

BEHEMOTH

PREFACE

This special issue of the FILOZOFSKI VESTNIK is dedicated to Thomas Hobbes's Behemoth.

Hobbes's Behemoth has always been overshadowed by his more famous Leviathan. Leviathan is arguably Hobbes's masterpiece and is one of the greatest works of political philosophy. Behemoth, Hobbes's "booke of the Civill Warr," on the other hand, is most often seen as little more than a history of the English Civil War and Interregnum. While Hobbes's analysis in Leviathan touched off great debate, Behemoth has never been much discussed.

And yet, the two books are intimately related. They both analyze sovereign public authority. Where Leviathan discusses the institution of the state, Behemoth gives an account of its destruction. In Behemoth, Hobbes presupposes the subject matter of Leviathan – the creation of "that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMON-WEALTH, OR STATE" – but adds an essential dimension. For in Behemoth he analyzes how the state can be destroyed, and at what cost.

In my Call for Papers I suggested that Hobbes's political philosophy can only be fully appreciated by studying his views on both the institution and the destruction of the state. I also proposed that Hobbes's often neglected analysis of the destruction of sovereign power in Behemoth has great resonance for much of what is going on in the world today. Invitees were asked to analyze and interpret Behemoth and to explore the relevance of Hobbes's account of the "causes of the civil-wars of England and of the counsels and artifices by which they were carried on" for today's debates about the decline of sovereignty and the state, and the rise of religious and democratic fundamentalisms. The following papers have fulfilled that task admirably and open up rich terrain for future contributions to this area of study.

I would like to thank all who kindly and favorably responded to my invitation, especially those whose contributions appear in these pages. My special thanks go to John Dunn, Stephen Holmes, István Hont, and Richard Tuck for their encouragement and advice in the initial phase of this project.

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