

The Passions in Hobbes's Political Philosophy

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Cambridge, 19 November 2012

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The paper

In a letter from Paris (15/25 August 1635) addressed to William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle, Hobbes praises Robert Payne, and writes: 'I would he could [a *deleted*] give good reasons for ye facultyes & passions of ye soule, such as may be expressed in playne English. [I do *deleted*] if he can, he is the first (that I ever heard [of] could] speake sense in that subject. if he can not I hope to be ye first'. Did Hobbes succeed with this task? His 'state of nature' (*Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*, 1640; *De Cive*, 1642) or 'the natural condition of mankind' (*Leviathan*, 1651) with 'the war of all against all', is probably one of the most famous notions in the history of western philosophy. It is depicted in *De Cive* as 'the empire of the passions' (*Imperium affectum*) – while the State, with its political order that brings peace and concord, is 'the empire of reason' (*Imperium rationis*). That Nature 'dissociates' men, producing conflict and war – asserts Hobbes in Chapter XIII of *Leviathan* – is an 'inference made from the passions' (*perspicue illatum est ex natura passionum*, in the Latin version of 1668), and it is also confirmed by experience. Since Hobbes's political conceptions are logically derived from the state of nature, it is important to analyze the nature of the passions, and their key role in the construction of political philosophy or (as Hobbes prefers to say, probably to make himself different from the Aristotelians) 'civil philosophy'/'civil science'. The paper is an attempt to present such a reconstruction, focusing on the sources which might have influenced Hobbes at various levels, especially the Stoic Crysippus.

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