

Respublica mosaica:
imposters, legislators and
civil religion

TOLAND was, then, embroiled in the day-to-day cut and thrust of British politics, advancing a clear and profound defence of commonwealth principles especially by supporting the interest of the Protestant succession against popery. This was not simply a British project, but a European-wide campaign. Toland exploited all possible connections. His intellectual contribution was not just made in the form of printed works but (as we have seen in chapter 2 above) was also manifest in the conversations and scribal materials he circulated amongst his powerful friends. One potent relationship was the connection with Hanover. From the very moment Toland managed to intrude himself into the diplomatic mission charged with presenting the *Act of Settlement* to Sophia, he used his intimacy with her as a theatre for the display of his arguments. This relationship with Sophia (and her daughter) was both public and private: the series of public defences and *eloges* of her political legitimacy and rational character were matched by a private liaison manifest in a series of profoundly erudite and heterodox conversations about the nature of the soul, the sacred status of Scripture and political theory.¹ The textual remnants of these conversations are the closest we can get to capturing the power of Toland's intellectual charisma.

Taking advantage of the 'complete liberty of conscience' established at Hanover, Toland, often encouraged by Sophia (much to the anxiety of Leibniz), engaged head on in disputation with many more pious and orthodox Christian believers.² Although some historians have described Sophia as a wit rather than as seriously interested in matters of metaphysics and natural philosophy, it was Leibniz himself who insisted that 'Madame L'électrice, est entièrement pour la raison, et par conséquent toute les mesures qui pourront servir à faire que les rois et les peuples suivent la raison, seront à son goût'.³ 'Serenissima' while distinguished by great intellectual curiosity and linguistic skill, had little

taste for dogmatic theology. Hostile to religious enthusiasm and mystery in ecclesiastical matters she pursued an Erastian toleration: Lutherans, Calvinists, French Huguenots as well as the Anglican liturgy all found a place in her regime. An insight into her religious character can be seen in Leibniz's comment to Toland in 1709, 'that she was accustomed to quote and praise particularly that passage of Scripture which demands whether it is consistent with reason that the Author of the eye should not see, and the Author of the ear should not hear'.⁴ It was also reported that Sophia found fault with the Apostles for failing to inquire of Lazarus what death was like.⁵

The evidence of Toland's dispute with Isaac Beausobre which took place in Berlin in October 1701, orchestrated by Sophia, indicates that the Electress was keen to explore even the most controversial topics.⁶ Toland, clearly eager to impress his auditors with his intellectual credentials, set out to discuss 'des ouvrages anti-religieux qu'il n'avoit pas encore publiés'. The thrust of Toland's arguments would 'rendre l'Écriture douteuse'. The debate lasted for two hours. Toland refuted the inspired status of the Bible by arguing that it was defective because 'les anciens ayant admis dans le canon du livres douteux'. During the discussion, Beausobre became so disenchanted with the tone of Toland's arguments that he defied him to testify to his belief in God and Providence, a tactic that was unsuccessful, since Toland (typically) eluded any precise denial or commitment but merely moved the conversation along to a different matter. These oral discussions ultimately resulted in the composition of scribal text upon the Christian canon which was circulated amongst a broader community. Without the restraints of a public audience, and the danger of censorship or punishment, Toland's intellectual argument was destructive and hostile. Indeed, reports of his behaviour in the coffee-houses of Edinburgh and Oxford, where he was given 'to railing ... against all communities in religion and monarchy', confirm that Toland was a fierce controversialist in the right context.⁷ As contemporaries were very well aware, letting Toland tell the potential Queen of Great Britain that the Bible was defective and corrupt, was a dangerous business. It did not stop there however.

One of the more heterodox discussions initiated in Sophia's company focused on an even more controversial issue. Conversations between Leibniz, Sophia and Toland in September 1702 had fixed upon the related issues of the nature of the soul and the relationship between matter and motion.⁸ As Leibniz reported to Sophia, Toland's opinions about the soul were similar to those of Lucretius: 'c'est à dire sur le concours du corpuscules, mais il ne dit pas d'où il vient que le matière a du mouvement et de l'ordre, ny comment il y a du sentiment dans le monde'.⁹ Sophia supported Leibniz's point that the relationship between matter and motion was the critical issue and that perhaps Toland understood little of the problem. As Leibniz clarified, Toland subscribed to the views of Hobbes, Epicurus and Lucretius in arguing 'qui'l n'y a

d'autre chose dans la nature que ses figures et mouvemens'.¹⁰ So, just as Toland was engaged in advancing a political defence of the Hanoverian succession in public, he was also discussing heterodox accounts of key metaphysical problems with the next successor. This convergence of public and private discourse was made more manifest by the publication of the substance of these discussions in 1704 in *Letters to Serena*, a work closely associated with the Hanoverian interest, which established the connections between such metaphysical speculation and more mainstream political thought.

Letters to Serena (1704) is an intriguing work. Although its first form was in a private disputation, the published text displayed a range of erudition and learning. Especially in the first three letters on the history of prejudice, idolatry and doctrine, Toland borrowed learning from Herbert of Cherbury, Gerard Vossius, Charles Blount, Robert Howard, Anthony Van Dale and Balthasar Bekker, as well as a library of classical texts. The last two letters offered critiques of the metaphysical theories of Spinoza and Newton. The continuity and intellectual portability of Toland's intentions are indicated by the fact that the first three letters of the work were later translated into French by Toland and scribally circulated amongst the milieu of Prince Eugene and Baron d'Hohendorf in c. 1709–10. An anonymous Dutch translation of the first letter appeared in Amsterdam in 1710, while later on in the eighteenth century, French translations were published by d'Holbach and Naigeon.¹¹ Here is clear evidence of how Toland used works for different audiences, but also how he saw a continuity of purpose across these communities in Holland, Vienna, Hanover and England. The first three letters gave an account of the epistemology of prejudice, the history of opinions concerning the soul, and a history of the origins of idolatry. The last two letters engaged with the natural philosophy of Spinoza and Newton. Taking inspiration from Lucretius' *de rerum natura*, the work used a materialist metaphysics as a premise for a criticism of the politics of fear. Toland, building on these arguments, also justified a practical and radical political anticlericalism.¹² The text corroded belief in the immortality of the soul, and the associated system of priestcraft. It was conceived as an antidote to the damage false religion and superstition did to civic communities. That this agenda resulted from Toland's intellectual intimacy with the successor to the English Crown must have alarmed more orthodox contemporaries.

Unhindered by constraints of writing for a public audience where the radicalism of his insights were determined by the hegemony of mainstream Protestant discourses (and the letter of the law), in private Toland characteristically engaged in a much more pungent style of communication. Evidence for the literary remodelling of scribal work for a broader public readership is most profound for the case of his *Nazarenus* (1718) which saw life initially as a bespoke scribal work for Prince Eugene of Savoy and Baron d'Hohendorf a

decade before its publication. The literary style of the original version of the work was polemic and abrasive – the irreligious assault upon Judaism, Christianity and Islam was obvious – unlike the printed version which translated the brusque irreligion of the French work into a more subtle and ambiguous text. It was so equivocal that in fact many readers thought of the work as an essentially pious one.¹³

In his scribal works, then, when communicating with powerful and influential people like Sophia, Eugene and Shaftesbury (people who had as much to lose as him), Toland was explicit in his heterodoxy. This intellectual honesty was an essential part of Toland's strategy of trying to persuade his audience. For a public, and probably hostile, audience he used a more subtle form of insinuation, but in private he let the full flow of his polemic rip. This can be seen most evidently in his contribution to the composition and circulation of the most dangerous clandestine work of the period, the *Traité des trois imposteurs* printed at The Hague by Charles Levier in 1719. This edition was the end-product of a complex series of manuscript traditions, literary shadow-play and intellectual conversation that dated back to the earlier 1700s.¹⁴ Establishing precisely who was responsible for the composition of the clandestine work, and who transformed it into a semi-public text, has been the subject of much historical debate. Some years ago the suggestion was advanced that the work was the product of a semi-masonic group, 'The Knights of the Jubilation', and consequently was part of a radical, materialist and republican assault upon the shibboleths of the *ancien regime*.¹⁵ More recently research, exploring the circle of men like Charles Levier, Rousset de Missy and Jean Aymon, has proposed a little-known Dutchman Jan Vroesen (friend of Furly and Shaftesbury) as the original compiler of the text.¹⁶ Others have suggested that Toland was also intimately involved.¹⁷

The French manuscript has diverse forms. It is possible to construct a historical taxonomy for the variant manuscript versions of the work, indicating that there were at least three distinct types of families of the manuscript independent of the printed edition.¹⁸ Establishing the inter-relations of text, distribution and chronology between these works is a profoundly complicated business. There is certainty that Benjamin Furly, Eugene of Savoy and Baron d'Hohendorf were all involved in the compilation and circulation of the text.¹⁹ Extracting ideas and even paragraphs from a range of heterodox material (Spinoza, Hobbes, Cicero, Vanini, Pomponazzi, Herbert, Charron, Lucretius, amongst many others), the manuscript systematically destroyed and ridiculed the notion of a revealed religion. Moses, Christ and Mahomet were false prophets who manipulated religion to their own ends. Doctrines of the soul, spirit, heaven and hell were ridiculous. The majority of humankind was condemned for their superstitious ignorance. All priests were dismissed as

agents of tyranny and prejudice. Some versions of the work included different materials, expanding on the crimes of the priests, the absurdity of Christian doctrine, or the imposture of Mahomet. One of the distinctive versions (known as *Le fameux livre des trois imposteurs*), included a larger account of Moses' life and conduct. These scribal copies are closely associated with the library and intellectual connection of Prince Eugene and the Baron d'Hohendorf.²⁰ While there is obscurity about the specific origins of these additions, it is possible to establish the role Toland played in the circle that produced the text.²¹ As we will see he was also perpetrating similar ideas in his own writings to both public and private English audiences.

Toland was connected to the *Traité* in two ways. First, by his intimacy with the individuals who were central in the production of the work, and second, by the literary parallels between his work and the arguments of the clandestine text. As we have seen, Toland's connections with heterodox circles on the continent were manifold. Early in his career he had spent time in the Low Countries, especially in Leiden, studying at the University, which had brought him into contact with people like Benjamin Furly, in whose library it is known that Charles Levier made a copy of the *Traité* in 1711. Later in his career, while undertaking various diplomatic duties, Toland travelled throughout Europe: it was during these visits that he became friendly with, first, Baron d'Hohendorf and then with Prince Eugene of Savoy. During this period Toland established relations with many of the men involved in the work. He certainly knew the controversial figure of Jean Aymon who had a hand in revising the *Traité* in collaboration with Rousset de Missy before publication in 1719.²² Toland first encountered Aymon when the latter was attempting to sell manuscripts stolen from the French Royal Library. Toland undertook a sales-catalogue describing the various manuscripts for Humphrey Wanley: it was through this connection that Toland had a sight of the source (the *Codex Armachanus*) upon which he based the second part of his *Nazarenus* (1718).²³

Aymon was also an important connection for Toland's dealings with Thomas Johnson, the Scottish bookseller who lived and traded in Holland, and was deeply involved in the 1719 edition. Johnson was a significant, if much under-studied, figure in the clandestine Republic of Letters. Based in The Hague and then Rotterdam, Johnson was involved in the publication and distribution of a range of mainstream and more contentious literature. Publisher of the *Journal Littéraire* (1713–22) and the *Mercure Galant*, he also produced works by Anthony Collins, Shaftesbury, the Duke of Buckingham as well as Colerus' *Vie de Spinoza*.²⁴ A pioneer publisher of editions of single Shakespeare plays, he was a member of 'the association of booksellers at the Hague' and collaborated in joint ventures with publishers in England like Bernard Lintott. As a *libraire* he also had contacts in England with men like Anthony Collins, to whom he sent packages of books.²⁵ Johnson later

collaborated with Toland in the publication of a number of books. The latter used his bookshop as a postal address in 1708 when writing to Leibniz. In 1709, Johnson published (at The Hague) one of Toland's most radical works: the Latin *Adeisidaemon* and *Origines Judaicae*. He was still in contact with Toland in 1715 when a second edition of the same work was mooted.²⁶ Toland, then, was intimate with many of the key figures involved in both the manuscript and printed version of the *Traité*.

Toland was not merely a hanger-on in this world of clandestine letters but made his own contributions. Toland supplied both Eugene and d'Hohendorf with scribal work as can be seen in the collection of 'Dissertations diverses' composed between 1708 and 1710. Dedicated to Eugene, and copied for d'Hohendorf, much of this scribal work, like the *Traité*, was concerned with the nature of religious imposture in general, and the *respublica mosaica* in particular. Toland's scribal energies were also devoted to distributing, and generating interest in, a new edition of Giordano Bruno's *Spaccio*, writing to Leibniz and others with a specimen of his intentions. Importantly, in trying to prompt interest in Bruno's work, Toland connected it with the tradition of imposture epitomised in the *Traité*. In 1711 M. de la Croze, reporting a conversation he had with Toland in 1702, commented that 'Monsieur Toland, qui a ses raisons pour faire beaucoup de cas de cet ouvrage, croit que c'est celui qui est si fameux dans la monde, sous le titre de Traité des trois imposteurs'.²⁷ That Toland was deliberately attempting to pass off Bruno's work as the *Traité* is confirmed by another letter written in 1709 (from Amsterdam) by John Bagford 'the book-hunter' and antiquary. Writing to his correspondent Bagford insisted that the attribution of a book 'intituled the three Grand impostores' to Toland was incorrect, indeed he continued 'nor dou I knowe thare is any book in the World which bare that Title'. On the other hand, Bagford recognised Bruno's *Spaccio* as the work which Toland had 'occasion' to pass off as the *Traité*. Bagford, who had read the *Spaccio* in Toland's company (and hoped to do so again), added the comment that when he first read the volume he too thought that it was 'the book meant by the title of the three Impostors'. Although Bruno's work scarcely mentioned 'Mouse Christ or Mahomet' the work was still impious because it treated 'all the authores of all revealed Religion whatsoever, as Impostour'.²⁸ Toland was clearly aware of the reputation (and probably the text) of the *Traité*: it was typical of his desire to be at the vanguard of radicalism that he claimed insider knowledge of the work.

Further evidence of contemporary association of Toland with the clandestine work is found in the fabricated provenance commonly attached to the *Traité*. In the fictionalised account of the discovery of the manuscript in a Frankfurt bookshop in 1706, a German officer named Tausendorf (surely a reference to the real Hohendorf) had offered three books for sale: the first was a copy of Bruno's *Spaccio* (described as 'the same one of which Toland had an English

one printed'); the second was an edition of Cicero's *de natura deorum*; the final volume was the treatise on imposture. The naming of Toland (in association with the circulation of Bruno's work) is significant. It is also notable that Toland had connections with Cicero that tied him to the same circle. In 1712 he had printed a work called, *Cicero illustratus*, intended as an encouragement for subscribers to fund a complete edition of the Roman's works replete with critical historical and philological apparatus. Significantly, this work was dedicated to both Eugene and d'Hohendorf. In his extensive and influential article on the *Traité*, Prosper Marchand rehearsed these same discussions about 'the famous' Toland's role in the confusion of the *Spaccio* and the *Traité*, and also noted that as author of *Nazarenus* Toland was skilled at constructing fake literary lineages for supposedly ancient texts.²⁹ His association with many of the central figures involved in the production and circulation of the clandestine work, especially the intellectual intimacy with Eugene of Savoy and Baron d'Hohendorf which threw open to him their important collection of *libertin* and freethinking literature in Vienna, make it unlikely then, that Toland was not involved in the making of the *Traité*.³⁰

Toland's works (both published and manuscript) during this period show that his attitudes to the divine mission of Moses were profoundly irreligious. Toland exploited his erudition to compose a heterodox account of Moses as a political legislator which challenged the Christian version of the divine religious patriarch. There was a good republican source for this depiction of Moses in the writings of the arch-heretic, Machiavelli. The Florentine's *Discourses* had treated Moses as a legislator with the same skills and 'virtu' as Numa, Solon and Lycurgus.³¹ This laid the foundations for what contemporaries regarded as atheism. For orthodox believers the Mosaic legation was the prophetic foundation of Christianity. Although Christian theologians insisted Christ had perfected the Mosaic dispensation as a type or pre-figuration of the true faith, Judaism was treated as a Godly model. Christian scholarship became increasingly knowledgeable about the historical nature of the *republica hebraeorum*.³² The primary document for exploring the Hebrew republic was the Old Testament. Historical scholarship became much more sophisticated in its exploration of the rites, ceremonies and practices of the ancient Jews, as philological and linguistic developments opened up new rabbinical and classical sources. Toland was aware of this Christian apologetic and indeed owned the learned works of men like Carlo Sigonio and the Buxtorfs. Although much of this work was driven by Christian theological imperatives it still valued the sacred meaning of the Jewish state.³³ Contemporary historians like Jacques Basnage carefully used their learning to defend a providential account of the meaning of Jewish history against the threats of 'atheists, deists, and apostates'.³⁴ Writing the history of Moses ought to have been, *au fond*, an apologetic exercise.

Evidence of Toland's heterodox opinion can be seen in the frontispiece to Harrington's *Works* (1700) where Moses was depicted as the first of the great political legislators that included Solon, Confucius, Lycurgus and Numa. Repeatedly Toland announced his ambition of publishing a major analytical study to be called 'Respublica Mosaica'. His first indication of these intentions was in the private manuscript written for Prince Eugene of Savoy, circulated between 1708 and 1710: 'vous sçavez que j'ai déjà promis au public LA REPUBLIQUE de MOYSE, laquelle de toutes les formes de Gouvernement j'estime avoir été la plus excellente et parfaite'. In this study, he continued, 'je donneray une face et un tour si nouveau (pourtant sincere et naturel) non seulement au systeme politique entier et à la plus grande partie des loix particulieres de cet incomparable Legislatteur: mais aussi à un si grand nombre des circonstances et incidens historiques qui se trouvent dans la relation fort defectueuse et tres-abregée du Pentateuque'.³⁵ Toland promised a full blown 'political' reading of Moses along the model of Spinoza's account in the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (1670). Lamentably this work does not appear to be extant, even though Toland expressed the hope that it 'seroit un ouvrage que je pretendois faire vivre apres moi, sans craindre de passer pour fan faron'. The work was not conceived simply as a historical work but also for 'le temps present, auquel (comme j'ay lieu de l'esperer) il pourra n'etre pas inutile à plusieurs egards'.³⁶ Although the major work remains elusive, Toland did disseminate fragments towards this larger study from which it is possible to reconstruct some of his intentions. The first of these to be published was *Origines Judaicae* (The Hague, 1709). At about the same time Toland had also composed a couple of shorter pieces in French for private circulation. The longer of these, the 'Projet d'une dissertation sur la colonne de feu et de nuée des Israelites', was also circulated in an English translation in the 1710s, and eventually published in 1720 as *Hodegus, or the pillar of cloud and fire*.³⁷ The second shorter piece 'Deux problems historiques, theologiques & politiques' was originally included in the collection of 'Dissertations diverses' sent to Prince Eugene and Baron d'Hohendorf, and was eventually published as an appendix to Toland's controversial study in comparative biblical criticism, *Nazarenus* (1718).

Origines Judaicae was a full-blown assault upon orthodox Christian understandings of Moses as the *vir archetypus*. This work was directed against Pierre-Daniel Huet's classic statement of Christian orthodoxy, the massive *Demonstratio evangelica* (1679), which took as its motif the Mosaic origins of all philosophical and ethical learning. Huet set out to safeguard the universality of the sacred history of the Old Testament and 'to draw all of profane history together into the single course of sacred history and to state that all peoples knew the teachings of the prophets'.³⁸ Similar attempts had been made in writings like Edward Stillingfleet's *Origines Sacrae* (1662 and many subsequent editions), which had aroused a furious debate in the 1680s and

1690s about the relative historical priority of Egyptian and Hebrew learning.³⁹ Toland intended to replace this Christian *philosophia mosaica* with a civic *respublica mosaica*.⁴⁰ Notice of his views had been indicated in his first anonymous publication where he had described Moses as ‘without dispute ... one of the greatest and wisest Legislators that ever appeared in the world, not excepting, Solon, or Lycurgus or Numa’.⁴¹ *Origines Judaicae* opened with a unequivocal assertion (borrowed from Cicero) that religion was ‘a mere ingine of state policy ... that a belief in the immortal Gods was an invention contrived by wise and profound legislators for the general benefit of the commonwealth, in order that those whom reason could not influence, might be trained to their duty by a sense of religion’.⁴²

Arguing against Huet’s use of classical sources to claim that Moses was the archetype of all learning, Toland pointed out that one of the Bishop of Avranches’ sources – Strabo – ‘compares Moses with Minos, Lycurgus, Zamolxis and many others of the same description, without any distinction, and what is more, that he has given an account of the Jewish religion, the origin of that nation, and of Moses himself, totally different from that which we find in the Pentateuch’.⁴³ As Toland made plain, Huet had ‘distorted’ and falsified his sources in trying to ‘demonstrate’ Moses as the originator of pagan mythology. Huet’s work was composed of ‘frivilous and empty trifles’.⁴⁴ Having illustrated how Huet had misinterpreted Diodorus Siculus, Toland concentrated upon his business of giving an exegesis of Strabo’s account of Moses and the Jews found in the *Geography* (Book XVI chapter 2 §34–39). For Strabo, as understood by Toland, Moses was ‘unequivocally ... a pantheist, or as we in these modern times, would style him, a Spinozist’. Moses maintained that ‘no divinity exists separate from the universal frame of nature, and that the universe is the supreme and only God, whose parts you may call creatures, and himself the great creator of all’.⁴⁵ To identify Moses as a pre-figuration of Spinoza was calculated to provoke the Godly. Toland compounded this danger by reproducing Strabo’s commentary in its entirety so that it might be compared with the (in his view) faulty account given in the Pentateuch.⁴⁶ Invoking a biblical hermeneutics, again learnt from Spinoza’s work, Toland insisted that the difference between the two accounts of the fertility of Judaea and the Pentateuch’s description of it as a ‘flowing with milk and honey’ was attributed to Moses’ ‘pardonable stratagem’ of providing a stimulus ‘to keep up the spirits of the wandering Tribes of Israel’.⁴⁷

Aware of the Christian concern to distance the tribes of Israel from Egyptian foundations, Toland persisted in approving Strabo’s suggestions, noting that, as he commented, ‘Moses himself, when he fled into the land of the Midianites was immediately taken for an Egyptian’.⁴⁸ Exploring the question of the racial identity of the Israelites, Toland further muddied the matter by claiming ‘that they were a mixt race’: consequently ‘they are blindly

prejudiced therefore who obstinately maintain that all the Jews were the undoubted offspring of Abraham or Jacob, without any admixture of foreign blood'.⁴⁹ Citing another classical text as a means to contextualise scriptural descriptions, he pointed out that Tacitus was correct to claim that the Jews were emigrants from Assyria to Egypt. Further evidence from Diodorus Siculus suggested that Moses himself was 'an Egyptian Priest, and a Nomarch, or Governor of a Province'.⁵⁰ Moses was 'learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians' which indicated his 'priesthood and temporal dignity' and 'not his skill in magic and miracles'.⁵¹ Indeed Moses instituted a simple non-ceremonial religion that upheld the injunctions of natural religion. Most of the rites and ceremonies of Judaism were introduced by post-Mosaic figures 'from superstitious motives'.⁵² The broader theme of *Origines Judaicae*, echoing Spinoza's historical arguments, was the denial of the providential revealed history of the Hebrew religion and people. Toland exploited pagan sources like Strabo, Tacitus and Diodorus Siculus to give a historical and 'disenchanted' account of Moses and the Israelites. The refrain of his writing was that this classical historical account could be constantly contrasted with the defective evidence of the Pentateuch. Indeed in the middle of the work Toland inserted an extended consideration of the nature of divine prophecy, dismissing it as the false and fraudulent impositions of dreamers and seducers. He robustly concluded that 'no intimation is ever conveyed to men by God, by means of dreams or visions'.⁵³ This was pure Spinoza.

This technique of establishing the historical context of biblical history, and then giving a political account of Moses' *res gestae* was given even more detailed treatment in *Hodegus*, a work originally written for Eugene of Savoy in 1710, and published in a much expanded form in 1720.⁵⁴ Unlike *Origines Judaicae* where the audience of such subversive ideas was restricted to those who could read Latin, this work although originally written in French had a broader English readership. As the text was transformed from clandestine manuscript to published form the blunt heterodoxy of the first was modulated and masked by a veneer of scholarly investigation.⁵⁵ Toland's starting point was an insistence that studying the history of the Jewish nation was to be wrested from the monopoly of the Church. The history of the Hebrew antiquity was as important if not more so than that of the Greeks and Romans. Toland's own researches led him to a higher veneration for Moses and the Hebrew republic: 'wherefore my design in this publication, is to make Moses better understood, and consequently more easily believed'.⁵⁶ The premise of Toland's argument was that the account given in the Old Testament was incomplete and abridged: indeed, even the 'hyperbolic' language of Scripture was problematic and prone to allegory and 'inpenetrable absurdity' in the hands of priestly exegetes. The principal head of his case was that the Pentateuch did not record the achievements of providence and that 'several

transactions generally understood to be miraculous, were in reality very natural'.⁵⁷

In *Hodegus* Toland attempted to substitute the orthodox miraculous understanding of an episode from Exodus (XIII 21) where Moses and the Israelites were guided by a pillar of cloud and fire through the deserts, with a non-providential historical account. Using a collection of classical sources like Quintus Curtius, Herodotus and Xenophon to establish a correspondence between the practices of Moses and Alexander and the Persians, Toland argued that the 'cloud and pillar' were no miraculous manifestation of God but a form of 'ambulatory beacon' which directed the Israelites 'with the cloud of its smoke by day, and with the light of its fire by night'. There was no prodigy but 'mere human contrivance'.⁵⁸

Drawing together, and comparing, the descriptions scattered throughout Exodus and Numbers, Toland hoped that 'I have set in the clearest light the nature and use of the Pillar of Cloud and Fire, directing the marches and stations of the Israelites in the Wilderness; in such a light, I say, that no man of good understanding, or void of superstition, will any longer think it a miracle'.⁵⁹ To reinforce the human dimensions of the episode Toland continued to argue that the biblical description of the Israelites being guided by the 'Angel of the Lord' was again no providential manifestation, even though Christian commentators had interpreted it so, but simply a reference to 'a mere mortal man, the overseer or director or the portable fire, and the guide of the Israelites in the wilderness'.⁶⁰ Contrary to the allegorising interpretations of the Church Fathers and following some suggestions advanced by Hobbes, Toland examined the Hebrew usage of the word, to conclude that the 'word Angel of itself imports nothing extraordinary, much less supernatural'.⁶¹ 'Angel' was simply a Hebrew word for messenger or ambassador. Using the minor Roman military author Vegetius to establish the meaning of descriptions given in Numbers, Toland identified this 'guide and director' as Hobab 'the brother in law of Moses' who since he was born and bred in the wilderness was 'consequently well acquainted with the several parts of it'.⁶² While Toland was at pains to indicate that the evidence of the Pentateuch was not good enough to establish, without doubt, that the guide at that particular time was Hobab since it was not possible to be accurate about the precise affinity of Hobab to Jethro and Moses, he was confident that the 'angel' was simply a local guide. The point of Toland's dissertation was to establish, by exploring the historical 'circumstances' of the Israelites, that Moses had acted like any other general or legislator in exploiting the military and logistic traditions of his time.⁶³

Toland's reading of Moses as a political legislator and of Judaism as a religion adapted to civic circumstances was reviewed briefly in his 'Two problems', originally included in the collection of clandestine manuscripts

circulated on the continent post-1710 and published as an appendix to his controversial *Nazarenus* (1718). This work was a prospectus for his *respublica mosaica* which he claimed he was half a year away from completing. Toland applauded Moses' political prudence, especially his 'plan' of government, which if it had been successfully established in Judea 'cou'd never have been afterwards destroy'd, either by the internal sedition of subjects, or the external violence of enemies, but should have lasted as long as mankind; which is to make a Government Immortal, tho it be reckon'd one of the things in nature the most subject to revolutions'. Toland proposed to discuss whether this immutability was based on 'any promise and miraculous concurrence of God; or on the intrinsic nature and constitution of the form itself' by posing two questions about the nature of Judaism. The first question inquired why, given that the ancient institutions of the Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks and Romans had disintegrated long ago, had the Jews 'preserved themselves a distinct people with all their ancient rites'? Secondly, why, after the collapse of their republic, had they persisted in their hostility towards idolatrous practices? Toland encouraged answers that did not have 'recourse to miracles, or to promises drawn from the Old Testament'. In his own view Moses' system was to be explained by using Cicero's *de Republica* rather than providential arguments. It was necessary to 'allow MOSES a rank in the politics farr superior to SALEUCAS, CHARONDAS, SOLON, LYCURGUS, ROMULUS, NUMA, or any other Legislator'.⁶⁴ As Toland concluded, indicating that he always contrived some practical implication from his intellectual speculations, such was the 'original purity' of the Mosaic republic, that if the Jews ever happened to be 'resettl'd in Palestine upon their original foundation, which is not at all impossible; they will then, by reason of their excellent constitution, be much more populous, rich and powerful than any other nation now in the world'.⁶⁵

It was apparent from the reception of this corpus of works upon Moses that Toland's attitudes were regarded by contemporaries as dangerously perfidious towards Christian observance.⁶⁶ Erudite scholars like Leibniz, who corresponded with Toland about *Origines Judaicae*, were unhappy with his use of classical sources like Strabo to explain the Mosaic republic.⁶⁷ Indeed Leibniz painstakingly listed the faults derived from Strabo's account, encouraging Toland to correct his own work. Toland sternly defended both himself and his sources, confirming that he would not 'make the least alteration' in the projected second edition.⁶⁸ Pierre-Daniel Huet was less restrained in his attack, ridiculing Toland's rustic Latin and faulty attempts at a display of classical learning. Toland was an atheist who had falsely attributed pantheistical opinions to Moses: 'il est assez grossier pour s'imaginer que nous jugions de la doctrine de Moïse sur la temoignage de Strabon, et non pas de la doctrine de Strabon sur la temoignage de Moïse'. Toland made Moses a Spinozist and denied his authorship of the Pentateuch: similarly he objected to Toland's

description of 'la republique de Moÿse n'a point été instituée de Dieu: c'est l'ouvrage de la politique de cet homme avise'.⁶⁹ In the *Journal Littéraire* (1714) Toland's work was reviewed as advancing the following principles 'que la Sainte Ecriture n'est qu'une production de l'esprit humain; que la Republique des Juifs n'est que l'effet de la politique de Moïse, et c'est a tort qu'on lui à donne le nom de Theocratie; que l'inspiration des prophetes ne differoit en rien des songes ordinaire'. The reviewer rather tartly noted that Toland acknowledged the dangerous consequences of such positions with audacity.⁷⁰

In the English language reviews Toland got a similarly jaundiced reception. Samuel Parker decried the fact that Toland had put 'Moses in company with Lycurgus and Minos' describing *Origines Judaicae* as 'such an outrageous libel upon God's word, prophets and people'. Parker was astonished at Toland's relation of Moses: 'one would think, it might have satisfy'd Mr Toland to transform him into an Egyptian priest, without loading his memory so far as to tell us again and again, that with some people he pass'd for a Pantheist or Spinozist, in plainer words, a downright Atheist'. For Parker, as long as the Bible existed Toland's absurdities could be refuted for 'twill be impossible for him to persuade us the Word of God is a system of Atheism'. Point by point the reviewer challenged each of the claims Toland had derived from Strabo by contrasting them with the statements of Scripture.⁷¹ As well as receiving extensive reviews in the major journals of the Republic of Letters, *Origines Judaicae* was also the subject of intensive and lengthy rejoinders in larger theological works and academic disputations published in the Low Countries, Germany and France. *Hodegus* did not generate quite so much attention either on the continent or in England, although it was reprinted in 1732 and 1753. The one substantial reply to the work, *Hodegus confuted* (1721), rejected Toland's political account of Moses: the redemption of 'the Jews from the Egyptian slavery was to be unto all ages a spiritual figure of the manumission of true Christians from the yoke and bondage of sin by the guidance of Messiah the eternal Son of God'. Contrary to Toland's assertion that the cloud and pillar described in Exodus was a 'machine on a pole' the author simply asserted that 'it was the Angel of God's presence'. In an exceptionally confident piece of work the evidence of Scripture was simply contrasted with Toland's odd claims. The Word of God was of more value than the errors of *Hodegus*: the Holy Book contained an 'unalterable meaning'.⁷²

There are close affinities between Toland's *respublica mosaica* and the account in the *Traité*.⁷³ The earliest versions of the account of Moses found both in the early clandestine manuscripts (like BL Sloane 2039 dated 1709) and the 1719 printed edition, were short and to the point. Derived from a series of classical and renaissance sources, the narrative was possibly lifted from the clandestine manuscript *Theophrastus redivivus*. The only copy of this work, which included

a section on 'de Mosaic religione', was in the possession of Eugene of Savoy.⁷⁴ Moses was represented as a 'magician', an impostor adroit in the manipulation of a credulous and ignorant people. Invoking obligation by the use of prodigies and pretended miracles, he convinced the Israelites 'de sa mission divine'. Having established his authority 'il songea à la perpétuer; & sous prétexte d'établir un Culte Supreme, pour servir le Dieu, dont il se disoit le *Lieutenant*, il fit Aaron, son frère, et ses enfans Chefs du Palais Royal'. Using 'ruse Politique', Moses joined the force of arms with imposture to confirm his 'Autorité Souveraine' against those who 's'appercevoir de ses Artifices, & assez courageux pour lui reprocher'. He became 'moins leur Père que leur Tyran' of the Israelites, and under cover of 'de Vengeances Divines, il vècut toujours absolu'.⁷⁵ This exposition of Moses as a manipulator and tyrant dominating an ignorant and credulous people was rather insubstantial. Although Moses showed skill in creating religious observance like keeping the 'sabbath' as the premise of political order, he is portrayed as a deviant model rather than a positive one. This description was expanded with more historical detail in the succeeding versions of the manuscript.

Between 1709 and 1716 the account of Moses in scribal versions of the *Traité* underwent significant expansion exposing the variety of stratagems employed to dupe the people. The two types of amplification were both associated with manuscripts originating from the circle of Eugene and d'Hohendorf. The nature and style of these embellishments have an affinity with Toland's contemporaneous writings. The first stage of elaboration was the most influential, in the sense that it was the version that became the standard text for the later printed editions of the eighteenth century.⁷⁶ In this version much more attention was given to the historical circumstances of the Mosaic 'revolution'. Using a much broader base of historical sources that importantly combined the scriptural account of Exodus with pagan histories like Diodorus Siculus and Strabo, Moses was located within an Egyptian context. This was precisely what Toland's *Origines Judaicae* had attempted. Describing the Israelites as a pastoral nation integrated with the Arabian tribes of Goshen and wider Egypt, originally tolerated by Orus I, but then persecuted by Memnon II, the text described the 'state of bondage' into which Moses was born. Rescued and adopted by Queen Thermutis, daughter and successor of the cruel Orus II, Moses was educated 'in the right way to acquire the utmost knowledge of the Egyptians'. Thus Moses became the 'profoundest politician, the best naturalist, and the most knowing magician of his time'. A 'deep politician', Moses, under the patronage of Thermutis, became nomarch of Goshen. While in Egypt 'he had leisure and sufficient opportunity to study, as well the manners, as the genius and disposition both of the Egyptians and of those of his own nation': here the schemes for his 'revolution' were made. Upon the demise of Thermutis 'a violent persecution of the Hebrews was

renew'd', and Moses 'no longer protected, and apprehensive he should not be able to justify certain murders by him committed, betook himself to flight'. Retiring to Arabia Petrea, Moses took the opportunity of collaborating with Jethro of Midian, marrying his daughter: as the text commented, 'and here it may not be amiss to remark, that Moses was then so very indifferent a Jew and knew at the time so little of the tremendous God he afterwards imag'd out, that he readily espous'd a damsel who worship'd Idols and did not even once think of circumcising his children'.⁷⁷

Conspiring with Jethro of Midian, Moses plotted military revenge, and 'lay'd a vast plan, and knew how to employ against Egypt all the science which he had learned of the Egyptians'. His strategy was to prompt a popular revolt against the Egyptians by cultivating in the populace a belief that he was sent by God to save them. Using his skills and talents 'he accordingly soon brought them to a belief that his God who he sometimes called an Angel of the Lord, the God of his fathers, the God of the Almighty had appear'd to him, that it was by his express order he took upon him the care and trouble of conducting them'. Such pretended prodigies 'bedazzled' the Israelites. Interestingly, lengthy treatment was given to the methods Moses took 'to induce this populace to submit to his jurisdiction', especially his manipulation of the episode of the cloud and pillar described in Exodus and Numbers. Undoubtedly this was the 'grossest of all cheats and impositions of this impostor'. Learning from his experience in the deserts of Arabia he noticed how 'customary' it was for travellers to use 'flaming lanterns' and 'smoak which issued from the same lanterns' as guides. Moses made such natural skills 'pass for a miracle and a token of his God's favour and protection'. Moses exhorted Hobab, his wife's brother, 'by the most pressing motive of interest' because of his experience of the countryside 'to undertake the office of being their conductor'. The credulous populace 'believed that the Almighty was actually and personally present in that Fire and in that Smoke'. This expansion, then, gave a far more historical or 'circumstantial' account of Moses than that given in the 1709/1719 version. By using both classical sources and Scripture the text now gave a more forensic picture of precisely how Moses established his imposture. It emphasised the 'Egyptian' origins of both Moses and the Israelites, but also by implication undermined the 'miraculous' nature of events reported in the Old Testament.⁷⁸

The second series of expansions developed these points in greater detail by including passages that exposed the 'imaginary prodigies or miraculous operations' that Moses employed to dupe the people. Not only did the text expose how Moses used 'natural magick' and 'so dazzled even the most clear sighted of the Hebrews', but moved on to berate Christian commentators who insisted on such impostures as the grounds of 'the grandest of mysteries of Christianity'. Examining passages in Maccabees and elsewhere, where mysterious lights

were interpreted as the manifestations of God, the author suggested that Moses and his confederates had used chemical phosphorus to create a 'pretended celestial light'.⁷⁹ Such tricks were readily available and exploited by Moses. Like the vulgar of the eighteenth century, 'those poor silly wretches were seduced and led astray by means of these subtil pranks ... which they believed real miracles, for want of knowing the natural causes of such fallacious appearance'. As the addition continued, Moses performed many other tricks with snakes and lice to seduce the credulous Jews. The thrust of this addition was both to expose Moses' fraud and also the ignorance of the vulgar: an ignorance that was still perpetuated by a stupid veneration for miraculous understandings of scriptural accounts. Further additions underscored 'the iniquity, the fallacy, and injustice of Moses' in his treatment of the Israelites. Again appropriating scriptural passages from Numbers and Deuteronomy, the text described Moses' 'tyrannical' treatment of the twelve tribes of Israel in general and of those who opposed him.

These revisions in the description of Moses' imposture have parallels in Toland's work. Not only the substance of the account, but also the approach of collating classical and sacred sources, was mirrored in his researches on the *respublica mosaica*. As we have seen Toland commonly exploited orthodox learning to compromise the authoritative status of scriptural texts. Like the *Traité*, Toland used his erudition both to give an unusual and heterodox account of Moses, and to appropriate scriptural authority for his own devices. Unlike the *Traité*, Toland's account of the significance of Moses was not unequivocally hostile. Moses was not simply an impostor, but was an exemplar of how a legislator could accommodate religion to the virtuous service of civil society. Just as Spinoza had used the books of the Old Testament to construct an account of Moses as a republican legislator, so too did Toland try to reclaim his reputation for non-sacerdotal 'political' purposes.

Clearly, Toland's writings (both the scribal and printed versions of *Hodegus*) had broadly different audiences than that of the *Traité*. Although it should be noted that Eugene and d'Hohendorf, were recipients and owners of both sets of writings. Evidence of the distribution of surviving copies of the French work suggest it had a broad circulation on the continent. Toland's scribal writings on Moses unlike the *Traité*, were also published in a widely distributed printed edition in 1720. Untangling the exact connections between these two traditions of writing will prove very difficult. It is unclear whether those who copied and distributed manuscript versions of the *Traité* included Toland himself, or whether they merely took the opportunity of exploiting Toland's work available in the same library. By 1719 Toland's reputation in relation to his account of Moses had already been compromised by the critical reception of *Origines Judaicae*. Given the careful attention paid by all the participants to covering up the historical origins and authorship of the *Traité*,

inclusion of such an easily recognisable extract would have prompted much finger pointing from Christian critics.

What Toland was trying to do in these works is not immediately obvious. Possibly his intentions were merely impious – to corrode the commonplace Christian veneration for sacred Hebrew history. Certainly the force of his account was to compromise scriptural history with non-sacred sources, just as Spinoza had done in his *Tractatus theologico politicus*. Providing such material for men like Eugene and Hohendorf would have been providing more grist to their irreligious mill. But Toland also made public versions of his work, so clearly had a wider political objective. Comparing Toland's intentions with the reception of the *Traité* is less than helpful since the meaning of the accounts of Moses in both works is different. While the *Traité* gave a negative and hostile account of the Hebrew legislator, it is equally clear that Toland's attitude was one of admiration. For the *Traité* Moses exemplified tyranny, while Toland's laid much more stress upon Moses' skills as a (republican) legislator. Perhaps bound by Straussian imperatives of censorship, Toland simply adopted different attitudes in public and private. It is also possible that Toland simply had different intentions as a public writer. There is little doubt that the social context for reading a manuscript of the *Traité* was distinct from the audience that encountered a printed edition of Toland's writings. He was deeply aware of the power of public texts as persuasive devices for compromising the hegemony of orthodox belief. This attack on the commonplaces of established belief was more than intellectual hubris, but had political purposes. The priority Toland gave to the pursuit of civic virtue, meant that reform could only be achieved by destroying the confessional basis of political authority. As he put it, 'Civil liberty and Religious Toleration, ... [are] the most desirable things in this world, the most conducing to peace, plenty, knowledge, and every kind of happiness, [and] have been the two main objects of all my writing'.⁸⁰ Toland's Moses was a republican legislator and therefore an exemplary model for the conduct of contemporary politics.

Toland was by no means unique in drawing republican significance from the Mosaic model. James Harrington (whose works, as we have seen, Toland edited in 1700) represented a key moment in the republican development of a political account of the Mosaic theocracy. Drawing specific significance from the collaboration between the heathen Jethro of Midian and Moses, Harrington argued that human and divine prudence was 'first discovered unto mankind by God himself in the fabric of the Commonwealth of Israel'.⁸¹ Moses had his 'education by the daughter of Pharaoh' and acquired political wisdom through a combination of prophetic understanding and an appreciation of ancient prudence. The perfection of Israel was achieved by the institution of a holy popular commonwealth: the degeneration of such theocracy was prompted by

a crisis of republican virtue and the rise of priestcraft.⁸² For Harrington, the Mosaic commonwealth was both divine and a human contrivance.⁸³ Such was Harrington's conviction that divine and rational prudence were complicit in Moses' commonwealth that he denied the irreligious implications of comparing it with the achievements of Numa, Solon and Lycurgus. This was the point of the scriptural convergence of the commonwealths of Midian and Israel: 'How then cometh it', he continued, 'to be irreverent or atheistical, as some say, in politicians ... to compare (though but by way of illustration) other legislators or politicians, as Lycurgus, Solon, with Moses, or other commonwealths, as Rome and Venice, with that of Israel?'"⁸⁴ Human prudence was the 'creature of God', thus there were proper commonwealths before that of the Mosaic theocracy and might be afterwards.⁸⁵

Unlike the more Godly accounts of the Hebrew commonwealth written by men like Cunaeus, Harrington's work embraced a republican reading of Moses as a legislator that had its roots in Machiavelli's *Discorsi*. For Harrington this was not to deny the theocratic nature of the *respublica mosaica* but to elevate the status of commonwealth politics to divinity. Following Moses' and Jethro's injunctions, the true commonwealth was popular and anti-hierocratic, which implied that political reform would involve both civic and religious renewal against the iniquity of both tyranny and priestcraft. Later republicans like Henry Neville and Algernon Sidney echoed Harrington in applauding the Hebrew state as a 'model fit to be imitated by all nations'.⁸⁶ Unlike Machiavelli, Harrington constructed his account of Moses from almost comprehensively scriptural sources: much of the defence of his position against the attacks of contemporary clergy rested upon his ability to establish his position from biblical material. So although Harrington undertook an unorthodox description of the Hebrew commonwealth it was not contrived as an underhand assault upon the integrity of Scripture. The authority of his argument was precisely because it was a credible biblical interpretation.

A far less orthodox account of Moses as a political legislator was advanced by the radical republican translator of Spinoza, Charles Blount. Moses was not the author of divine revelation but a legislator who expounded 'the first originals of things after such a method as might breed in the minds of men piety, and a worshipping of the true God'.⁸⁷ Importantly Blount used many of the classical sources that formed the basis of both Toland's work and that of the *Traité*.⁸⁸ Commenting on Moses passing the Red Sea, Blount noted (following Memphite tradition) that the legislator was 'well acquainted with the condition of the place, observed the flux and reflux of the waters, and so brought over his army by dry land'.⁸⁹ Alexander of Macedon had experienced the same sort of episode in his passage through the Pamphylian Ocean. Both Abraham and Moses 'were well skill'd in Egyptian learning' and (following Herodotus) this explained why certain of their customs such as circumcision

were adopted from Egyptian practice. Judaism upheld the principal tenets of natural religion in the ‘practices of Virtue and Goodness’. The laws, rites and ceremonies of Judaism far from being particular divine revelation ‘were practised among the Gentiles indifferently, or at least did not much vary from them, as the diligent searchers into Antiquity well know’.⁹⁰ Unlike Harrington’s more positive explication of the significance of the Mosaic commonwealth for contemporary politics, Blount’s arguments simply indicated that Moses was as much a legislator as any other figure in antiquity, the point being that most religion (beyond the rational injunctions of natural religion) was a heuristic device either for civic measures, or twisted to deviant purposes by a corrupt and self-interested priesthood. There was a readily available public discourse articulated by English republicans from the 1650s to the 1700s which paid close conceptual and historical attention to the nature and import of the *respublica mosaica*. Toland’s account of Moses drew then upon a well-established English republican tradition.

It is important to underscore that Toland’s work on Moses was not simply impious but, as has been discussed in the previous chapter, laid the foundation for practical suggestions in reforming the confessionalism of political culture. Circulating clandestine manuscripts to elite figures was intended to provide impetus for the reception of practical political projects. The republican reading of Moses as a ‘legislator’ laid the foundations for establishing a tolerant rational state. His intentions were twofold, both making a point about the historical nature of Scripture and providing a prescriptive model for the relationship between religion and the state. As he repeatedly insisted, the Old Testament, as a historical source, was partial and abridged: it could claim no special evidential status as revealed material but had to be contextualised with other pagan sources. The veneration of the Mosaic institution was to be a prescriptive model for political and religious reform. Toland’s applause for Moses was part of a public strategy for rendering republican institutions more readily accommodated to the dominant Christian discourses of his time. If Moses could be shown to be a republican pantheist who designed a rational religion for political purposes then Toland’s arguments were less exposed to vilification as irreligious. Toland’s took the radical arguments of the *Traité* right into the heart of the British establishment.

NOTES

- 1 *An Account of the courts* p. 67.
- 2 *Ibid.* p. 56.
- 3 A. Ward ‘The Electress Sophia and the Hanovarian Succession’ *English Historical Review* 1 (1886) pp. 470–506.

Subversive learning

- 4 *Ibid.* p. 479.
- 5 A. Ward *The Electress Sophia and the Hanoverian Succession* (1909) p. 341.
- 6 See J. P. Erman *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Sophie Charlotte reine de Prusse* (Berlin, 1801) pp. 200–211.
- 7 S. Daniel *John Toland* (Montreal, 1984) p. 146
- 8 See M. Jacob 'John Toland and the Newtonian ideology' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 32 (1969) pp. 307–331 especially at pp. 313–314. Klopp 2 pp. 361–364.
- 9 Klopp 2 p. 362.
- 10 *Ibid.* pp. 363–364.
- 11 See Vienna Ms 10,325 'Dissertations Diverses'. See also *Tolandiana* p. 105.
- 12 See J. H. Nichols *The Epicurean Philosophy: the De rerum natura of Lucretius* (Cornell, 1976). See J. A. I. Champion "'The Men of Matter": spirits, matter and the politics of priestcraft, 1701–1709' in G. Paganini (ed.) *Scepticismes, Lumières, Clandestinité* (Geneva, 2002) pp. 115–150.
- 13 See Champion *Nazarenus*.
- 14 S. Berti et al. *Heterodoxy*.
- 15 See Jacob *Radical Enlightenment*.
- 16 See S. Berti 'The first edition of the *Traité des trois imposteurs*, and its debt to Spinoza's *Ethics*' in M. Hunter, D. Wootton (eds) *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment* (Oxford, 1992) pp. 183–220.
- 17 See M. Benitez 'La coterie Hollandaise et la réponse à M. de la Monnoye sur le *Traité de tribus impostoribus*' *Lias* 21 (1994) pp. 71–94.
- 18 See F. Charles-Daubert '*L'Esprit de Spinoza* et les *Traités des trois imposteurs*: rappel des différent familles et de leurs principales caracteristiques' in Berti et al. *Heterodoxy* pp. 131–189.
- 19 Charles-Daubert 'Les principales sources de *L'Esprit de Spinoza*' in *Groupe de recherches spinozistes. Travaux et documents 1* (Paris, 1989) pp. 61–107, at p. 82.
- 20 See Charles-Daubert '*L'Esprit*' pp. 138, 153, 174, 179; idem '*Les Traités des trois imposteurs* aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles' in G. Canziani (ed.) *Filosofia e religione nella letteratura clandestina secoli XVII e XVIII* (Milan, 1994) pp. 319, 320–321; idem '*Les principales sources*' pp. 83–84.
- 21 M. Benitez 'Une histoire interminable: origines et développement du *Traité des trois imposteurs*' in Berti et al. *Heterodoxy* pp. 53–74.
- 22 On Aymon see A. Goldgar *Impolite learning: conduct and community in the republic of letters 1680–1750* (1995) pp. 174–176.
- 23 See P. L. Heyworth (ed.) *The Letters of Humphrey Wanley* (Oxford, 1989) pp. 265–267, 275–278, 429–430.
- 24 Marchand owned a copy of Shaftesbury's *Lettre sur l'entousiasme* (The Hague, 1709) published by Johnson: see C. Berkvens-Stevalinck *Catalogue du Manuscrits de la Collection Prosper Marchand* (Leiden 1988) p. 126.
- 25 On Johnson see J. O'Higgins *Anthony Collins: the man and his works* (The Hague, 1970)

- pp. 25, 211, 226; J. Feather 'English books in the Netherlands in the eighteenth century: reprints of piracies?' in C. Berkvens-Stevelinck, *et al.* (eds) *Le magasin de l'univers* (Brill, 1992) pp. 151–154.
- 26 See G. Carabelli 'John Toland e G. W. Leibniz Otto Lettere' *Rivista critica di storia della filosofia* 31 (1976) pp. 412–431 p. 417; *Tolandiana* p. 194.
- 27 See *Tolandiana* p. 154.
- 28 G. Aquilecchia 'Nota su John Toland traduttore di Giordano Bruno' *English Miscellany* 9 (1958) pp. 77–86 at 85–86.
- 29 Marchand 'Impostoribus' in Berti *et al.* *Heterodoxy* pp. 494, 499.
- 30 See G. Ricuperati 'Libertinismo e deismo a Vienna: Spinoza, Toland e Triregno' *Rivista Storica Italiana* 79 (1967) pp. 628–695.
- 31 See A. Brown 'Savararola, Machiavelli and Moses: a changing model' in A. Brown *The Medici in Florence: the exercise of language and power* (Florence, 1992) pp. 263–279.
- 32 See F.E. Manuel *The Broken Staff* (1992) *passim*.
- 33 C. Ligota 'Histoire à fondement theologique: la République du Hebreux' in *L'écriture Sainte au temps de Spinoza et dans le système Spinoziste* (Paris, 1992) pp. 149–167 at 158.
- 34 Cited in L. A. Segal 'Jacques Basnage de Beauval's L'Histoire des Juifs: Christian historiographical perceptions of Jewry and Judaism on the eve of the Enlightenment' *Hebrew Union College Annual* 54 (1983) pp. 303–324 at 317.
- 35 See 'Projet d'une Dissertation sur la Colonne de feu et de Nuée des Israelites: dans une Lettre à Megalonymus' ONB 10,325 fos. 4–5.
- 36 'Projet' fo. 5.
- 37 Toland lent a copy of this work, under the title 'The Cloud & Pillar', to Lord Castleton.
- 38 See P. Rossi *The Dark Abyss of Time* (Chicago, 1987) pp. 152–157.
- 39 See S. Hutton 'Edward Stillingfleet, Henry More, and the decline of *Moses Atticus*: a note on seventeenth century Anglican apologetics' in R. Kroll *et al.* (eds) *Philosophy, science, and religion in England 1640–1700* (Cambridge, 1992) pp. 68–84.
- 40 See D. B. Sailor 'Moses and Atomism' *Journal of the History of Ideas* 25 (1964) pp. 3–16.
- 41 See Toland *Two Essays sent in a letter from Oxford* (1695) p. 15.
- 42 See the English translation of *Adeisidaemon* and *Origines Judaicae* located in John Ryland's Library call mark 3 f. 38. Since this manuscript is not paginated or foliated I have used a combination of page openings and paragraph numbers. *Origines Judaicae* Dedication fo. 2. § 1.
- 43 *Origines* fo. 5 § 2.
- 44 *Ibid.* fo. 11 § 5.
- 45 *Ibid.* fo. 16 § 6.
- 46 *Ibid.* fos. 18–26 § 7–9.
- 47 *Ibid.* fo. 28 § 10.
- 48 *Ibid.* fo. 32 § 12. At fo. 35 § 12 Toland noted 'in my own private opinion' Jews could be regarded as Egyptians.
- 49 *Origines* fo. 37 § 13.

Subversive learning

- 50 *Ibid.* fo. 39 § 14.
- 51 *Ibid.* fo. 42 § 14.
- 52 *Ibid.* fo. 52 § 18.
- 53 *Ibid.* fo. 63 § 21.
- 54 See A. Rosenberg (ed.) *Simon Tyssot de Patot: voyages et aventures de Jaques Masse* (Paris, 1993) pp. 91–92.
- 55 See *Nazarenus* ‘Introduction’.
- 56 See ‘Projet’ f.1–2, 3; the manuscript passages were translated and expanded in passages in *Tetradymus* (1720) Preface pp. i–ii; and *Hodegus* pp. 3–4.
- 57 *Tetradymus* p. ii; *Hodegus* pp. 4–5; ‘Projet’ fos. 3–4.
- 58 *Hodegus* pp. 6–7.
- 59 *Ibid.* p. 27.
- 60 *Ibid.* p. 46.
- 61 See T. Hobbes *Leviathan* (1651) ed. R. Tuck (Cambridge, 1989) p. 276.
- 62 *Hodegus* pp. 48, 50–51.
- 63 *Ibid.* p. 14.
- 64 *Nazarenus* Appendix 1 pp. 2–3, 4–5, 6–7.
- 65 *Nazarenus* Appendix 1 p. 8.
- 66 *Tolandiana passim*.
- 67 See G. Carabelli ‘John Toland e Leibniz’.
- 68 *Ibid.* pp. 421, 428.
- 69 See ‘Lettre de Mr Morin’ in *Mémoires pour l’histoire des sciences et des beaux arts à Trévoux* (1709) pp. 1589–1590, 1591, 1601, 1604, 1611–1612, 1618.
- 70 *Journal Littéraire* (1714) IV (The Hague, 1732) pp. 250–253.
- 71 S. Parker *Censura Temporum* 2 volumes (London, 1708–9) pp. 547–564 cited at 548, 559, 560–563. See also, *The History of the Works of the Learned XI* (1709) pp. 376–378.
- 72 See *Hodegus Confuted*. In a plain demonstration that the Pillar of a cloud and fire which led the Israelites thro the wilderness; was not, as Mr Toland vainly imagines a fire of human preparation (1721) pp. 7, 18, 42, 46.
- 73 See Charles-Daubert ‘Les Traités des trois imposteurs aux XVIIe et XVIIIe’ pp. 331–336.
- 74 See G. Canziani and G. Paganini (eds) *Theophrastus redivivus* 2 volumes (Florence, 1981) Part 3 Chapter 5 pp. 430–457.
- 75 See Berti (ed.) *Trattato dei tre impostori* pp. 110, 112, 114.
- 76 See P. Retat (ed.) *Traité des trois imposteurs 1777* (Saint Etienne, 1973) pp. 40–51; A. Anderson (ed.) *The Treatise of the Three impostors and the Enlightenment* (1997) pp. 18–22.
- 77 The passages can be found in BL Stowe 47 ‘The famous book entitled De Tribus Impostoribus’ fos. 33–41 and Glasgow University Library, General 1185 fos. 104–153.
- 78 *Ibid.*

- 79 See J. V. Golinski 'A noble spectacle. Phosphorus and the public culture of science in the early Royal Society' *Isis* 80 (1989) pp. 11–39.
- 80 See *Tetradymus* p. 223.
- 81 J. G. A. Pocock (ed.) *The political works of James Harrington* (Cambridge, 1977) p. 161.
- 82 Pocock 'Introduction' p. 92.
- 83 *Ibid.* p. 95.
- 84 *Ibid.* p. 629.
- 85 *Ibid.* pp. 616–617.
- 86 See Worden 'Republicanism and the Restoration' p. 162. Rousseau continued this republican regard for Moses as a great legislator: see 'Des Juifs' in *Oeuvres Completes III* (Paris, 1964) p. 499.
- 87 C. Blount *The Oracles of Reason* (1693) p. 75.
- 88 *Ibid.* pp. 127–130.
- 89 *Ibid.* p. 131.
- 90 *Ibid.* p. 133.