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The Response of the Contemporary Orthodox World to the Ancient Church- State Biblical Model

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Abstract

Following the logic of the Biblical governmental system, politics was not allowed to contaminate religion; instead, like in other ancient states (Ugarit, Syria, Palestine), it simply had to consolidate national feeling and territorial belonging, based on which and within whose framework, the people could practise their faith in Yahweh, the Only God, in full freedom. For this very reason, the *Leviathan* proposed by Thomas Hobbes does not have a correspondence in the Jewish-Christian world. The birth of a political system based on society voluntarily renouncing its most basic rights, established by God in the Torah, only for a utopian peace with civil security blatantly contradicts the politics revealed by the Scriptures: Christian doctrine requires abiding by political power and not showing an obedience that precedes spiritual corruption (*Matthew 22, 21; Romans 13, 1-7; 1 Timothy 2, 1-3; Titus 3, 1-2; 1 Peter 2, 13-17*). This is precisely why, hoping to correct certain deviations that still exist, we put forward an orthodox vision of theocracy – the sole form of government revealed by God. In this context of Biblical theocracy, the Constitution of a state must be based on the moral values of the Law of God; leaders must faithfully bow to God and the rights of ordinary people, foreseen by the Torah – the Word of the Lord –, must be respected.

Keywords:

Biblical governmental system, ancient paradigm, Law of God, Thomas Hobbes
Leviathan, Orthodox theocracy, human rights.

I. The biblical model of the relation between the civil and the religious authority in short

The prophet would begin his speech with an introductory formula (*captatio benevolentiae*¹) of the type: אָמַר יְהוָה (So says the Lord), thus informing the people with respect to God's plan for the world². Later on, the exile prophets would introduce themselves to their audiences by using the introductory phrase *koh amar Yahwe*, which means "so says the Lord"; or *vaiehi devar Yahwe elai*, i.e. "and the word of the Lord came unto me" (*Jeremiah* 1, 9; *Ezekiel* 2, 7, etc). As they announced an imminent catastrophe, prophets considered themselves to be the bearers of a divine warning³, interpreting

¹ By means of a testimony built on an unbeatable rhetoric (including a *captatio benevolentiae* aimed at the people, which makes special reference to the Judaic heritage and to Jews having been divinely chosen to conduct a mission among the other peoples), the prophet Moses managed to present the revealed message of YHWH, thus posing as the sole leader of the chosen people. Thus, Moses, by virtue of his status as both preacher and catechete, had a decisive contribution to the permanent instruction of the members of his community. See Monica J.HARRIS, Robert ROSENTHAL, "No more Teacher's dirty looks: Effects of Teacher Nonverbal Behavior on student outcomes", in: Ronald E. RIGGIO, Robert S. FELDMAN, Lawrence ERLBAUM (coord.), *Applications of Nonverbal Communication*, Associates Publishers, Mahwah, London, 2005, p. 159; U. KELLERMANN, "ἀπολογέομαι apologeomai defend oneself", in: Horst BALZ, Gerhard SCHNEIDER (eds.), *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 1, T.&T. Clarck, Edinburgh, 1990, p. 137; Charles H. DODD, *La predicazione apostolica e il suo sviluppo*, Paideia Editrice, Brescia, 1978, p. 36.

² Geoffrey WIGODER, *Enciclopedia Iudaismului*, Hasefer, București, 2016², p. 537.

³ The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel often acquainted the people with the approaching punishment of God, yet the Israelites would take advantage of their position as the chosen people and allowed themselves to live in all kinds of sins, thus depriving themselves of God's providence (*Jeremiah* 6, 14; *Ezekiel* 13, 10). Thus, in their defeatism, they forgot the demands of their Covenant with YHWH, which attracted God's wrath upon them due to their acts of social injustice (*Isaiah* 1, 15-17; *Jeremiah* 5, 28; *Amos* 5, 7-12; *Micah* 3, 1), religious syncretism (*Isaiah* 1, 10-17; *Jeremiah* 6, 20; *Hosea* 6, 6; *Amos* 5, 21-27), foreign policies (*Isaiah* 30, 1-5; 31, 1-3; *Jeremiah* 2, 35-37; *Ezekiel* 16, 26; *Hosea* 5, 13; 7, 11) – signs that they had abandoned their Master, thus violating the nature of the Alliance (*berith*). See E. JOHNSON, "‘ānaph; ‘aph", in: G. Johannes

the geopolitics of the time from the perspective of a God who gets pedagogically involved in the history of the people of Israel⁴. Through the voices of the prophets, the faithful in Israel were reminded of the obligations they had solemnly committed to on Mount Sinai in the form of the Covenant and of their vocational mission; the target was the direction that the Israelite way of life had taken, as the people, having discarded the demands of the Covenant by giving into idolatry, lust and murder, were no longer to the liking of YHWH. The prophet's task was to determine those Israelites who had repudiated the Law by their inappropriate behaviour to resume the path of learning to know God, for, through His envoy, YHWH seeks to show them that He has not forgotten His Covenant and that, by sending out His messengers, He has set out to find those men who are lost⁵. Thus, a prophet was sent out in times of severe moral crisis in order to correct deviations and remind the people what is the will of God, which they must obey.

The history of the people of God is tightly dependant on receiving the Law, as, by fulfilling it, Israel remained within the realm of knowing God. Obedience to the Law was regarded not only as a way of obtaining Yahweh's blessing, but also as a genuine answer to the grace of having been saved from Egyptian slavery (*Exodus* 20, 1-17). The institution of the monarchy was obliged to stay faithful to the law of God in order for the State of Israel to remain within God's favour, but also in order to support the carrying out of the cultic rituals with their daily sacrifices for sins, so that the people may advance on the path to holiness. In that context, the king had a duty to his people to remain faithful to God, as embracing idolatry would have been a danger to the very religious, social and political stability of Israel. Moreover, the king was obliged to know the Law, as one who dealt justice among the people, for the restoration of the dignity of the injured party depended on the king's ability to judge disputations fairly – the rights of the ordinary Israelite fell under the watchful jurisdiction of the king. The final aim of this judgement exercised by competent forums was not conviction, but rather correction⁶, in the very same way in which

BOTTERWECK, Helmer RINGGREN (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, , William B. Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, 1974, p. 357.

⁴ Geoffrey WIGODER, *Enciclopedia Iudaismului*, p. 537.

⁵ André NEHER, *L'essence du prophétisme*, Calman-Lévy Editeur, Paris, 1972, p. 94.

⁶ All the words deriving from this etymon originate from the Hebrew noun *ʔedaka* , which in Greek translates as *dikē*, an element superior to the cosmos, which springs

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David asks for God's judgment (*Psalms* 25, 1), which means that judgment restores the balance of the community⁷. In the history of Israel, the king was invested with the authority to judge social behaviour (*2 Samuel* 14, 1-20; 15, 1-6; *2 Paralipomenon* 19, 5-7; *Psalms* 71, 1-2⁸); in all other situations, Jews would direct their entreaties towards YHWH – the ultimate guidepost when it came to judgment⁹.

In Israel, monarchy was of the constitutional type and was structured according to the teachings of the Law of God (*Torah*). Written law was the guide of any king of Antiquity, according to rabbis, and the king was obliged to study it and apply it both in his personal life and within the community¹⁰. In case Israel's civil authority abused its power by violating basic human rights, it was the duty of the prophet sent by God to remind the

from God and lies at the foundation of interhuman relations. The first denotation of the Greek term is that of doing justice, of fulfilling the law; second to that is maintaining justice or giving commands so as to obtain it; thirdly, there is the notion of punishing and proclaiming the sentence. See H. SEEBASS, "Justicia", in: Lothar COENEN, Erich BEYREUTHER (eds.), *Diccionario Teológico del Nuevo Testamento*, vol. 2, Ediciones Sigueme, Salamanca, 1990³, 404; Alfred E. TUGGY, *Lexico Grieco-Español del Nuevo Testamento*, Editorial Mundo Hispano, El Paso, 1996, p. 245; Cătălin VARGA, "Δικαιοσύνη în limbajul biblic. O scurtă incursiune filologică, exegetică și teologică", in: *Teologie și Viață*, 9-12, 2014, pp. 133-135.

⁷ W.F. LOFTHOUSE, "The Righteousness of God", in: *The Expository Times*, L, 1939, pp. 341-345.

⁸ Cătălin VARGA, "Teologia și Exegeza episodului Schimbarea la Față (varianta lucanică)", in: *Altarul Banatului*, XXIV (2013) 7-9, p. 84.

⁹ Henri CAZELLES, "A Propos de quelques textes difficiles relatifs à la justice de Dieu dans l'Ancien Testament", in: *Revue biblique*, no. 2, 1951, p. 169. As King of the chosen people, YHWH is the one who governs history and, when it reaches a turning point, He intervenes (*Joshua* 1, 9; 2, 24; 3, 7; 6, 20, etc.) through His prophets and messengers (*Isaiah* 1, 18; 25, 6-7; 40, 4-5; *Jeremiah* 6, 16-19; 15, 19; *Ezekiel* 33, 2-20; 37, 9; *Malachi* 3, 1). As a Judge (*Psalms* 95, 10-13), YHWH imparts upon the writings of the old covenant the responsibility of applying social justice in accordance with the pathology of the deed. See Leo G. PERDUE, *The Blackwell Companion to the Hebrew Bible*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 2001, p. 243; Aubrey JOHNSON, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1967, pp. 6-7; Gerhard VON RAD, *Old Testament Theology*, vol.1, SCM Press Ltd, London, 1975, p. 372; Edmond JACOB, *Théologie de L'Ancien Testament*, Delachaux&Niestle, Neuchatel, Paris, 1955, pp. 75-82.

¹⁰ Jeffrey H. TIGAY, *Deuteronomy*, The Jewish Publication Society, Jerusalem, 1996, p. 168; André LEMAIRE, *Les écoles et la formation de la Bible dans l'ancien Israel*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1981, pp. 8-15.

king that encroaching on the dignity of a human being created in the image of God with the purpose of permanently pursuing holiness was tantamount to infringing on God's right as supreme monarch¹¹ (*Ezekiel* 28, 1-2). One paradigmatic case of this type is the episode of "Naboth's Vineyard" (*1 Kings* 21, 1-16¹²), in which the idolatrous king Ahab suppresses the right to parental inheritance, as laid down by the Law, of the winegrower Naboth¹³. There is a part of International Law to which all peoples have subscribed (*Amos* 1, 3 – 2, 3¹⁴), a law which is universally applicable and concerns the necessity to respect human dignity. When the Israelites promoted a kingly model which was purely human and rejected the norms of international law, as well as the revelational model commanded by

¹¹ Silviu TATU, *Dumnezeu a vorbit în vechime prin profeți. Studii în Vechiul Testament*, Editura Metanoia, Oradea, 2007, p. 139.

¹² From the perspective of historical-critical Old Testament research, the paternity of this chapter is under question, precisely due to the inconvenient occurrence of a social issue – that of Naboth's vineyard – in a narrative context in which only themes such as conspiracy, rebellion, prophetic intervention, etc. are predominant. For further details, see Emanuel TOV, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, Septuagint*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 2015, p. 8; Steven L. MCKENZIE, *The Trouble with Kings: The Composition of the Book of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1991, p. 67; Jerome T. WALSH, "Methods and Meanings: Multiple Studies of 1 Kings 21", in: *Journal of Biblical Literature*, CXI (1992) 2, pp. 193-211; Marc SHOFFREN, "Educational Approaches to Naboth's Vineyard (1 Kings 21)", in: *Journal of Progressive Judaism*, no. 13, 1999, 7.

¹³ Paul R. HOUSE, *1,2 Kings*, Broadman&Holman Publishers, Nashville, 1995, p. 232; Richard D. NELSON, *First and Second Kings*, John Knox Press, Atlanta, 1973, p. 120.

¹⁴ One notes that, in the indictment pronounced by the prophet Amos, it is basic human rights which needed to be respected at all costs, especially the dignity of slaves, the poor, war prisoners, pregnant women, the deceased or workers. These oracles of the prophet Amos are examples of specific situations, which refer to reprehensible acts committed in times of war, to all kinds of atrocities: irrational cruelty (1, 3. 11. 13); buying and selling those defeated in war (1, 6. 9); profaning the dead (2, 1). The oracles do not only refer to crimes committed against Jews, but Israel itself is judged for the same transgressions (2, 6-16). Ergo, what is being condemned is the violation of international law with respect to the wartime behaviour of both pagan nations and the chosen people, the latter appearing twice as guilty, for, unlike the others, Israel possessed the revelation of clear wartime laws which it was not allowed to renounce (*Deuteronomy* 20). See John H. WALTON, Victor H. MATTHEWS, Mark W. CHAVALAS, *Comentariu cultural-istoric al Vechiului Testament*, trad. de Silviu Tatu și Luca Crețan, Editura Casa Cărții, Oradea, 2016, pp. 822-823; James D.G. DUNN, John W. ROGERSON, *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 2003, p. 691.

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Yahweh in *Deuteronomy* 17, it meant they had all made the mistake of slighting divine will. When the function of the monarchy has been diverted from its natural course and the king has stopped being a mere representative of the people and an executing servant of the Torah¹⁵, but claims to be the ultimate authority and places himself in a blatant conflict of interest with Yahweh, then the prophet becomes the only solution left to solve the crisis. It is on his mission and on the repentance of the king and the people that hinges Israel's damnation or salvation from God's wrath.

The Christian perspective of the early 1st century, marked by the political context of the rule of the Roman Empire, continues the Judaic paradigm as to the relation between the political and the religious authority, but adds certain nuances to it. Broadly speaking, the relation between the two is expressed in terms of equity and peaceful cohabitation: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (*Matthew* 22:21). A dinar of that time bore the portrait of emperor Tiberius surrounded by the inscription "Tiberius Caesar Divi Augusti Filius Augustus" and, on the back of the coin, the title "Pontifex Maximus" was inscribed. Even though the two titles, of divine son of Augustus and of great priest, could easily have offended Judaic piety, Jesus Christ the Saviour did not challenge them. Moreover, he addressed the zealot Jews using the verb ἀπόδοτε¹⁶, which means a little more than simply "giving" or "paying". The context reveals the following meaning of the verb: to give back something borrowed or to pay a debt (5:26; 6:4; 18:25-34; 20:8 etc). Thus, levies were no longer arbitrary taxation, but a civil duty towards the imperial government, under whose

¹⁵ Silviu TATU, *Dumnezeu a vorbit în vechime prin profeți*, p. 77.

¹⁶ The Greek verb *apodidōmi* derives from the root *didōmi*, which means the act by which someone or something is transferred into someone else's possession (in this case, in the possession of Caesar of Rome), but even this concession reunites certain complementary nuances: conceded with the precise purpose of being guarded; conceded to a unanimously acknowledged authority; conceded with the purpose of being judged and punished (1 Corinthians 5, 5a); conceded even at the risk of the death of the subject (John 10, 15), and, finally, conceded with a single purpose, namely its destruction. The nuance used by the Saviour in this context refers to the concession of certain material goods to the administration of the unanimously acknowledged authority (Roman finances). See Gerhard KITTEL, Gerhard FRIEDRICH, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1964, pp. 169-171; Horst BALZ, Gerhard SCHNEIDER, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 1, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1990, p. 127.

protection the Jews were as well simply because they used the currency of the time. Since they were obliged to pay a tax to the Temple, they had to do the same for the Caesar, which showed the equal importance of the two institutions (*Numbers* 18:26: "Thus speak unto the Levites and say unto them: When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the Lord, even a tenth part of the tithe¹⁷"). Christ the Lord wanted to make them understand that the State and the Church did not have to be in conflict, nor in mutual subordination, but had to fully cooperate for the good of the community – a basic principle after all – which could have prevented many catastrophes had it been respected in the history of the relationship between religion and politics¹⁸. In the same vein, Apostles Peter and Paul made some necessary additions: one must show civil obedience to State authorities¹⁹ as long as they objectively fulfil

¹⁷ Rabbis commented this verse by insisting on the verb *lakah*, which means "to take into possession", so that no one before God could avoid the duty of paying to the Levites from the Temple the tithe of all personal produce. By extrapolation, one could say that, similarly, no one can avoid the duty of being a good citizen, that is paying taxes (τοῦ κήνσου) to the civil authority on time. See Jacob MILGROM, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Numbers*, p. 156.

¹⁸ R.T. FRANCE, *The Gospel of Matthew*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 2007, pp.833-834; Donald A. HAGNER, *Matthew 14-28*, Word Books Publisher, Dallas, 1995, p. 636.

¹⁹ It is not by chance that, in the prologue to the pericope from *Romans* 13 regarding Roman authority, Saint Paul used the term ἐξουσία ἐπιτελεστικῆς, meaning "government authority" – where the term *exousia* refers to an unchallengeable supreme authority. In the New Testament, *exousia* is used to describe political authority, the power of the ruler (*Luke* 20, 20; *John* 19, 10; *Revelation* 17, 12). In *Titus* 3, 1, the term designates those who participated to power by delegation (*1 Timothy* 2, 2) and the second degree governors sent by the emperor to punish wrongdoers (*1 Peter* 2, 14). This political authority deserves obedience and compliance, as it is the authority allowed by God, which serves the good of all those who do not tolerate evildoing, so that Christians can thus live in peace and tranquillity (*Romans* 13, 4; *1 Timothy* 2, 2). However, as an addition, he also used the term ὑποτάσσω, meaning hierarchical obedience to a unanimously acknowledged power – yet in no way blind obedience. To obey (ὑποτασσέσθω) means to recognise your place in society, while also acknowledging that a group of people (representatives of state power) have authority over you. In addition to government authorities, Saint Paul used the same verb, ὑποτάσσω, to define Christians' obedience to their spiritual fathers and to themselves (*1 Corinthians* 14, 32; 16, 16; *Ephesians* 5, 21). Likewise, the verb is also used to establish matrimonial relationships and relationships of slavery (*1 Corinthians* 14, 34; *Ephesians* 5, 24;

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their duty of rewarding the good and punishing the evil in a society and as long as they do not interfere with Christian conscience, dictating laws that go against the commandments of the Gospel (*Romans* 13:1-7²⁰; *1 Peter* 2:13-17²¹). Subsequently, when the intervention of emperor Constantine put an end to the persecution of the Church, the biblical foundations of the relation between Church and State were laid. The functioning principle is that of full cooperation, the *Byzantine symphony* allowing both institutions

Colossians 3, 18; *Titus* 2, 5). Yet, when a decadent civil authority claims the position at the top of the hierarchy – which belongs only to God – then Christian disobedience to an apostate government regime is allowed, since any obedience must be measured in terms of everyone's submission to the Law of God, to the Torah. See Douglas J. MOO, *The Epistle to the Romans*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1996, p. 797; Sabin VERZAN, *Epistola Sfântului Apostol Pavel către Tit: Introducere, Traducere, Comentariu și Teologie*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1994, p. 235.

²⁰ Beyond the virulent debate on the authenticity of the pericope, the Christian message with respect to the relation between Church and State is the following: every authority is allowed by God; governors are not to be feared; the Roman rule serves God; obedience is only possible based on the principle of conscience and if motivated by Christian love. For further details, see James KALLAS, "Romans xiii. 1-7: An Interpolation", in: *New Testament Studies*, XI (1965) 4, pp. 365-374; Ernst BARNIKOL, "Römer 13: Der nichtpaulinische Ursprung der absoluten Obrigkeitsbejahung von Römer 13, 1-7", in: *Studien zum Neuen Testament und zur Patristik: Erich Klostermann zum 90. Geburtstag dargebracht*, Akademie Verlag, 1961, pp. 65-133; William O. WALKER Jr., *Interpolations in the Pauline Letters*, Sheffield Academic Press, London, 2001, pp. 222-223; Stelian TOFANĂ, "Christian Submitting to Roman Authority According to Romans 13: 1-7", in: *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Theologia Orthodoxa*, LX (2015) 2, pp. 21-31.

²¹ Just like his fellow missionary, Saint Peter gives adds a nuance to the terms of obedience to civil authority by using the verb ὑποτάγητε, which translates best not as "obedience" but as a notion that aims to describe the negative action of overthrowing rather than the necessity of exercising power. The imperative of Saint Peter emphasises the act of one finding one's place in society and not at all that of resignation – therefore, every Christian is expected to cooperate with the regime in power. It is not a matter of obedience; instead, the Apostle Peter used this word (ὕπακοη) only to describe the relationship between God / the Gospel and man (2, 1). From the context of the pericope, it comes across that Christian obedience was conditioned by the way in which the Caesar and his rule objectively fulfilled their duty of orchestrating justice in terms of punishing evildoers and rewarding those who did good (*agathopoiós*). For, when civil authority break the divine Law, biblical examples prompt disobedience (*Exodus* 1, 17; *Daniel* 3, 13-18; 6, 10-24; *Acts* 4, 18-20; 5, 27-29; *Hebrews* 11, 23). See Joel B. GREEN, *1 Peter*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 2007, pp. 73-75; Norman HILLYER, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, 1992, pp. 77-78.

to have full autonomy, with the State's interference in the administration of the Church being harshly punished – this is why the emperor was symbolically called *episkopos tōn ektos*, meaning “*bishop over those outside*”, with limited power over ecclesiastical politics, without, however, giving up the title of *Pontifex maximus*²².

II. The relation model proposed by Thomas Hobbes – a different interpretation of the Ancient model

Preoccupied with social and political themes of particular consequence with respect to the old concern for defining the relationship between the State and the Church in precise terms, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), who was also engaged in the religious, political and social issues of his time, conceived a three-part philosophical and scientific project in the early 1640s (*De cive* – 1642; *De corpore* – 1654; *De homine* - 1658), the compressed form of which would result in *Leviathan*²³. By means of this symbolic image of a monster that has no match, Hobbes provides the collective mentality with the picture of an insurmountable authority, which subordinates even the authority of the Church to its interests, thus ensuring unmediated state protection to the civilian population on the basis of a civil contract through which the latter relinquishes all of its rights. The foundation of Hobbes' thinking is, according to some researchers, profoundly enlightened, liberalistic and even totalitaristic²⁴. It is worth mentioning that, because of his daring views, throughout his life, Hobbes was in danger of being swept off by an ecclesiastical court, which would have been ready to declare him a heretic and have him burnt at the stake at

²² Ovidiu PANAITI, “Relația dintre Biserică și Imperiu în timpul dinastiei constantiniene (306-363)”, in: Nicolae CHIFĂR, Dragoș BOICU (eds), *Imperiu și Sacerdoțiu: Dinamica raporturilor Biserică-Stat în Imperiul Romano-Bizantin (306-867)*, Doxologia, Iași, 2017, pp. 26-30.

²³ Thomas HOBBS, *On the Citizen*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998², pp. xi-xii.

²⁴ D.L. WILLIAMS, “Hobbes and Terrorism”, in: *Critical Review: A Journal of Politics and Society*, XXI (2009) 1, pp. 91-108; Q.SKINNER, *Liberty Before Liberalism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998; O.HÖFFE, *Thomas Hobbes*, SUNY Press, New York, 2015, p. 227; P.HAZARD, *The Crisis of the European Mind*, New York Review of Books, New York, 2013, p. 10; Michael OAKESHOTT, *Hobbes on Civil Association*, Liberty Fund, Indianapolis, ²1975, pp. 142-144.

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any time²⁵. Posterity suspected him of atheism, with some even declaring him an atheist, although he never publicly renounced the doctrine of the Anglican Church, whose member he was²⁶, but merely spoke against decadent clericalism.

The issue of the social contract put forward by Hobbes raises serious questions as to the biblical dimension of human rights. The civil community he proposes is based on the conclusion of a contract, the signing of a convention between the people and the Leviathanic power (XVII). To willingly relinquish one's natural right, one's own will, and the rights bestowed on one by God based on the dignity granted to man upon his creation (*Genesis* 1, 26-27) is the equivalent of signing a blank cheque, which can later turn against its signatory; the person or State apparatus invested with such irrevocable power could thus cancel a person's even most basic rights, following the example of Louis XIV, who stated emphatically: "*L'État, c'est moi*" or uttered the famous sentence, still present in the public conscience, "*Après moi le deluge*".

These secular abuses committed by royalty of divine right, against which there are no means of defence or revolt, paved the way for the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people, or democracy, sealed by the philosophy of Rousseau (*The Social Contract* I, 1), which stipulated that kings are made for peoples and not the other way around, human rights thus being sacred and inalienable. The French philosopher was forced to leave out of his equation the principle of the right of the mightiest due to the despotism of Hobbes's Leviathan and to the tyrannism of Grotius, who suggested the alienation of the right to freedom, both of the individual and of an entire people, on the basis of signing a social contract²⁷. If human rights are deemed as a mere means of further strengthening the Leviathanic power of this deeply anthropocentric and secular society, then the model of biblical Antiquity²⁸ has truly been overturned.

²⁵ Jon PARKIN, *Taming the Leviathan: The Reception of the Political and Religious Ideas of Thomas Hobbes in England 1640-1700*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, pp. 239-240.

²⁶ Patricia SPRINGBORG, "Hobbes on religion", in: Tom SORELL (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, pp. 347-348.

²⁷ James R. MARTEL, *Subverting the Leviathan: Reading Thomas Hobbes as a Radical Democrat*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, pp. 144-146.

²⁸ In a biblical sense, human rights refer to man's capacity and God-given means to become a saint through the natural exercise of the right to life, dignity, religious as-

Because anyone can enslave anyone, since any man is vulnerable in relation to his neighbour²⁹, according to Hegel's reductionism: "each is weak in relation to each", the only salvation that Hobbes can envisage is the birth of a supreme authority, a "mortal god" who would put an end to the terror of *homo homini lupus*³⁰ or of the war of all against all³¹ (ch. XIII). Practically, the entire legislative system of the *commonwealth* stands on one single pillar: the citizen's obligation to obey the sovereign unconditionally, pursuant to the signed contract, thus ensuring for himself the desires of natural right³²; it is not at all meant to create a legislative

sistance, a fair judgment by courts of law, remuneration for executed labour – in short, non-discrimination (*Ieşirea* 20, 10; *Levitic* 16, 29; 17, 8; 19, 33-34; *Deuteronom* 10, 19; 24, 19; 2 *Samuel* 15, 19; 1 *Cronici* 29, 15; *Psalms* 94, 5-6; 146, 9; *Ieremia* 7, 6). When strictly observed by both the civil and especially the religious authority, these basic rights of man – who was created in God's Image – facilitate man's journey towards meeting the Merciful Lord; hence, the attainment of the state of *entheosis* becomes Yahweh's gift bestowed upon that man who strives to fulfil His Law. At this point in man's sanctification, rights become irrelevant, as they were merely a path towards God, a pedagogue guiding him towards Christ, as Saint Paul says (*Galatians* 3, 24-25), for rights, as they were established by God, are strictly transitory in nature. That is why Saint John Chrysostom says that, before Christ came to grant us the freedom of the living faith, we were confined within the legalistic system of the Torah, restricted pending the arrival of the faith full of Spirit which was to come. In this biblical scenario, human rights were meant to keep us fenced in on the path to salvation, as the tendency to slide off into idolatry was great; however, with the Resurrection of Christ, the chains fell off and we were resurrected into a new life, in which limitations of our rights are bereft of any power over us, as the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life (*2Corinthians* 3, 6), and gives it in abundance (*John* 10, 10). Only in such terms do we declare ourselves in favour of the transitory nature of the Law and implicitly of human rights. See A.E. GUILDING, "Notes on the Hebrew Law Codes", in: *Journal for Theological Studies*, L (1948) 1, 1948, pp. 43-44; Franck LESSAY, "Hobbes's Covenant Theology and Its Political Implications", in: Patricia SPRINGBORG (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's Leviathan*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, pp. 244-245.

²⁹ Laurie M. Johnson BAGBY, *Thomas Hobbes: Turning Point for Honor*, Lexington Books, Lanham, 2009, pp. 117-118.

³⁰ Carl SCHMITT, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes: Meaning and Failure of a Political Symbol*, Greenwood Press, London, 1996, pp. 31-32; Thomas HOBBS, *The Unity of Scientific & Moral Wisdom*, University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 1989, pp. 54-62.

³¹ Norberto BOBBIO, *Thomas Hobbes and the Natural Law Tradition*, Chicago & London, 1993, p. 41.

³² S.A. LLOYD, *Morality in the Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes: Cases in the Law of Na-*

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framework of rights and obligations in which moral terms should have coverage. The only “moral concept” still valid is the obligation to obey according to the following equation: *A* has the obligation not to do *X* = *A* relinquishes his natural right to do *X*³³ – clearly a system of government that belongs in totalitarianistic circles if one were to judge by the modern paradigm³⁴. Practically, in Hobbes’ anthropological view, ontically marred human nature needs an overwhelming and unanimously acknowledged state authority which would shield man from self-destruction through coercion.

The critics of T. Hobbes are also sceptical as to the anthropological vision of T. Hobbes, claiming that, based on Calvin’s anthropology, the English sociologist tends to exaggerate man’s weaknesses, forcefully

ture, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2009, p. 153.

³³ Anat BILETZKI, *Talking Wolves: Thomas Hobbes on the Language of Politics and the Politics of Language*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 1997, pp. 79-80; David P. GAUTHIER, *The Logic of Leviathan: The Moral and Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1969, p. 41.

³⁴ Modern theories of natural law or natural right have the relationship between religion and politics as their fundamental characteristic. The matter of separating the Caesar’s power from the Church’s could no longer be ignored after the interventions of Machiavelli, the Reform, and religious wars. The most potent expression of this separation is embodied by the King of England, Henry VIII, who, following serious confrontations with the Catholic Church, proclaimed himself the head of the Anglican Church. That is precisely why modern theories of natural law pertain to social contracts and implicitly define the laws of peace or war. The founder of the modern theory of natural law is German scholar Hugo Grotius, who identifies natural law with natural right, thus representing natural law as a common element to all men who belong to a civil society. Although he admits the existence of a relevant divine law, Grotius holds natural law to be the only basis for universal laws – for the State must not be influenced by religion. In his treatise called “The Rights of War and Peace”, he sees natural law as pertaining to rational human nature, precedent to all convention, independent from all volitional element, having as its only source man’s social nature, saying that “*natural law is the one that leads and dictates according to reason*”. Thus, no modern community can ignore natural law, as its precepts are universal, immutable and shaping. The immanent law of reason, on the other hand, is the constant that distinguishes between justice and injustice, as concluded by modern theories of natural right. Unfortunately, this modern scenario of natural legislation, inherited from Hobbes and other secular thinkers, leaves no room for revealed Law, thus reducing humanity exclusively to its telluric dimension. Any concern for immortality and the deification of man becomes a utopic equation. See Gabriela RATULEA, *From the Natural Man to the Political Machine: Sovereignty and Power in the Works of Thomas Hobbes*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2015, pp. 27-28.

generalising them precisely to give legitimacy to the future unbeatable state power³⁵. Hobbes' entire theory derives directly or indirectly from the dictate of natural law, which has a formal character with respect to external actions, shaped by a contract or by certain positive laws that require obedience in order to maintain social peace³⁶. Hobbes' postulation is clearly incorrect, as human nature is reduced to the mere principle of self-conservation, the theory being based on the reductionism of the four Platonic cardinal virtues³⁷, over which reigns self-conservation³⁸ (*De cive* III.32).

This is why, today more than ever, a correct understanding of civil authority in harmony with the concept of human rights is necessary. As a consequence, in what follows, we propose the rediscovery of the Ancient paradigm with respect to the relation between Church and State in the form of an Orthodox vision.

III. The thesis of an Orthodox vision as a reaffirmation of the Ancient model

The critics of T. Hobbes have also been suspicious as to the model of a Leviathan that absorbs ecclesiastical authority, ignoring the ordinary

³⁵ A.P. MARTINICH, *The Two Gods of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes on Religion and Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 74-75.

³⁶ Jeffrey R. COLLINS, *The Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2005, p. 11.

³⁷ Hobbes, among others (Pico, Bruno, Campanella, Ficino etc.), was a true Neoplatonist, but he defined, however, his own thinking that owes very little to the philosophy of Plato, whom he reads in the translations of Ficino and not in the original works. Nonetheless, Hobbes inherits from him a mathematical thinking of the world, especially from the perspective of geometrical coordinates, thus building his Leviathan on the doctrine on the conceptions and ideas of things. See Karl SCHUHMAN, *Selected papers on Renaissance philosophy and on Thomas Hobbes*, Springer, Dordrecht, 2004, pp. 191-194.

³⁸ Leo STRAUSS, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago&London, 1996, p. 15; Gabriella SLOMP, *Thomas Hobbes and the Political Philosophy of Glory*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2000, pp. 40-43.

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Christian's conscience in its attempt to achieve infinite power and thus distorting the Trinitarian face of the world, according to J. Edwards³⁹. This model was born against the backdrop of Aristotelian thinking, of the notion of "civil philosophy", divided between ethics and politics, Hobbes putting forward the elimination of ethics from the preoccupations of politics in *De Corpore* – man being in a permanent personal conflict between the psychological and the political⁴⁰ (chap. 6, 6). Other critics consider that Hobbes was a modern epicurean in thought, promoting a private lifestyle built on pleasure that resumed everything to earthly life, eliminating any aspiration to transcendence and portraying immortality as a chimaera⁴¹. Due to this way of thinking, Hobbes basically created an artificial person – state power –, under the image of a marine monster called Leviathan, a kind of "mortal god" that no other existing power could oppose⁴². This artificial man, rightly called by certain researchers a mythological creation⁴³, is in fact what we technically call *The Hobbes Problem*, by which an empirical and normative action is attempted in political science: Hobbes tried to understand how the State could function and what were the obligations of citizens towards public authority⁴⁴. His solution was resolute: social contract or civil association, by which the citizen wilfully cedes all his rights - from here to totalitarian regimes there is only one step left. The vocal polemic against classical republicanism from chapter 21 of the Leviathan portrays Hobbes in the eyes of his readers as deliberately against the traditional political current of *civitas libera*, meaning the free State supported by Machiavelli, or against the principle of democratic

³⁹ Jonathan J. EDWARDS, "Calvin and Hobbes: Trinity, Authority, and Community", in: *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, no. 2, 2009, pp. 115-116.

⁴⁰ Richard TUCK, "Hobbes's moral philosophy", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes*, pp. 178-179.

⁴¹ Mark LILLA, *The Stillborn God: Religion, Politics, and the Modern West*, Vintage Books, New York, p. 73.

⁴² Carl SCHMITT, *El Leviatán en la Doctrina del Estado de Thomas Hobbes*, Distribuciones Fontamara, México, 2008, pp. 89-100; Gregorio SARAVIA, *Thomas Hobbes y la Filosofía Política Contemporánea*, Editorial Dykinson, Madrid, 2011, pp. 148-149.

⁴³ Michael OAKESHOTT, *Hobbes on Civil Association*, pp. 161-163; Johan TRALAU, "Leviathan, the Beast of Myth: Medusa, Dionysos, and the Riddle of Hobbes's Sovereign Monster", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's Leviathan*, pp. 68-70.

⁴⁴ Peter STONE, "Hobbes' Problem", in: *The Good Society*, XXIV (2015) 1, pp. 2-3.

equality from Aristotle's politics⁴⁵ – throwing the entire discussion in the area of battle between tyranny and freedom⁴⁶.

We can definitely say, following this brief overview of Hobbesian paradigm regarding the relation between civil and religious authority, that this “ideal society” dominated by the arrogance of the Leviathan is not at all ideal for ordinary people. In the Hobbesian state system, the citizen loses all his rights related to freedom and dignity by signing a civil contract and the right of practising faith and religious ideas is nipped in the bud, because political *commonwealth* does not tolerate the cultivation of faith in God. For this very reason, we identify in Thomas Hobbes' political doctrine protocommunist and profascist elements – the appanage of totalitarian regimes. To achieve this desideratum, Hobbes promoted a “political education” whose object was not the understanding of human nature, but the act of disciplining citizens. The spread of knowledge by logical, unbeatable arguments was not a civic goal for Hobbes, as the political education of citizens did not aim at promoting the free movement of ideas, scientific ambition being harshly punished⁴⁷. For personal opinions can give birth to resistance and the insubordination to the totalitarian power of the Leviathan represented for Hobbes a real threat to public safety – from this point, all could escalate towards his obsession related to civil war. Given that any exercise of power limits the frameworks of freedom, the two great sets of values (authority / power and freedom / individual joy of opinion) being, according to Hobbesian thinking, in total conflict⁴⁸. To solve this aporia, the captivity of reason was aimed at, since a society is more easily manipulated the less educated it is. We notice once again the recrudescence of totalitarian convictions.

In order to attack and discredit the governmental form commanded by God in the Old Testament, namely theocracy, in which the king or sovereign proposed by Hobbes was not the absolute ruler, but the co-regent

⁴⁵ Giulia SISSA, “De L'Animal Politique à la Nature Humaine: Aristote et Hobbes sur la colère”, in: *Anthropologie et Sociétés*, XXXII (2008) 3, p. 23.

⁴⁶ Jon PARKIN, *Taming the Leviathan*, pp. 177-178.

⁴⁷ Geoffrey M. VAUGHAN, *Behemoth Teaches Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes on Political Education*, Lexington Books, Lanham, 2002, pp. 38-39; J.D. MARSHALL, “Thomas Hobbes: Education and Obligation in the Commonwealth”, in: *Journal of the Philosophy of Education*, XIV (1980) 1, p. 194.

⁴⁸ Richard E. FLATHMAN, *Thomas Hobbes: Skepticism, Individuality, and Chastened Politics*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, 2002, p. 129.

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of Yahweh, the Only Emperor, and the Law revealed on Sinai stood in for a State constitution and its interpretation in contextual language was the work of prophets that communicated directly with Yahweh for the constant education of people in view of their redemption (*Deuteronomy* 32, 7-9. 44-47), Thomas Hobbes attacked the very key of theocratic success, the institution of biblical prophetism that is (XXXII). The indirect attack to the *sine qua non* institution of biblical prophetism meant denying the social value of theocracy, manifested by the Davidic Covenant (*2 Kings* 7, 8-9), for the prophets of the Old Testament supported it as the only revealed form of rule, accomplished in its Archetype Messiah, the eternal King of Israel (*Jeremiah* 23, 5-6; *Ezekiel* 37, 24-25; *Daniel* 9, 25; *Amos* 7, 8). Discrediting prophetism meant, beyond question, discrediting theocracy in Israel. Doubt regarding theocracy definitely represents a step towards the corrosion of faith, for the one through whom Yahweh speaks is the one whom He has previously chosen to serve the prophecy (*1 Kings* 3, 8-9; *Isaiah* 6, 6-10; *Jeremiah* 1, 4-10; *Ezekiel* 3, 1-3). No true prophet self-claims himself to be a prophet, except for fake prophets (*3 Kings* 22, 22-23; *2 Peter* 2, 1). All prophets that announced the messages of Yahweh started from the Torah and had the consensus of previous prophets, as God acts only after revealing Himself to His prophets (*Amos* 3, 7-8). This is because God's justice (*Psalms* 96, 10) manifested itself in the chosen people in two ways: it flooded those who did good with blessing and punished evildoers⁴⁹. Yet, God's actions were revealed to the people by prophets in order to settle the knowledge relationship between God and His people and the prophet was obliged to act immediately after receiving the message, spreading God's intentions⁵⁰. Precisely for this reason, the syllogism of Hobbes' doubt is a fail from the very beginning. This is all the more true as he did not believe in prophetic inspiration (XXXIV). Hobbes' intention was to deny at any cost the Christian doctrine of inspiration by the work of the Holy Spirit, his target being the discredit of the Church, so that later on he could attach it to the subjective interests of the state Leviathan.

The thesis of an Orthodox vision of theocracy that we put forward is based first on the ruins of the Hobbesian system that is, as we have

⁴⁹ Petre SEMEN, "Sensul Expresiei Yom-Yahwe – Ziua Domnului la Profetia Vechiului Testament", in: *Studii Teologice*, XXX (1978) 1-2, p. 149.

⁵⁰ Silviu TATU, *Când Leul Rage: Comentariu la Cartea Profetului Amos*, Editura Meta-noia, Oradea, 2010, pp. 183-185.

demonstrated, an antidemocratic state model that destroys in the bud human rights in the form left by God by the Law of the Old Testament⁵¹ (*Exodus* 21, 18-26; *Leviticus* 19, 17; *Deuteronomy* 24, 16; *2 Samuel* 10, 2-11; *Proverbs* 24, 29; *Ezekiel* 18:20). In order to shape an ideal society, we insist on supporting the biblical state model, in particular the paradigm of the New Testament (*Matthew* 22, 21; *Romans* 13, 1-7; *1 Timothy* 2, 1-3; *Titus* 3, 1-2; *1 Peter* 2, 13-17), in which the State Constitution should be built on the moral values of the Law of God, rulers should be God's faithful servants and the rights of the ordinary people foreseen by the Torah – the Word of the Lord –, should be respected. For this reason, the relation between civil and religious authority must unfold in terms of synchronic collaboration to support the legal framework necessary for gaining holiness and not at all in terms of mutual subordination or in terms of taking the Church out in the unlawful area, according to totalitarian paradigm. As Christian virtues are by their nature foundations of social order, transforming into Evangelical depth the very social and political structures – not natural law and its lay derivatives, proposed by Hobbes and existentialist philosophers. In fact, this is also the model proposed by the Fathers of the Eastern Orthodox Church⁵²; consequently, in order to maintain its Orthodox dimension, it must be protected and promoted at a global level (*Psalms* 97, 2; *Isaiah* 65, 1; *Micah* 1, 2), given that human rights mean every person's right to holiness.

IV. Conclusion(s)

We can definitely say, following this brief overview of the Hobbesian paradigm regarding the relation between civil and religious authority, that this “ideal society” dominated by the arrogance of the Leviathan is not at all ideal for ordinary people. In order to attack and discredit the

⁵¹ David DAUBE, *Studies in Biblical Law*, Ktav Publishing, New York, 1969, p. 109; Bernard M. LEVINSON, “Calum M. Carmichael's Approach to the Laws of Deuteronomy”, in: *The Harvard Theological Review*, LXXXIII (1990) 3, p. 230-232; David NOVAK, “The Judaic foundation of rights”, in: John WITTE Jr., Frank S.ALEXANDER (eds.), *Christianity and Human Rights: An Introduction*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010, p. 50.

⁵² Gerald BRAY, Thomas C. ODEN, *Romans*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1998, pp. 324-325.

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governmental form commanded by God in the Old Testament, namely theocracy, in which the king or sovereign proposed by Hobbes was not the absolute ruler, but the co-regent of Yahweh, the Only Emperor, and the Law revealed on Sinai stood in for a State constitution and its interpretation in contextual language was the work of prophets that communicated directly with Yahweh for the constant education of people in view of their redemption (*Deuteronomy* 32, 7-9. 44-47), Thomas Hobbes attacked the very key of theocratic success, the institution of biblical prophetism that is (XXXII). The indirect attack to the *sine qua non* institution of biblical prophetism meant denying the social value of theocracy, manifested by the Davidic Covenant, for the prophets of the Old Testament supported it as the only revealed form of rule, accomplished in its Archetype Messiah, the eternal King of Israel. Discrediting prophetism meant, beyond question, discrediting theocracy in Israel. Doubt regarding theocracy definitely represents a step towards the corrosion of faith

For this reason, like I've just said, the relation between civil and religious authority must unfold in terms of synchronic collaboration to support the legal framework necessary for attaining holiness and not at all in terms of mutual subordination or in terms of rendering the Church unlawful. We must preserve the ancient Biblical governmental system.

Based on the text from *Matthew* 22, 21, that Caesar and, through him, public authorities deserved everything they asked from us, as long as those things did nothing to harm our Christian faith. As a consequence, a good Christian is not to engage in conflicts or plots against civil authority, for he does not have the right to wear himself out in all kinds of foolish and unnecessary battles. Yet, when a decadent civil authority claims the position at the top of the hierarchy – which belongs only to God – then Christian disobedience to an apostate government regime is allowed, since any obedience must be measured in terms of everyone's submission to the Law of God, to the Torah.

Medieval political philosophy was centred on the conflict between individual or public freedom and institutional control. 17th century social, political and scientific order on the one hand, and of the birth of a new paradigm on the other, determined the meticulously tackled of the legitimation and limitation of the public exercise of power within a state or civil community (*commonwealth*), abiding strictly by natural laws. In order to avoid a new civil war or a world war, and in pursuit of human

peace and happiness, we propose these ancient biblical imperatives related to the relation between the Christian and the Roman political rule precisely to encourage the one who considered himself above the political order to be humble and obedient for the simple fact that he was called to be a Christian, an apprentice of Jesus Christ the Lord.