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*Homo Politicus*

Spinoza, Oldenburger, and the Politics of Envy and Friendship

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In 1671, writing to Jarig Jelles, Spinoza told about a rare book he recently read, entitled *Homo politicus*:

Some time ago one of my friends sent me a little book, titled *Homo Politicus*, or *Political Man*, which I'd previously heard a lot about. I've read through it and found it to be the most harmful book men can devise. The Author's supreme goods are money and honor. He organizes his teaching for these ends and shows how to reach them: by rejecting all religion internally, and externally professing whatever can most serve your advancement. In addition, you should not be true to anyone, except insofar as it's to your advantage. For the rest, he puts the highest value on dissembling, promising without performing, lying, false oaths, and many other things. When I read this, I thought about writing a little book indirectly against it, in which I would treat of the supreme good, and further, to show the anxious and miserable condition of those who are greedy for money and honor, and finally, by clear reasoning and many examples to show that Republics which have an insatiable desire for honor and money must necessarily perish, and that they have [in fact] perished.<sup>1</sup>

The philosopher, of course, did not write any “little book” against the work in question. The *Tractatus politicus* that Spinoza only began working on some four years later, does contain some remarks regarding those he describes as *politici*, often given as “statesmen” but wisely translated by Edwin Curley somewhat more broadly as “political practitioners.”<sup>2</sup> Both those remarks—as we shall see below—praise the *politici* for their political realism and practical knowledge more than they criticise them for their shrewdness or pretence. Moreover, the contents of the *Tractatus politicus* generally do not correspond to the table of contents of the “little book” Spinoza envisaged. If anything, that table is rather reminiscent of the famous opening paragraphs of the early *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione*, with its famous resolution to seek out the “true good” and invectives against those who seek only “wealth, honor, and sensual pleasure.”<sup>3</sup>

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But what was it that Spinoza had gotten his hands on? There is no simple answer to this question. No book entitled *Homo politicus* figures in the inventory of his library, so he likely returned the copy he read to the friend who lend it to him the first place.<sup>4</sup> However, a book with a similar title is mentioned in a list of “very rare” books found among Spinoza's papers that Schuller forwarded to Leibniz in March 1677.<sup>5</sup> In Schuller's list the work figures as “Franciscus Datisii Homo politicus liber rarissimus.” Leibniz notes in the margins of Schuller's letter that

he has seen a book with that title, but offers no further specification.<sup>6</sup> I have not found a work of that kind—indeed any kind of work—by anyone of that name, Franciscus Datisius. Attempts at putting a person to that name, even when allowing for a spelling error or other deformation (Dafisius, Dativius, etc.), have not yielded any plausible results. Konraad Oege Meinsma in his classic 1896 study *Spinoza en zijn Kring*, asserts that Shuller's reference is corrupt and that the book Spinoza had read was the *Homo Politicus, hoc est Consiliarius Novus, Officarius & Aulicus, secundum hodiernam praxin* published under the pseudonym Pacificus à Lapide.<sup>7</sup> This is entirely possible as we shall see shortly, but also entails some complications.

The work published under that pseudonym, Pacificus à Lapide, was in fact written or edited by the Nurnberg jurist Philipp Andreas Oldenburger (1617–1678). We can reasonably assume this because he also published a second work under the same pseudonym in 1669, the *Dominus de Monzambano illustratus et restrictus [...] opera et studio Pacifici a Lapide Germano-Constantiensis*, a book concerned with Samuel von Pufendorf's 1667 *De statu imperii germanici*.<sup>8</sup> Oldenburger was born in Celle.<sup>9</sup> He studied with Hermann Conring (1606–1681) in Helmstedt and later, after touring the German Empire making a (dubious) name for himself, ended up as a quite popular professor of jurisprudence in Geneva. He died there in 1678. Oldenburger's bibliography is substantial, but a lot of his work is derivative. His 1668 *Rerum Illustrum Imperii Romano-Germanici*, for example, draws heavily on the writings of Conring and Johannes Limnäus (1592–1665).<sup>10</sup> Conring himself, however, did not appreciate the effort of his former student. As he wrote to Leibniz's benefactor, the Baron von Boineburg, in 1668: "I have indeed looked at his books but not read them with any care. They are industrious, but I found in them no good judgment and an equal lack of argumentative skill. I cringed at the overly crude writing."<sup>11</sup> Oldenburger's later *Thesaurus rerum publicarum totius orbis quadripartitus*<sup>12</sup> caused Conring even further irritation because it was falsely attributed to him. He wrote a short pamphlet against it to set things straight.<sup>13</sup> As a writer, however, Oldenburger acquired his greatest notoriety when, in 1669, he published *Ad Justum Sincerum Epistola politica de Peregrinationibus recte et rite instituendis* which contained vivid depictions of the life and circumstances at the Princely German Courts—their intrigues, political scheming, love affairs and so on.<sup>14</sup> The book was everywhere confiscated which only increased demand and added to Oldenburger's reputation. The fallout from the work, however, made it impossible for the author to reside in Germany: anecdote will even have it that one prince had Oldenburger flogged and forced to eat several sheets of the book as punishment for having exposed his love life. Among other controversial works, we can also mention Oldenburger's 1669 *Satyra in Eubulum Theosdatum Sarckmasium*,<sup>15</sup> a witty but somewhat rude response to sharp criticism of Oldenburger's book on Pufendorf formulated by Conrad Samuel Schurtzfleisch (lat. Sarckmasio) in his short pamphlet *Judicia de novissimis prudentiae civilis Scriptoribus ex Parnasso*.<sup>16</sup> Later, in his capacity as professor in Geneva, he also wrote several ordinary political treatises on the principles of government fit for Christian Emperors and Princes, such as his 1672 *Manuale Principum Christianorum* where he sets out to show how the "supreme law, the primary aim, and, as were, its brightest goal, of Christian princes is the public honour and security of the kingdom."<sup>17</sup> His *Discursus historico-politici de rebus publicis turbidis in tranquillum statum reducendis* also belongs in that category.<sup>18</sup> None of these works compare with the *Homo Politicus* in audacity.

The *Homo Politicus* went through several editions and also changed its title slightly along the way. The first edition I have been able to locate was entitled *Homo Politicus hujus seculi*. It was published in 1661 along with a virulent anti-Jesuit work entitled *Defensio Pro Valerio Magno* published under the pseudonym Theophilus, which contains a series of demonstrations *in forma* to the effect that "the society of Jesus is infested by heresy or atheism."<sup>19</sup> Contrary to other, later editions, this first known edition includes no author name or pseudonym. Moreover, and intriguingly, it presented as "with desired additions made to this

second and complete edition [*cui nunc supplementum, In prima editio desideratum, altera hac, & integra accessit*],” so apparently this was not the *editio princeps*. Yet another edition with the same title from 1662 was bound together with an edition of the notorious 1614 *Monita privata Societatis Jesu* by the disgruntled Polish Jesuit Hieronim Zahorowski, a defamatory anti-Jesuit text that records the alleged techniques of flattery and feigned humility employed by Jesuits to gain political influence.<sup>20</sup> I have not been able to consult a copy of this edition and do not know if or to what extent it differs from the 1661 edition. We find testimony regarding one of these early editions in a broadsheet on “machievellians and monarchomarchs” by Jacob Thomasius from September 1662 which denounces a recent “hellish” Machievellian treatise entitled *Homo politicus*.<sup>21</sup> A few years later, a considerably amended and now annotated edition was printed with 1664 indicated on the title page (although it may have been available already some time in 1663, if we are to believe Weller’s 1858 catalogue of *Falschen und Fingierte Druckorte*.)<sup>22</sup> A second print of the 1664 edition was published in 1665. The 1664/65 version was put on the *index librum prohibitorum* on 18 January 1667. Finally, a third and further emended edition was published in 1668, once again along with the *Monita privata Societatis Jesu*.<sup>23</sup>

It must be understood that Oldenburger’s authorship of all versions and editions of the *Homo politicus* is not something that can be affirmed straightforwardly. A work dedicated to refuting the earlier editions affords us a bit of additional information regarding its possible provenance. I have in mind here the *Politicus sceleratus impugnatis* published in 1663 by the Nuremberg jurist Christoph Peller von Schopperhof (1630–1711).<sup>24</sup> In his work, Peller proposes to refute “a new political compendium published and printed under the title *The Political Man*.”<sup>25</sup> Peller’s book was very successful and went through three additional editions in 1665, 1669, and 1698. Now, Peller only identifies the author of the book he is refuting by the initials “C. R. B. C.,” apparently found in some copies of the work. He does not venture to identify directly who is behind those initials but indicates some suspicions based on the name and “public office” of the supposed author.<sup>26</sup> Likely he had in mind Christoph Rapp (1566–1619) (“C. R.”), jurist and Chancellor to the Elector of Brandenburg (“B. C.”). Indeed, the work has often been—indeed still sometimes is<sup>27</sup>—attributed to this Prussian statesman. Is this simply a mistaken attribution? The 1664 and 1668 editions of the *Homo Politicus* cite texts postdating Rapp’s death by several years. The 1661 edition, however, is not annotated and I find nothing in it that would necessarily place its writing later than the year of Rapp’s death in 1619. So, it is not impossible that, in 1661, someone who may or may not be Oldenburger himself, published a version of an older text which Oldenburger then in 1664, under the name Pacificus à Lapide, amended and annotated.<sup>28</sup> Nothing proves that the *editio princeps* or even the first extant 1661 edition, was written by Oldenburger himself. For all we know, it could have been Christoph Rapp or someone else with the initials “C. R. B. C.,” or perhaps even the mysterious Franciscus Datisius mentioned as the author in Spinoza’s list of rare books. The question remains entirely open.<sup>29</sup>

The most important difference between the early 1661 edition and the later 1664 and 1668 editions is that the latter include a wealth of precise references and passages extracted from other authors. The text thus evolves to become more and more a mosaic of quotations than an individual or personal text. This new contextual framework is highly eclectic. First, Oldenburger urges his reader to consult Machiavelli, this “most famous Italian statesman,” and frequently refers to him.<sup>30</sup> He moreover cites the satirist Trajano Boccalini (1556–1613) and the reading of Machiavelli included in his *De Ragguagli di Parnaso*.<sup>31</sup> Next, Putting to one side ancient sources—Plato, Cicero, Plutarch—and very extensive use of Tacitus’ *Annales*, he draws examples from a number of contemporary historical works, including Francis Bacon’s 1622 *History of the Reign of King Henry VII* (1622), Gabriel Barthélemy de Gramond’s *Historia prostratae Ludovico XIII sectariorum in Gallia rebellionis* (1623) and Charles Vialart’s

*Histoire du ministère d'Armand Jean du Plessis cardinal duc de Richelieu* (1649). Among the jurists and political theorists, he references both Arnold Clapmar's *De arcanis rerum publicarum libri sex* (posth. 1605), the author who as the first introduced the notion of *status rationis* in the German context,<sup>32</sup> and Jean de Chokier de Surllet—a disciple of Justus Lipsius—and his 1610 *Thesaurus politicorum aphorismorum*. Finally, he draws on a group of French thinkers. Hence, in the 1664/65 edition, he cites at length from Jean de Silhon's *Le Ministre d'état* (1633), and the 1668 edition adds to this several sections drawn from Jean Louis Guez de Balzac's *Socrate Chrétien, Apologie contre le docteur de Louvain, and Aristippe*.<sup>33</sup> This edition finally adds a reference to *Les Entretiens de monsieur De Voiture, et de Monsieur Costar* (1654), thus including yet another key figure—Vincent Voiture—from the entourage of Richelieu and the newly established French Academy.

In any case, with all the various editions in circulation, the *Homo politicus* was perhaps not quite as *rarissime* as Spinoza and his list would suggest unless, of course, he had gotten his hands on the today lost pre-1661 *editio princeps*. But until additional textual evidence comes to light, we must resign ourselves to the fact that we do not know which one among the different versions of the *Homo politicus* Spinoza read. Moreover, we cannot know whether his reading included only the text by Oldenburger or also the text by Zaborowski. I have generally consulted the 1668 edition for the purposes of this paper, but I cannot be certain that this is the appropriate choice and I will point out a few differences among the different editions along the way. There is no indication that Spinoza ever set eyes on Peller's or any other refutation, so if indeed he had "heard a lot about" the *Homo Politicus*, this was likely from hear-say and in-person discussions with friends who had either read the work itself and/or Peller's refutation.

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But let us put these textual complications to one side and turn to the content of Oldenburger's text. One thing that strikes a reader—and especially a reader of the 1668 edition—is its frank rejection of the Christian religion as vain and useless. Already the second paragraph includes some very impious passages, such as the following (the parts in brackets are only on the 1668 edition):

And do not listen to the appeal of religion, for it is nothing but coaxing and superstitious piety, nay, a pure deception that the political man, if he wants to attain his goal, will take little account of. [Come to think of it, I do not recall who it was that wrote that he did not believe that one could make a good emperor of a good Christian or that a good Christian could be a good emperor, but I would add that, given the way things are today, he who wishes to be a good Christian cannot be a good counsellor, a good courtier, or a good civil servant either. *For today religion is nothing but an empty name.*]<sup>34</sup>

Meinsma quotes this passage in order to illustrate what is was in Oldenburger's work Spinoza reacted so strongly to. It is however not particularly well chosen for that purpose, although it was doubtless the passages like this one that very quickly earned the work its place on the *Index librom prohibitorum*. The rejection of Christianity as empty superstition is, however, not what Spinoza complains about in his letter to Jelles. Rather, it is these two other things: first, the author's conception of money and honour as the sole good; second, the deceptive means – lying, making false promises, breakings oaths, flattery, and so on – that the author recommends to obtain them. And with regard specifically to religion, what Spinoza deems reproachable is less the author's denunciation of religion as the recommendation to reject it internally while still professing it externally. It is, again, principally the deceptive strategies he condemns.

So let us consider in more detail what the *Homo Politicus* has to say about the topics that Spinoza in fact seems to care the most about. Oldenburger's text is mostly made up of recommendations regarding how to navigate society and politics to one's own advantage, meaning by this anything that will bring money or glory. Indeed, Oldenburger proclaims, "our political practitioner [*politico*] should not consider anything profitable to him to be unjust."<sup>35</sup> The advice he provides is entirely practical. For example, he explains if one's circumstances are prosperous, in order to deflect the envy and hatred of others, one must enter secret alliances with others who can tend to your business in your place, or letting other handle your money while promising them half of what is gained.<sup>36</sup> Or he explains how one must be wary of becoming too intimate with peers, especially inferior ones, because it will only draw "contempt" and "evil judgement" while bringing none of the "advantage" to which the "political man should be fully devoted."<sup>37</sup>

Oldenburger's general calculation that "he who aspires to higher things must pretend [*simulare*] not to care for petty ones"<sup>38</sup> forms a stark contrast to Spinoza's aspiration for the "highest good" in the *Tractatus de intellectus emendation*, exactly because Oldenburger's "higher things" are exactly those Spinoza declare to be "vain"—riches and honour—and which Oldenburger incidentally considers closely related. For "if some *politicus* attains the greatest riches, he may experience the envy of others and a lot of hatred from many and yet still have the greatest authority and esteem, and quite a few people will seek his friendship and relation."<sup>39</sup> It is, however, the methods of deception and dissimulation that Spinoza mostly criticizes. Oldenburger shows little scruples: "I say that one must pretend in all things, and in this imitate Tiberius who, having both an insidious, and being devoted to his own advantage, always pretended to want what he did not, and vice versa, to appear indifferent to those whose advice he desired and almost kind to those he hated; thus his words are generally obscure, suspended, sometimes perplexing, sometimes dismissive."<sup>40</sup> He also explains how, when dealing with recalcitrant interlocutors, a prudent man should "appear to possess some secret competence that others desire" and simulate "particular goodwill" toward them in private conversation. "Except in words," however, the political practitioner should not "faithfully perform a service for anyone that runs counter to his own advantage and honour, or ever disclose what is hidden in his mind."<sup>41</sup> Similarly, if one "has and an intelligent and cunning peer" who appears to oppose one, one should seek to establish a "close relation of friendship" but not sincerely, i.e. not reveal to him "any of your political secrets" but only "pretend to favour his interest, and feign a great friendship with many words."<sup>42</sup>

In the 1664 and 1668 editions, much of what Oldenburger says about such pretence and deception is mediated through the texts he references. So taking a closer look at the specific authors he draws upon in his discussions of various forms of deception—dissimulation, fraud, flattery—is very instructive. Perhaps most interesting is Oldenburger's use of the two French political writers, Silhon and Guez de Balzac, whose doctrines, as opposed to simply being referenced, are worked directly into the amended version of the text. In the 1664 edition already, Oldenburger pulls out a long passage from Jean de Silhon's 1631 *Le Ministre d'estat* concerned with the political maxim according to which "he who does not know how to dissimulate does not know how to rule"<sup>43</sup>:

The foundation of this opinion is that even if lying is prohibited, that it is not a dignified thing for people to do and an ugly outlook to take for one's behaviour that the outside should contradict the inside, that the tongue should disagree with the heart, and the word betray the thought of which it is the image or sign, nonetheless no one is obliged to always reveal their feelings, to put on display everything that is in their heart, to make of whoever comes along his confessor and judge. And it is certain that God has advised

us to keep silent to hush up dangerous truths as much as he has given us speech to make known the necessary ones.<sup>44</sup>

Later in the *Homo Politicus*, Oldenburger shall go on to reference Boccacini's reading of Machiavelli to state something along the same lines as what Silhon writes here, namely that "it is more necessary to know when to keep silent than to know when to speak, which fits well with what the very subtle Italian [student of] the secrets of princes also advanced: "I have learned," he says, "that no secretary (politician, a courtier, a counsellor) will do otherwise than to praise someone who is willing to speak but who knows well when to keep silent."<sup>45</sup> However, in the immediate context, Oldenburger takes the passage from the *Le Ministre d'Etat* to mean that "you should not speak rashly in ways that will not please others or be convenient for you; nor should you persist so much in being truthful that you do not learn to artfully make up things like a spider for your own advantage and opportunity."<sup>46</sup> And he immediately proceeds to also reference the view—in the text, attributed to Plato on the authority of Clapmar—that "lying and deceit should be abundantly used by rulers in order to command subjects more easily."<sup>47</sup> Oldenburger takes Silhon to advance a view more crude than is warranted by the text by Silhon himself who was neither a Machiavellian nor a libertine.<sup>48</sup> Similar patterns emerge from Oldenburger's use of Balzac. The following assertions are accompanied by a reference to the Balzac's *Apologie contre le docteur de Louvain*: "So this is the true political religion; this is how it should be played today, to believe in one way with the mouth and another with the heart, as did certain monks in Spain who, after having celebrated mass and taught theology publicly for twenty years, when their final hour arrived, revealed themselves to have been of the Jewish faith although of the Christian confession."<sup>49</sup> However, if Balzac does indeed recount this story, he certainly does not take it to reflect an act of "true political religion," but instead denounces the Spanish Jewish monks as "performers and comedians, imitators and charlatans" who "make a mockery of our devotion!"<sup>50</sup>

Still, it must be acknowledged that, unless we read Oldenburger's text between the lines (and why would a text otherwise so entirely uninhibited suddenly resort to such writing?), there appears one limit to his embrace of strategies of pretence and deception. He pulls back when it comes to flattery (*adulatio, assentatio*), this quintessentially courtly form of deception decried by classical and renaissance authors alike, from Plutarch to Cicero, Erasmus to Machiavelli: "In order for your ways to be accepted by others, you should always see to it that you adapt your speech and gestures to your superiors; that you adapt it to them by feigning and disguising, lest you fall under a suspicion of flattery, especially among princes."<sup>51</sup> He adopts this position partly on prudential grounds. He thus goes on to recount the story of the ill-advised flattery (*stulta quadam assentatione*) of the plebeian Publius Afranius who, in during an illness of Caligula promised to sacrifice his own life if the emperor if the latter got better, hoping to receive reward for his devotion, was in fact severely punished when he refused to fulfil his promise upon the emperors' recovery. In other words, flattery is a dangerous form of deception to engage in because it tends to backfire, so one should "avoid flattery as the pest" by (*ergo adulationem ceu pestem fuge*).<sup>52</sup> Still, it is not just in the interests of self-preservation that Oldenburger discourages flattery, but also on moral grounds:

Today none are more at home or fortunate at the princes' courts [than flatterers]; these parasites are permitted to enter, to sit, to speak, food is provided them from the prince's tables, their chambers and coffers are open to them; it is established custom that they may speak of anyone as well or as badly as they wish; in the end, everything they say or do is welcomed; Princes award them many things. But those upon whom the burden of government rests, are rarely rewarded for their labours. However, since the rewards of virtue belong to the deserving, lest you reap the flatterer's award of disgrace instead

of glory, flatter the Prince with caution. Do not appear like those who soothe the ears of Princes day and night, who applaud their every word and heap praises upon those whom they silently detest.<sup>53</sup>

On this point, at least, Spinoza could not disagree, and it is not insignificant that, in the list of reproachable forms of deceit that he gives in the letter to Jelles—dissembling, promising without performing, lying, false oaths—flattery does not appear. Indeed, when Oldenburger complains that “these parasites are permitted to enter,” that “food is provided them from the prince’s tables” and that the “coffers are open to them,” this is not so far removed from Spinoza himself when he counts the flatterers among those “whose supreme well-being consists in contemplating the money in their coffers and having bloated bellies.”<sup>54</sup> They both draw on a broad tradition for associating the flatterer with a courtly “parasite” and a “sponger” that we can trace back to Menander, Terence, Lucian, and Cicero, and of course Plutarch’s *How to distinguish a friend from a flatterer* that Erasmus appended in Latin translation to his *Manual of the Christian Prince*. It is a classical and humanist tradition that Spinoza also appeals to in the *Ethics*, when, while exploring the various ramifications of “pride,” he declares having “omitted the definitions of [flatterers and parasites] because they are too well known.”<sup>55</sup>

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Having now a better sense of the nature and scope of the position developed in the *Homo Politicus*, we can now turn to Spinoza and the position he likely wanted to develop in the never written “little book indirectly against it.”

One good place to begin is with the conception of the figure of the *politicus*—the “political practitioner”—that we find in the *Tractatus politicus*. Edwin Curley proposes only Machiavelli as a model for Spinoza’s understanding of the *politicus*—the “political practitioner”<sup>56</sup> And the Florentine was certainly an important figure in the background of Spinoza’s use of the term. It is also a generally positively connoted one, for, as is well known, Spinoza offers a resolutely republican reading of the Florentine as a “very prudent man” who clearly “was on the side of freedom, and gave very good advice for protecting it” by showing “show how much a free multitude should beware of entrusting its well-being absolutely to one person.”<sup>57</sup> Still, Machiavelli is clearly not the only figure looming in the background of Spinoza’s conception of the *politicus* and the letter to Jelles testifies to the importance of distinguishing between Machiavelli and Machiavellians in relation to Spinoza.<sup>58</sup> In Spinoza’s Dutch and closely related German context, the figure of the *politicus* was representative of a much broader field of political theory, associated not only with the North European reception of Machiavelli, but also with the legacies of thinkers such as Jean Bodin and Justus Lipsius, and with the tradition of *raison d’état* inherited from the broader Italian and French tradition. His general familiarity with these traditions of court politics can be detected for example in his remark in the *Tractatus politicus* about “the devices and shrewd tricks counselors must use” that are “are too well known.”<sup>59</sup> Closer to home, the idea of a *politicus* was even representative of a certain lifestyle, a “political way of life” (*modus politicus vivendi*) as Nicholas Steno later described the freethinking circles (which included Spinoza) within which he moved during his student years in Amsterdam and Leiden, as noted by Eric Jorink.<sup>60</sup> In both meanings, Spinoza and his peers were themselves “political practitioners.”<sup>61</sup> What matters here, however, is what *kind* of practitioners they were. And in this respect, Spinoza was not a libertine but a moderate one, entirely committed to putting the practice of politics in the service of established higher ethical and political ideals, and to curb the use of political cunning in accordance with those ideals. Hence, the models of political counsel he develops in the *Tractatus politicus*, chapter VII on Monarchy, are clearly devised so as to allow for a monarch to benefit from the “devices



and shrewd tricks” of political practitioners while trying to mitigate the harmful effects of their necessary self-interest, given that that “for their own protection they are obliged to shrewd rather than loyal.”<sup>62</sup> This is why, for example, Spinoza prescribes terms of no more than four years for such counsellors, and also recommends large councils where the various interests of the members cancel each other out.

What Spinoza does *not* do, however, is condemn political prudence or shrewdness as such. Quite to the contrary, he clearly acknowledges that there “can’t be any doubt that Political Practitioners [*politicos*] have written much more successfully about Political affairs than Philosophers have. Since they’ve had experience as their teacher, they’ve taught nothing remote from practice.”<sup>63</sup> And while he warns, for example, that “this has always been the song they sing who covet absolute rule for themselves: that it is altogether to the state’s advantage that its affairs be conducted in secret,”<sup>64</sup> he also acknowledges “that silence is often useful to the state no one can deny.”<sup>65</sup> What results from this argumentative wavering is a complicated relationship to political deception that Spinoza attempts to navigate terminologically by putting “deception” and “flattery” to one side and “caution” and “accommodation” to the other. Certainly, Spinoza strongly rejects the “flattering priests” of the late Hebrew Republic—easily recognizable as similar to the leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church—in terms not unlike to those of Cicero’s critique of the “wily and covert flatterer” who is “not very easily recognized, since he often assents by opposing, plays the game of disputing in a smooth, caressing way.”<sup>66</sup> They are also “the worst hypocrites” who persecute “distinguished for their integrity” under the “deceptive appearance of religion.”<sup>67</sup> Nonetheless, in the *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione*, he states as a “rule of living” that one must “speak according to the capacities of ordinary people” in order to ascertain that they “give a favorable hearing to the truth.”<sup>68</sup> And he also acknowledges that “the more we have observed and the better we know the customs and character of men ... the more cautiously we will be able to live among them and the better we will be able to accommodate our actions and lives to their mentality, as much as reason allows.”<sup>69</sup> Spinoza, however, mostly presents such caution and accommodation as strategies ultimately deployed as much for the sake of others as for the sake of oneself. For example, in the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* he argues that “if someone wants to teach a doctrine to a whole nation ... and wants everyone to understand him in every respect, he is bound ... for the most part to accommodate his arguments and the definitions of his teaching to the capacities of ordinary people.”<sup>70</sup> This explains at least partly why, in a note intended for a never published second edition of the work, he stresses that not all deception is equally reproachable: “In the civil state, where there is a common law which decides what is good and what is evil, we rightly distinguish between a good and an evil intent to deceive [*recte dolus distinguitur in bonum et malum*].”<sup>71</sup> Everything depends on whether practical shrewdness of the *politicus* is deployed for the sake of himself alone or in the service of society as a whole.

Accordingly, Spinoza positions himself as follows. Before the establishment of the state, natural right in itself in no way prohibits the use of deception for the sake of one’s own advantage: “By natural right each person can act deceptively, and is bound to stand by the contract only by the hope of a greater good or the fear of a greater evil.”<sup>72</sup> By contrast, in a society not regulated law but by reason alone, all would recognise the disadvantage to all of using it: “if all men could easily be led just by the guidance of reason ... there would be no one who would not absolutely detest deceptions.”<sup>73</sup> Moreover, he stresses, even in state governed by laws and founded in obedience rather than reason, should be no room for political fraud: “to establish the state so that there’s no place for fraud, ... this is the task, this is our concern.”<sup>74</sup> Indeed, “good faith” is “especially necessary in a Republic” and one must avoid at all cost that “abominable flattery and treachery [is] encouraged.”<sup>75</sup> However, the advancement of the common good by a man guided by reason within a society regulated by law does *not* prohibit the use of “deception with good intent” (*dolus bonus*). Those latter strategies are those Spinoza

generally gather under the heading of “accommodation,” as a kind of well-intended and nobler form of manipulation. Presumably, if Spinoza saw fault with the author of the *Homo Politicus*, it was not necessarily because of him promoting dissimulation and deception as it was promoting the wrong kind of deception, caginess rather than caution, manipulation rather than accommodation, *dolus malus* rather than *dolus bonus*.

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So what does Spinoza offer as the alternative to the self-interested strategies of the libertine political practitioner? According to him, what driving motive could a *politicus* have that would make him interact with others with “integrity” (*integro animo*) and “good faith” (*fides*) rather than “deceive with evil intent” (*dolus malus*)? What driving motive sets some strategies of dissimulation and deception (*accommodatio, dolus bonus*) apart from others (*fraus, deceptio, dolus malus*). After all, is Spinoza’s own *Ethics* not itself entirely predicated on the notion that no one will ever do by his own accord what they do not perceive to be to their own advantage? Spinoza shall offer an answer which is revealing of a deeper humanist heritage of his position. He continues his letter to Jelles:

How much better and more excellent the thoughts of Thales of Miletus were than those of this Author will be evident from the following reasoning. All things, he said, are common among friends; the wise are friends of the gods; therefore, all things belong to the wise. In this way this very wise man made himself the richest of all, more by nobly scorning wealth than by greedily pursuing it.<sup>76</sup>

The key to Spinoza’s position lies in the proverb: All things are common among friends. As Curley points out, the attribution of the saying to Thales of Miletus is mistaken but its proverbial status not in question. Indeed, it figures very prominently as the very first among Erasmus’s *Adages*.<sup>77</sup> And Erasmus, for his part, points to a number of sources of the proverb, including Socrates, Euripides, Terence, Plato, Aristotle, Martial, and Plutarch, and agrees with Cicero, Diogenes Laertius, and Aulus Gellius in pointing to Pythagoras as the original source.<sup>78</sup> Spinoza, for his part, was likely not particularly concerned with the exact ancient source of this common saying. After all, proverbs draw much of their appeal and truth value from the fact that they belong to no author in particular but are commonly shared and circulated.<sup>79</sup> Still, the widely known Erasmian account of the adage is, I think, what most clearly resonates in Spinoza’s appeal to it. For, in the *Adages*, Erasmus paradigmatically voices a common North European humanist reception of shared classical tradition that is also present everywhere in Spinoza’s writings.<sup>80</sup>

Now, according to Erasmus, “not only was Pythagoras the author of this saying, but he also instituted a kind of sharing of life and property in this way, the very thing Christ wants to happen among Christians. For all those who were admitted by Pythagoras into that well-known band who followed his instruction would give to the common fund whatever money and family property they possessed.”<sup>81</sup> Friendship first implies assuming ownership of things in common. There is however a kind of reflexive double-sidedness to this notion which considerably strengthens its community-building qualities. For not only do friends have property in common but friends also in a sense take each other’s friends to be common property. To that effect, Erasmus cites an intriguing phrase from Plutarch: : “An elegant remark of Theophrastus is quoted in Plutarch, in the little essay entitled ‘On Brotherly Love’: ‘If friend’s possessions are in common, then friends’ friends still more should be in common too’.”<sup>82</sup> If friends have property in common, then by the same token and by even greater reason, friends also have friends in common—a reasoning which implies that friendship itself can be construed as a

sublimated form of mutual ownership or belonging with an inbuilt mechanism of expansion, with relations of common property and mutual friendship expanding like rings in the water.

The fundamental generator of such relations, or what motives the sharing of property and friends, is the recognition of mutual similitude or likeness among men. This we learn from Erasmus's subsequent discussion of the proverb *Simile gaudet simili*—"like rejoices in like".<sup>83</sup> For, as he says, "similarity is the mother of good will, and links people together by habit and way of life" and "similarity is the mother of affection."<sup>84</sup> It is finally, one could suggest, via this mechanism of similitude that Erasmus's first adage on friendship, which turns on common property, is closely related to the second, which turns on mutual recognition and sense of self: *Amicus alter ipse*, i.e. "A friend is another self."<sup>85</sup> Friendship is a form of self-ownership via other people, mediated by similitude: in having a friend who is *like* or *similar to* myself, I take ownership of myself through her.

In Erasmus, these various affective mechanisms are mostly justified by reference to a common classical tradition, but in terms of content they are practically all mirrored in Spinoza's geometrical, demonstrative accounts of interpersonal relations in parts III and IV of the *Ethics*. For Spinoza, "it is especially useful to men to form associations, to bind themselves by those bonds most apt to make one people of them, and absolutely, to do those things which serve to strengthen friendships."<sup>86</sup> And, in this context, he stresses in particular the community-building effects of the so-called "imitation of affects." The *imitatio affectuum* refers to the fact that "if we imagine a thing like us, toward which we have had no affect to be affected with some affect, we are thereby affected with a like affect."<sup>87</sup> Its basic forms are "pity" and "emulation," understood as "the desire for a thing which is generated in us from the fact that we imagine others like us to have the same desire."<sup>88</sup> This theory is sometimes seen as an original trait of Spinoza's theory of the passions that sets him apart from both Hobbes and Descartes in particular.<sup>89</sup> But which I think it also brings him very close to Erasmus's understanding of friendship as based in the recognition of similitude among human beings.

In Erasmus, the recognition of likeness among people can, however, refer to both virtue and vice: "'We say that like is a friend to like as far as virtue is concerned, and equal to equal.' But the adage can rightly be transferred also to those who are linked by a likeness in vice."<sup>90</sup> Moreover, it can generate not only friendship among men with common vices but also vicious communities among men tied to each other not in friendship but in mutual envy and hatred. This is what transpires from Erasmus's discussion of the adage *Figulus figolo invidet, fabro*—"Potter envies potter and smith envies smith,"<sup>91</sup> which is exactly described as the principle of "mutual envy," especially when he describes two contrasting reactions to similarity—joy and envy—giving rise to "two kinds of emulation, one useful and honourable for mankind, the other nasty and pernicious."<sup>92</sup>

Similarly, in Spinoza, the imitation of affects produces among men a desire for a common object, such desire can produce both unity or conflict depending on the nature of the object. As Spinoza explains to Blijenbergh, nothing creates unity more than a common love of truth, "for I believe that of things outside our power we can love none tranquilly, except such people. Because the love they bear to one another is based on the love each has for knowledge of the truth, so that "nothing but truth can completely unite different opinions and minds."<sup>93</sup> If friendship based on the common knowledge of truth is superior, it is first of all because knowledge—and knowledge of virtue in particular—can be equally shared as a whole and therefore does not generate envy.<sup>94</sup> Contrary to other kinds of property—the TTP addresses the question in relation to land property in the Hebrew Republic for example the management of which sometimes produced separation and sometimes unity<sup>95</sup>—knowledge you transmit to another deprives you of nothing of what you have, or vice versa: "the greatest good of those who seek virtue is common to all, and can be enjoyed by all equally."<sup>96</sup> This explains how it is

possible that “the good which everyone who seeks virtue wants for himself, he also desires for other men.”<sup>97</sup>

By contrast, in communities based on the possession of property that cannot be owned equally by all, such as land or money, or that value affective relations to others that are similarly grounded in inequality, such as honour, admiration, or glory, contrariety and disunity will eventually follow, for “if someone imagines that a thing he loves is united with another by as close, or by a closer, bond of friendship than that with which he himself, alone, possessed the thing, he will be affected with hate toward the thing he loves, and will envy the other.”<sup>98</sup> In this case, the imitation of affects operates as an engine of disunity.

We should here dwell a moment *invidia* or envy. For this is, in the final analysis, the defining affect in the sphere of libertine political practice within which the *homo politicus* moves.<sup>99</sup> As Spinoza writes in the *Tractatus politicus*, in a passage clearly alluding to the Machiavellian *politicus*: “I say nothing about the devices and shrewd tricks counselors must use to prevent their being sacrificed to envy.... For their own protection they are obliged to be shrewd, rather than loyal.”<sup>100</sup> Envy is the dominant affect with which the political counsellor finds himself confronted at the court, and the effects of which he must navigate to evade. This is indeed also what Oldenburger’s text clearly illustrates. Many of the “political man” strategies are devoted exactly to obtain riches and honour while avoiding jealousy and envy, through deception and dissimulation, secrecy and use of middle men, and so on. And here we are perhaps at the very root of Spinoza’s visceral dislike of the *Homo politicus*, and what decisively places the *homo politicus*’s deception in the category of *dolus malus*. For no worse affect than envy exists for Spinoza.<sup>101</sup> Envy is “evil.”<sup>102</sup> It leaves “no room for reason,”<sup>103</sup> and leads directly to “wickedness.”<sup>104</sup> Already according to the *Korte Verhandeling*, envy belongs among the “evil passions” which form “the real hell itself.”<sup>105</sup> This understanding of envy as the worst of all evils has a long classical pedigree, from Euripides, Menander, Galen, and, of course, Plutarch who “consider[s] ... hatred and envy to be the same, since their aim is the contrary to that of friendship.”<sup>106</sup> But it also has a systematic, deductive foundation in Spinoza’s understanding of the affects. Grounded in emulation, i.e. in the imitation of affects, envy stems from “a desire for a thing which is generated in us from the fact that we imagine others like us to have the same desire.”<sup>107</sup> But this desire gives rise to envy rather than friendship because of *the nature of the desired object*. It stems from the perception that the desired goods, be it things or other people, is a zero sum game, or the idea—at the exact opposite of the common sharing of the true good of knowledge among friends—that whatever is worthwhile having, be it land, money, honour, or glory, cannot be equally shared but only be possessed at the exclusion or diminution of its possession by others.

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Above, I have explored the philosophy behind Spinoza’s opposition to Oldenburger in terms of two kinds of political practice, fundamentally governed by two opposing affects, namely, a politics of *envy* and a politics of *friendship*. While Spinoza’s geometrical treatment of these affects is highly original, the opposition itself is perfectly commonplace and testifies to the humanist heritage in Spinoza’s *Ethics*.<sup>108</sup> The first is oriented toward perceived goods that cannot be attained without division or inequality (such as money and honour); the second toward the “true good” that can be equally shared in full and without division (such as knowledge and virtue). In Spinoza, both envy and friendship are moreover inseparable from the principle of *imitatio affectum*, and thus from the recognition of mutual likeness among people, a recognition of common interests. But they pull in opposite directions, both socially and politically. Envy operates within society as force making those with privileges hold on to them jealously, concentrating them on ever fewer hands. Envy, in effect, explains why “democratic

states are transformed into aristocracies, and aristocracies, in the end, into monarchies.”<sup>109</sup> This is the kind of political power Spinoza recognizes in Oldenburger’s treatise: the envy and jealous preservation of personal privileges that drives the political practice of the *Homo politicus* operates as a fundamentally anti-democratic affect. Friendship, by contrast, works as expansive force of knowledge exchange and community building because “the good which man wants for himself and loves, he will love more constantly if he sees that others love it. So he will strive to have the others love the same thing. And because this good is common to all and all can enjoy it, he will therefore (by the same reason) strive that all may enjoy it.”<sup>110</sup> In chapter III of the TTP, Spinoza offers a long passage that summarizes the affective economy behind this opposition between a politics of friendship and a politics of envy:

The true happiness and blessedness of each person consists only in the enjoyment of the good, and not in a self-esteem [*gloria*] founded on the fact that he alone enjoys the good, all others being excluded from it. For whoever views himself as more blessed because things are well with him, but not with others, or because he is more blessed and more fortunate than others, does not know true happiness and blessedness. The joy he derives from that comparison comes from envy and a bad heart [*ex invidio, & malo animo*]—if it isn’t mere childishness. For example, the true happiness and blessedness of man consists only in wisdom and in knowledge of the truth, not at all in the fact that he is wiser than others, or that others lack true knowledge. For their ignorance does not increase his wisdom at all, i.e., his true happiness. So someone who rejoices for that reason rejoices because of an evil occurring to someone else. He is envious and evil [*invidus est, & malus*], failing to know either true wisdom or the peace of true life.<sup>111</sup>

Spinoza was in both theory and practice what the Dutch described as a *politicus*—a pragmatic political philosopher not at all opposed to the kind of statecraft associated with Machiavelli, but also a man of a liberal mentality invested in the political life of the Republic.<sup>112</sup> But his letter on Oldenburger to Jelles displays virulent opposition to the kind of cynical statecraft that the *Homo politicus* exemplifies, and his commitment, grounded in humanist ideals, to a political practice that “contributes to social life, insofar as it teaches us to hate no one, to disesteem no one, to mock no one, to be angry at no one, to envy no one.”<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Spinoza to Jelles, February 17, 1671, G IV.228 | C II.390–1. In the context of an analysis of Spinoza’s analysis of political deception, I have already briefly considered the *Homo politicus* and Spinoza’s reaction to it in *Spinoza and the Freedom of Philosophizing*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021, pp. 105–106.

<sup>2</sup> Spinoza, *Tractatus politicus*, I, sect. 2, G III 273–74 / C II 504: “Political Practitioners [*politici*] are thought more inclined to set traps for men than to look after their interests. They’re judged to be shrewd rather than wise. Experience, of course, has taught them that as long as there are men, there will be vices. So they try to anticipate men’s wickedness, using the arts experience and long practice have taught them, arts men usually practice more from fear than because they’re guided by reason. In this way they seem to be opposed to Religion—especially to the Theologians, who believe the supreme powers ought to treat the public business by the same rules of Piety private men are bound by. Still, there can’t be any doubt that Political Practitioners [*politicos*] have written much more successfully about Political affairs than Philosophers have. Since they’ve had experience as their teacher, they’ve taught nothing remote from practice.”

<sup>3</sup> Spinoza, *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione*, sect. 1 and 3, G II 5–6 / C I 7–8. For very detailed analysis of the *proemium*, see P.-F. Moreau, *Spinoza. L’expérience et l’éternité*, Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> See A. J. Servaas van Rooijen, A. J. *Inventaire des livres formant la bibliothèque de Bénédicte Spinoza*, La Haye: Martinus Nijhoof, 1889

<sup>5</sup> Schuller to Leibniz, March 29, A III, ii, 53: “I would very much like to learn whether you have ever seen any of the following books from a catalogue (with this inscription: very rare books) that I have found among the posthumous works [*Pervelim ex Te discere num ex sequen tibus libris, (quorum catalogum (:cum hac inscriptione libri rarissimi:) inter posthuma reperi) unquam aliquos videris:*].”

<sup>6</sup> Schuller to Leibniz, March 29, A III, ii, 53: “Vidi librum sub titulo Hominis politici.”

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<sup>7</sup> I cite the 1983 French translation, *Spinoza et son cercle*, p 285.

<sup>8</sup> Incidentally, Pufendorf's was yet another work published under a pseudonym, namely S. de Monzambano Veronensis.

<sup>9</sup> Nathan Goldschlag: "Oldenburger, Philipp Andreas," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 24, Leipzig, Duncker & Humblot, 1887, pp. 261–63.

<sup>10</sup> P. A. Oldenburger, *Notitia Rerum Illustrium Imperii Romano-Germanici sive Discursus-Juridico-Politico-Historici ad Instrumentum Pacis Osnabrugo-Monasteriensis*, Freistadij : Apud Aemilium Verum, anno 1669.

<sup>11</sup> See H. Conring to Boineburg, 1 May 1668, in Daneil Gruber (ed.), *Commercium epistolicum Leibnitianum*, Hanoverae et Gottingae: Adup Io. Wilhem. Schmidium, vol. II, p. 1216: "Libros illius inspexi quidem; non legit amen cum cura. Deprehendi industriam; sed nec iudicium limatum inueni, nec peritiam argumento parem. Abieci itaque scripta nimium cruda."

<sup>12</sup> 4 vols., Geneva: Apud Samuelem De Tournes, 1675

<sup>13</sup> H. Conring, *Admonitio de thesauro rerum publicarum Genevae*, Helmstadii, [Müller] 1675, 18 pp.

<sup>14</sup> P. A. Oldenburger, *Constantini Germanici Ad justum sincerum epistola politica de peregrinationibus Germanorum rectè & ritè juxta interiorem Civilem prudentiam instituendis*, Cosmopoli : Apud Levinum Ernestum von der Linden [1669].

<sup>15</sup> Albipoli [= Geneva] : Apud Esurium Slagmasium Kreckken, 1669.

<sup>16</sup> Martismonte: Excudebat Satirius Stepabius, 1669, 14 pp.

<sup>17</sup> Oldenburger, *Manuale Principum Christianorum*, Geneva: Joh. Herm. Widerhold, 1672, Preface, p. 3v: "Christianorum Principum, lex summa, praecipuus scopus, & candida veluti meta sit, decus publicum ac regni salus."

<sup>18</sup> Geneva: Apud Samuelem de Tournes, 1677.

<sup>19</sup> Theophilus (pseud.), *Defensio pro valer. Magno, In qua exponitur Ecclesiae Romano-Catholicae Scandalum ... contra lib. ... Homo politicus accessit integer*, s.l., s.n., 1661

<sup>20</sup> See A. Carayon, *Bibliographie historique de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Paris, A. Durand, no. 2977, p. 402. This edition is very rare. One will find a copy at the Edinburgh University Library (Main Library - Special Collections N.23.58/2). On the Monita, see Paul Bernard, *Les Instructions secrètes des jésuites : étude critique*, Bloud: Paris, 1903; and Sabina Pavone, "Between history and myth: the Monita secreta Societatis Iesu," in *The Jesuits II: Culture, Sciences and the Arts, 1540-1773*, in *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540-1773*, edited by John W. O'Malley, Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris and T. Frank Kennedy, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019, pp. 50-65.

<sup>21</sup> See Jacob Thomasius, *Programma XXIX. De Machiavellistis et Monarchomachis*, 30 September 1662, in *Dissertationes LXIII*, ed. Chr. Thomasius, Halæ Magdeburgicæ: Impentis Johannis Frederici Zetleri, 1693 p. 306: "Et sunt tamen hodie, qui quasi nondum satis esset pestilentium pagellarum, novas subinde veteribus addit, qualis per hos ipsos menses ex cæca quadam officina publice prodiit Hominis Politici titulo vestitus tartareus foetus, cum jam per manus incautæ Juventutis clandestine flagitio discurrisset."

<sup>22</sup> See Emil Weller, *Falschen und fingierten Druckorte*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Leipzig : Wilhem Engelmann, 1858, vol. I, p. 271.

<sup>23</sup> For the three editions, see [1] Pacificus à Lapide [P. A. Oldenburger ?], *Homo politicus : h. e. consiliarius novus, officarius et aulicus, secundum hodiernam praxin*, Cosmopoli : [s. n.] 1664, in-4. [2] *Homo politicus : h. e. consiliarius novus, officarius et aulicus, secundum hodiernam praxin*, Cosmopoli : [s. n.] 1665, in-8. [3] Pacificus à Lapide [P. A. Oldenburger (?) and Hieronimus Zahorowski], *Homo politicus, hoc est Consiliarius novus, officarius et aulicus, secundum hodiernam praxin, auctore Pacifico a Lapide, editio secunda. Cui accesserunt Monita privata Societatis Jesu*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Cosmopoli: [s.n.] 1668, in-8.

<sup>24</sup> The work was first published under the initials "C. P. D. & A. N.," but from the second edition onward issued under Peller's name. See C. P. D & A. N. [Christoph Peller], *Politicus sceleratus impugnatus : Id est Compendium politices novum, sub titulo, Hominis Politici, secunda antehac vice editum atque impressum*, Norimbergæ: Apud Joh. Andream Endterum, 1663; and Christoph Peller, *Politicus Sceleratus impugnatus: Id est, Compendium politices novum, Sub Schemate Hominis Politici, aliquoties antehac editum atque impressum, Editio secunda, emendatior*, Norimbergæ: Johannem Andream Endterum, & Wolfgangi Jun. Hæredes, 1665.

<sup>25</sup> In the 1665 edition he refutes "a new political compendium, under the figurehead [*sub schemate*] of The Political Man, previously published and printed several times."

<sup>26</sup> See Peller, *Politicus Sceleratus*, first edition of 1663, "Ad Lectorem," 6v-7r: "Existit autem, haud multos ante annos, quidam Author, qui hujus Sectæ hominem, evulgato quodam scripto, cui ipse COMPENDII POLITICES NOVI mangonium præfixit, ad suum exemplum, omni conatu omniq; animi impetus efformare allaboraret. Quis ille fuerit scriptor, haud ita teIn amere affirmare ausim: quamvis non desint, qui in literas C. R. C. B., nonnullis exemplaribus inscriptis, & præ- & cognomen, & officium Politium publicum, & locum illius contineri existimarint." And for a different, slightly longer version in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, see "Ad Lectorem," p. 4v-5v.

<sup>27</sup> See e.g. note by Curley, in *Spinoza*, III, 390 no. 31.

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<sup>28</sup> The BNF data page on Oldenburger ([https://data.bnf.fr/fr/15113503/philipp\\_andreas\\_olderburger/#activities](https://data.bnf.fr/fr/15113503/philipp_andreas_olderburger/#activities)) perhaps overconfidently rejects the option that Rapp was involved on the grounds of post-1619 references, but ignores the existence of the primitive 1661 edition.

<sup>29</sup> Vincent Placcius's 1674 work hunting down the identities of anonymous writers, only identifies the "C. P. D. & A. N." of the 1663 edition of the *Politicus sceleratus* as Peller on the basis of the 1669 edition but identifies Peller's target simply as "C. R. B. C." with no attempt to identify the latter (V. Placcius, *De Scriptoribus Occultis Detectis: Tractatus Duo, quorum prior Anonymos Detectos, in capita, pro argumentorum varietate distinctos, posterior Pseudonymos Detectos Catalogo Alphabetico, exhibet*, Hamburgi, Guthius, 1674, pp. 62–63).

<sup>30</sup> Oldenburger, *Homo politicus*, § 3, p. 6; see also § 7, p. 12, and § 12, p. 17.

<sup>31</sup> For a seventeenth-century English edition, see T. Boccalini, *I ragguagli di Parnasso, or, Advertisements from Parnassus in two centuries: with the politick touch-stone*, London: Humphrey Moseley et al, 1656.

<sup>32</sup> See H. Dreitzel, "Reason of state and the crisis of political Aristotelianism: an essay on the development of 17th century political philosophy," *History of European Ideas*, 2002, 28:3, p. 163.

<sup>33</sup> Oldenburger, *Homo politicus*, § 2, pp. 5–6; §4, pp. 7–8, § 23, p. 28.

<sup>34</sup> Oldenburger, *Homo politicus*, p. 2 (1664 ed.) / p. 5 (1668 ed.): "Neque te Religio avocet, persuasion quædam est, & superstitiosa Pietas, imo pura puta deceptio, quæ homini Politico, si finem suum assequi vult, non magni æstimanda, [quod optime perpendens, nescio quis, scripsit, se non credere, quod ex bono Christiano possit fieri bonus Imperator, nec quod Imperator possit esse bonus Christianus, addo, nec Conciliarius, nec Aulicus, nec Officiarius Bonus is, secundum hodiernam Praxin, esse potest, qui bonus vult esse Christianus. *Nam Religio hodie inana nomen est.*]"

<sup>35</sup> Oldenburger, *Homo politicus*, § 41, p. 40: "Nostro enim politico nihil debet esse injustum quod ei fructuosum."

<sup>36</sup> Oldenburger, *Homo politicus*, § 31, p. 34.

<sup>37</sup> Oldenburger, *Homo politicus*, § 7, p. 11.

<sup>38</sup> Oldenburger, *Homo politicus*, § 29, p. 32: "Qui verò ad altissima adspirat, simulare debet, neque se minuta."

<sup>39</sup> *Homo Politicus*, §41, p. 42.

<sup>40</sup> *Homo Politicus*, § 19, p. 23: "Dixi simulanda esse omnia, in eoque Tiberium imitandum; qui, cum esset ingenio insidiosus, & commodi proprii studiosissimus, semper simulabat ea se velle quæ nolebat, & contra; his quasi insensus, quibus consultum cupiebat, ijs, quos oderat, benevolus quasi apparebat; hinc verba ejus plerumque obscura, suspensa: nunc perplexa, nunc in speciem recusantis composita."

<sup>41</sup> *Homo Politicus*, § 14, p. 18.

<sup>42</sup> *Homo Politicus*, § 22, p. 26.

<sup>43</sup> Jean de Silhon, *Le Ministre d'Etat*, last edition, Amsterdam, Antoine Michiels, 1664, Book 2, Part 1, p. 257: "qui ne sçait dissimiler, ne sçait pas regner."

<sup>44</sup> Silhon cit. in Oldenburger, *Homo Politicus*, p. 4 (1664 ed.) / § 5, p. 9 (1668 ed.), from *Le Ministre d'Etat, op. cit.*, p. 257: "Le fondement de cette opinion est qu'encore que le mensonge soit defendu, & que ce soit une chose indigne de l'homme, & une vilaine perspective en sa conduite, que le dehors contradise son intérieur, que la langue demente le Coeur, & que la Parole trahisse la Pensée dont elle est l'image ou le Caractère; si est ce que Personne n'est obligé de manifester tousiours les sentimens. D'estaller tout ce qu'il a dans l'ame: de faire du premier venu son confesseur & son juge; & il est certain que Dieu nous à aussi bien recommandé le silence pour taire les veritez dangereuses, qu'il nous à donne le parler pour publier les nécessaires."

<sup>45</sup> Oldenburger, *Homo Politicus*, § 6, p. 11: "Magis necessaria sæpius est scientia tacendi quàm loquendi: hucque possunt accommodari, quæ subtilis ille Italus de Secreta Principum prodidit; Ego, ait, edoctus sum, nullum Secretarium (Politicum, Aulicum, Consiliarium) secus ac alii existimant, effe laudandum, qui lingua promptus est, sed qui benè tacere novit." The passage is accompanied by a reference to Boccalini. Cf. Boccalini, *I Ragguagli di Parnasso, or, Advertisements from Parnassus in two centuries*, Advertisement XXVIII, p. 77: "And then I was aware that the excellency and chiefest praise of a Secretary, did not consist (as many men believe) in knowing how to speak eloquently, but how faithfully to be silent." Perhaps an indication that Oldenburger's reading of Machiavel is aligned with Boccalini's. For an interesting paper on Boccalini's reading of Machiavel, see C. Henry, "Une interprétation oblique du Prince: le procès de Machiavel dans les Ragguagli di Parnaso de Traiano Boccalini," in *Astériorion* 4 (2006), sect. 1–31. URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/asterion/606?&id=606>.

<sup>46</sup> Oldenburger, *Homo Politicus*, § 5, p. 9: "Neque verbum ullum a te temerario excidat, quod non aliis placet, vel tibi commodo esse poterit. Neque tu tam veri tenax sis, ut non fingere tanquam aranea artificiose, quod ad tuam faciat utilitatem & institutum tempestive discas."

<sup>47</sup> Oldenburger, *Homo Politicus*, § 5, p. 9.

<sup>48</sup> Etienne Thuau, *Raison d'Etat et pensée politique à l'époque de Richelieu*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2000, pp. 48, 213–14, 263–75; William Farr Church, *Richelieu and Reason of State*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972, pp. 261–68.

<sup>49</sup> Oldenburger, *Homo Politicus*, § 2, p. 5: "Hæc fuit Religio verè Politica; sic hodiè cum ea luditur; aliter nempe ore, aliter corde credendum, ad modum Religiosorum quorundam in Hispania, qui per viginti Annos celebrantes

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SS. Officium Missæ, & publicè docentes Theologiam, tandem extremâ vitæ horulâ appropinquante, manifestabant se elle Judæos, quoad fi.”

<sup>50</sup> Jean Louis Guez de Balzac, *Apologie contre le Docteur de Louvain*, in *Les Oeuvres de Monsieur Balzac*, Paris, Louis Billaine, 1665, vol. II, p. 289.

<sup>51</sup> *Homo Politicus*, § 9, p. 14: “Ut autem mores tui aliis sint accepti, etiam atque etiam videas, ut te superioribus sermone, gestibus accomodes; omnia simulando dissimulando ad captum, ne tu adulationis aut assentationis suspicionem incurras, præsertim, apud Principes.”

<sup>52</sup> *Homo Politicus*, § 9, p. 14. Passage not included in the 1661 edition.

<sup>53</sup> *Homo Politicus*, § 9, p. 14-15: “Cumque hodie nulli sint in Aulis Principum acceptiores, nulli feliciores; parasitis illis enim licet intrare, sedere, loqui, illis cibus de Principum mensa datur, cubacula & arcæ etiam Principum patent, illis creditur, mos geritur, illis bene aut male, prout voluerint, de unoquoque loqui licet; grata denique sunt omnia quæ dicunt aut faciunt, illis plurima Principes largiuntur, ij verò, quibus onus gubernationis incumbit, vix admittantur, raro remunerationem laborum accipiant. cum tamen virtutum præmia tribui merentibus conveniat, ne tamen dedecus pro gloria præmium Assentatorum habeas, caute Principi assentiaris, ne videaris esse ex eorum numero, qui tàm noctu quàm interdiu permulcent aures suis Principibus, nec tantùm applaudunt dictis eorum singulis, sed & prolixè eos ornant laudibus, quos tamen execrantur taciti.” The last lines are partly drawn from Philo’s *De migratione Abrahami*. They are not present in the 1661 edition.

<sup>54</sup> TTP XX, G III.243-4|C II.349.

<sup>55</sup> E4p57d, G II.251|C II.577. See also Lærke, *Spinoza and the Freedom of Philosophizing*, pp. 111-16, and D. J. Kapust, *Flattery and the History of Political Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

<sup>56</sup> C II, 648-49.

<sup>57</sup> *Tractatus politicus*, IV, sect. 7, G III 296-97.C II 531.

<sup>58</sup> David, “Carte No. 40,” p. 178

<sup>59</sup> TP VII.14, G III 314 / C II 551.

<sup>60</sup> See Steno to Sylvius, 12 January 1672, in Nicolas Steno, *Nicolai Stenonis epistolæ et epistolæ ad eum datæ*, ed. G. Scherz, Copenhagen, Nordisk Verlag 1952, vol. I, pp. 257-260, here p. 257; and E. Jorink, “*Modus politicus vivendi*: Nicolaus Steno and the Dutch (Swammerdam, Spinoza and Other Friends), 1660-1664,” in R. Andrault and M. Lærke (ed.), *Steno and the Philosophers*, Brill: Leiden, 2018, 13-46.

<sup>61</sup> In this regard, it is telling that Meinsma twice qualifies Spinoza’s teacher Franciscus van den Enden as a *homo politicus* “who carried Machiavelli in his backpack.” See Meinsma, *Spinoza et son cercle*, 136-37.

<sup>62</sup> TP VII, sect. 14, G III 314 / C II 551.

<sup>63</sup> Spinoza, *Tractatus politicus*, I, sect. 2, G III 274 / C II 504

<sup>64</sup> TP VII.29, G III 320-21 / C II 560

<sup>65</sup> TP VII.29, G III 320-21 / C II 560

<sup>66</sup> Cicero, *De amicitia*, in *Ethical Writings*, III, p. 68.

<sup>67</sup> TTP XVIII, G III 225 / C II 327-8.

<sup>68</sup> TdIE, § 17, G II.9|C I.12; trans. modified.

<sup>69</sup> TTP IV, G III.62|C II.130.

<sup>70</sup> TTP V, GP III.77|C II.148; trans. modified.

<sup>71</sup> TTP XVI, G III.263|C II.285. The distinction stems from Roman law which opposes *dolus malus* to both *bona fides*, good faith, and to *dolus bonus*, understood as mere shrewdness. The notion of *dolus malus* occurs in one other place in Spinoza’s works, namely in E4p72, according to which “a free man always acts honestly [*cum fide*], and not deceptively [*dolo malo*].” On this distinction in Spinoza, see Lærke, *Spinoza and the Freedom of Philosophizing*, pp. 104-8; Don Garrett, “‘Promising Ideas’: Hobbes and Contract in Spinoza’s Political Philosophy,” in Yitzhak Melamed and Michael Rosenthal (eds.) *Spinoza’s Theological-Political Treatise: A Critical Guide*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 204-5.

<sup>72</sup> TTP XVI, G III 193 / C II 286; TP II.8, G III 279 / C II 511: “the Right and established practice of nature ... does not prohibit ... deceptions, and it is absolutely not averse to anything appetite urges.” See also TTP XVI, G III 190-92 / C II 284-85.

<sup>73</sup> TTP XVI, G III 192 / C II 286.

<sup>74</sup> TTP XVII, G III 204 / C II 299; see also TTP XX, G III 241 / C II 346.

<sup>75</sup> TTP XX, G III 243 / C II 349.

<sup>76</sup> Spinoza to Jelles, February 17, 1671, G IV, 228-9/C II 391.

<sup>77</sup> From the 1508 edition onward. It figures as the 94<sup>th</sup> adage in the smaller 1500 Paris edition, the so-called *Collectanae*. See Kathy Eden, “‘Between Friends All is Common’: The Erasmian Adage and Tradition,” in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 59, no. 3, 1998, pp. 405-19, here pp. 405-6.

<sup>78</sup> Erasmus, *Adages*, I.i.1: “Amicorum communia omnia,” trans. M. M. Philipps, in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1974-, vol. 31, pp. 29-30.

<sup>79</sup> See Eden, “‘Between Friends All is Common’, pp. 408-9.



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<sup>80</sup> In this respect, confronting Spinoza's philosophy with Erasmus's *Adages* does not necessarily require evidence that Spinoza was specifically familiar with Erasmus's text. It is more a question of them both addressing and appealing to a common tradition the terms of which, in Spinoza's North European and Dutch context, had largely been set by Erasmian humanism. The relations between Spinoza and Erasmus or, indeed, the humanist tradition as a whole is understudied. Evidence of a direct engagement of Spinoza with Erasmus's texts is non-existent. The second dialogue in the *Korte Verhandelng* is staged as a conversation between Erasmus and Theophilus (KV *Second Dialogue*, G I 31-34 / C I 76-79) but that is the only place in Spinoza's writing's the name of the humanist occurs. However, according to L. S. Feuer, "it was to the men of the liberal party, the followers of Erasmus, that [Spinoza] most directly addressed his philosophy" (*Spinoza and the Rise of Liberalism* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1987 [orig. 1958], p. 72). A similar point has been made by Russ Leo ("Spinoza's Calvin. Reformed Theology in the *Korte Verhandelng van God, de Mensch en deszelfs Welstand*," in Yitzhak Melamed (ed.), *The Young Spinoza: A Metaphysician in the Making*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 155–7. See also M. Lærke, *Spinoza and the Freedom of Philosophizing*, p. 114.

<sup>81</sup> Erasmus, *Adages*, I.i.1, p. 30.

<sup>82</sup> Erasmus, *Adages*, I.i.1, p. 30.

<sup>83</sup> Erasmus, *Adages*, I.ii.21, pp. 167-8.

<sup>84</sup> Erasmus, *Adages*, I.ii. 20, p.165, and I.ii.21, p. 168.

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<sup>86</sup> EIV, Appendix G II 269 / C I 589.

<sup>87</sup> EIIIp27, G II 160 / C I 508–9.

<sup>88</sup> EIIIp27s, G II 160 / C I 509.

<sup>89</sup> Pierre-François Moreau, "Imitation of the Affects and Interhuman Relations," in Michael Hampe, Ursula Renz, and Robert Schnepf (eds.), *Spinoza's Ethics: A Collective Commentary*, Leiden, Brill, 2011, p. 170.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Erasmus, *Adages*, I.ii.21, p. 168. The first part of the citation is a quote from Plato's *Laws*.

<sup>91</sup> Erasmus, *Adages*, I.ii.25, pp. 170–71.

<sup>92</sup> Erasmus, *Adages*, I.ii.25, p. 170.

<sup>93</sup> Spinoza to Blijenbergh, 5 January 1665, Letter 19, G IV, 86 / C I 357–58.

<sup>94</sup> One could here compare with what Erasmus writes regarding the proverb according to which "the doors of the muses are free from envy," that it is "often said about people who freely and frankly communicate their learning to others, and are ready and willing to teach." (*Adages*, I.iii 85, p. 217).

<sup>95</sup> TTP XVII, G III 210 / C II 307–8 and TTP XVII G III 215–6 / C II 314-15.

<sup>96</sup> EIVp36, G II 234 / C I 564

<sup>97</sup> EIVp37, G II 235 / C I 564-65.

<sup>98</sup> EIIIp35, G II 166 / C I 514. See also EIVp36, G II 235 / C I 564: "what if the greatest good of those who seek virtue were not common to all? Would it not follow from that, as above (see P34), that men who live according to the guidance of reason, i.e. (by P35), men, insofar as they agree in nature, would be contrary to one another?"

<sup>99</sup> See e.g. *Homo politicus*, § 41, p. 40: "Nostro enim politico nihil debet esse injustum quod ei fructuosum."

<sup>100</sup> TP VII.14, G III 314 / C II 551.

<sup>101</sup> The *Ethics* defines envy as "hate insofar as it so affects a man that he is saddened by another's happiness and, conversely, glad at his ill fortune" (EIIIdef.aff.23, G II 196 / C I 536; see also EIIIp24d, G II 58 / C I 507). And "insofar as men are moved against one another by envy..., they are contrary to one another" (EIVcap.10, c II 269 / C I 589; see also EIIIp54s, G II 183 / C I 525).

<sup>102</sup> EIVp45c, G II 244 / C I 571.

<sup>103</sup> TTP XVI, G III 193 / C II 285.

<sup>104</sup> TTP XVII, G III 203 / C II 299

<sup>105</sup> KV II, chap. VIII, §6, G I 88 / C I 128.

<sup>106</sup> See Plutarch, *De invidia et odio*, in *Moralia*, trans. P. H. De Lacy and B. Einarson, in LCL VII, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959, pp. 91–107.

<sup>107</sup> EIIIp27s, G II 160 / C I 509 and EIVdef.aff.33, G II 200 / C I 539. See also EIII Def.Aff.33, G II 200 / C I 539 and KV II, IX, § 5, G I 71 / C I 113.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Plutarch, *De invidia et odio*, p. 96.

<sup>109</sup> TP VIII.12, G III 329 / C II 570.

<sup>110</sup> EIVp37alt.dem., G II 235-36 / C I 565.

<sup>111</sup> TTP III, G III 44 / C II 111.

<sup>112</sup> On Spinoza and the humanist conception of the liberale ingenium, see Lærke, *Spinoza and the Freedom of Philosophizing*,. 62, 65, 272 n. 15.

<sup>113</sup> EIIp49s, G II 136 / C I 490.