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Digital Tools and the History of Political Thought: The Case of Jean Bodin

Ioannis D. Evrigenis, Tufts University

Abstract

As scholars debate the virtues, drawbacks, and even the existence of the digital humanities, it is worth thinking more narrowly about how certain digital tools might be put to use in the study of the history of political thought. In what follows, I examine the case of Jean Bodin's *Les six livres de la république*, a work as challenging as it is important. By means of examples of the development of that work and of certain relatively new techniques, I consider the opportunities that these tools afford us for the composition of digital variorum editions that are broadly collaborative, fully accessible, up-to-date, and featuring a heretofore impossible degree of editorial accountability.

Keywords: Jean Bodin, *Les six livres de la république, De Republica Libri Sex*, digital humanities, history of political thought, history of ideas, text, meaning, editing

In interpretive battles over the meaning--intended and otherwise--of influential texts, warring parties often consider the nuances and evolution of language, the historical setting in which a treatise was composed, other relevant debates and exchanges, and speculate about the author's motives and intentions. More often than not, however, these debates tend to take the text itself for granted in at least three important ways.

The first concerns its provenance, genealogy, and history. Nearly every commentary on political thought will have something to say about the setting in which a text was composed, and some may even address the history of its composition and reception. However, for the most part commentators confine their engagement with such issues to a simple declaration of which editions they have used and, at best, offer some cursory explanation of why they have chosen them. Detailed examination of how the text being analyzed came to have the form that it does is generally left to the editors of critical editions and, to a lesser extent, intellectual biographers. That division of labor makes sense

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for many reasons, but it is also fraught with peril, because it risks putting everyone else at ease.

Difficult cases might include manuscripts that were not published during an author's lifetime, or published versions that differ from manuscripts discovered after an author's death. One could imagine infinite complications to such scenarios. But even a seemingly simple case presents potential difficulties. Take, for instance, an author who survives the publication of his work and engages in recorded exchanges about it. Presumably, his text and commentary taken together constitute a solid basis for determining the form and, perhaps, even the meaning of the text in question. Yet, later doubts about the extent to which the exchange had taken place in an open and free setting, or the postmortem discovery of an earlier manuscript or later notes would complicate the picture. The simplest way to put it is: when a scholar uses the Cambridge University Press or Penguin edition of a certain work as the basis for her commentary, what is the relationship between what issued from the author's pen--to say nothing of what he may have intended to do--and that edition? Commentators who are unaware of such pitfalls may in fact be arguing beside the point.

The second issue has to do with the translation and/or interpretation of important terms and concepts. When shifts between languages are involved, this kind of interpretation can be exceedingly tricky. For instance, there is simply no single good equivalent in English for the Greek words λόγος and εὐδαιμονία, both crucial in understanding Aristotle's political thought. Even when there is an appropriate equivalent, as for example in the case of «virtù» in Machiavelli's writings, the accurate translation may do little to elucidate the meaning of the term in every instance. Part of the problem in such cases lies in the shifting and/or variable meaning of the word in question. Take, for instance, the word «republic,» which it has become fashionable to equate with self-government, when it has frequently been used to denote a commonwealth irrespective of its form of government. Such difficulties are often addressed by editors and serious commentators, but the nuances and potential complications often do not make it to widely used and student editions of texts.

The third problem stems from the development, over time, of truisms around such texts and their authors. Sometimes, these begin with the invocation of «well-known» or «commonly accepted» facts, examples of which I will invoke below. On other occasions, they involve the use of «-isms» purporting to describe schools of thought, but extending as far as loose thematic or political resemblances. While these are sometimes sufficient to the task for which they are used, in most cases they result in distortions. These, in turn, become increasingly problematic as they get entrenched, reinforced, and serve as springboards for further assessment of the texts in question.

All of these tendencies are understandable: without the ability to economize intelligently, it would be impossible to go very far. Scholars thus put their trust in the processes that have evolved to ensure that cumulative work can be based on solid foundations. In the best cases, the system works: experts who have devoted their research to the study of specific events, thinkers, and sources supply the starting point for further scholarship in the form of annotated editions and translations supported by an apparatus that explains the provenance of the text and supplies at least some of the tools that can help a reader make sense of it. By their nature, such projects are collaborative: even the solitary editor has to rely on the help of other experts, whether directly, through communication with colleagues, or indirectly, in consulting others' published findings. Well-run peer review complements this process by supplying other points of view, ensuring that the relevant material has been considered, and by suggesting improvements and other pertinent sources.

Beyond the opening pages of large scholarly editions, the connections that comprise this safety net are revealed in the sources of authority a scholar invokes, and the evidence is usually located in parenthetical citations or footnotes. Although these are often resented and dismissed, they perform at least two crucial functions. For readers who are inclined to consult and test them, they make it possible to evaluate the claims being made; footnotes «are the humanist's rough equivalent of the scientist's report on data: they offer the empirical support for stories told and arguments presented» (Grafton, 1999: vii). Even for readers who cower before authority, dread the tedium, or despise the stylistic transgression, they serve as a veil of reassurance, comforting them that due process has been followed and that the appropriate checks and balances have been applied.

Altogether too often, it is the second function that becomes de facto the most important. Even with the best of intentions and unlimited time and attention, a reader wishing to verify many of the assertions contained in the footnotes of a scholarly work will need access to the cited sources. It used to be the case that such access was very hard to secure. Practical limitations of all sorts prevent the vast majority of libraries from having extensive holdings in most subject areas.[1] Beyond what they could find in their local collections, scholars had to rely on hectic trips to larger libraries and, often, the aid of colleagues better situated in relation to a certain manuscript or book.[2] The increasing availability of journal archives and scanned books in electronic form has changed this situation dramatically in recent years. Much of the legwork can now be conducted from one's computer or, at worst, from a library workstation. Many archives and libraries have been allowing researchers to use digital cameras in order to capture material necessary for their research, and many have begun participating in digitization processes both open-access and commercial.[3]

The promise and perils of the sphere of activity that is referred to as the "digital humanities" have now received substantial attention, not least because of what many have seen as the irrelevance and gradual decline of the humanities. Both sets of issues are vast and far beyond the scope of this article. Here, I wish to confine myself to two sets of overlapping problems that ought to concern those who consider the value of the humanities--conceived in the broadest possible sense--as beyond dispute and digitization as unavoidable. The first set contains interpretive problems, such as i) an author's intention in composing the work in question, ii) the development of the author's thought, whether in relation to the work in question or more generally, iii) the method that the author in question made use of in composing the work, iv) his sources, and v) the historical setting and audience of each successive version of a work. The second set of problems could be described as practical, and has to do with i) access to the primary and secondary material necessary for a particular critical edition, ii) the management and utilization of that material in preparation for a critical edition, iii) the efficient and effective design of an edition given the volume and complexity of the necessary material, iv) publication, v) the incorporation of measures to ensure that the editor is accountable for his decisions, and vi) the need to facilitate collaboration and correction, so as to maintain critical editions up to date. These lists are far from complete.

To a large extent, the second set of issues I listed above revolve around "a long-recognized practical problem: how best to present texts and textual evidence, particularly in codex form" (Tanselle, 1996: 51). Editorial work towards a critical edition by definition requires the comparison of a version of the text with other versions or with information deemed relevant for its emendation. In a relatively simple case, this could mean the comparison of a printed version to the manuscript on which it was based, but here too one can imagine infinite complications. In some cases, the "codex" includes several manuscripts of the same work, other notes and manuscripts of works by the same author, proofs and printed editions of the work, correspondence about it, public exchanges with critics, reprints, and corrected or updated editions. In many cases, the digitization of such sources has made access to the pertinent material easier for editors and readers alike, and the digitization of catalogues makes it easier to search for other relevant material. This is even more so in the case of relevant secondary sources, which can be marshaled with increasing ease. It is worth noting here that in this case the term "secondary sources" has two broad meanings: sources that the author consulted, used, or alluded to in the process of composing his work and sources that the editor can invoke in order to enrich its critical edition and render it more accessible and useful to readers. The latter may include not just commentaries on the author and work in question, but also such aids as maps, biographies, and historical accounts and narratives. As anyone who has used a critical edition knows first hand, the volume of such material makes it necessary that the editor compromise, usually by resorting to the production of a single text accompanied by an apparatus denoting important variants. Tanselle argues that this is the result not of the editors' theories about their work, but of the "limitations of the codex form" (1996: 58, 52), and speculates that in most cases editors "would have been delighted by the opportunity to offer readers multiple texts in full, but the physical limitations and economic realities of codex publication precluded doing so" (1996: 53). The cost of many such editions, especially of those that extend beyond a single volume, offers but one measure of these practical difficulties, but there are others.

The management, design, and publication of a large volume of material pose their own challenges. Even when an editor manages to assemble it, it is far from clear how to best organize it and convey it. Until very recently, archives and libraries that permitted researchers to reproduce their material, often at considerable cost, prevented them from disseminating the reproductions to any considerable extent. Thus, a critical edition might contain a page or two of the original manuscripts or early editions for the purpose of illustration, but not much more. Where the layouts of critical editions are concerned, editors often have to come up with several markers to denote different sets of annotation, references to original or classic editions, and notes referring the reader to other material.[4] The decision to leave something out, relegate it to the end of a volume or, perhaps worse, to a different volume of the edition has significant consequences for how something will be read. Equally importantly, once these choices have been made and the edition sent to press, for better or worse the result is likely to be what it is for a long time. Readers may discover errors or decide quickly that certain editorial choices are cumbersome or irritating, but the same factors that made the original publication difficult make updating even more so.

Then there is the issue of authority that lies at the heart of the scholarly division of labor. In the most general terms, the authority of someone charged with producing a critical edition allows a significant amount of leeway in regard to the economizing strategies involved in its production. This freedom of movement is both understandable and desirable in a world of expensive printed books, but it comes at the cost of accountability. Some scholars of the humanities and social sciences have observed the rise of the sciences with frustration and envy, and found it impossible to resist the urge to imitate them. More often than not, such attempts have produced pitiful results, perhaps because they tend to focus on practices that do not travel well from one domain to another. Yet there is a fundamental principle of science that can inform editorial work in a productive way: the expectation that claims be verifiable. On the level of the critical edition, an editor's introductory remarks or notes will contain claims regarding sources that the reader will have a very limited capacity to validate. The desirability of validation need not arise out of foul play; error and subjective judgment suffice.

I have only touched on the interpretive problems associated with critical editions, but a few further basic considerations are in order. Beyond the danger that an editor's economizing strategies will leave commentators with less than a full picture and, thus, a greater likelihood that their arguments will be missing important information, there is the danger that the less information there is about the genesis and development of the text, its sources, and setting, the greater the likelihood that readers will not be able to make sense of it, let alone interpret and comment on it. The ebb and flow of scholarly trends take away certain sources and substitute them with others. Thus, while Renaissance and early modern readers needed little warning that an allusion to Scripture or Cicero's *De officiis* was about to follow, nowadays readers may be caught unawares. For the practical reasons listed above, as well as for lack of expertise or depth in a particular aspect of the text, editors are likely to have blind spots of their own, causing them to leave out or miss such connections altogether. Even the best-positioned editors may be unable to consult all the relevant experts--if only because they do not know where to look or even *that* they need to look--and new scholarship will keep providing fresh insight into the text, the circumstances in which it emerged, and its reception.

If all these considerations make for a complicated picture, matters are even worse when it comes to making some of these texts accessible to a broader audience, including students and other interested readers. If the barrier of inaccessibility to a facsimile has been largely lifted, it is still the case that many texts remain impenetrable to a large number of readers because of the type, language, and obscure references they contain. In what follows, I wish to examine a specific example, that of Jean Bodin's *Les six livres de la république*, and consider some ways in which the tools currently at our disposal can be brought to bear on the problems I have listed. I begin with a short survey of the state of the text and proceed to consider a small example of a telling variant of the conclusion with significant consequences for the work's reception.

Bodin's *République*

In 1962, Kenneth Douglas McRae noted that Jean Bodin's "concept of sovereignty, his theory of climate, and his advocacy of religious toleration have today become commonplaces in practically all the histories of political thought" (1962: A, vii). Indeed, it has become a commonplace that *De Republica Libri Sex* (1586), the work in which Bodin develops this theory most fully, is the locus of the modern definition of sovereignty (e.g., Tooley, 1955; Figgis, 1960; Stankiewicz, 1969; Jackson, 2007; Elshtain, 2008; Skinner, 2013), and that its account of it was "a major event in the development of European political thought" (Franklin, 1991: 298). Evidence of its significance abounds (see Lloyd, 2013). It was one of a very small number of near-contemporary works cited approvingly by Thomas Hobbes, as well as by authors such as Giovanni Botero, John Donne, Hugo Grotius, John Selden, Robert Filmer, Gabriel Harvey, John Milton, Marchamont Nedham, Edward Stillingfleet, James Tyrrell, and one that shaped the theories of Locke, Rousseau, Pufendorf, Vattel, Montesquieu, and Kant. Perhaps equally importantly, its influence extended beyond the confines of philosophical debates. Among surviving copies, one belonged to King James VI of Scotland (later James I of England) and another to John Adams.[5]

The significance of the *Six livres* is all the more striking in light of its size and curious publication history. Bodin first published the French version, in 1576, and then spent the next few years making changes to successive editions. As a result, between "1576 and 1580 there are no fewer than six separate stages in the development of the French text" (McRae, 1962: A 78). Ten years after the first edition, Bodin published a Latin version, which was not merely a translation of the most recent French version, but a substantially different treatise, whose title page advertised it as "much richer than before" (1586).

That edition, which by all indications was intended to appeal to a broader audience (see Blair 2013), became widely known throughout Europe, and gave rise to translations into Spanish and German. When Richard Knolles decided to produce an English edition, however, he used both the French and the Latin. As a result, his *Six Bookes of a Commonweale* (1606) is neither a translation of the French nor one of the Latin originals, but rather a mix of the two. In 1962, McRae published a facsimile edition of Knolles's English, with excellent annotation and apparatus. In his introduction, McRae noted that no complete edition of the book existed "since the Latin edition of 1641, none in French since 1629, and none in English since the Knolles translation of 1606."[6] McRae's facsimile has been out of print for decades. Although an Italian translation and a French transcription of the 1583 edition were published in the 1960s (reissued in 1988) and 1970s, respectively, both have since gone out of print (1964; 1977; 1988). Facsimile reproductions of the 1583 French, 1586 Latin, and 1606 English editions printed in the second half of the twentieth century mitigated the lack of access temporarily, but those too have since gone out of print. The only critical editions currently available are Franklin's (1991) severely abridged English translation of four chapters (out of 44) and Turchetti's (2013) French and Latin parallel edition of Book One (out of six).

The size of the book--whose French edition numbers 1102 pages, while Knolles's comes to 792 quarto pages--would render the cost of the publication of even a single print version prohibitive. A parallel edition would simply be out of the question. The text alone of the three editions of the *Six livres* is estimated at over 1,200,000 words. The complexity of the treatise adds yet another layer of difficulty, as Bodin uses Greek, Latin, and Hebrew terms, and often alludes to persons, places, events, and sources that are unintelligible to the modern reader. Notes explaining these references and translating foreign or obscure terms would add significantly to the size of a critical edition. Thus, the *Six livres* remains available only through electronic reproductions online, and has become one of those points of reference that scholars in the history of political thought acknowledge dutifully but do not really engage with. This is a striking fact, given that the dissemination of works has become easier and less costly, scholarship has increased exponentially, and research into the less-known areas of modern political thought has exposed new and previously neglected territories. The topics that animated Bodin's inquiry during the religious civil wars of the late sixteenth century have remained current, and his ideas and language have continued to exert a broad influence, yet this most important of his works remains inaccessible to most readers today.

If these several difficulties appear daunting, it is nevertheless the case that this rich body of sources also affords us certain unique opportunities. While it is common for authors to revise successive editions of a work, it is unusual for the author himself to both translate and revise a work of this size and scope into another language. In this case, therefore, the first set of changes--to the French--tells us something about Bodin's response to the reactions of his Francophone readers. The second set of changes, however, tells an even more complicated and instructive story along three interrelated variables: the audience, the vocabulary and conceptual apparatus, and the evidence that Bodin mustered to support his arguments. Thus, while there is no doubt that the decision to publish the work in Latin represents a desire to see it read beyond the confines of France, it is also clear that the events of the intervening years caused Bodin to change some of his views on important subjects (see Blair, 2013). The difference in language is thus informative on its own, because the translation occasionally sheds light on an obscure term (e.g., the absence of a direct equivalent in the Latin for "souveraineté"). The change in the intended audience also brought with it the need for different, less Franco-centric, examples, as well as attention to more scholarly demands, including references to more sources of authority and citations.[7]

Examples of how Bodin's theory evolved between 1576 and 1586 abound and combine to tell a powerful story of how the better known Latin version came to be what it is. Many of the changes that Bodin made have direct implications for his concept of sovereignty and its relationship to natural law. For the sake of illustration, consider the changes Bodin made to the conclusion of the work. In defining sovereignty as "the most high, absolute, and perpetuall power ouer the citisens and subiects in a Commonweale" (I.viii: Knolles, 84), Bodin claimed that neither lawyer nor political philosopher had provided an appropriate definition before him.[8] The reason he gave was that no one had paid attention to the need to understand precisely the first and third elements, namely "most high" and "perpetuall." These claims, however, are offered in the midst of an account that contains restrictions, such as subordination by the sovereign to the laws of God and nature, which are repeated throughout the work (I.viii, 1606: 92, 105). Some commentators have thus challenged Bodin's conception as problematic insofar as it hesitates between a limitless and limited conception of power. Pointing to Bodin's definition of law as "*The right commaund of him or them, which haue soueraine power aboue others, without exception of person*" (I.x, 1606: 156; 1586: 150: "recta […] iussa"), Lewis has argued that the restrictions that Bodin places on sovereign power are "neither external nor non-essential, but serve intrinsically to complete it" (1968: 214). Neither this distinction, however, nor the passage on which it rests are entirely unproblematic, for they apply not to ruling simply, but to *right* rule.

That Bodin prefers right rule to a rule which contravenes the laws of nature, namely, that he prefers a monarchy to a tyranny is clear. It is worth noting, however, that in his discussion of tyrannical monarchy Bodin gives no sign of considering the tyrant any less sovereign than his just counterpart. In fact, after contrasting the two, Bodin lists a series of positive characteristics of monarchy, which the tyrant will enlist in the service of his selfish or evil aims. Among them is sovereignty, which he will use "to the oppressing of other mens libertie" (II.iv, 1606: 213).

Lewis *is* correct when he points out the need to bear in mind Bodin's purpose in writing, namely the establishment of a firm foundation for order. Bodin's language in two different epistles dedicatory, those of the 1576 and 1578 editions, is telling: in the former, he warns against those who "*under the pretext of* […] *popular liberty* […] *induce the subjects to rebel against their natural princes, opening the door to a licentious anarchy, which is worse than the harshest tyranny in the world*" (McRae, 1962: A70). In the latter, he claimed that he "*denied that it was the function of a good man or of a good citizen to offer violence to his prince for any reason, however great a tyrant he might be*" (McRae, 1962: A72). In explaining how a Latin edition of the work came about, Bodin highlighted the need to "*warn those who have survived the earlier disasters, lest they be entirely ruined by the unforeseen destruction of the state*" (McRae, 1962: A72). Much later in the work, in a conventional discussion of the dangers of paying insufficient attention to whether a certain kind of government is suitable for a certain people and place, Bodin declares that it is better to have the worst government than none at all (IV.iii, 1586: 425; 1606: 469).

Bodin concludes the *Six livres* with a broad-ranging examination of justice in the government of the state. In the final pages of the 1577 Du Puys edition, having dismissed Plato's assertion that God governs the world by geometrical proportion as too myopic, Bodin argues that

> the great God of nature composed the world of matter and forme harmonically, through equality and similitude, especially as matter would be useless without form and form would not be able to subsist without matter, neither in the universe as a whole, nor in its parts. He composed the world, which is equal to the one and similar to the other. It is equal to the matter, and similar to the form, just as the harmonic proportion is composed of the arithmetical and geometrical proportions, equal to the one and similar to the other; when they are separated one from another, they are imperfect (1577: VI.vi, 796).

Citing the Pythagoreans' "sacrifice" in having shown one figure to be simultaneously the equal of two others and similar to one of them as an example,[9] Bodin proceeds to fill in the details that Plato missed. He argues that God made the world "equal in matter, for it comprehends everything and has no void, and similar to the form that He had conceived[10] before making the world, as we read in the Holy Scripture" (1577: 796). A marginal note directs the reader to Genesis 2.

Viewed through this prism, the world is the result of harmonious combinations produced from the blending of a great many elements, including opposites. Citing a series of examples from the physical world, of which the crowning one is man as the mean between the beasts and the angels, Bodin proclaims that just as discord gives grace to harmony, "God has willed that the bad be intermingled with the good and that the virtues be placed in the midst of the vices, so that a greater good might result thence and so that God's power might by this means become known, which otherwise would lie hidden and obscured" (1577: 797). A marginal note, the final note of 1577 French edition, points to Exodus 9.

Bodin closes this argument and, with it, the *Six livres*, by declaring that the commonwealth is composed of good and bad, rich and poor, wise and fools, strong and weak, as well as those who represent the mean of these, but that the good are always mightier than the bad and agreements stronger than disagreements. It is in this spirit that Bodin answers the question of theodicy and finds at the heart of the universe a harmonic justice and the example from which "the wise king should form and govern his kingdom" (1576: 797).

Two issues that are already apparent in the earliest French editions are worth noting. The first centers on Bodin's parting advice to kings, namely that they follow God's example in ordering their commonwealths. In different contexts this kind of suggestion might seem trivial, but at the conclusion of an elaborate theory of absolute sovereignty it raises some important questions about the nature and extent of rule that is being proposed, as well as the relationship of the ruler to his subjects. One might also be tempted to dismiss it as a mere concluding nicety, but the main body of the *Six livres* indicates that Bodin means what he says. In Book V, Chapter v for instance, following a long line of thinkers that includes Aristotle and Sallust, Bodin suggests that the best inoculation against seditions, rebellions, and civil wars is the use of external threats that can capture and hold the attention of one's citizens (1577: 586-89). It is the result, rather than the isolated ingredients of the compound that matters, and the result here appears to be a good one. In the same chapter, having dispensed with the obvious example of Rome, Bodin notes that military discipline and war are also good means of dealing with thieves, murderers, and other kinds of malefactors and undesirable elements of society that disturb the peace and submit to neither law nor magistrate (1577: 587; Evrigenis, 2008: 83-85).

The second issue arises from Bodin's cryptic marginal reference to Exodus 9. Recall that it was intended to support the claim that the juxtaposition of good and bad was a means of making God's power known. Exodus 9 tells part of the story of Moses' attempts to persuade Pharaoh to let the Hebrews go. It begins with God's instructions to Moses to issue a warning to the Pharaoh, relates several successive warnings followed by punishments, and ends by declaring that "the heart of Phâr'-āōh was hardened" and that he refused to let the children of Israel go (Exod. 9:35, KJV). Exodus refers several times to Pharaoh's hardened heart, usually in the vague terms of the passage I just quoted, but two instances, 9:12 and 10:1, make it clear that it is God who brought about this outcome. This must be one of the reasons why Bodin invoked Chapter 9 in support of his argument, but there are others.

In a momentary lapse following the most destructive hailstorm that Egypt had ever experienced (9:24), Pharaoh says to Moses that he has sinned, that the Lord is just, and that he and his people are wicked (9:27), making for a contrast that also fits Bodin's juxtaposition between good and evil very well. Yet, Exodus 9 contains a couple of other suggestive verses. Having made his admission, Pharaoh asks Moses to entreat the Lord to stop the storm (9:28). Moses promises to put an end to the punishment, so that Pharaoh will know that the earth is the Lord's (9:29). This reminder of the true chain of sovereignty turns out to be insufficient to convince Pharaoh to let the Hebrews go just yet. It is important for our purposes, however, because it provides a clue to the changes that Bodin was about to make to the first edition, for it repeats an idea expressed in slightly different terms in 9:14. There, having hardened Pharaoh's heart, the Lord commands Moses to go before him and demand he let His people go, promising that if Pharaoh refuses, "I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that *there is* none like me in all the earth" (Exod. 9:14, KJV).

This language calls to mind Job 41.24 in the Vulgate, where the Lord offers the penultimate element of his description of Leviathan, in a phrase well-known to anyone who has observed the frontispiece of a famous work named after that beast: That verse reads, "There is no power upon earth that can be compared with him who was made to fear no one." If this connection seems tenuous at the hands of a commentator, it is nevertheless confirmed by the additions that Bodin made to the 1578 edition of the French. That edition, which the title page announces as "Reueuë, corrigee & augmentee de nouueau" and which McRae labels Fr. 3, followed three other Du Puys editions: the original of 1576, an identical issue of 1577, and a slightly corrected version also published in 1577 (McRae's Fr. 2).

As the contrast between the 1577 and 1578 editions shows readily, Bodin made a number of changes to the latter. Some of these are enhancements to the original formulations, as in the concluding sentence, where the changes reflect greater reverence for God's design and appreciation of the model it offers sovereigns. Other additions in this vein expanded the scope of examples of evils by adding monsters, frightening natural phenomena, and "surd reasons" in geometrical demonstrations. Bodin's central addition to the passage follows this trajectory in two ways. In the main body of the paragraph, Bodin adds,

> that is because God having hardened Pharaoh, whom the wise Hebrews interpret as the enemy of God and of nature, said, I have made him so as to test and demonstrate my force against him, so that the whole world will praise my glory and my power. And yet all the theologians agree that the force and might of this enemy of God is enclosed within the bounds of this elementary world, and that he had but such power as it pleased God to allow him (1578: 773).[11]

Where the marginal note in the first edition pointed to Exodus 9, the new note adds: "so God to the inquiring Pharaoh, I have raised thee so as to show in thee my virtue and in order to declare my name in all the earth," which is a loose paraphrase of Exodus 9:16.[12] The note adds "Scripture often calls Leviathan what Job 40 & Psalm 104 often also call ןטשה [ha-sathan]."[13] Both of these references are somewhat puzzling. Job 40:20, for instance, mentions Leviathan, but contains no reference to Pharaoh, nor to Satan, who is of course mentioned in other chapters (e.g., 1:6). Psalm 104, on the other hand, recounts the trials of the Hebrews in Egypt, which it attributes to God's having turned the Egyptians' heart to hate His people (104:25), as well as the punishments that befell the Egyptians. These episodes are part of a chain of elements drawn from Genesis and Exodus aimed at showing that God is "dominus […] in universa terra" (Ps. 104:7). Although the subject fits the general theme of the conclusion of the *Six livres*, the psalm makes no mention of Satan, Pharaoh, or adversaries.

These and other related questions are answered in part by two changes that Bodin made for the Latin edition of 1586. The first of these concerns those puzzling marginal notes. In the Latin edition, the single note from 1578 has been split into two, the first of which marks a return to the original French edition: a solitary reference to Exodus 9. The rest of the material from the 1578 edition has also been split into two. The name Leviathan has now been rendered more prominent by having been moved into the main body of the text. The remainder of the note, namely the references intended to support the connection to the Biblical beast, has now been placed into a new marginal note, right next to its name, and strengthened by the addition of references to Ezekiel 29 and 30. In this version, Bodin explains the connection between Exodus 9 and Leviathan as follows. He characterizes his paraphrase of Exodus 9:16 a "verissimam narrationem" of the events that took place in Egypt, and claims that therein lies hidden a lesson about Pharaoh, the "worker and father of all evil, whom the sacred Scriptures indicate by the word Leviathan." By itself, this explanation of the "hidden" meaning of Exodus 9 sounds problematic, but when we consult Ezekiel 29 we find that the Lord instructs the prophet to tell Pharaoh:

> Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I come against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, thou great dragon that liest in the midst of thy rivers, and sayest: The river is mine, and I made myself. But I will put a bridle in thy jaws: and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick to thy scales: and I will draw thee out of the midst of thy rivers, and all thy fish shall stick to thy scales (Ezek. 29:3-4).

A dragon sitting in the middle of the rivers of Egypt and claiming divine powers for himself would probably be a crocodile, but Ezekiel's language cannot but call to mind that of the Book of Job, where the Lord asks his servant "Canst thou draw out Leviathan with a hook, or canst thou tie his tongue with a cord?" (40:20). The combination of the Scriptural passages that Bodin cites, then, leaves little doubt about the fact that he sees Pharaoh as Leviathan and the adversary.

The second substantive change Bodin that made between the French edition of 1578 and the Latin of 1586 came in the form of the addition of Augustine's observation that God allows evil to manifest itself so that greater good can ensue. I have not been able to trace Bodin's exact formulation in Augustine's works, but the basic idea is not only compatible with the theologian's goal to account for theodicy in *The City of God*, but also very similar to a number of formulations in that work of the idea that Bodin ascribes to Augustine here (see, e.g., Augustine, 2003: I.1, IV.3, IV.33, XIV.11).

In the broadest terms, the basic structure of Bodin's account remained constant from 1576 to 1586, and reflects what in the first edition he had described as a progression "in logical order" from the family to sovereignty. Bodin's additions and clarifications for the Latin edition fulfill the promise that he made in the epistle dedicatory to the Latin, when he noted that he went beyond the mandate of the translator and "illustrated with clearer reasons and examples whatever seemed inaccurately or obscurely written on sovereignty" (McRae, 1962: A72).

How do these changes supplement Bodin's discussion of sovereignty in Book I? The late addition of the Saint's name confirms a suspicion that attentive readers may have had in having read previous editions of the work, that Bodin was influenced significantly by *The City of God* and perhaps other works of Augustine's. The various additions intended to highlight the significance of the role of adversaries in the creation of harmony serve to correct the impression that Bodin's interest in order is limited to the straightforward arrangement of socioeconomic groups within the hierarchy of a well-designed and orderly commonwealth. That is the sort of topic that the chapter added to Book III of the Latin edition treats, but it extends to combinations of elements far more complicated and potentially dangerous than socioeconomic groups. Taken together, these two themes in the revised conclusion point to two ways in which sovereignty is de facto limited. The French definitions state explicitly that the domain in question is a republic, what Knolles translates as a "commonweale." This limitation is less clear in the Latin, which is problematic more generally when it comes to sovereignty. Backed, as it is, by references to Exodus, Ezekiel, and Job, Bodin's examination of harmonies produced out of mixes of good and bad elements makes it clear that the latter are not simply unavoidable but also a necessary ingredient of harmony in the world as it was made. Internally, their prevalence might yield a Pharaoh no less sovereign in his realm than the best of kings. If the laws of God and of nature are one set of constraints on sovereignty that straddle the extrinsic/intrinsic divide, the presence of Leviathans is another. Perhaps because of its immediate purpose, the *Six livres* does not develop that allusion. Its suggestive presence at the conclusion, however, helps bridge the gap between Bodin and his many admirers in the centuries that followed the publication of the *Six livres*.

Beyond illustrating the evolution of the *Six livres*, the concluding passage demonstrates the complexity involved in annotating the text and making it accessible to readers. Bodin's sources are not always readily apparent, and passages that appear as quotations are often allusions, paraphrases, or summaries of the views of other authors not named. Together with numerous references to events, persons, and locations unfamiliar to the modern reader, these make the *Six livres* appears inaccessible. The differences between the two languages in which Bodin wrote account for some of the changes in the text, but for the most part the transformation of the *Six livres* was driven by the desire to expand its message to a wider audience that was embroiled in religious violence about to spread to heretofore inconceivable proportions.

It is not uncommon to find Bodin described as anti-Aristotelian in histories of political thought, yet the structure of the *Six livres* is modeled after Aristotle's *Politics* and the work itself contains many points of convergence, despite disagreement on key topics, such as slavery. The complicated relationship between the two thinkers is symptomatic of the broader fate of Aristotle and Scholasticism during this period. On the one hand, we have Bodin's interest in religious toleration and his own religious views, which remain the subject of intense debate. On the other hand, we have Aristotle who in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries represented not merely the epistemological paradigm to be reckoned with, but also the means by which the church exerted its influence over philosophy and science. In such a setting, an author's attitude towards Aristotle was not simply a reflection of his philosophical views, and Bodin--the author of the *Paradoxon*--was well aware of the significance of his commentary.

The complicated story of Bodin's relationship to Aristotle forms the foundation for the examination of his concept of sovereignty. Along the way from the *Six livres* to the *Republica*, Bodin's conception of sovereignty becomes increasingly shrouded in religious language and imagery, culminating in an image combining such elements as the biblical beast Leviathan and Augustinian theodicy, alongside the vaguer allusions to the Greeks' notion of *κυρία ἀρχή* of the earlier chapters. The evolution of the conclusion of the work is one measure among many of the ways in which Bodin's political theory changed. Taken together, the changes could perhaps provide a fuller answer to the question of Bodin's intent (see McRae, 1962; Miglietti, 2014). Yet this example is also indicative of how much more could be gained from a variorum, fully annotated edition. In addition to offering us better insight into Bodin's sources, the final version of the conclusion also provides a clue to an important chapter in Bodin's influence: his role in the formation of Hobbes's political theory. A vague kinship between the two thinkers' outlooks has often been taken more or less for granted, but the similarity of Bodin's final conclusion to Hobbes's *Leviathan* is striking and may well account for the enigmatic title of that work (Evrigenis, 2014: 127-31).

What the Future Might Look Like

Already in the mid-1990s, Tanselle (1995; 1996) had pointed to the promise of hypertext in addressing many of the problems I have listed. Developments in the intervening twenty years have proven his faith justified. High-resolution photography is now ubiquitous, and optical character recognition (OCR) programs can extract text from photo-reproductions of pages, whether photographed or scanned.[14] OCR technology has begun to extend well beyond digitally-created fonts, to include early modern type featuring ligatures and even manuscripts.[15] Through training, some of these programs can learn to read early modern diphthongs and even differentiate between a long-s (ſ) and an "f," making the extraction of text much easier and accurate. Although there is no substitute for manual checking, it is nevertheless possible to pave the way for it by checking the extracted text against electronic dictionaries. The better the latter, the fewer the errors that will creep into the resulting text. Difficulties will always exist at this stage because of the nature of early modern books, which frequently contain typographical errors, faint type or smudges, and damaged pages. Nevertheless, the ability to access multiple copies of a work easily will allow editors to compare different versions of the same text and make reliable corrections.

Promising though these techniques for the preparation of the text may be, the first big breakthrough comes from the new options available for its publication. The Internet eliminates the physical barriers imposed by print editions. The same is true where economic considerations are concerned, as the cost of maintaining and hosting such material is rather small and continues to drop. More importantly, the plasticity of web design allows for flexibility with regard to the structure of an edition that is simply impossible on paper. For instance, one can place two or more versions of a text side-by-side, in order to compare them, and still maintain the ability to increase or reduce the number of texts being compared. At the same time, users can have the ability to call up photoreproductions of the pages, so as to be able to compare the text with its source and one original with another (see, e.g., Turchetti, 2013: 101-103). The same is true of all other relevant resources. Editions can now link to maps and gazetteers, biographies, histories, primary and secondary sources, databases, multimedia, and dictionaries. With links to these resources, a user will not only be alerted to the fact that a passage contains a reference to another work; she will also be able to link to the appropriate passage in that work. Dictionaries and grammar tools allow even users who cannot read the original language the ability to approach the text. Similarly, the side-by-side display of different editions of the text allows readers to see not only how the text may have changed from one version to another, but also how it was translated in another language. Alignment between different versions means that a user will need reading knowledge of just one language in order to access the text, making it possible to introduce primary material in a variety of languages to students at early stages of their studies.

In a work such as the *Six livres*, these tools can make a significant difference. Bodin's references to persons, places, and events from French history are likely to be obscure to most readers. His countless allusions to myths, other historical figures and events, religions, ancient authors, Scripture, patristic texts, and laws of all kinds are beyond the expertise of any single editor. Not least among the benefits of a web-based edition is the ability to keep updating it from any place with an Internet connection, as corrections or new information come to light. The latter aspect is crucial, since it allows scholars to collaborate on editions without having to leave their home base, a crucial advantage especially in cases in which experts in the various relevant subjects are scattered around the world. Collaborations around large projects, such as Bodin's *République*, can thus become ongoing, taking full advantage of the available expertise by assembling a virtual editorial board. With variations, the same tools that can be used to connect Bodin's works to their sources can also be used to search for evidence of his own influence on subsequent authors, making it possible to tell a much fuller story about the evolution of the conception of sovereignty, to take but the most obvious example.

The combination of these tools will yield a dynamic variorum edition of Bodin's treatise, which will allow users to see the French and Latin text on either side of Knolles's English. The Bodin Project at Tufts has begun work on such a dynamic variorum edition by extracting working versions of the text in these languages and preparing them for alignment on the Perseids platform.[16] Alignment is similar to translation insofar as the editor has to decide what in one version corresponds to something in another. For example, the opening sentence of the 1576 French edition, "Repvbliqve est vn droit gouuernement de plusieurs menages, & de ce qui leur est commun auec puissance souueraine" corresponds to the following sentence in the 1586 Latin: "Respvblica est familiarum rerúmque inter ipsas communium summa potestate ac ratione moderata multitudo." This process opens the way for the achievement of two important goals. First, the alignment will make it possible to see quickly and vividly how the text changed from one version to the next, by highlighting parallel passages and thus revealing omissions and changes. Second, it will permit users who may lack knowledge of one or more languages to follow the text in those languages by tracking it in a language they do know. Aligned passages will provide the basis for a contemporary, up-to-date translation, and aid commentators by putting side-by-side terms and formulations that will shed light on one another. For instance, it would reveal in every instance how Bodin chose to render in Latin a French term that has no single equivalent in that language.

The Perseids platform also allows users to annotate the text. For example, a reference or allusion to Aristotle's *Politics* in Chapter 1 of the *République* can be aligned with the passage in question, in Greek and in translation, in versions publicly available on the Perseus Digital Library.[17] A user wishing to see and explore the connection between the text and its sources will thus be able to call them up quickly and efficiently, in order to more readily evaluate interpretive claims. The principles of accountability, accessibility, and accuracy that pose challenges for print editions here meet with great opportunities. Tools such as the Alpheios add-ons[18] and Pleiades gazetteer[19] can help users overcome language barriers and follow references with greater ease.

Beyond these advantages, this kind of editing platform has two crucial consequences: it allows scholars to treat an edition as what it should be, namely a work in progress, and it facilitates collaboration by removing innumerable barriers. As the word "dynamic" implies, its existence online makes it available to constant improvement. Whereas even the greatest print editions of texts come with a shelf-life and a tremendous cost attached to reprints and updated editions, the openness of a platform such as Perseids means that even the slightest correction can be incorporated almost immediately. Users can submit a suggestion for a change to the text, translation, or annotation. That suggestion, stamped with the name of the contributor and the date and time of the submission, makes its way to an editorial board, whose members vote to accept or reject it. Once accepted, the proposed change becomes part of the latest version, but previous versions are saved as well and remain parts of the repository of the work, as well as a detailed record of the editorial process. Where collaboration is concerned, a platform such as Perseids allows scholars from any part of the world to contribute to the edition without having to leave their base. Contributions can be large or small, sustained or incidental, and they can be made by seasoned scholars and insightful students alike. A small discovery in the course of one's re-reading of the text can have an immediate impact by entering the process of peer review and becoming the subject of debate without having to wait for a conference or the publication of so-called definitive print editions.

Bodin worked on several editions of the *Six livres* and produced the *Republica* himself, so the corpus from which to begin a variorum edition is better than in many other cases. McRae's magisterial apparatus for the facsimile of Knolles's English composite and his subsequent tracing of references for over half a century show just how difficult a full edition of this "codex" would be. The lists of problems and tools I have sketched here are merely indicative of the ways in which new technologies can be utilized in the study of political thought, both for the advancement of research and for the improvement of pedagogical practices. By allowing them to witness and participate in the construction of a dynamic variorum edition, tools like the ones I have described make it possible for more scholars of the history of political thought to remain continuously aware of the methodological questions that lie at the heart of their work. The advent of these tools presents a serious challenge but also a double opportunity: to transcend certain limitations that stand between the theory and practice of the history of political thought, and to rethink its place, scope, and purpose.

NOTES

1 Grafton (1999: 9-11) offers a snapshot of what the scarcity of material meant for

Italian historians, but the story was nearly universal until very recently.

2 For instance, McRae (1962: A78-79) had to rely on such help in order to record surviving copies of Bodin's *Six livres* and *Republica*, for his facsimile edition of Knolles's English composite of 1606.

3 To take but four examples, as of this writing, Project Gutenberg has digitized 49150 books; the Internet Archive contains over 16000 books but also links to over 8 million "fully accessible public domain eBooks" (https://archive.org/details/texts). According to a variety of reports, Google had digitized about 30 million books until 2013, although its Books site does not provide up-to-date information, perhaps because of litigation surrounding its digitization project. The Hathi Trust contains 13,469,901, of which over 5 million are in the public domain (http://www.hathitrust.org/about).

4 Consider, for example, the Barbeyrac editions of Samuel Pufendorf, which contain notes by both the author and his famous translator. A contemporary editor would most likely wish to reproduce those alongside her own and the original paragraph summaries on the side margins, making for an especially challenging layout.

5 King James's copy of the 1577 *République* is housed in Harvard's Houghton Library (f FC5 B6324 576sb); Adams's copy of the Latin is housed in the Boston Public Library (https://archive.org/details/sixbookesofcommo00bodi).

6 Preface to Jean Bodin, *The Six Bookes of a Commonweale*, A vii-viii.

7 In the most thorough study of its kind, Kenneth McRae has documented 7436 references, allusions, and examples in the *Six livres* and *Republica* (http://curve.carleton.ca/collections/BodinSourcesIndex/BODINRepublique.doc).

8 Lewis lists several commentators who accept Bodin's bold statement (1968: 207-09).

9 The example, virtually unintelligible in Knolles's edition is explained by marginal notes in both the French and Latin editions. On the "sacrifice," see Huffman, 2014.

10 Lit. "figuree." As Davidson points out, in Chapter 2, "All that [God] had intended was now complete" (1973, 27).

11 Lit. "lascher la bride."

12 This particular formulation can be found in various theologians, e.g., Chrysostom, 1836: 850. See also the *Patrologia Latina* (Migne, 1844-90), e.g., 103: 89.

13 The Hebrew is misspelled in most editions. The 1583 French edition by Du Puys, which is often considered definitive, skips the Hebrew altogether.

14 A prominent and relevant example is the Text Creation Partnership (http://www.textcreationpartnership.org/), which provides searchable full-text versions to a subset of the works available through Early English Books Online (http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home).

15 See, e.g., the "Circulation of Knowledge and Learned Practices in the 17th-century Dutch Republic" project (http://ckcc.huygens.knaw.nl).

16 http://sosol.perseids.org/.

17 http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/.

18 http://alpheios.net/.

19 http://pleiades.stoa.org/home.

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