著都会以完整而不删节的形式出版，其中的译作则是专门为本丛书的目的而安排。每一本书都有一个评论性的导言，加上历史年表、生平梗概、进一步阅读指南，以及必要的词汇表和原文注解。本丛书的最终目的是，为西方政治思想的整个发展脉络提供一个清晰的轮廓。

本丛书已出版著作的书目，请查阅书末。

# CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

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*In memoriam* George Armstrong Kelly  
1932–1987

*Lux perpetua*

## Preface

I have, as always, received constant support and excellent advice from two dear old friends: Judith Shklar and George Armstrong Kelly. The sudden death of the latter in December 1987 deprived the learned world of a great Enlightenment scholar, and me of a friend whose loss I regret every day. It is to him that I dedicate this edition of Bossuet's *Politique* – a work which fascinated him, and on which he could have written the definitive commentary. As consolation there are a few fine Bossuet pages in his *Mortal Politics in Eighteenth-Century France* – that extraordinary study of death and dying in French philosophy from Bossuet to Robespierre. If I miss the book he might have written, how much more do I miss the charming, generous, humane scholar who would have given it to us!

The best piece of practical advice I received in preparing this edition came, characteristically, from Judith Shklar – who urged me to view Bossuet not as a conventional Christian political philosopher in the Augustinian or Thomist mode, but as a “Judaizing Calvinist” who tried to “draw” a (not very Christian) politics from Kings and Chronicles. Not until I had finished my edition did I fully appreciate the exactness of her words: as usual, she saw the end when I could only see the beginning. To have such a friend, as generous as she is learned, is a constant joy.

The third person in my trinity of helpers was my wife, Joan A. Riley, whose excellent Catholic education enabled me to see at every turn the unorthodox nature of Bossuet's “orthodoxy.” She also typed the entire manuscript and checked all of the Scriptural citations – a labor of love for which I can never be grateful enough.

## Preface

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My son, Patrick Riley Jr., of the Department of French, University of California, Berkeley, gave me a great deal of help with Book VII of the *Politique* – one of the most difficult, as well as the longest. For that kindness I am most grateful.

I would also like to thank my friend and colleague Theoharis Constantine Theoharis, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who helped me to see the sheer oddity of Bossuet's reading of Judges and 1 Kings. His knowledge of Scripture provided me with many a suggestive hint.

Finally I would like to thank the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, which permitted me to see the original manuscript of the first six books of the *Politique* – the only surviving part in Bousset's hand; and the British Museum – which supplied me with a photocopy of George Keating's 1826 translation of Book I of the *Politics*.

Patrick Riley

Cambridge, Massachusetts

Bastille Day

July 14, 1989

I have taken advantage of the re-issuing of Bossuet's *Politics* by updating the Bibliography and by correcting a few errors.

This edition would never have been possible without the wise advice of my dear friend Judith Shklar, whose premature death in 1992 was a blow to all who admired and loved her.

Cambridge, Massachusetts

St Valentine's Day, February 1998

# Introduction

## I

Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet was born (1627) into a parliamentary family in Dijon which had been horrified by the Fronde, and by the weakening of monarchical authority during the minority of Louis XIV.<sup>1</sup> He was educated by the Jesuits, and had for his mentor Nicolas Cornet – the theologian who later “unmasked” Jansenism (and the “five propositions”) as a form of demi-Calvinism in the Sorbonne.<sup>2</sup> After some years as a canon at Metz, his fame as a preacher began to grow: by 1662 he was preaching in Paris before Louis XIV (“On the Duties of Kings”), and in 1675 even served briefly as the King’s spiritual counselor. He was named Bishop of Condom in 1669, and then (more importantly) tutor or preceptor to the Dauphin in 1670.<sup>3</sup> For this not

<sup>1</sup> For a good account of the life of Bossuet, see Thérèse Goyet, *L’Humanisme de Bossuet* (Paris: Librairie Klincksieck, 1965), Vol. 1. One must make allowance for Goyet’s claim that Bossuet was a classical humanist steeped in Plato and Aristotle, and for her insistence on his devotion to Descartes. Almost certainly she gives too much prominence to philosophy, ancient and modern, and too little to *l’Ecriture Sainte*. For a briefer but more judicious *vie de Bossuet*, see Jacques Truchet, *La Politique de Bossuet* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1966), pp. 7ff. (Truchet also offers the best-balanced assessment of Bossuet’s political thought.)

<sup>2</sup> See the excellent notes to Bossuet’s *Oraison funèbre de Nicolas Cornet* (1663), in Bossuet, *Œuvres*, ed. Abbé Velat (Paris: Pléiade, 1961), pp. 1198ff., particularly p. 1199: “Bossuet had been for twenty years the preferred student and the very dear friend of Nicholas Cornet.” It was Cornet’s unmasking of Jansenism which drove Antoine Arnauld from the Sorbonne, and (much later) from France itself.

<sup>3</sup> See Jacques Le Brun’s Introduction to Bossuet, *Politique tirée des propres paroles de l’Ecriture Sainte* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1967), p. x. This introduction is valuable if one already knows the argument of the *Politique*.

very scholarly youth Bossuet wrote the *Discourse on Universal History*, arguing that human affairs are shaped by divine *Providence particulière* (published in 1681), and the first six books of the *Politics drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture* – a *Politique* which he set aside by about 1679 (after describing the work in a long letter to Pope Innocent XI), and did not take up again until 1700.<sup>4</sup>

His tutorship came to an end in 1680, and in 1681 he was made Bishop of Meaux.<sup>5</sup> In the 1680s and 1690s Bossuet emerged as a great controversialist and defender of Catholic orthodoxy: against Luther and Calvin in the *Histoire des Variations*; against Fénelon's "quietism" or "disinterested love of God"; against Malebranche's neo-Cartesian assault on *Providence particulière*; against Richard Simon's "Spinozist" critique of the Old Testament; against Pierre Jurieu's contractarian and popular-sovereignty defenses of French Protestant *émigrés* against the French monarchy; against Leibniz' notion that the whole of Christendom should be charitably reunited while suspending final doctrinal decisions; against Hobbes' privileging of reason over revelation in arriving at monarchical conclusions.

But he was not merely a brilliant opponent and nay-sayer; in a positive vein he supported a moderate version of the "Gallican" thesis that monarchs derive their authority directly from God, not from the Church or the Pope;<sup>6</sup> and he crowned his mature writings with the brilliantly political *Oraisons funèbres* of Queen Marie-Thérèse of France, of Chancellor Le Tellier, of the great Condé, of Anne de Gonzague – his most glowing pages.

Beginning in 1700 he once again took up the *Politique*, little touched for twenty-two years; concurrently he worked on his last great theological statement, the *Défense de la tradition et des pères* – a final tribute to an Augustine saved from Calvinist and Jansenist rigorism. He died in the Spring of 1704, leaving the *Politics* without its closing summary; his nephew, the Abbé Bossuet, filled in the gap with a fragment of Augustine's *City of God*. After some publication difficulties (both political and theological), the posthumous *Politique* finally saw the light of day in 1709.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The text of this letter is given in Truchet, *La Politique de Bossuet*, pp. 118–19.

<sup>5</sup> Le Brun, Introduction to Bossuet's *Politique*, p. x.

<sup>6</sup> See A.-G. Martimort, *Le Gallicanisme de Bossuet* (Paris: Editions de Cerf, 1953), *passim*.

<sup>7</sup> These difficulties are recounted in Le Brun, Introduction to Bossuet's *Politique*, pp. xixff.

The first six books of this work, finished by 1679, argue that a "general society" of the entire *genre humain*, governed by Christian charity, has given way (after the Fall) to the necessity of politics, law, and absolute hereditary monarchy; that monarchy – viewed as natural, paternal, universal, and divinely ordained (beginning with David and Solomon) – is then defended in Books II–VI.<sup>8</sup> Books VII–X, written in 1700–4, go on to take up the rights of the Church; the distinction between absolutism and arbitrariness; causes of just war; and finance and taxation (*inter alia*). The final section of the final book drives home the distinction between absolutism and arbitrariness with a harrowing account of the monarchical crimes of Saul, Belshazzar and Antiochus; the last words written by Bossuet himself place "the beautiful Psalms of David" in "the hands of pious kings."<sup>9</sup>

The break of twenty-two years in the composition of the *Politique* makes it a little repetitious and diffuse; and only Book V, which draws a parallel between monarchy and divinity (above all in the reign of David), contains a lyrical flight to match the best pages of the *Oraisons funèbres* and the *Histoire universelle*. Even so, the *Politique tirée des propres paroles de l'Écriture sainte* remains the most extraordinary defense of divine-right absolute monarchy in the whole of French political thought.

## II

It is always reasonable to ask: why is a work – such as Bossuet's *Politique* – exactly as it is? ("everything is what it is, and not another thing").<sup>10</sup> Thus Plato's *Republic* is as it is – with its huge middle section given over to education in mathematics and music – because for Plato "harmony" is mathematics (the eternal antidote to Heraclitean flux) made audible, and then an harmonious psyche is "writ large" in the harmonious *polis*, then larger (or largest) in the harmony of the spheres, the *kosmos*. So there is nothing "accidental" in the *Republic*, which views life (including political life) as a set of

<sup>8</sup> The original MS of these first six books is now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, where it bears the number fr. 1810. Le Brun prints (in an appendix) those passages from fr. 1810 which diverge from the published text of 1709.

<sup>9</sup> Bossuet, *Politique*, ed. Le Brun, p. 450.

<sup>10</sup> Bishop Butler's line is cited by G. E. Moore in *Principia ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), facing page.

ever-expanding concentric harmonious spheres, "realizing" changeless mathematical eternity, as one moves from the *psyche* to the *polis* to the *kosmos*.<sup>11</sup> Bossuet's *Politique*, too, is as it is for a reason: but "reason" is not that reason.

Since Bossuet was an ecclesiastic, indeed a bishop, one would expect him to "ground" politics in religion, especially the Christian religion. But there are various ways of doing that; and in the eternal pull between reason and revelation, Bossuet comes down surprisingly firmly on the side of revelation and Scripture. "The constant frequenting of the Bible was the great originality of the Christian culture of Bossuet," writes Jacques Truchet, "for at this time the Catholics read it little enough."<sup>12</sup> Here the natural comparison is with St. Thomas Aquinas, who in the *Summa theologiae* lets fragments of Scripture become mere "propositions" or "objections" to be evaluated on their rational merits, and on a footing of equality with other propositions drawn from "the Philosopher," or Cicero, or Roman lawyers such as Ulpian, or Justinian's *Institutes* and *Decretals*. In Thomism Scripture is not privileged; and often enough a saint or a prophet will be overridden by a philosopher or a jurisconsult.<sup>13</sup> One does not find St. Thomas speaking, with Bossuet, of *notre faible raison*.<sup>14</sup>

What weighs with Bossuet is reason's insufficiency to establish or reveal the highest things. It is not merely that human beings are ingenious rationalizers, that "reason can do nothing, because each calls reason the passion that transports him."<sup>15</sup> It is that St. Paul in 1 and 2 Corinthians – precisely in Scripture – has revealed reason's limitations; the word reveals the boundaries of the mind. "It is not at all in reasoning that one understands this mystery [of Christianity],"

<sup>11</sup> Plato, *Republic*, above all 444d–e: "Justice . . . means that a man must not suffer the principles in his soul to do each the work of some other . . . but that . . . having first attained to self-mastery and beautiful order within himself, and having harmonized these three principles . . . he should then and only then turn to practice." See also *Phaedo* 75d for the link between absolute justice and "absolute mathematical equality."

<sup>12</sup> Truchet, *La Politique de Bossuet*, pp. 15–16.

<sup>13</sup> See particularly the Questions on law in the *Summa* (90–97), in *The Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. D. Bigongiari (New York: Hafner, 1953), pp. 3ff.

<sup>14</sup> Bossuet, *De la connaissance de Dieu et de soi-même*, in *Œuvres de Bossuet* (Paris: Didot Frères, 1841), vol. 1, p. 85.

<sup>15</sup> Bossuet, *Cinquième avertissement aux protestants*, in *Œuvres* (1841 edn), Vol. IV, p. 403. One of the reasons that Bossuet put off finishing the *Politique* was that he had syphoned many of its central thoughts into the *Cinquième avertissement* (1690).

Bossuet urges in the *Histoire universelle*; "it is in 'bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ,' it is 'in destroying human reasonings, and every height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.'" <sup>16</sup> And in the *Panegyrique de Saint François d'Assise* (1670), he offers a fuller reading of the anti-rationalism of 1 Corinthians: "God, then, indignant at human reason, which had not willed to know him through the works of his wisdom, willed that in future there would be no salvation for reason except through folly." <sup>17</sup>

For Bossuet, as for St. Paul in 1 Corinthians, it is especially Greek philosophy which gives unreasonable weight to *raisonnement*.

There are errors into which we fall by reasoning, for man often entangles himself by dint of reasoning . . . What have the philosophers gained with their pompous discourses, with their sublime style, with their 'reasonings' so artfully arranged? Plato, with that eloquence which he believed divine – did he overturn a single altar at which monstrous divinities had been adored? . . . Is it not with reason that St Paul cries: "Where is the wise?" <sup>18</sup>

The problem of a "rational" ethics (and politics), however, for Bossuet, is not confined to Plato: in his notes on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he complains of "the uncertainty of Aristotle's morality," adding that

there is nothing, however, in which it is more essential to be certain than [on the question] of what ought to be done or not done. So that, if reason does not determine it, it is necessary that the law do so. Now human law cannot regulate the internal forum. Thus a divine law is necessary. <sup>19</sup>

Not that the unhappy effects of maladroit *raisonnement* are limited to antiquity; on the contrary, for Bossuet the great religious crisis of the 1690s – the fratricidal struggle with Fénelon over "quietism" and the "disinterested love of God" – was a clear case of reason's over-

<sup>16</sup> Bossuet, *Discours sur l'histoire universelle*, in *Œuvres* (1841 edn), Vol. 1, p. 239.

<sup>17</sup> Bossuet, *Panegyrique de Saint François d'Assise*, in *Œuvres* (1961), p. 600. For a fine appreciation of this *panegyrique* (and others like it), see Jacques Truchet, *Bossuet panégyriste* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1962), pp. 50–51, 90–94, 118–20.

<sup>18</sup> Bossuet, *Histoire universelle*, in *Œuvres* (1841 edn), p. 239.

<sup>19</sup> Cited in Goyet, *L'Humanisme de Bossuet*, Vol. II, p. 417. For the full text of Bossuet's commentary on the *Ethics*, *Politics* and *Magna Moralia*, see Thérèse Goyet (ed.), *Platon et Aristote, notes de lectures* (Paris: Librairie Klincksieck, 1964).

reaching itself in a way that had unfortunate political implications (since M. de Cambrai had been tutor to the new Dauphin). So obsessed with rationalizing Mme. de Guyon's mystical ecstasies has Fénelon become, Bossuet urges in *Relation sur le quiétisme* (1698/99), that, as at the birth of all such errors,

cabals and factions stir up; passions and interests divide the world . . . Eloquence dazzles the simple; dialectic hurls her lances at them; an exaggerated metaphysics flings minds into unknown lands; many no longer know what they believe, and holding everything in indifference, without understanding, without discerning, they join a party by whim. These are the times that I call those of temptation, if one is searching for obfuscation; and one must await with faith the later time in which truth will triumph and manifestly gain the upper hand.<sup>20</sup>

Here the efforts of reason are pitiable: "dialectic" merely hurls injurious weapons, and *une métaphysique outrée* literally "alienates" (by flinging minds into foreign terrains); but truth finally arrives, conveyed by a "faith" which passes safely through obscurity, cabals, factions, parties, passions, and interests. What is essential is that one avoid "the false philosophy which St. Paul has condemned."<sup>21</sup>

But the truth which post-Pauline reason cannot reveal – including "the truth of monarchy" (to anticipate Hegel's phrase)<sup>22</sup> – can be found in Holy Scripture, which is *un livre parfait*.<sup>23</sup> There is simply nothing to equal "a book as profound and as precise, not to mention as divine, as Scripture."<sup>24</sup> This is why the Preface to Bossuet's *Politique* is as it is, why it begins with a phrase from St. Paul's first letter to Timothy, then spins a world (including a political world) out of extra-rational Revelation.

God is the King of kings: it is for him to instruct them and to rule

<sup>20</sup> Bossuet, *Relation sur le quiétisme*, in *Œuvres* (Pléiade 1961), pp. 1153–54. See also L. Cognet, *Le Crépuscule des mystiques: Le Conflit Fénelon–Bossuet* (Tournai: Desclée, 1958). To be avoided is Raymond Schmittlein's *L'aspect politique du différend Bossuet–Fénelon* (Mainz: Editions Art et Science Bade, 1954), which is merely abusive: Bossuet appears as "un serf ébloui par son souverain, un roturier avide de pouvoir" – unlike the aristocratic Fénelon (p. 25).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1176.

<sup>22</sup> Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*, cited and treated in George Armstrong Kelly, *Hegel's Retreat from Eleusis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

<sup>23</sup> Bossuet, *Histoire universelle*, cited in Goyet, *L'Humanisme de Bossuet*, Vol. II, p. 298.

<sup>24</sup> Bossuet, *Cinquième avertissement*, in *Œuvres* (1841 edn), Vol. IV, p. 398.

them as his ministers. Listen, then, Monseigneur [le Dauphin], to the lessons which he gives them in his Scripture, and learn from him the examples on which they must base their conduct.

Besides the other advantages of Scripture, it also enjoys this one, that it takes up the history of the world from its earliest origins, and shows us by this means, better than all other histories, the original principles which have formed empires. . . There one sees the government of a people whose legislator was God himself.<sup>25</sup>

In Bossuet's 1679 letter to Pope Innocent XI, describing the first six books of the *Politique*, *la raison* is totally eclipsed by *l'Ecriture*:

We shall uncover the secrets of politics, the maxims of government, and the sources of law, in the doctrine and in the examples of Holy Scripture . . . [which] surpasses, as much in prudence as in authority, all other books which give precepts for civil life, and . . . one sees in no other place such certain maxims of government.<sup>26</sup>

If rightful politics must be drawn "from the very words of Holy Scripture," it is not surprising to find that the *Politique* gives a priority to Jewish law and institutions that had been much less prominent in the *Histoire universelle*. In the *History* Bossuet had urged that "just as Rome revered the laws of Romulus, of Numa and of the Twelve Tables; just as Athens turned to those of Solon; just as Sparta preserved and respected those of Lycurgus, the Hebrew nation ceaselessly put forward those of Moses."<sup>27</sup> Here four ancient cases are parallel ("just as") and apparently equal. But in the *Politique* one is told that "all that Sparta, all that Athens, all that Rome . . . had by way of wisdom, is nothing in comparison to the wisdom which is contained in the law of God, from which other laws have taken their best features . . . [in ancient Israel one sees] the finest and most just politics that ever was."<sup>28</sup> In the end, then, Greece, Rome, reason, and metaphysics yield to the philo-Judaic penchant which completely colors the *Politics*.

If reason alone – even Scholastic reasoning in the manner of St.

<sup>25</sup> Bossuet, *Politique*, ed. Le Brun, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Bossuet, *Correspondance*, ed. C. Urbain and E. Levesque (Paris: Hachette, 1909–25), Vol. II, pp. 135ff.

<sup>27</sup> Bossuet, *Histoire universelle*, cited in Goyet, *L'Humanisme de Bossuet*, Vol. II, p. 465.

<sup>28</sup> Bossuet, *Politique*, ed. Le Brun, pp. 1–2.