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[I]  
 Vulgar traditions

477. In addressing this work at the outset to the universities of Europe, we respectfully noted the need to submit our vulgar traditions to the severe criticism of an exact metaphysical ratiocination. In the first book, despairing of finding the principles of this Science from either the philosophers or the philologists, we alerted our reader to the need to suspend his memory or imagination of our vulgar traditions, if only for the brief amount of time required to read the work, in order that, when he later returned to these traditions, he would recognise for himself the truth that gave rise to their birth and understand the causes through which they have reached us covered in falsehood. Hence, in article VIII, part II, volume XVIII, of the *Biblioteca antica e moderna*, in reference to *De constantia philologiae*, a part of another of our works in which, although by means of other principles and in a wholly different order, these same fickle traditions are noted, Jean Le Clerc makes the following judgement: 'He gives us in brief the principal epochs after the Flood up to the time in which Hannibal waged war in Italy. Because, throughout the whole course of the book, he discusses the diverse things that ensued in this length of time, makes many philological observations on a large number of matters, and corrects many vulgar errors, to which men of the highest understanding have paid no attention whatsoever.'

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478. We now offer a list of these errors, together with their corrections:

*I*

479. That the Ogygian and Deucalion Floods were individual floods in Greece. Whereas they were mutilated traditions of the Universal Flood.

*II*

480. That Japhet was the Iapetus of the Greeks. Whereas he was the race of Japhet, sent by its creator, through its impiety, into a ferine wandering through Europe, from which the peoples of Greece arose in that part of Europe.

*III*

481. That the giants of the poets were impious, violent tyrants, who were called 'giants' only metaphorically. Whereas they were true giants. Wholly impious until the sky first thundered after the Flood, their violent successors were those who remained in bestial communion, in whom, when they finally wanted to rob the cultivated lands of the religious giants, the first outline of tyrants began to appear.

*IV*

482. That the first gentle men, whom the Socinian Grotius identified with his simpletons, satisfied by nature, and therefore innocent and just, created the golden age, the first age of which the poets tell us. Whereas they were satisfied with the fruits of nature, and their innocence and justice was of the kind that Polyphemus relates to Ulysses of himself and the other giants,<sup>1</sup> in whom Plato located the first state of the families.<sup>2</sup> And their golden age was the age of the wheat discovered by the giants.

<sup>1</sup> *Od.*, IX, 112–15. Ulysses is the narrator.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *Laws*, III, 678c–681e.

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*V*

483. That when men finally became aware of the pains of their common life, without religion, without force of arms and without the command of laws, they divided the fields justly and, with only their boundaries fixed, held them securely until the cities arose. But this is our own fable of the golden age. For, as proved in this work [116, 143], the boundaries were fixed to the fields through religion; the pains of life of which men became aware were not those of a common or human, but of a solitary and ferine, life; and those who became aware of them were Grotius's impious simpletons, who, hunted for their lives by Hobbes's violent men, had recourse to the lands of the strong and religious to save themselves.

*VI*

484. That the first law in the world, as Brennus, Captain of the Gauls, told the Romans,<sup>3</sup> was that of force, which Thomas Hobbes imagined was the force that some men imposed upon others, with the consequence that, since kingdoms are born of force, they ought to be preserved by force. But the first law was born from the force of Jove, supposedly residing in his thunderbolts, which drove the giants underground into their grottoes, whence, as demonstrated above [58, 106, 414], arose the whole of gentile humanity.

*VII*

485. That the first gods in the world were created through fear, understood, in accordance with Samuel Pufendorf's idea, as a fear that some should have induced in others; hence, that the laws that these men made are the daughters of a deception, and that states ought therefore to be preserved by certain powerful secrets together with certain semblances of liberty. But it was their fear of the thunderbolts that, Providence permitting, brought the giants to imagine and revere for themselves the divinity of Jove, king and father of all the gods, so that the essence of republics lies in religion and not force or deception.

<sup>3</sup>Livy, V, 48, 9.

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VIII

486. That the recondite wisdom of the East should have spread to the rest of the world through a series of schools in which the teachings of Zoroaster passed successively to Berosus, Hermes Trismegistus, Atlas and Orpheus. Whereas it was the vulgar wisdom that was propagated from the same religious origins throughout the world with the propagation of mankind itself, which undoubtedly came from the East. The [truly] recondite wisdom of the East was brought by the Phoenicians to the Egyptians, to whom they gave the use of the quadrant and the science of the height of the Pole Star, and to the Greeks, to whom they brought gods raised to the stars. And in both cases, as demonstrated above [107], this happened long after [the propagation of vulgar wisdom].

IX

487. That, consequently, to the sound of his lute, Orpheus sang his wonderful fables of the power of the gods to the savage men of Greece, thus reducing them to humanity and founding the Greek race. But, as shown above [213, 216], this is a gross anachronism concerning the heroic disturbances in Greece over the ownership of the fields, disturbances that occurred some five hundred years after religions were introduced and peoples and kingdoms were founded.

X

488. That, on the strength of this fable of Orpheus, the vulgar languages arose first, followed later by those of the poets, [a belief] based upon the hitherto prevalent idea that Orpheus of Thrace had a language in common with the vagabond Greeks of the forests; and that, since he understood this vulgar Greek language, he created poetic metaphors and used the metre of song in such a way as to delight Hobbes's violent men, Grotius's simpletons and Pufendorf's abandoned ones with the wonder of his fables, the novelty of his mode of expression and the sweetness of his harmony, thus reducing them to humanity. But, as demonstrated above [303], these languages could never have been born without religion.

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*XI*

489. That the first authors of language were sages. But they were sages in the first and proper wisdom which, as demonstrated in our principles of poetic reason [313–16], was that of the senses.

*XII*

490. That, before all others, a natural language, i.e. a language that signified things in accordance with their nature, was spoken, based on the idea that talking and philosophising were one and the same thing. But, as demonstrated above [303–5], the first language was the divine language of the gentiles, based upon the false ideas of the first poetic peoples, in which the origins of the civil world were taken to be corporeal substances and objects believed to possess divinity, i.e. a divine intelligence. Thus were the gods imagined.

*XIII*

491. That Cadmus the Phoenician discovered the characters. But they were poetic characters.

*XIV*

492. That colonies were led by Cecrops, Cadmus, Danaus and Pelops into Greece and by the Greeks into Sicily and Italy. Not, however, for the pleasure of discovering new lands or the glory of propagating humanity, but for safety and escape when they were under pressure during the heroic disturbances in their countries.

*XV*

493. That, in the midst of all this, avid for the pleasure of glory, Hercules travelled the world, slaying monsters and suppressing tyrants. Not, however, some single Theban Hercules, but, as fully proved above [262, 385, 458], as many Hercules as there were ancient nations.

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XVI

494. That the first wars were undertaken solely for the sake of glory and to bring plunder home as emblems of war. Whereas these were the wars of the great heroic robbers, so that 'great robber' was an honourable title for a hero.

XVII

495. Through the things imagined about Orpheus, that the founders of Greek humanity, such as Amphion, Linus, and the others called 'theological poets', were sages of the same kind as that of which, in the times known to us, the divine Plato was prince. But they were sages in the divinity of the auspices, i.e. divination, which, from *divinari* ['to divine'], was the first divinity among the gentiles.

XVIII

496. That, consequent upon the previous error, the theological poets concealed the highest mysteries of a recondite wisdom in the fables: hence the desire, from Plato's time down to our own, that of Bacon of Verulam,<sup>4</sup> to discover the wisdom of the ancients within the fables. But the wisdom concealed in them was of the kind whereby, in all nations, all sacred things were kept secret from the profane.

XIX

497. Hence, above all, the desire to discover the wisdom of the ancients in Homer, the first certain father of the whole of Greek erudition. But Homer was a sage in heroic wisdom: thus in the *Iliad*, the model of heroic virtue whom he presents to the Greeks is an Achilles who believes, as he tells Hector,<sup>5</sup> that there is no equality of right between the strong and the weak concerning the utilities; and in the *Odyssey*, his model of heroic prudence is a Ulysses who always procures his utilities by deceptions such that he can maintain his reputation for keeping his word.

<sup>4</sup>See footnote 24, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup>*Il.*, XXII, 261–7.

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XX

498. That the first cities were born of families, hitherto understood as consisting solely of children of the family. But they were born of the families, properly so called from their *famuli*, without whom, had they not, from the start, rebelled against the heroes who governed them with such harshness, no cities would ever have arisen in the world. Hence we demonstrate that the patriarchs were just and magnanimous, because they preserved the state of the families up to the time of the [Mosaic] law.<sup>6</sup>

XXI

499. That the first name for a civil power to be heard on earth was that of 'king', i.e. as hitherto imagined, the monarch of a people. But the first civil powers were the fathers of the families, those whom Homer calls 'king' on the shield of Achilles, and, as demonstrated above [134, 360, 395], they were monarchs of their families.

XXII

500. That in the first age the sages, priests and kings were the same as those whom we have hitherto imagined to be sages in recondite wisdom, a tradition that derives from Plato, for whom such sages were necessary. But they were the fathers of the state of the families, and, as such, sages in the wisdom of the auspices.

XXIII

501. That, on the basis of a belief in the discerning nature of the customs of the golden age, in which the multitude had a common understanding of beauty and worth, the kings were elected for the dignity of their appearance and the worthiness of their persons. But the kings were born naturally, as demonstrated above [150], during the disturbances of the clientes, when the more robust and spirited of the fathers became the chiefs of the nobles and ruled them in orders to resist the clientes, who had united in plebs. Then the cities arose.

<sup>6</sup> See 148 above for the reasons for the special status of the biblical patriarchs.



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XXIV

502. That the Roman kingdom was an admixture of monarchy and popular liberty. But here we have hitherto been deceived by the word 'king'. For the political philosophers tell us that the Spartan kingdom was certainly aristocratic and the philologists believe that the Spartans retained many of the most ancient heroic customs of Greece. And, as we saw above [158–60], the Roman kingdom was aristocratic in form.

XXV

503. That Romulus established the clientles in order that through them, or so we have hitherto imagined, the nobles would teach the plebeians the laws, which were, [on the contrary], kept secret from them for a good five hundred years more and were communicated among the nobles themselves by signs or occult characters. But through the clientles Romulus defended the lives of the plebeians, sheltering them in the asylum opened in the sacred grove. Then, from Servius Tullius onwards, the fathers defended the plebeians in their possession of the fields assigned to them under the burden of the census. Then, after the Law of the Twelve Tables, they defended the plebeians in their possession of fields with the right of optimum ownership, which had been communicated to them: hence the formula for asserting a claim, *Aio hunc fundum meum esse ex iure quiritem* ['I affirm this land to be mine in accordance with quiritary law']. And with the full development of popular liberty, they defended them with their support and defence in lawsuits and legal charges.

XXVI

504. That the Roman plebs consisted of citizens from the time of Romulus. This assumption has stood in the way of a correct reading, and hence a proper understanding, of the history of ancient Roman law. For the fathers communicated to the plebs the right to contract legal marriages, so appropriately called *connubium*, only six years after the Law of the Twelve Tables.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Hence, prior to that, they would have remained slaves.

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*XXVII*

505. That the barbaric nations waged war when they were desperate for their liberty. This is true [but only in the sense that] the heroes waged war for their liberty as lords, whereas the plebs waged it for the natural liberty to enjoy, under their natural lords, the natural or bonitary ownership of the fields that they would have lost through slavery.

*XXVIII*

506. That Numa was a disciple of Pythagoras. This is denied even by Livy.<sup>8</sup>

*XXIX*

507. That Pythagoras' voyages through the world were true because many dogmas identical to his were later discovered throughout the world. But, as demonstrated above [37], these voyages are incredible for other reasons.

*XXX*

508. That Servius Tullius established the census in Rome. But this was the census that the plebeians had to pay the fathers for bonitary ownership, and not yet that upon which popular liberty was founded.

*XXXI*

509. That Brutus established popular liberty. But he re-established the liberty of the lords and it was through the two annual consuls that the first outlines of popular liberty appear, as Livy clearly noted.<sup>9</sup>

*XXXII*

510. That in Rome, at the beginning of liberty, there were agrarian disturbances of the same kind as those stirred up by the Gracchi. But they were the second kind of agrarian disturbance, i.e. they were

<sup>8</sup>Livy, I, 18, 2–3.

<sup>9</sup>Livy, II, 1, 7.

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concerned with the communication of optimum ownership of the fields from the fathers to the plebeians. Others of the first kind, i.e. those concerned with bonitary ownership, must have been stirred up earlier under the reign of Servius Tullius, who settled them with the census.

XXXIII

511. That colonies of the last kind known to us were led to Rome. But these were the second kind of colonies which arose as a result of bonitary ownership under the census of Servius Tullius. Like the first colonies of Romulus they were proper colonies of peasants who cultivated the fields for the lords.

XXXIV

512. That the Roman plebs wanted the Law of the Twelve Tables because of their hatred of uncertain and hidden law and of law administered through the royal hand of the fathers. This is true, [but only] because, as a result [of these kinds of law], the plebs were not secure in the bonitary ownership of the fields assigned to them by the fathers.

XXXV

513. That the Law of the Twelve Tables came to Rome from abroad. [This false belief arose] because, when the Romans went abroad, they found customs there that were the same as those commanded to them by this law.

XXXVI

514. That Roman law was an amalgam of Spartan and Athenian law. [This false belief arose] because when the Romans went abroad at the time of their aristocratic government, they saw that their law was the same as that of Sparta. And later, in the time of their popular government, they saw that it was similar to that of Athens.

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*XXXVII*

515. That the century of Roman virtue lasted from the expulsion of the kings to the Carthaginian War. [But] the century of Roman virtue was the century of heroic virtue, in which the fathers fought for heroism and the rights dependent on it against the plebs who aspired to them.

*XXXVIII*

516. That the natural law of the gentes, with which from the beginning the Romans justified their wars, practised their victories and regulated their conquests, came to them from other nations. But it was born at home among the Romans, uniform with the law of the other nations that the Romans came to know on the occasion of these wars.

*XXXIX*

517. That optimum law was exclusive to the world of Roman citizens. But it was born uniform in every free city, and became exclusive to Roman citizens only because the Romans removed it from the whole world that they made subject through their victories.

*XL*

518. That, from the beginning, the natural law proceeded among the gentiles through the force of the true, without distinguishing the gentiles from a people assisted by the true God; for Selden failed to distinguish this people from Hobbes's violent men, Grotius from his own simpletons, and Pufendorf from his men thrown into this world without the care and assistance of God. But it becomes true because it proceeded in accordance with the truth of Providence.

[II]  
General discoveries

519. In addition to the particular discoveries made in particular places, we now present a summary of certain general discoveries which, like

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blood through the body, are diffused and spread through the whole of this work.

*I*

520. An ideal eternal history, described on the basis of the idea of Providence, in accordance with which the particular histories of all nations proceed through time in their rise, progress, state [of perfection], decline and end.

*II*

521. The eternal principle of the nature of states and the eternal properties of civil institutions, through which, by combining and uniting them, the reader will discover a description of the laws of an eternal republic that changes in time and place.

*III*

522. The nature and original properties of the monarchies and the free republics, the matrices of which, as it were, are discovered in the heroic republics and the monarchies of the first family fathers in the state of nature, which have hitherto lain hidden within the Greek fables. This was the wisdom of the ancients that awaited discovery in the fables.

*IV*

523. Hence the whole of ancient Roman history is cast in a new light through this investigation of causes that we have discovered in the shadows and fables of antiquity least known to us, enabling us to establish facts that are as certain as their alternatives, as they currently stand, are beyond the possibility of belief, as demonstrated earlier [93, 158–60].

*V*

524. The certain origin of the whole of profane, universal history, and its continuity from sacred history, through fabulous Greek history,

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down to certain Roman history, which begins with the second Carthaginian War. This universal history is read by means of three languages, corresponding to the three ages through which, in the order laid down by Providence, this history begins, proceeds and finishes in all the gentile nations. The science of these languages was required in order to be able to talk of the natural law of the gentes with propriety.

*VI*

525. The whole of ancient Roman government, law, history and jurisprudence brought together in a single system on the basis of three laws, all of which were native to the peoples of Latium. The first was that of the clienteles of Romulus; the second was the census of Servius Tullius; and the third was the optimum private law of the fields which was communicated to the plebeians in the Law of the Twelve Tables, reserving to the fathers, in the Eleventh Table, the optimum public law of the auspices. In these three laws, which alone can form and fix virtuous habits in peoples, lie the causes of the religion of the fathers, the magnanimity of the plebs, the strength of the people in waging war, the justice of the senate in giving the laws of peace to conquered nations and, through all this, the causes of the whole of Roman greatness. Hence these same native customs enabled the likes of Brutus to drive the tyrants from the necks of Rome; and the likes of Horatius, Mucius Scaevola and, finally, the maiden Cloelia,<sup>10</sup> to confound the likes of Lars Porsena and his whole Etruscan power with the wonder of their virtue. Similarly, through their customs, the Roman people were able to prevail over the other peoples of Latium, who, because they shared the same customs, were also of a ferocious nature, so much so that, as the political philosophers concerned with Roman affairs have noted, this was a much more difficult accomplishment. Later, these same native heroic customs, by then set down in the [Twelve] Tables, enabled the Roman heroes to subdue Italy, conquer Africa and, on the ruins of Carthage, lay down the foundation of their command of the world.

<sup>10</sup> Cloelia was a Roman renowned for her bravery in the dispute with Porsena. Livy, II, 13.

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VII

526. A proper philosophy of humanity, constituted by a continuous meditation upon what was necessary in order that Hobbes's violent men, Grotius's simpletons and Pufendorf's destitutes should gradually be led from the time in which Jove drove the giants underground to the times in which the seven sages arose in Greece, i.e. to the times in which Solon, prince of the seven sages, would teach the Athenians the celebrated saying, *Nosce te ipsum* ['Know thyself'], through which the humanity of the Greeks began to come to completion by means of maxims. Over the whole preceding period of fifteen hundred years, Providence alone, through certain human senses, led these [first men] to this humanity, as mankind began to take shape, first through the religion of a provident divinity, then through the certainty of children, and, finally, through the burial of ancestors. These are the three origins of the civil universe that we laid down at the start.

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