

JEAN ASTRUC AND HIS CONJECTURES

by

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This work is dedicated to the memory of Walter Louis Dorn, late Professor of History at Columbia University.

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INTRODUCTION

The evaluation of the role of Jean Astruc in the development of biblical criticism has been registered for the most part in encyclopedias and in surveys dealing with the criticism of the Old Testament. There are few studies of the Conjectures, and but a single monograph on the life of Astruc. However, the range of comment on Astruc and his Conjectures is as wide as the quantity of literature dealing with them is meager.

The opinion in the Encyclopaedia Judaica describes the Conjectures as "einer der Begründer der modernen Bibelwissenschaft... die biblische Forschung bis auf den heutigen Tag entscheidend beeinflusst."¹ The commentator continues somewhat more analytically "das Epochmachende seiner Entdeckung liegt darin, dass er diese einzelnen Elemente, die bis dahin nur Anlass zu theologischen Reflexionen gebildet hatten, zu seiner Theorie versinnigt, in der zum erstenmal der Begriff der nach literarischen Merkmalen unterschiedenen Quellen seine Anwendung fand..."² Nevertheless, it is pointed out that "die Argumentation Astrucs ist unvollkommen von einer, auch für sein Zeitalter ungewöhnlichen Naivität... seine Bedeutung besteht darin, das Quellenkritische Instrument der Bibelforschung geschaffen zu haben..."³

Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart describes the Conjectures as having "auch die Tendenz... noch apologetisch."⁴ Westphal⁵ places Astruc in the ranks of both conservative and the radical biblical critics of his time.

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Heisinger⁶ refers to Astruc's Conjectures as "sein bahnbrechendes Buch." In a recent notice published in 1953 on the occasion of the two hundredth anniversary of the publication of the Conjectures, Astruc is described as a "genuinely independent genius."⁷ On the other hand, Otto Eisefeldt⁸ contends that "Astruc folgt also hinsichtlich der Auslegung der Genesis ganz der Tradition" and that Astruc operated "von dem durchaus konservativen Wunsche."

Pfeiffer considers Baruch Spinoza and Richard Simon as the "founders of modern Biblical criticism,"⁹ but considers Astruc to be the first proponent of the Documentary theory.¹⁰ In his survey of Old Testament criticism since the Reformation, Kraeling does not mention Astruc at all.¹¹

The fine monograph of Adolphe Lods includes a survey of the biblical criticism before Astruc, an evaluation of the Conjectures, and a summation of the various reviews given the Conjectures by Astruc's contemporaries. He concludes that "on est frappé de la pénétration critique, de la vigueur de pensée, de la loyauté d'esprit de cet exégète amateur... et surtout de l'habileté qu'il a déjà montrée dans cette science toute nouvelle qu'était l'analyse des sources."¹²

The "notice biographique" of Jean Alphonse¹³ concerns itself with the life of Astruc. It deals only cursorily with the Conjectures, preferring to leave its examination in the hands of those concerned with biblical research. However, Alphonse bases many of his

conclusions on secondary literature. A reading of the various contemporary memoirs pertaining to the salons of Paris in the middle of the eighteenth century and to the court of Louis XV is a prerequisite to understanding the interrelationship of those people with whom Astruc was in contact and the amount and kind of influence they exercised upon him. An analysis of the interplay of the monarchy and the Catholic Church and of the factions within the Church would serve as a proper background to a study of Astruc. Alphandery considers the attitude of Astruc to the philosophes and to contemporary problems outside of biblical criticism.

When the variety of opinions of the Conjectures and of Astruc is considered, especially in light of the fact that they are presented in encyclopedias and surveys, the urgent need becomes clear for an analytical study of the Conjectures and its author. Although he deals with the biblical criticism of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Lods does not consider the specific influences on Astruc which were operative in the writing of the Conjectures. In order to determine the place of Astruc in the development of biblical criticism in the eighteenth century, e.g., his originality or lack of it, the presence or absence of apologetics in his work, it is necessary to show where and how much he differed with his predecessors and how the Conjectures deals with the problem of scriptural authority.

An historical study of the life of Astruc is a desideratum. Such a study would suggest the various political and economic forces

which played upon Astruc and which were related to the writing of the Conjectures.

In short, both the career of Astruc and his Conjectures need to be treated as a chapter in the history of France in the first half of the eighteenth century. Astruc was a royal physician and a member of the lower nobility at the time when the social, economic, and political upheavals which culminated in the French Revolution of 1789 were in ferment.

The Conjectures would then appear as a manifestation of the same age which produced Voltaire, the Encyclopaedia, and Madame de Pompadour.

This is a preliminary study in what will -- it is hoped -- grow into the kind of analysis projected above. This study concerns itself with suggesting the different main lines of biblical criticism current in the late seventeenth century. It contains an evaluation of the observations of critics and philosophers concerned with the study of the Bible.

It also deals, perforce, with the life of Astruc, more specifically with his participation in the society and in the problems of the Court of Louis XV. An understanding of these factors may illumine Astruc's purpose in writing the Conjectures and the conclusions which he reached.

Notes

- ¹ H. Soloweitschik, "Astruc," ibid. (Berlin, 1929), III, p. 611.
- ² Op. cit., p. 612.
- ³ Op. cit., p. 613.
- ⁴ E. Kutsch, "Astruc," ibid.³ (Tübingen, 1957), I, p. 666.
- ⁵ A. Westphal, Les Sources du Pentateuque: I - Le Probleme Littéraire (Paris, 1888), pp. 103, 119 ff.
- ⁶ H. Holsinger, Einleitung in den Hexateuch (Leipzig, 1893).
- ⁷ E. O'Doherty, "The 'Conjectures' of Jean Astruc (1753)," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, IV (1953), p. 304.
- ⁸ Einleitung in das Alte Testament² (Tübingen, 1956), p. 189.
- ⁹ R. H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York, 1941), p. 46.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., p. 136.
- ¹¹ E. Kraeling, The Old Testament since the Reformation (New York, 1955).
- ¹² A. Lods, "Jean Astruc et la critique biblique au XVIII^e siècle" Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuse, IV (1924).
- ¹³ P. Alphandéry, "Jean Astruc (1684-1766): notice biographique" Revue de l'histoire et de philosophie religieuse, IV (1924).

I. TEXTUAL CRITICS

The historical and critical investigations of the books of the Old Testament had their beginnings in the seventeenth century. Several lines of questioning the literary veracity of the text of the Old Testament developed, the earliest of which was textual criticism.

1. Morin and Cappel

Jean Morin (d. 1659) was the first important textual critic. Originally a French Calvinist, he converted to Catholicism and joined the Order of the Oratory. He published an edition of the Septuagint and the text of the Samaritan Pentateuch. Morin concluded, after comparing the Greek and Samaritan versions of the Old Testament with the Masoretic text, that the latter suffered from the negligence of copyists and from deliberate alterations of heretics and was consequently inferior to the Septuagint and to the Vulgate, both of which were written before the Synagogue corrupted the Hebrew text.¹ Morin criticized the Protestant tradition of Biblical criticism for its dependence upon the Jewish tradition of orthodox interpretation.² He indicated that the reliable text to study is not the present corrupted Hebrew text but the Septuagint which was composed "ex purissimis Hebraeorum."³

Louis Cappel (d. 1658) a French Protestant, tread a more moderate path. He demonstrated that the vocalization of the Hebrew consonantal text was of relatively recent origin. He argued that vowel points and accent signs were introduced into the Hebrew text by Jewish scribes during the fifth and sixth centuries. Cappel maintained that even the

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the consonantal text itself was by no means perfectly preserved. He treated corruptions in the text however not as purposeful heretical insertions but as the result of the process of transmitting the text of the Old Testament from generation to generation. His major work, Critica Sacra, was a quest for a systematic approach to the treatment of the Hebrew text and for the establishment of certain principles of inquiry with which he could operate in working up a pure Hebrew text.⁵ Cappel held that the truth of the Holy Scriptures was not impugned by critical analyses of the text. "Gott hat diese 'multiplex varietas' zugelassen."⁶

Cappel incurred the wrath of the orthodox factions in the Catholic and Protestant churches in France. He was prepared to publish the Critica Sacra in 1634. His work did not appear until 1650, after his son, who had converted to Catholicism, had commended Cappel's work to the Oratory.⁷

2. The Simon-Bossuet Controversy

A. Richard Simon

Richard Simon, a Protestant turned Catholic, was basically a textual critic. He ventured further than his two predecessors. Simon entered the Oratory in 1658, withdrew, and returned in 1662. He was ordained a priest in 1670.

Richard Simon commanded a number of ancient languages. While in the Oratory, he studied Hebrew and had some acquaintance with the Talmud. He also studied Coptic, Syriac, the Coptic and Syriac versions of the Old Testament, the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint.

Despite the official interdiction in France against commerce and social intercourse with Jews, Richard Simon studied Hebrew with a

Jewish teacher. Upon the latter's request, Simon composed in 1670 a defense of the Jewish community of Metz against a charge of ritual murder.¹⁰

That Simon was an independent personality is indicated by his relationship with the Jewish community.¹¹ That he was an independent scholar is evident from his conclusions on some of the crucial issues in the field of biblical scholarship of his day.

On the subject of Moses' authorship of the Pentateuch, Simon wrote:

"Moses is not the sole author of the entire Pentateuch in the manner in which he is regarded today."¹²

The majority of facts reported there gives the impression that another person than Moses put order into these annals.¹³

Moses in his role as lawgiver wrote all that pertained to the laws, and he left to the scribes and prophets the responsibility of collecting those acts which seemed most important with the aim of conserving them for posterity... The changes that they could have introduced into the ancient acts have the same authority as the rest of the text of the Bible."¹⁴

On the relative importance of the versions of the Bible, he commented:

"There is only this difference between the Vulgate and the others, that we are obliged to recognize the Vulgate as authentic because it has been declared as such... Every version of the Bible that was made by capable persons, who are not suspected of fraud, is in and of itself as authentic in quality as a copy of an act which itself is authentic."¹⁵

Richard Simon drew attention to the facts of internal evidence which cast doubt on the accepted attribution of the Pentateuch to

the authorship of Moses. He pointed to the last chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy, the story of the death of Moses, as evidence in support of his conclusions.¹⁶ He indicated also that certain events are related in the Pentateuch on the basis of previous source material, such as the Book of the Wars of the Lord, mentioned in Num. 21:14.¹⁷

The Old Testament all through, he pointed out, offered many signs of alteration and transposition, as well as chronological difficulties. He tried his hand at separating Gen. 7:17-24 into what he believed were its original components, and he arrived at three possible conclusions:¹⁸ that any one of

- A. 17a, 17b, 20, 21,
- B. 17a, 18, 20, 22, or
- C. 17a, 19, 23,

constituted the original text.

Soon after publication, Simon's Histoire Critique was banned. The French monarchy issued an order (April, 1678) forbidding the further sale of copies of his books. Simon had antagonized the leader of the Catholic orthodox camp, Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, the tutor of the Dauphin.

Bossuet pressed hard for a thorough condemnation of Simon. The Oratory, which had already had trouble with the authorities, bowed to Bossuet's pleasure and expelled Simon.

The Royal Council of State suppressed the Book (June, 1678). The entire edition was confiscated except for the few copies already distributed. The book was reprinted in Amsterdam, but in a hastily edited defective edition. Under false titles and false names copies managed to reenter France. One such was called "Histoire de la Religion

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des Juifs... par Rabbi Moses Levi." The printer reissued this¹⁹ edition in 1681 and again 1683.

Simon retired to his curate and pursued his work. For two years he negotiated with Bossuet and the censors for the publication of his book in France with some corrections. He was refused. Finally, he published his Histoire in Rotterdam in 1685. Thenceforth, he published in Holland.

He was permitted, under the protection of the Archbishop of Paris, to put out in France a revised edition, but financial difficulties prevented this. Finally, in 1695, he succeeded in publishing, with approbation, the fourth and final part of his critique of the New Testament.

Bossuet for a time was taken with the idea of using Simon's talents for the benefit of the Church (1702). Bossuet proposed a collaboration in which Simon would rewrite his critique of the Old Testament under Bossuet's direction. Simon accepted none of this arrangement.²⁰

B. Jacques Bossuet

Jacques Beguine Bossuet (1627-1704), Bishop of Meaux, championed the cause of orthodox Catholicism in France. He was the archenemy of Richard Simon. Bossuet was largely responsible for the suppression of Simon's works in France.

Bossuet spent the first years of his ministry at Metz. He was then named Bishop of Condom and appointed tutor to the Dauphin. Bossuet's major concern during the course of his own studies had been the Bible. He mastered Greek and to a lesser extent, Hebrew. He

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placed the Bible at the head of his pupil's studies:

"If I have to form a person in his points to my liking, I should oblige him to choose several beautiful places in Scripture, and have him read them often, so that he may know them by heart."²¹

From 1673 to 1681, Bossuet held a series of meetings at court to which he invited theologians, historians, and orientalist^s. The purpose of those meetings was to prepare a commentary on the Bible.²² In 1681, when Bossuet was appointed Bishop of Meaux, his preoccupation with the Bible continued and intensified. He annotated every copy of the Bible he used. He translated texts of the Old and New Testaments from the original Hebrew and Greek.²³

In 1691 Bossuet published a commentary on the Book of Psalms, and in 1693 a commentary on the books traditionally attributed to Solomon: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom of Solomon, and Ecclesiasticus.²⁴ He placed many of the psalms in the category of "psalms of prophecy". He listed twenty-one prophetic psalms of which the principal ones were to him: 21- which he maintained spoke of Christ on the Cross; 68- which he claimed describes the abandonment of Christ and the chastisement of the Jews; 109- which he said defined the divinity of Christ.

In a later study Bossuet discovered in Psalm 21 not only prophecies of the Crucifixion, but also of the Resurrection, the foundation of the Church, and the Eucharist.²⁵

He maintained that within the books which he attributed to Solomon were numerous references to Christ and the Church. He argued, for example, that in Song of Songs the dialogue between

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the groom and the bride should be considered on two levels: The literal- which referred to the marriage of King Solomon and the daughter of the pharaoh; and the more important figurative level - which referred to the union of Jesus and the Church.

Bossuet came to be called a "dictator of the faith and of the episcopacy."²⁶ His assumption of power within the Church in France prompted the Pope to remark:

"Does Mr. de Meaux think he is the pope of France, papa gallus?"²⁷

Bossuet became the champion of Catholic orthodoxy in France. He used his influence at court to curb and suppress the works of Richard Simon.

Of Simon's Histoire critique de Vieux Testament Bossuet said:

"The most wicked maxims are found prevalent throughout."²⁸

In a letter to a colleague, Bossuet wrote of Simon (1691):

"As for me, he will never deceive me; and I never opened any of his books where I did not quickly sense an design to destroy senseless insidiously the foundations of religion."²⁹

Bossuet had earlier written (1690):

"It is the constant method of our author (Simon), and we see that always, in a premeditated design, he states the tradition in order to show that the scripture is powerless. The proofs of the scripture fall here, the tradition falls elsewhere: the entire edifice is shaken, and this fatal criticism does not wish to leave to it one stone upon another."³⁰

Simon had stated in his Histoire critique du texte du Nouveau Testament (Rotterdam, 1689):

"The Evangelists and the Apostles have followed in their manner of explaining passages on the Old Testament and applying them to the Messiah, the usage that is prevalent now among the Jews. There are several words in the New Testament that have a much more extended meaning than they do in the Old; this one cannot attribute except to the usage and tradition received among the Jews."³¹

Simon believed that contemporary critics of the Bible knew more than the Fathers of the Church. The ancient commentators, he asserted,

"had great faults, that cannot altogether be attributed to the authors, as to the barbarism of their times. It is necessary to avow that such was exactly the case at the beginning of our century. Many discoveries have been made, principally for the benefit of the literal sense of Scripture, through the means of the Greek and Hebrew languages... Moreover, like the Aryans who gave another occasion to the orthodox to study with greater discernment the letter of the sacred books, so do the Protestants motivate the Catholics, to examine with greater care the text of the Bible..."³²

Simon sympathized with the attitude of those schools which "are not following blindly upon the fact of the inspiration of the sacred books which is accepted in most schools of our time."³³

Bossuet's reaction to Simon's Histoire critique du texte du Nouveau Testament is summarized by one scholar: To Bossuet, he said,

"the New Testament is an ecclesiastical book. It belongs to the Church, and thus its interpretation is a reserved right. When people from outside the Church seize it, apply to it profane methods, and deter it from its true

meaning, it is sacrilegious."³⁴

Bossuet had already formulated his approach to the Bible early in his career, in his doctoral sermon (1652):

"O Supreme Truth, conceived in the paternal wisdom of God, and descended to earth in order to give itself to us in the Sacred Scriptures, we bind ourselves entirely to you, we consecrate absolutely to you all that lives in us."³⁵

Bossuet spent his career erecting fortifications to surround orthodox Catholicism in France and make it impregnable against the assaults of the textual critics. He had seen to the suppression of the works of Richard Simon. His defeat of Simon was a signal victory over the textual critics. Now Bossuet turned to another enemy:

"I see a great attack preparing itself against the Church, under the name of Cartesian philosophy. I see born of his wisdom and of his principles, to my way of thinking misunderstood, more than one heresy... I see a great cause being formed against the Church, and it will explode in its time, if early enough one will choose to understand it before becoming absolutely bound to it..."³⁶

"The majority of Frenchmen thought as Bossuet," suggests one historian, "then all at once the French thought as Voltaire. It was a revolution."³⁷

C. Bossuet's Victory

Bossuet's struggle with Simon was part of the attempt of the French Catholic Church and the French monarchy to suppress heresy in France.

The revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, which granted privileges of worship and domicile to Protestants in France, brought to a close an almost century-long movement by the French Catholic Church and the French monarchy to rid France of the Huguenots.

For the greater part of the seventeenth century, France had been successively ruled by two Cardinals of the Catholic Church, Armand de Richelieu and Jean de Mazarin. They were titularly first ministers of the King, but actually the rulers of France.

Early in his career, Richelieu had vehemently inveighed against the Huguenots. When he became prime minister, Richelieu, in the interests of the monarchy, did not use his authority to cripple the Huguenots. Richelieu was leading France in a struggle to achieve political domination in Europe. The existing dominant power in western Europe lay in the hands of the members of the House of Hapsburg. The Hapsburg territories were extensive. Richelieu found it necessary to secure allies in his battle with the Hapsburgs. He found his most powerful ally in Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden.

Since the king of Sweden was the champion of Protestantism in Europe, Richelieu could not cultivate an alliance with him and at the same time actively persecute French Huguenots. Richelieu was obliged to utilize more subtle means to undermine the status of the Huguenots. He took great pains to convert them to Catholicism.

He went to the extent of bribing Huguenot ministers to embrace Catholicism and then to convert their congregations to it. The necessities of State prevented Richelieu from unleashing more potent forces in an effort to destroy Protestantism in France.

Neither did Mazarin, his successor, resort to violence in order to eliminate Protestantism in France. Mazarin was no longer concerned with the Swedish alliance. He needed the friendship of the small German Protestant principalities along the Rhine to assure him of peace on that border, while he concentrated his armies against Hapsburg, Spain. Mazarin also had to contend with two internal uprisings. He was thus ill-disposed to take up the burden of destroying the French Huguenots.

From 1643 until 1660, Louis XIV was in his minority. But when Louis XIV took the affairs of state into his own hands, there was no doubt of his intention to destroy Protestantism in France. He was charged by the Catholic Church in the person of its leading exponent, Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, "to exterminate in good faith, according to his power, all the heretics noted and condemned by the Church."³⁸

The revocation of the Edict of Nantes affected the progress of biblical scholarship in France. In 1676, a group of five clerics, four Huguenots and a Catholic, met to begin collaboration on a project which upon completion would have given France a Bible, neither Catholic nor Protestant in outlook, entirely true to the original Hebrew and Greek texts, detached completely from any polemics.³⁹

The Huguenot ministers were accused by their colleagues "of abandoning the religion of their fathers, in order to enter into ways of the Papists, in authorizing the Greek of the Septuagint and the other ancient versions, upon which they would pretend that one could reaffirm portions of the sacred Hebrew text."⁴⁰

The project continued for nine years. On October 17, 1685

Louis XIV signed the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Five days later, Parliament registered the act and it became the law of France. The major provisions of the law were: Huguenot churches were henceforth forbidden to be built, and those churches already standing were to be demolished. Finally Huguenot ministers were to leave France within a maximum of two weeks.

The Pope greeted Louis XIV on this occasion:

"The Catholic Church will not forget to record in its annals such a great act of your devotion towards it; and will never cease to praise your name."⁴¹

Within France, Bossuet, preaching at the funeral of the king's chancellor, addressed the King:

"You have affirmed the faith. You have exterminated the heretics. This is the finest work of your character. Because of you heresy is no more. God alone could have achieved this marvel."⁴²

Two of the Huguenot collaborators in the Bible translation project had already taken refuge in Protestant England as active persecutions in France began against the Huguenots. The two remaining Huguenot ministers left France within the two weeks prescribed by the Revocation.

The remaining member of the group, the Catholic priest, Richard Simon, later recorded his impressions of the impact of the Revocation:

"Of all of the history that I have researched by myself... I must conclude that the fact that this project was not executed has been a loss for the Catholic religion."⁴³

The subsequent victory of Bossuet over Simon epitomized the victory of the Church over its critics.

Until the decade of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, there existed within the French Catholic Church sufficient allowance for objective biblical scholarship to exist.¹⁴ However, upon the advent of Bossuet, the Church closed its ranks behind the determined exponents of orthodoxy. The type of writing on the Bible which was to follow within the Church was mainly in the nature of apologetics. Even those members of the Church who were aware of and took into account the newly-learned techniques of paleography, chronology, and who were utilizing such newly-developed factors in historiography as the influence of climate and geography, deferred to the traditional formulas in reaching their conclusions.

Notes

- 1 Exercitationes biblicae de hebraei graecique textus sinceritate... (1633). H-J Kraus. Geschichte der Historisch-Kritischen Erforschung des Alten Testaments (Hamburg, 1956), p. 42 summarizes Morin's conclusions: "Der hebraische Original text ist so sehr verfälscht und so stark von Fehlern durchsetzt worden, dass er nicht mehr als unantastbare Quelle und Norm des biblischen Studiums dienen kann..."
- 2 Exercitationes biblicae, I, p. 3: "Nobis igitur erit repuerascendum et Ecclesia post tot secularum cantium iterum erit alphabetaria et Synagoga discipula. Cujus vero discipula? Synagogae Christiano nomini infensissimae, sinag. Deo et hominibus ipsisque haereticis maxime execrabilis."
- 3 Exercitationes biblicae, I, p. 381 ff.
- 4 Arcanum punctuationis revelatum sive de punctarum vocalium et accentuum apud Hebraeos vera et germana antiquitate, libri duo (Leyden, 1624).
- 5 Critica sacra, sive de variis quae in sacris veteris testamenti libris occurrunt lectionibus, libri sex (1650).
- 6 Kraus, Geschichte, p. 46, sums it up this way.
- 7 Encyclopédie des sciences religieuses, publiée sous la direction de F. Lichtenberger (Paris, 1877, 1882), II, p. 626 ff.
- 8 We will concern ourselves mainly with this critique of the Old Testament. His Histoire critique de Vieux Testament was published in Paris in 1678. The same edition was published in Amsterdam in 1681 and 1683. A revision under Simon's direction was published in Rotterdam in 1685. The references are to the latter edition.
- 9 R. Simon, Lettres choisies (Amsterdam, 1730), I, p. 4; II, pp. 32, 264; IV, p. 50; Eloge historique, included at the beginning of the Lettres, pp. 3, 4, 5, 6, 39.
- 10 Lettres, II, p. 15, 60, 215; III, pp. 10, 71. On the matter of the blood libel in Metz, see H. Graetz, Geschichte der Juden (Leipzig, 1896), X, pp. 270 ff.

Notes (cont'd)

¹¹By itself, in light of the bans against associating with Jews, Simon's relationship with them constitutes an important piece of evidence in testimony of his independence. He developed a close affinity with them, Lettres, I, pp. 97 ff. In addition, there should be considered his travels from school to school in search of a teacher, Lettres, I, p. 23; III, p. 215; and the inner struggles he experienced in seeking to develop an independent point of view, Lettres, III, p. 513, in forming a more complete picture of the man.

¹²Histoire Critique I, p. 31.

¹³Op. cit., p. 17

¹⁴Ibid., I

¹⁵Op. cit., pp. 226, 270.

¹⁶Histoire, p. 20.

¹⁷Op. cit., p. 24.

¹⁸Op. cit., p. 35.

¹⁹A. Bernus, Notice bibliographique sur Richard Simon (Basle, 1882).

²⁰Bernus, Notice, p. 51.

²¹Op. cit., p. 30.

²²A. De La Broise. Bossuet et la Bible (Paris, 1927), ch. IV.

²³De la Broise, op. cit., p. xxxiii.

²⁴De La Broise, op. cit., ch. I.

²⁵Liber Psalmorum, additis canticis, cum notis: Libri Solomonis: Proverbia, Ecclesiastes, Canticum canticorum, Sapientia, Ecclesiasticus, cum notis.

Notes (cont'd)

- 26 Explication de la prophétie de Isaïe sur l'enfantement de la Vierge (7:14), et du Psaume 21 sur la passion et le délaissement de notre Seigneur (Paris, 1704).
- 27 So commented the self-styled wit of the court of Louis XIV, the Duc de Saint-Simon, quoted in A. Bernus, Richard Simon et son Histoire critique de Vieux Testament. La critique biblique au temps de Louis XIV (Lausanne, 1869), p. 33.
- 28 Quoted in H. Bremond, Bossuet. Textes choisis et commentés (Paris, 1913), III, p. 9.
- 29 Cited in De La Broise, op. cit., ch. XII.
- 30 Defense de la tradition de nos Peres (Paris, 1690), III, ch. II.
- 31 Histoire critique de text de Nouveau Testament (Rotterdam, 1689), preface to ch. 21.
- 32 Histoire critique des principaux commentateurs de Nouveau Testament (Rotterdam, 1693), preface.
- 33 Histoire critique... de NT, p. 284.
- 34 A. Monod, "La controverse de Bossuet et de R. Simon," Revue historique, philosophique, et religieuse (1921), p. 219; A. De Ville, "Richard Simon, critique Catholique du Pentateuque," Nouvelle Revue Théologique, LXXIII (1951), pp. 723-39.
- 35 Quoted in De la Broise, op. cit., p. xiii.
- 36 Quoted in P. Hazard, La Crise de la conscience européenne (Paris, 1939), I, p. 286.
- 37 Hazard, op. cit., I, 1.
- 38 Bossuet, La Politique (Paris, 1675), Book VII, art. 5.
- 39 For the full history of this project, see A. Lods, "Les parrains de la 'Bible du Centenaire' au XVII^e siècle," Revue historique, philosophique et religieuse. (1921) pp. 409-427; Bernus, R. Simon et son Histoire, p. 24 ff; R. Simon, Lettres choisies, III, p. 235.

Notes (cont'd)

- 40 Simon, Histoire...de VT, preface.
- 41 O. Douen, La Revocation d'Edit de Nantes (Paris, 1894), I, p. 55.
- 42 Douen, op. cit., p. 62 ff.
- 43 Lettres choisies, III p. 257.
- 44 A. Lods, Jean Astruc et la Critique Biblique au XVIII^e siecle, (Strassburg, 1924) p. 44, suggests that after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) "any author who wanted to be left alone had to teach that the Pentateuch is in its entirety the work of Moses." Apparently he is not considering, e.g., all the later works of Simon in his accounting.

II. LIBERAL PHILOSOPHERS

The liberal philosopher of the seventeenth century was a tolerant but angry skeptic. He inquired into the nature of everything. He took nothing for granted except, perhaps, the tool which he utilized for inquiry, that is, human reasoning and that, too, he subjected to critical scrutiny.

He was witnessing a great outpouring of accounts of voyages to America, Asia, and Egypt. He was unearthing from the ancient world information which no longer seemed the mere product of uncontrolled fancy.¹ The diversity of human customs and ideas on religion, justice, property, social organization, and the like was thus revealed to him. Small wonder if he drew the conclusion that all was relative, and that norms of behavior were conspicuous by their absence.

His rationalism provided an unsuitable climate for any branch of knowledge which claimed any certainty:

"Even the most faithful histories," wrote Descartes about one such area, "if they do not wholly misrepresent matters, or exaggerate their importance to render the account of them more worthy of perusal, omit, at least, almost always the meanest and least striking of the attendant circumstances, hence it happens that the remainder does not represent the truth."²

The liberal philosopher launched his most savage attacks on orthodox religion:

"There is nothing more ridiculous, than for any man, or company of men, to assume the title of orthodoxy to their own set of opinions, as if infallibility were annexed to their systems, and these even to be the standard measure of truth to all the world..."³

If he could not in general trust history then certainly he would most critically scrutinize the religious version of the history of mankind.

The most militant campaigner against the Catholic Church bastion of orthodox religion in France, was an exiled Huguenot, Pierre Bayle. Of the Bible he wrote:

"If such a narrative as this should be found in Thucyides, or in Livy, all the critics would unanimously conclude, that the transcribers had transposed the pages, forgot something in one place, repeated something in another, or inserted preposterous additions in the author's work."⁴

These men denied few of the walls that surrounded the Church. It was not until 1744, that for example, Galileo's Dialogues could be printed with a Papal license at Padua, and then only on the condition that the sentence on Galileo and his recantation were included in the volume. Only in 1757, did the Congregation of the Holy Office decide not to enforce any longer the decree condemning books which taught the movement of the world.⁵

It must not be supposed that the Protestant churches were any less authoritarian or more tolerant of heterodoxy, than the Catholic Church. Furthermore, many of the Protestant churches were closely allied to the state and identified with secular governmental authoritarianism. Luther had early in his career promoted the authority of the secular ruler. Calvin's form of government was an autocratic theocracy in Geneva. In Catholic France, the Huguenots, whose survival in seventeenth century France depended on the good will of the king were for a time the strongest upholders of monarchical authority.⁶

1. Hobbes

In England, the need for an absolute sovereign power was underscored by Thomas Hobbes in his Leviathan (1651). After a decade of bloody civil strife had passed in England, Hobbes concluded that only a central ruling force, operating with unchallengable powers, could prevent disunity and revolution from tearing a country apart. Hobbes chose to use the Scriptures to support his own theory of a Leviathan state. First, however, Hobbes subjected his primary source of evidence to close examination. His principal aim is to display ultimately a form of government which will serve as the model for his own. He is therefore concerned with the origin of the Hebrew society and most of all, with the authority behind the laws which governed the Hebrew society.

He first demonstrates that the Pentateuch, wherein the laws are contained, was not written by Moses.

"For the Pentateuch, it is not argument enough that they were written by Moses, because they are called the Five Books of Moses."⁷

He cites the last chapter of Deuteronomy as his proof, the chapter dealing with the death of Moses:

"It may be perhaps alledged, that the last chapter only, not the whole Pentateuch, was written by some other man, but the rest not."⁸

He refutes this possibility by referring to other verses, e.g., Gen. 12:6, "the Canaanites were then in the land," and others of similar nature, and concludes:

"It is therefore sufficiently evident, that the Five Books of Moses were written after his time, though how long after it be not so manifest."⁹

But though Moses did not compile those books entirely, and in the form that we have them, yet Hobbes contends, he wrote all that which he is there said to have written, e.g., Deut. 32.

Hobbes continues his examination of the Scriptures by demonstrating in similar fashion that Joshua did not write Joshua, or Judges, or Ruth, nor Samuel the books named for him:

"That time... of the writing of that books (Samuel), must be long after the time of the fact; that is, long after the time of David."¹⁰

The books of Kings, Hobbes indicates, "were written after the captivity in Babylon" as were Esdras, Nehemiah, and Ezther."¹¹

Having established to his satisfaction, that Moses was not the sole author of the Bible, and that the traditional dating is not historical, Hobbes asks, "By what authority they are made law" and answers: by

"his, whose commands have already the force of Law; that is to say, by any other authority than that of the Commonwealth, residing in the Sovereign, who only has the Legislative power."¹²

Hobbes then makes his conclusive point:

"We may infer that the Scriptures of the Old Testament which we have at this day, were not canonical, nor a law unto the Jews, till the revocation of the Covenant with God at their

return from the Captivity, and restoration of their Commonwealth under Esdras... Now seeing Esdras was the High Priest, and the High Priest was their Civil Sovereign, it is manifested that the Scriptures were never made Laws, but by the Sovereign Civil Power."¹³

Hobbes made use of the authority of the Scriptures for his own theory of a Leviathan state and at the same time shook the authority of the Scriptures themselves. He concludes that the royal will was the sole factor in making the Scriptures sacred. The argument involving the Bible became part of the thesis for the necessity for absolute royal power.

Leviathan provided a well-sharpened argument which the monarchs on the Continent whose government tended to be absolutist happily utilized. However, its central model argument provided those who wished to undermine absolutist government with powerful weapons.

The manner in which Hobbes treated Scriptures is also significant. He was not involved in any of the religious quarrels of the period. Hobbes was a political theorist, not a theologian. He stood outside the Church. His was therefore a secular treatment of the Scriptures. The fact that his argument for absolute government could be turned against him is perhaps ironical, but irrelevant. Hobbes did not intend to shake the foundations of either Church or State. Yet he was a skeptic. His skepticism was focused strongly on the powers of human reason. In light of his own experiences in the civil wars which sundered England during the seventeenth century, he saw little

reason to put his trust in a state operated through representative government. The omnipotent State was his answer to the chaos he witnessed.

Hobbes thereby utilized the Scriptures as evidence for a plan which would provide for ultimate order in society. Hobbes became the first of many political theorists and social philosophers to use the Scriptures as part of a plan to reorganize society according to their visions. Like Hobbes, these philosophers, who for the most part were liberal in their thinking, operated from outside the Church.

The liberal philosophers are therefore to be distinguished from the textual critics of the Old Testament who (1) were clerics or theologians, and (2) were concerned with the order of the text for the sake of having a correct text. These latter, including Cappel, Morin, and Simon, were not concerned with the reconstruction of society. They operated within the organization of the Church. The societal scheme which the traditions of the Church planned was the one in which they lived. Even the most vociferous critic of the French Catholic Church, Richard Simon, had no intention of destroying it or of leaving it. His controversy with Bossuet was an internicene quarrel. His attacks upon the traditional interpretations of the Catholic Church were part of his attempt to achieve the production of a clear, unobfuscated text, unencrusted with layers of traditional interpretation.

It was John Locke, a liberal philosopher, who attacked not only the orthodox Church but even the manifold theological

controversies of the time of which Simon-Bossuet quarrel was one:

"All the effect of it the theological quarrel will be just the same viz., as it has been these thousand years, and upwards: schisms, separations, contentions, animosities, quarrels, blood and butchery..."¹⁴

Clearly, there were two lines of inquiry into the validity of the Biblical text operative in the seventeenth century: the clerical-scholarly and the political-philosophic.

To the second group, the need to change the social order was pressing. To the first group, it was incidental, and for a few of its members, disastrous.

There was, however, one man who combined the talents and shared the hopes of both groups. He wanted an orderly text and a differently ordered world.

2. Spinoza

Baruch Spinoza was born in Amsterdam in 1634 of Portuguese (or possibly Spanish) Jews, who had sought refuge in the Low Countries from the rigors of the Inquisition in the Iberian Peninsula. Spinoza was instructed in Old Testament, biblical commentaries, philosophy, Talmud, and Kabbalah, and later in Latin. He was by trade a lens polisher.

The Dutch Republic was a haven for the persecuted because it was founded in the belief that stable civil government need not be based on religious uniformity.¹⁵

As the Calvinist church in the Dutch Republic grew in strength it began to claim authority over the civil power in the sphere of

religion, and to seek religious uniformity. It was during this shift in power that Spinoza sharply clashed with the elders of Jewish community in Amsterdam, from which he was subsequently expelled (1650) and from whose synagogue he was excommunicated (1656).

Spinoza supported the oligarchy of merchants and landowners who governed the Dutch Republic by means of a States-General. Those leaders considered a liberal religious policy as a necessary condition of economic prosperity. Against the States-General stood the House of Orange which wanted to increase the power of the office of stadtholder traditionally held by a Prince of Orange and ultimately make a kingship of it. The stadholders found their ally in the Calvinist Church which sought in turn a governmental policy of uniformity of religion.

In 1670, Spinoza published his plea for religious tolerance and political freedom, the Traetatus Theologico-Politicus. It was published anonymously, ostensibly at Hamburg, but in fact at Amsterdam.¹⁶ Its rise to notoriety was meteoric, and after frequent condemnations by religious bodies it was finally banned by the civil authorities in 1674.¹⁷ It was subsequently placed on the Index of the Roman Catholic Church.

After three additional stormy years,¹⁸ Spinoza died. Manuscripts found in his desk were, in accordance with his wishes, forwarded to an Amsterdam publisher and brought out in that year. They consisted of the Ethics, a selection of letters, a compendium of Hebrew grammar, and two uncompleted treatises, one on politics and the other on logical method.¹⁹

Tractatus contained the observations of Spinoza on the Bible.

Like Hobbes, Spinoza used the Scriptures as a primary piece of evidence in constructing a political theory. The general argument has been aptly summarized as follows:

"If we appreciate the old Jewish prophets from this (viz., Spinoza's) standpoint, we find that they were ignorant men brilliantly gifted to instill faith and obedience in an ignorant society. Confusion comes from false sophistication who, like the great Maimonides, try to read philosophic truths into the text of Scriptures by ingenuities of interpretation. It is both futile and dangerous to try to convert the old prophets into rational metaphysicians; one will only undermine their authority as prophets. Any intelligent and pious Jew or Christian must experience a crisis of conscience if he is asked to choose between modern knowledge and scriptural authority; but the crisis is unnecessary, because there can be no question of choosing between reason and prophecy; the dilemma is falsely stated; rational argument requires only practical obedience to moral precepts. To require belief in miracles of educated men is gratuitously to provoke disobedience... As the only interest of a rational government is the obedience of its subjects, it will permit, and will recognize that it cannot prevent, every variety of belief, provided only that these beliefs are compatible with obedience and good order. Therefore, in a free (that is, rationally governed) state 'every man may think what he likes, and say what he thinks: the real disturbers of the peace are those who, in a free state, seek to curtail the liberty of judgment which they are unable to tyrannize over' (Tractatus, ch. XI). A rational government requires enlightened and tolerant citizens, just as free men require an enlightened and tolerant government. This is the proposition which the Tractatus Theologico-Politicus was intended to prove..."²⁰

Spinoza uses the history of the Hebrews as portrayed in the Old Testament as his model from whose examination he will derive his conclusions. He is obliged therefore to demonstrate the

operations of the Hebrew society. In the course of this demonstration, he, like Hobbes, brings a critical focus to bear on his source material. He is concerned most of all with the plain meaning of the text of the Old Testament. In order to observe clearly the workings of a society, he must brush away, as he progresses, the obfuscating encrustations of traditional interpretations. His chief evidence, the statements in the Scriptures, must speak for themselves.

Spinoza prepares first an approach to the examination of the Scriptures:

"The history of a Scriptural statement comprises: the nature of properties of the language in which the books of the Bible were written, and in which their authors were accustomed to speak... an analysis of each book and arrangement of its contents under heads; so that we may have at hand the various texts which treat of a given subject. Lastly, a note of all the passages which are ambiguous or obscure, or which seem mutually contradictory... Such a history should relate the environment of all the prophetic books extant; that is, the life, the conduct, and the studies of the author of each book, who he was, what was the occasion, and the epoch of his writing, whom did he write it for, and in what language. Further, it should inquire into the fate of each book: how it was first received, into whose hands it fell, how many different versions there were of it, by whose advice was it received into the Bible, and, lastly, how all the books now universally attested as sacred, were united into a single whole."²¹

Spinoza using a method similar to Hobbes' and reaching fairly similar conclusions about individual sections after a thorough search into the text, emerges with the following observation:

"When we put together these three considerations, namely, the unity of the subject of all the books, the connection between them, and the fact that they are a compilation made many generations after

the events they relate had taken place, we come to the conclusion, as I have just stated, that they are the work of a single historian. Who this historian was, it is not so easy to show; but I suspect that he was Ezra...²²

"Ezra...did not put the finishing touches to the narratives contained therein, but merely collected the histories from various writers, and sometimes simply set them down, leaving their examination and arrangement to posterity."²³

"These five books are set down promiscuously and without order, with no regard for dates..."²⁴

"In addition to what has been shown...these books were not guarded by posterity with such care that no faults crept in..."²⁵

On the two crucial issues with which the cleric-textual critic concerned himself, Spinoza is forthrightly clear:

1) Moses is not the author of the Bible; he is not even the editor. Ezra's editing furthermore was tentative, the product of which was more of a collection than a careful edition of the works of the other writers whose narratives and histories make up the Bible. 2) The Bible is not homogeneous. It is not an entity. It is a "Compilation made many generations after the events they relate had taken place."²⁶

He makes a singular observation of the prophetic books:

"An examination of these assures me that the prophecies therein contained have been compiled from other books, and are not always set down in the exact order in which they were spoken or written by the prophets, but are only such as were collected here and there, so that they are but fragmentary."²⁷

Of interest to the cleric-critic was the impact of traditional interpretation on the original text:

On the commentators, Spinoza writes:

"The commentators, in seeking to harmonize difficulties, generally do no more than indicate the causes; for I suppose no sane person supposed that the sacred historians deliberately wrote with the object of appearing to contradict themselves freely."²⁵

His remarks on the work of canonization of the Rabbis are highly virulent, more in the nature of polemic than of textual criticism:

"I cannot here pass over in silence the audacity of the Rabbis who wished to exclude from the sacred canon both the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, and to put them both in the Apocrypha. In fact, they would actually have done so, if they had not lighted on certain passages in which the law of Moses is extolled. It is, indeed, grievous to think that the settling of the sacred canon lay in the hands of such men; however, I congratulate them, in this instance, on their suffering us to see these books in question, though I cannot refrain from doubting whether they have transmitted them in absolute good faith."²⁶

Commenting further on the tradition of the Rabbis, Spinoza leaves the area of textual criticism and enters into the principal sphere of his argument, political theory. Here, as in Hobbes, the key issue is authority; the position taken by Spinoza is diametrically opposed to that of Hobbes.

"As to the tradition of the Pharisees... it is not consistent, while the authority of the popes of Rome stands in need of more credible evidence... As the supreme right of free thinking, even on

religion, is in every man's power and as it is inconceivable that such power could be alienated, it is also in every man's power to wield the supreme right and authority of free judgment in this behalf, and to explain and interpret religion for himself... the supreme authority in explaining religion and in passing judgment thereon, is lodged with the individual because it concerns questions of individual rights...²⁹

3. The Philosophes

The philosophes³¹ of the eighteenth century freely utilized the arguments of the seventeenth century liberal philosophers against the unity of the Pentateuchal text and against the authorship of Moses as part of their attack upon the vested interests of the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church in France at the beginning of the eighteenth century was a rich, powerful, and closely organized corporation. It was an active participant in secular politics. Through its local organization, schools, poorhouses, and literary publications, it exercised in France a powerful influence.

The Church was, furthermore, intricately involved with the nobility of France. The Church and the nobility, historically known as the First and Second Estates of the Old Regime in France, operated quite often as an interlocking directorate in their relationship to the monarchy on the one hand and to the mercantile classes on the other.

The Church operated independently of the monarchy, of the nobility, and of the lower classes. The Church was immensely wealthy. It raised and expended its own monies. It could not

legally be required to pay taxes to the State.³²

Finally, The Catholic Church in France claimed to be the sole dispenser on earth of the living word of God, the sole controller of the means by which men might be saved.

These factors-- the constant involvement of the Church in secular politics, the entrenched relations with the nobility, its wealth and organization, its intolerance of those who questioned its authority to suppress all ideas of which its officials did not approve-- explain much of the opposition which it aroused in France.

One of the groups which led the hostile reaction to the Church were the philosophes. A key argument against the authority of the Church used by the philosophes rested upon the conclusions of the liberal philosophers of the seventeenth century that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch. If Moses could be shown to be the author of those books of the Bible which bore his name, i.e., the Five Books of Moses, then it could be demonstrated that the Revelation spoken of in the Bible was non-existent. The authority of the Catholic Church was founded upon the assumption that Divine Revelation was an historical fact.

On the other hand, if the claim that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch could be refuted, then the authority of the Church would remain secure. It was not, however, the philosophes whose conclusions needed to be refuted, but their predecessors, the liberal philosophers of the seventeenth century, in this case, Spinoza and Hobbes.

22

One of the defenders of the authority of the Church, who prepared a refutation of the claims of Spinoza and Hobbes, was the physician of Louis XV of France, Jean Astruc.

Notes

- ¹ A. Momigliano, "The Place of Herodotus in Historiography." History, xliii (1958), pp. 1-13.
- ² R. Descartes, Discours sur la methode, pp. 6-7, in Oeuvres, publiées par G. Adam et P. Tannery sous les auspices du ministère de l'instruction publique, vol. VI, (to the edition of Leyden, 1637).
- ³ J. Locke, A Second Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity (1697), in Works (London, 1823), vol. VII, p. 376.
- ⁴ P. Bayle, Selections from Bayle's Dictionary, edited by E. A. Beller and H. du Pinss (Paris, 1952), article "David," p. 99.
- ⁵ G. Mangin, Etude sur l'évolution intellectuelle de l'Italie de 1657 à 1750 environ (Paris, 1909), p. 82.
- ⁶ Dodge, G. Political Theory of the Huguenots of the Depression (New York, 1947), pp. 6, 7, 10, 18; G. E. Armstrong, "The Political Theory of the Huguenots," English Historical Review, IV (1889), 13-40.
- ⁷ Hobbes, Leviathan (Oxford, 1929), p. 292.
- ⁸ Hobbes, op. cit., p. 293.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Hobbes, op. cit., p. 295.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Hobbes, op. cit., p. 300.
- ¹³ Hobbes, op. cit., p. 405. On the influence of Hobbes in France, see G. La Cour - Gayet, "Les Traductions françaises de Hobbes sous le règne de Louis XIV," Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie, XIII (1889), pp. 202-207.
- ¹⁴ Locke, A Second Vindication... op. cit., p. 358.
- ¹⁵ J. L. Motley, The United Netherlands (New York, 1869), vol. II, p. 214.

Notes (cont'd)

- 16 Spinoza, The Political Works: The Tractatus Theologico-Politicus in part and the Tractatus Politicus in full, edited and translated with an introduction and notes by A. G. Wernham (Oxford, 1958), p. 42. For a discussion of Spinoza's method, see W. A. Steurmann, "Benedict Spinoza: A Pioneer in Biblical Criticism," Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research, XXX (1960-61), pp. 139-179. Steurmann attributes too much credit to Spinoza by saying "while he did not discriminate between sources on the basis of divine names, there is... a passage in the Treatise which indicates that Spinoza came to the very edge of this sort of theory." For the passage in which Spinoza discusses Ex. 2:6, see Tractatus, pp. 178-79. Similarly while it may be assumed that Spinoza's principle of using biblical materials alone "makes quite a good sense..." it is too embracive a statement that in biblical criticism subsequent to Spinoza, "the investigators do not seem to have capitalized on it," p. 68.
- 17 J. Freudenthal, Die Lebensgeschichte Spinozas (Leipzig, 1899), p. 121 ff.
- 18 Freudenthal, op. cit., pp. 194-5.
- 19 B. Spinoza, Chief Works, translated by R. H. M. Elwes (1863; reprinted, New York, 1951), vol. I, Tractatus Theologico-Politicus, p. ix xxxi.
- 20 S. Hampshire, Spinoza (London, 1951), pp. 207-8; A. Wolf, The Correspondence of Spinoza (London, 1928), p. 206 (Letter 30), discusses Spinoza's intent in writing the Tractatus.
- 21 Tractatus, ch. VII, pp. 101, 103.
- 22 Tractatus, ch. VIII, pp. 129-30.
- 23 Tractatus, ch. IX, p. 133.
- 24 Ibid., p. 135.
- 25 Ibid., p. 139
- 26 Ibid., ch. VIII, p. 130
- 27 Tractatus, ch. X, p. 127.

Notes (cont'd)

28 Ibid., p. 154.

29 Ibid., pp. 146-47.

30 Tractatus, ch. VIII, p. 129.

31 The philosophes were for the most part popularizers of the original ideas propounded by the philosophers of the seventeenth century, see R. Hubert, "Essai sur l'histoire et des progrès de la sociologie en France," Revue d'histoire de la philosophie et d'histoire générale de la civilisation (1938), p. 111 ff; For the social background of the Enlightenment movement in France. see B. Groethuyzen, Les origines de l'esprit bourgeois en France (Paris, 1927), 2 vols. Two classic works on the Enlightenment are E. Cassirer, The Philosophy of the Enlightenment, trans. F.O.A. Koellin and J. F. Pettegrene, (Princeton, 1951), and P. Hazard La Crise de la conscience européenne, 1680-1715 (Paris, 1934), 3 vols. Hazard develops fully the thesis that the original and creative thinkers were the seventeenth century philosophers and that the Age of Enlightenment began in the seventeenth century. On Bayle, see Delvane, Religion, critique et philosophie chez Pierre Bayle (Paris, 1906).

32 However, there was beginning a growing predominance of the civil war over the ecclesiastical power in France, see M. Picot, Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique pendant le dix-huitième siècle (Paris, 1816), II, pp. 313, 479-90; see generally, G. Le point, L'Organisation et la politique financière du clergé de France sous le règne de Louis XV (Paris, 1923).

III. JEAN ASTRUC AND THE DEFENSE OF MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP

1. His Career

A life of Jean Astruc cannot be definitively written.

The most extensive amount of evidence for his biography is contained in an elogy of Astruc written by his successor as physician to the king, Anne-Charles Lorry. The prejudice of this source is difficult to determine because of the lack of evidence from other sources.

Something of Astruc's life can be seen through the eyes of his contemporaries. Their mention of him is often incidental to the central issue or figure with which they are dealing. Astruc is most often brought into the picture because of his association with another figure who is more important in the eyes of the writer of the source. Astruc forms, for the most part, part of the backdrop for his age. He is seen as an accessory by his contemporaries, not as a leading figure in events.

Nevertheless, a fair, if dim, picture of Astruc can be construed from the evidence that is at hand. There are a few periods of his life which emerge with some clarity.

Jean Astruc was born in Sauves, in Languedoc, on March 19, 1684. He was the son of a well-educated Huguenot minister. Pierre Astruc had mastered several languages, among them Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. He converted to Catholicism after the publication of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, and consequently left his ministry. Astruc brought up his sons, Jean and Anne, within the Catholic faith. It appears, too, that he gave Jean a classical education.²

Early in life Jean Astruc rose to prominence in his chosen field of medicine. In 1700, at the age of sixteen, he received his master of arts degree from the University of Montpellier, and in 1702, his ³ baccalaureate in medicine.

Astruc was the pupil of Pierre Chirac,⁴ the physician of the Duke of Orleans, then Regent of France during the minority of Louis XV. When the Duke of Orleans went to war in 1707, against the English in the War of the Spanish Succession, Chirac was obliged to accompany him. He proposed that Astruc conduct his courses. After Chirac returned in 1709 to Montpellier, Astruc accepted the chair of anatomy, his field of specialization, at the University of Toulouse.

Little is known of Astruc's life during this period. In 1717, he returned to Montpellier to become professor of medicine. He remained there until 1720, when a new chapter in his life began.

In 1720, Astruc accepted a pension of 700 livres from the King, and in 1721 was appointed inspector of mineral waters for the province of Languedoc. Astruc went to Paris in 1721 and remained there until 1728, when he returned briefly to Montpellier.⁵

In 1729 he was recalled to Paris and designated personal physician to Augustus II of Saxony, the king of Poland. In 1730, Astruc returned to Paris. His biographer, Lorry, suggests that Astruc became involved in the politics of the Polish court and that some unpleasantness resulting from this involvement was partially responsible for his return to France.⁶

Another reason may have also prompted Astruc's return: upon his arrival in Paris, Astruc was appointed consultant physician to

Louis XV, and a year later in, 1731, professor of medicine at the Royal College of Medicine.⁷

Astruc was by now a wealthy and famous man. He was married and a father of two children.⁸ He had been a favored pupil of Chirac, a court physician. Astruc's works had received a measure of acclaim. He had become accepted into Parisien society. During his first stay in Paris, Astruc became a member of a Paris salon. The salon was the gathering place of courtiers and litteratti, sponsored and usually presided over by the wife of a nobleman. Now, Astruc became a frequent visitor at the most celebrated salons in Paris.

During these years, Astruc's interest began to diversify. He began to dabble in "metaphysical studies," and to become an active participant in the politico-religious conflicts of his time.⁹ In Paris, he was a regular member of the salon of Mme. de Ferriol, wife of the receiver-general of finances of Dauphine. The salons were havens for the great and near-great literary figures of the age. They were also hotbeds of political planning and maneuvering. Mme. de Ferriol was a devoted adherent of the Jesuit party at court.¹⁰ The Jesuits constituted a significant faction of the Catholic Church in France. They were associated with the monarchy and the nobility. They argued that the church of Rome was supreme and central in the Catholic Church, and deserved absolute allegiance in terms of doctrine and of all monies collected by various dioceses in western Europe.

In this, they were opposed by the Jansenist faction of the Church. The Jansenists, among other groups within the Church in France, believed in a national Catholic Church of France. These groups argued that the Gallican Church had certain privileges in deciding doctrine independently of Rome. They asserted further that the monies collected by the French bishops should first be applied to the needs of the Gallican Church, the remainder going to Rome. This group was composed of members of the magistracy and the parlements, who sought a decentralization of government, and of members of the commercial and slowly emerging industrial classes, who sought to share some of the economic privileges that had heretofore been solely the prerogatives of the landed nobility and of the Church.

The salons would declare some sort of allegiance to one of these groups and its causes. Like the salon of her sister, Mme. de Ferriol, that of Mme. de Tencin was pro-Jesuit. The salon of Mme. de Tencin supplanted the former in importance. Mme. de Tencin and her brother were among the wealthiest nobility in Paris. She was a leading figure at the royal court. He was the Archbishop of Lyons and Primate of Gaul, a close associate of the Abbé Dubois, the premiere ministre of the conseil d'etat, and of his successor, Cardinal Fleury, and ambassador of the royal court to the papal court. De Tencin was yet to become a cardinal, a member of the conseil d'etat and a good friend of Pope Benedict XIV. The de Tencins were active adherents of the Jesuit party. Astruc too was an active anti-Jansenist.¹²

Mme. de Tencin's salon was the haven of famous literary figures of the age. There was Fontenelle the philosopher, Marivaux the playwright, and Mirabeau the political analyst. In her salon were to be found two of the most celebrated Englishmen of the age, Bolingbroke, in exile from England after having lost the prime ministership, a recognized philosopher on the nature of law and government; and the Earl of Chesterfield, a statesman and essayist.¹³ Toward the end of her life, Mme. de Tencin's frequent companion was the political philosopher Montesquieu. At her side from 1731 until her death was her physician Jean Astruc. It is possible that most of these men were her lovers.¹⁴

Astruc continued his rise to prominence in the medical profession. In 1736, he published his magnus opus, De morbis veneris. He then published his observations on the natural history and geography of the province of Languedoc, made while inspector there of mineral waters. It was generally received with acclaim.¹⁵

Astruc's fame has been attributed to his being a pioneer in the field of medical mathematics.¹⁶ Astruc's fame was gauged by his contemporaries, however, not only by the quality of his contributions to medicine but also by the nature of his political and religious involvements.

The degree of Astruc's involvement with the Tencins is difficult to measure. He was considered a constant member of the salon. Mme. de Tencin helped negotiate the marriage of Astruc's daughter¹⁷ to the son of a royal treasurer in 1745. An insight into the age is provided by the kind of wedding gifts the new couple received. The

father of the groom bought for his son the office of maître des requêtes, a position as a court lawyer, and presented the couple with furniture and 12,000 livres. Astruc gave his daughter a dowry of 170,000 livres. He was a man of great wealth. In addition to his positions at the University and at court, Astruc was lord and baron of an estate.¹⁸

Astruc's son-in-law was Etienne de Silhouette who became comptroller-general of finances of France in 1759.¹⁹

Many of the references to Astruc in the contemporary sources are made in connection with his association with the de Tencins and with Silhouette. These associates were under attack during much of their public life. Astruc was often the secondary object of these attacks which were aimed primarily at the Tencins and at Silhouette. The critical opinions of Astruc's work in biblical criticism, his Conjectures, must be considered in the light of the critic's relation to and opinion of the de Tencins. Silhouette came to office after the publication of the Conjectures; the criticisms of the Conjectures which appeared after his dismissal are to be evaluated in the light of the opinion which centered on Silhouette. Similarly, whatever Astruc states as the purpose of his Conjectures is to be considered in terms of his associations with the Tencins and with Silhouette.

Mme. de Tencin was vigorously and constantly denounced both by her contemporaries and by later historians of the Old Regime for her religious and political views and for her personal conduct.²⁰

She was denounced by the philosophes for her espousal of the Jesuit cause. Her love affairs were common gossip. It was rumored that she together with her brother, now a cardinal-archbishop, and the Duc de Richelieu, the secretary of state for foreign affairs and her lover at the time, were supplying the king with his mistresses.²¹ Mme. de Tencin was especially denounced for her abandonment at birth of an illegitimate son. That he grew up to become one of the most important philosophes and the inventor of integral calculus, D'Alembert, served to heighten the degree of the denunciations.²² Many people commented on her love affairs; the one with Astruc was no exception.²³ There is hardly a way of knowing how deep was their mutual love.²⁴ When Mme. de Tencin died, Astruc received a large part of her fortune.

This inheritance was the subject of much villification. Astruc's enemies made their attacks vicious. The President of Parlement of Paris commented:

"The Cardinal de Tencin left two worthy nephews, very different from each other and enjoying public esteem, who were disinherited by their aunt, Mme. de Tencin, whose property was seized and swallowed by Astruc, worthy father-in-law of Silhouette."²⁵

Another contemporary observer was more specific:

"He (Astruc) had no scruples rich as he is with a million, to accept 200,000 or 240,000 francs, the value of property given him by Mme. de Tencin."²⁶

Whether Astruc was a scoundrel cannot be determined from such biased sources. However, it may be assumed that Mme. de Tencin left

a large sum of money to Astruc. It may also be assumed that Astruc did not suffer from a lack of enemies.

Silhouette was also the object of attack. He was closely associated with the royal court. He had been, since 1750, under the sponsorship of Mme. de Pompadour. He remained in office for only eight months. After his dismissal, he retired with an annual pension of sixty thousand livres. The public, it is said, was happy with his dismissal as they were unhappy with his stay in office.²⁷

It has been seen how the President of the Parlement of Paris paired Astruc with Silhouette. Aside from familial relations, Astruc and Silhouette may have had other common interests. Silhouette had published a translation into French of William Warburton's Dissertation on the Union of Religion, Morality, and Politics. In the preface that he wrote for the translation, Silhouette had attempted to refute the anti-clerical and anti-religious view of Pierre Bayle, the seventeenth century critic and philosopher. Astruc by then had published his Conjectures, in which he attacked Spinoza and Hobbes, and his Dissertation sur l'immortalité et l'immaterialité de l'âme (1755), in which he had attacked Bayle, Fontenelle, and other philosophes.²⁸ It was of Silhouette's translation and Astruc's Conjectures, that Voltaire wrote in his essay on "Livres" in his Dictionnaire philosophique. Once more, Astruc and his son-in-law are paired together under attack:

"It is quite dangerous [wrote Voltaire] to write a book. Before he could have known that he would someday become comptroller-general of finances, Silhouette had printed a book on the agreement of religion and politics; and his father-in-law, the physician Astruc, had given to the public those memoirs from which the author of the *Pentateuch* could have taken all those astonishing things that had passed before him, so long ago. The same day that Silhouette came into office a good friend found some copies of the books of the father-in-law and son-in-law, in order to present them to Parlement, and to have them condemned to the flames as was the custom. They bought up every copy in the kingdom; as a result they [the books] are very scarce today."²⁹

Astruc was involved in the politics of his own profession.

In 1742, he opposed the move to grant surgeons equal status with physicians. The latter had always maintained a higher rank. He was severely criticised by the chief royal physician, Francois Quesnay. Quesnay was the leading exponent of a popular school of economics and a favourite of Mme de Pompadour. He was considered a philosophe. It appears, however, that Astruc's position on this issue was one of the reasons why the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Paris waived their requirements for admission -- admission which Astruc had sought-- and welcomed him to their ranks in 1743.

Astruc again took up the cause of the physicians at court when it was threatened by the appointment of a Swiss man as a personal physician to the Duke of Orleans. The reason for the appointment was that this physician was involved with perfecting a new preventive cure against the attacks of smallpox; inoculation.

Astruc responded with a treatise expressing doubts about the effect of inoculation. His position on this issue provoked the attacks of another philosophe, Baron Grimm.³⁰

The philosophes, thus found many occasions to attack Astruc: his connection with the de Tencins, his allegiance to the Jesuit cause, his great wealth, his relationship with his son-in-law, and his positions on various issues which concerned his colleagues.

Astruc had spent his life before he came to Paris primarily in research and teaching. During his life in Paris, his practice overshadowed his other contributions to his field. Astruc spent his final years in medical research. He published works on tumors, ulcers, feminine diseases, and midwifery. Astruc died in 1766. Of his family, only his son, a respected member of the legal profession, remained. Astruc left unpublished a completed work, Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la faculté de l'université de Montpellier, which his successor as Docteur royal and biographer, Lorry, edited and published.

Jean Astruc was a man of many interests. One of his avocations brings him to our attention, namely, his work on the Bible, the Conjectures, which he published anonymously at Paris in 1753.³¹

2. The Conjectures

In his Conjectures, Astruc cautiously and methodically proceeded to illustrate how Moses used ancient mémoires to compose the Book of Genesis. His caution is shown in his choice of a title for his work.

He does not call it a "histoire," but rather "conjectures." The part of the title reading "dent il paroit (our italics) que Moïse s'est servi" can be construed as evidence of Astruc's caution. He appears to be less than dogmatic about his observations. However, the choice of a title alone is insufficient evidence for the assumption that Astruc took pains not to commit himself irrevocably, and dangerously, to the conclusions expressed in his work. Astruc, waited many years before he published the Conjectures. In 1753, he was 68 years old. He waited until "learned and pious men" assured him that his subject had been considered in previous works which had received approval. Nevertheless, he still submits his work to censorship:

"If those in power... find my conjectures either false or dangerous, I am prepared to abandon them... Never will my prejudice in favor of my own ideas forestall my love for Truth and Religion."³²

Astruc, according to his advertisement, sets out to determine how Moses, in his composition of the Book of Genesis, used memoires handed down ever since the creation of the world.

Astruc begins his work with certain basic assumptions. He believes, first of all, that Moses worked under the supervision of Divine revelation. There are no direct conversations between God and Moses in Genesis as there are in the other four books of the Pentateuch. In Genesis, Moses is recording material as "a simple historian... instructed by revelation."³²

Astruc assumes also that the memoires are divinely inspired, and authentic:

"The inspiration of the Lord which assisted Moses guarantees for us the truth and the authenticity of the memoires.³³

Astruc has an ambivalent attitude toward traditional interpretations of the text. He takes for granted as part of his argument that the Hebrew language was the language of communication between God and Adam; or that from the creation of the world to the birth of Moses, there elapsed 2433 years. Generally, however, he prefers to base his argument on the text. How he uses the text and a traditional commentator of the text can be seen in his argument for writing.³⁴

In order to prove that Moses composed the Book of Genesis, Astruc found it necessary first to prove that Moses knew how to write. Astruc began by citing the various verses in Exodus 28, where God instructs Moses to write. He then cited the recurrence of the word "Book" in the Pentateuchal text. These pieces of evidence in themselves were sufficient for Astruc to demonstrate that Moses knew how to write. However, he clinched his argument by citing Philo, a Hellenistic Jewish commentator, who said that Moses was learned in the sciences of Egypt, among which writing was one.³⁵

Astruc began his examination of the Book of Genesis with an analysis of the repetitions in the text. Occasionally, statements

about the same event, e.g., the creation of the first man, appeared twice. He noted, for example, that in the two stories of the creation of man, two different names of God were used. When Astruc analyzed a large number of these repetitions, he discovered that each statement of an event contained one of the names of God and that the other statement of the same event contained a different name of God.

Astruc then collected all the passages of the Book of Genesis containing one of the names of the names of God, all the passages containing the other name of God, and all the passages where neither name is mentioned. He noted that each collection of passages was a more or less self-contained, continuous narrative. He labeled one collection containing the name of Elohim, A, and the second one, containing the Tetragrammaton, which he called Jehovah (hereafter YHWH), B. The third group he divided into sections according to different criteria.³⁸

Bible critics of the seventeenth century, notably Richard Simon and Jean Le Clerc, had suggested that the preserved text of the Pentateuch may well have been based upon ancient memoires. These different collections of verses, separated from each other according the presence of one or the other name of God, were assumed by Astruc to be those memoires.

Astruc allowed the possibility that these memoires were based on even earlier ones. But he insists that the memoires which Moses had before him were homogeneous, unrepentive, and chronologically in order. The probability existed, however, that

"there are gaps and lacunae in the memoires after they are reunited... and it is necessary to assume some unoriginality sooner or later in one or the other in order to render the narration in each complete and consistent."³⁸

This reservation about the authenticity of the memoires is the only one Astruc permitted himself. (It was mentioned above that he felt that their authenticity was divinely guaranteed).

Astruc showed himself to have been very much aware of the possible harm his work might do to the authority of the Pentateuch:

"I hesitated to publish... fearing that the so-called free thinkers... would be able to abuse it (his work) in order to diminish the authority of the Pentateuch..."³⁹

Nevertheless, Astruc proceeded to the task of disentangling one memoir from another. As he distinguished a document, he labeled it with a letter of the alphabet.

A-Elohim and B-YHWA in toto comprise those verses in the text of Genesis which contained a name of God. When Elohim is the name employed, the verse is assigned to memoire A, and the verse containing YHWA is designated as belonging to B. Content is not a criterion here. Astruc apparently expects the verses to fall into the pattern of a single narrative.

When neither of the two names of God appears in verse, it is placed in memoire C. Here too, the content is a secondary factor. It is assumed that a continuous narrative will emerge from C.

Content is a factor in selecting verses for memoire B. When

no name of God is present and there is no mention of the "Hebrew nation," the verse is placed in memoire D.

Memoires C and D are further refined. The major part of C consists of portions of the Deluge narrative (7:20, 23, 24). C includes the tale of Dinah's abduction and rape. This story is set apart from the larger memoire since it contains characters which appeared in the war of the Canaanite kings, a matter which Astruc considers to be extraneous to the history of the "Hebrew nation." The tale of Dinah is therefore labeled memoire I.

D consists of seven separate memoires. There is no memoire D per se. The overriding criterion, as we have mentioned is twofold: a name of God is not mentioned; and the matter does not directly concern the "Hebrew nation."

Content is the criterion by which the seven memoires in D are separated one from the other.

E- Chap 14: the war of the Canaanite kings. Here the role of Abraham is so different from the character displayed before or after this incident that Astruc assumes there is no connection between 14 and the chapters preceding and following 14.

F- The incest of Lot's daughters.

G- Chap. 22: the genealogy of Nahor.

H- 25:12-19: the genealogy of Ishmael. (Astruc is undecided as to where to place the list of the children of Abraham and Keturah).

K and L- 26:34-, 28:6-10: Esau's marriages; Chap. 36; Esau's descendants. Since the names of Esau's wives are different in the first two references from those preserved in the third, Astruc assigns the first two to K and the third to L.

M- 36:20-31: the descendants of Seir.⁴⁰

Levi, Joseph and Amram, says Astruc, compiled the ancestral histoires. Jethro, he believes, brought to the attention of Moses

the materials dealing with Moab, Ammon, and Moab.⁴¹ The memoires might have been written in Hebrew or in the language of the other nations. Either way, Astruc demonstrates, Moses was able to read them and work with them.⁴²

Astruc shows how the problem of repetition of the same event in the text is cleared up. The two creation stories come from two separate memoires. The three Deluge stories are parts of different memoires.⁴³

He shows how antichronismes, chronological distortions, are cleared up. Thus, according to 24:67, Issac married Rebecca. According to 25:8, 9, Abraham is buried. On the basis of 21:5 and 25:7, 20, 26, and by using arithmetic, Abraham should have been 160 years old when Jacob and Esau were born (as told in 25:20-26). However, the report of Abraham's death preceeded in the text the story of his grandsons' birth. Astruc shows that 25:19 containing YHWH is part of memoire B and belongs therefore at the end of ch. 24, also part of B.⁴⁴

Moses first grouped all the fragments and memoires into eleven columns. He then regrouped them into four columns, ABCD. In their columnar order, the memoires could be immediately compared and their differences easily discerned. "Can one imagine anything more wise and more methodical than this arrangement?" writes Astruc. This columnar order is Moses' original text. It is not in any kind of disorder.⁴⁵

Astruc thereby absolved Moses "of negligences and even of faults which were dared to have been imputed to him and that were thought to have been found in Genesis."⁴⁶

Sometime during the period of Ezra, copyists discarded the clear Mosaic columnar arrangement.⁴⁷

The present text therefore is a corruption and distortion of the original text of Genesis as composed by Moses on the basis of the ancient memoires.

3. Astruc and Earlier Critics: Where they Differ

Astruc clearly opposed the conclusions of the politico-philosophic critics of the Pentateuch. Hobbes and Spinoza admitted that Moses might have been the author of several sections of the Pentateuch, e.g., Deut. 32. However, they cited the disorder of the biblical text as evidence that the books of the Pentateuch were written by more than one author and during a period in history later than Moses. They denied Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.⁴⁸

Astruc attempted to refute their conclusions. He believed that he had demonstrated

"with what wisdom and in what order Moses had prepared the different memoires or the fragments of the memoires which he had judged pertinent to be placed in the composition of the Book of Genesis. It has also been seen, at the same time, with what imprudence this order had been disturbed, how it was undertaken to transcribe these memoires, how they stand today; ...the confusions which had been thrown into several places in the Book of Genesis, which had given trouble to commentators, and which had caused the vain triumph of unbelievers."⁴⁹

As an example of the latter, Astruc cited chap. 33 of Spinoza's Traктatus, which contains the philosopher's conclusions on Mosaic authorship. He quotes Spinoza as saying that "all is written pell-mell in the five books of the Pentateuch." He reminds the readers of Spinoza's claim that Ezra had composed the five books of the Pentateuch and that even Ezra was not the last person to put his hand to the narratives in the text.⁴⁹

Astruc quotes Spinoza's contention that the present text is "only a precis of all the histories that had been collected by different writers...which they neither examined further nor put into order."⁴⁹

Astruc then cites Hobbes "who in a work written against Religion and against the Clergy, had several times previously tried to establish the same sentiment and had made use of the same passages (which indicated disorder)."⁵⁰

Astruc, it seems, was concerned with the conclusions of Hobbes and Spinoza as they affected "Religion and the Clergy." It is the "vain triumphs of the unbelievers" and the attacks upon religion which disturbed Astruc.

A comparison of Spinoza's remark that the textus receptus constitutes "a precis... collected by different writers" with Astruc's comment, "I claim that Moses had had in his hands ancient memoires, containing the history of his ancestors, since the creation of the world,"⁵¹ shows that they do not differ in their basic assumption that the present text is based on previous sources. Nor

does Astruc deny the presence of disorder in the text.⁵² Spinoza and Astruc both indicate that during the process of transcribing the text, the confusions and disorders were continually compounded. Their difference was not in this case a difference in approach. Astruc's objection to Spinoza was that Spinoza's conclusions threatened "Religion and the Clergy."

Hobbes is treated cursorily by Astruc. It is not Hobbes' method which concerns Astruc, but what Astruc considers Hobbes' attack on Religion and the Clergy, to Astruc, the Catholic Religion and the Catholic Church. Astruc's concern with these issues is not unexpected in the light of his Jesuit leaning and his connection with the Cardinal de Tencin, the Primate of Gaul.

It has been demonstrated how the political philosophers, Hobbes and Spinoza, used their criticism of the Pentateuch as part of the plan for the reconstruction of society. Astruc was not part of this school of thought. His aim was to preserve one of the fundamental institutions the status quo, the established church of his time. He sought to accomplish this end by providing a means which would explain the apparent confusions in the Biblical text. He attempted to preserve the authorship of Moses by demonstrating how Moses had composed the Book of Genesis according to Divinely revealed instruction. Astruc was a defender of this tradition in the way that Bossuet was.

Astruc's position within this "school" may be further pinpointed by comparing his approach and conclusions to those of a member of

this cleric-critic group, namely, Richard Simon.

Both men begin their argument with a reference to the repetitions in the text of the Pentateuch of events. Astruc writes:

"There are in Genesis frequent repetitions of the same facts... The creation of the world and in particular that of the first man, is recounted twice, the story of the deluge twice and perhaps thrice..."⁵³

Simon's observation is based upon an examination of the entire Pentateuch:

"There is an infinity of repetitions of the same thing in the Pentateuch that are apparently not at all by Moses, but rather by those who have made the collection of sacred books..."⁵⁴

The differences between the views of Astruc and those of Simon on repetitions are not to be found in substance but in degree. However, the conclusions which Simon draws from this observation is essentially contrary to the view of Astruc that Moses composed the Biblical text.

Astruc accounts for the present disorder in the text by accusing the copyists who "disarranged everything while transcribing it."⁵⁵ Simon writes that "it is increasingly apparent that just as when one writes books these days on small scrolls or on separate pages which are rolled up one in the other, the order of the pages becomes changed. And, moreover, the books of the Bible which we have is only an abridgement. One does not always consider the order of matters."⁵⁶

Astruc specifies the scribes or copyists as the guilty parties through whose ignorance and negligence the order of Moses' original text was distorted. Simon infers that while the same personnel may have been at fault, theirs was a common mechanical error. These differences are minor. The remarks of Simon about abridgement and order, however, are reminiscent of Spinoza's comment of the present text being a precis.

Astruc labors hard to indicate that the Hebrew language lends itself to repetition. Furthermore, he indicated that

"These repetition come from that of Genesis being only a simple compilation of two or three mémoires which report the same facts...⁵⁷

To Simon, however,

"one sees presently a very compressed style and then one quite extended, even though the diversity of material does not demand it...⁵⁸

Furthermore, and with some finality, Simon concludes:

"if one author had composed this work, he would have explained himself favorably in some saying, principally in some history."⁵⁹

Simon feels no need to begin to construct any hypothesis about authorship by a single person. There is no internal evidence or external evidence to support such a presumption. Simon assumes that

"scribes had compiled, under Ezra... all the ancient mémoires that they could find, and from them had made an abridged collection where they joined each thing. It is difficult to distinguish the changes that they made...

It is necessary to say that the Jews, long after Ezra, had retouched the Pentateuch."⁶⁰

Like Simon, Astruc assumes the presence of previous memoires upon which the present text is based. Unlike Simon, he maintains that they were compiled by Moses. While Simon argues that originally the scribes had collected the memoires, Astruc claims that the scribes were the ones who corrupted Moses' original text.

Astruc strongly disapproved of Simon's views. He called them "false and wantonly hazardous."⁶¹ His views of Simon is to be contrasted with the opinion Astruc held of one of Simon's chief antagonists, the Dutch Protestant bible critic, Jean Le Clerc, whom Astruc often cites.⁶²

Le Clerc had initially held views on the authorship of the Pentateuch that were more extreme than those of Simon. However, writes Astruc,

"the force of truth struck him and... he had the courage to retract, and to declare that he regarded Moses as the author of the Pentateuch. He even proved by a great number of precise testimonies, taken from the Pentateuch itself, that he agreed with... the majority of... the [traditional] commentators."⁶³

Le Clerc had in fact declared that

"the authority of the Pentateuch will be sufficiently established if it is shown... how it is composed of authentic pieces and collected by pious persons with the approbation of the entire Jewish nation."⁶⁴

Le Clerc thus stated the crucial problem that the defenders of the traditional interpretations of Catholicism and of conservative

Protestantism had to solve. For even the problem of the authorship of Moses was secondary to the basic issue of the authority of Scriptures. The authority of Scripture was the keystone of orthodox religion and of the established churches.

The vested interests of the Catholic Church in France were rooted in the sacredness of Scriptures. It was in turn dependent upon men like Astruc, to fight off the onslaught of the philosophic ideas of the seventeenth century, and of their proponents, the anti-religious and anti-clerical philosophes of the eighteenth century.

Le Clerc suggested that if the process by which the text arrived at its present state could be made clear and if the manner in which Moses composed the Pentateuchal text be described, then the attack upon the keystone argument of tradition would be well nigh overcome.

Astruc took up Le Clerc's proposition. By using the names of God, Astruc unravelled the present text into its memoires. He showed how straightforward was the text that Moses had composed from these memoires. He indicated that the memoires were of divine origin and that Moses labored under Divine instruction. He showed how the text of Moses had developed into its present state of confusion. As a test of his method, he demonstrated how such problems as the presence of repetitions in the text and the reversals and apparent errors in chronology disappeared when his method was applied.

He was convinced that his method demonstrated that

"there is nothing in these chapters [in the text] that can perplex, nothing that is anterior to the times of Moses, and consequently, nothing that can suggest to the Defenders of Religion the defiance that they witness, or to the pretended freethinkers the airs of triumph which they give themselves."⁶⁵

Astruc was satisfied that he had proved that Moses composed the Book of Genesis. He thus felt that he was providing the key argument for the establishment of the authority of Scriptures.

Astruc was thus spokesman for that element in the Catholic Church in France during the first half of the eighteenth century which sought to defend itself against the challenge of anti-religious ideas.

He spoke as a representative of the Catholic Church in France and as a member of the French nobility, the two privileged estates in French society before the Revolution of 1789. He defended the societal status quo against the attacks of the reforming philosophes.

Astruc was not concerned with the critical method of any biblical critic or with his observations on the text except as they afforded the privileged establishments he was trying to preserve.

It is not Astruc, the polemicist, the doctor, and the nobleman with whom succeeding generations have been concerned, but Astruc, the bible critic; not Jean Astruc, whose criticism of the Book of Genesis expressed the critical political and social issues of his time, but Astruc, whose method of analysing a biblical text would provide one of the most effective means of undermining the authority of the Scriptures, and of revolutionizing the society which Astruc was trying to preserve.

Notes

- 1 E. Ritter, "Jean Astruc, auteur des Conjectures," Bulletin de l'histoire de Protestantisme français LXV (1916), p. 276. Indicates that Pierre Astruc was a student at the University of Geneva, where among other subjects, he studied Hebrew. Astruc, Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire naturelle du Languedoc (Paris, 1740), p. 190, alludes to his father's knowledge of Hebrew. He says that his father had made corrections in the French translation of the Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela.
- 2 A-G. Lorry, Eloge, which serves as a preface to Astruc's Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la Faculté de l'université de Montpellier (Paris, 1767), xlii. "M. Astruc fut baptiste dans le temple de Sauve, mais il n'est jamais connu que catholique romain." J. Alphandéry, "Jean Astruc" Revue l'histoire philosophique et religieuse (1924), p. 6 and G. Best, "Notice Biographique," Bulletin de l'histoire de protestantisme française LXV (1916), pp. 73-75, demonstrate conclusively that the conversion of Pierre Astruc took place, however, after the birth of Jean Astruc. They can place the conversion no more exactly than in 1605. Neither questions the type religious education in Roman Catholicism that Lorry says Pierre Astruc gave his sons.
- 3 Alphandéry, ibid., p. 7. It was entitled De motus fermentativi causa.
- 4 Chirac is found as chief physician to Louis XV in 1731, after the death of the regent, Duval, Journal de la Régence (Paris, 1865), 2 vols., Vol. I, p. 150, 462. Chirac was chief physician to the king at the same time that Astruc, was appointed as consulting physician, see supra p. 3.
- 5 Alphandéry, op. cit., p. 10; the early career of Astruc is outlined by Lorry Eloge, pp. i-xi. Lorry says that he returned to Montpellier in order to write De morbis Venereis, Lorry xlii.
- 6 Lorry, ibid., p. xliii.
- 7 P. Clement and A. Lemoine, Silhouette, Bourcet, les derniers fermiers généraux (Paris, 1872), p. 8; Astruc apparently retained his association with the university of Montpellier as professor of medicine.

Notes (cont'd)

- 8 J. Barbier, Chronique de la Régence et du règne de Louis XV ou Journal (Paris, 1877), 8 vols., V, p. 80: Astruc married a girl from his own region. He had two children. He married off his daughter in 1745. He purchased an office for his son in the legal profession. Clement, op. cit., indicates his great wealth, p. 42.
- 9 Lorry, ibid., p. xli: "Les recherches métaphysiques... Les variétés avaient un attrait qui souvent le ramenait à la théologie la plus profonde... il pouvoit parler philosophiquement de l'âme, de ses liaisons avec le corps et le mécanique intermédiaire qui, place sur les confins de cette région inconnue, est toujours obscure, toujours, épineuse, il le faisait avec complaisance."
- 10 He vigorously championed the Jesuit cause attested to by a niece of Mme. de Ferriol, Mlle. de Aisse, Lettres (Paris, 1873), p. 339. For the Jesuit-Jansenist quarrel, its relationship to the struggle of the Gallican church for recognition of its claims and to the struggle of Parlements and the monarchy, P. Dudan, "De la Suppression de la Compagnie de Jesus, 1758-1775," Revue des questions historiques, cxxvii (1938), 75-107; ibid., "La Resurrection de la Compagnie de Jesus," ibid., cxxviii (1939), 21-58; J. Parguez, La Bulle Unigenitus et le Jansenisme politique (Paris, 1936); B. de Lacombe, La Résistance janséniste et parlementaire au temps de Louis XV (Paris, 1949); J. Egat, "Le Procès des Jésuites devant les Parlements de France," Revue historique, cciv (1950), 1-27.
- 11 On the Jansenist movement, see E. Fréclin, Les Jansenistes du dix-huitième siècle (Paris, 1929); R. R. Palmer, Catholics and Unbelievers in the Eighteenth Century (Princeton, 1938), pp. 23 ff., contains a brief statement of the Jesuit-Jansenist controversy; cf. W. K. Ferguson, "The Place of Jansenism in French History," Journal of Religion, VII (1927), pp. 16-42.
- 12 The great wealth of the Tencins in 1728 is attested to by Aisse, Lettres, p. 258. For their relationship with the king and his financial adviser, John Law, and for Tencin's negotiations in Rome on behalf of the première ministre, the Abbé Dubois, see A. Lemonney, Histoire de la Régence (Paris, 1832), 2 vols., I, p. 45. The opinion the Jansenists held of Mme. de Tencin is summarized in one of their little rhymes:
- "Te passerai-je sous silence
souver de Tencin montre
enrichie par l'imprudence
et le larcin..."
- Chansonnier Historique, du siècle (Paris, 1879-84), 10 vols, V, pp. III ff.

Notes (cont'd)

- 13 The list of those who attended Mme. de Tencin's salon is in the preface to her novellette, Mémoires de Comte de Comminges, notice et notes par M. de Lescure (Paris, 1885), p. 50. For one man's view of the salon, a favorable view, see Bolingbroke, Lettres, (Paris, 1808), II, 33, 551.
- 14 J. Christopher Herold, Love in Five Temperaments (New York, 1961), chapter one, especially pp. 43, 59.
- 15 Lorry, Eloge., p. xivi, indicates that De Morbis Venericis was "adopté par toute l'Europe, traduit, contrefait." See also Alphandéry, op. cit., p. 12.
- 16 Lorry, op. cit., p. xxxvi: "l'un des premiers professeurs qui aient suivi l'ordre des démonstrations mathématiques dans la physique du corps humain."
- 17 Mme. de Tencin to the Duc de Richelieu, 11/1742, complained that it was a "mariage difficileux, mariage de combinaison et d'argent, s'il en fût," quoted in P. Masson, Madame de Tencin (Paris, 1909), p. 212.
- 18 M. Guillaumont-Vallot, Le Contrôleur-Général Silhouette et ses réformes en matière financière (Paris, 1911), pp. 16-17.
- 19 E. Lavisse, Histoire de France... (Paris, 1909), 9 vols., Tome 8, vol. II: La règne de Louis XV, par H. Carré, p. 228 ff. discusses the problems with which Silhouette had to cope upon his accession to office.
- 20 For some contemporary opinions, see E. Ducloux, Ouvrages complètes (Paris, 1821), 3 vols., vol. III: Mémoires secrets sur le règne de Louis XIV, la Régence, et le règne de Louis XV, pp. 246 ff.; M. Marais, Journal et mémoires... sur la Régence et le règne de Louis XV, (1715-1737) Paris, 1863-68), 4 vols. I, pp. 265, 281 ff.; II, pp. 51, 108-13; R. D'Argenson, Journal et mémoires, 1697-1757, (Paris, 1859-67), 9 vols., VI, p. 142; St. Simon, Mémoires... (Paris, 1873-77) Paris edition

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of 1961, Tome 16, pp. 350-56; Voltaire, Correspondance, (Paris, 1954), vol. XXXIX (index volume), pp. 457-59. For the opinion of some historians, see Michelet, Histoire de France... (Paris, 1867), 19 vols., XV, pp. 59-65; Lavisse, op. cit., pp. 213-214. Astruc received much criticism as part of the Tencin salon group; Marais, ibid., I, pp. 265, 281 ff., V, p. 136 ff.; Michelet, ibid., V, pp. 15, 59 ff.

21 D'Argenson, Journal, II, 300; III, p. 49; IV, pp. 38-42; Chansonnier, VI, p. 332; VII, pp. 4-11, 112 ff.

22 See D'Alembert's own complaint, and the comments of the philosophes Grimm and Condorcet on the matter of his abandonment, R. D'Alembert Oeuvres (Paris, 1853), 20 vols., XVIII, pp. 1, 19, 50. See the letters exchanged between D'Alembert and Voltaire, Oeuvres completes, (edition of Paris, 1784), LXVIII, p. 181 (August, 1760) and that letter of D'Alembert to Voltaire in which he complains that Astruc has blamed the Encyclopedia for the fact that Jesuits are being persecuted. "Ce maroufle d'Astruc" D'Alembert calls him, ibid., p. 201 (May, 1762). When this particular attack is analyzed, the facts that D'Alembert was M^{me}. de Tencin's illegitimate son and that Astruc inherited much of her fortune, should be considered. Here a personal as well as a possible ideological antagonism is apparent.

23 Marais, Journal, V, pp. 136 ff.

24 M^{me}. de Tencin wrote to the Duc de Richelieu (June, 1743). Tencin, Oeuvres completes de Mesdames de la Fayette, de Tencin, et de Fontaine (Paris, 1825), III, p. 385: "Astruc veut qu'il d'Astruc, ne vous donnez pas la peine de lui écrire; vos complimens sont suffisamment faits par moi."

25 Henault, Mémoires... (Paris, 1854), p. 396. Henault had no love for M^{me}. de Tencin either. He called her "doux, insinuant, faux comme un feson," ibid., p. 395.

26 C^{lé}ment, op. cit., pp. 8, 29, 72, 80 ff., 298; D'Argenson, Journal, VI, p. 149; Barbier, Journal, VIII, p. 206; D'Argenson

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Journal, VI, p. 149; Barbier, Journal, VIII, p. 206; D'Argenson indicates that Silhouette was also the candidate of the Jesuits for the Controller-generalship, ibid.; the reason for this sponsorship is that the Minister of finance, Machault, had ventured to put a tax on the wealth of the Jesuits. For this reason, the Jesuits secured his dismissal. Silhouette, it appears, was like his father-in-law, a pro-Jesuit. On Machault, Silhouette, and the financial disquiet of 1753, see Lavisso, Histoire, op. cit., pp. 229, 237.

27 Clement, op. cit., p. 22.

28 D'Argenson, Journal, IV, p. 287: "On m'a dit que le sieur Silhouette prenait un grand vol, à l'occasion des affaires du clergé."

29 Voltaire directly criticized the Conjectures in his article on "Génése" in Questions sur l'Encyclopédie (1773): "Le médecin Astruc, beau-père du Contrôleur-général, Silhouette, dans un livre, devenu trésorier, intitulé Conjectures sur la Génése, ajoute de nouvelles objections insolubles à la science humaine... les savants osent contredire chaque ligne et les simples réverent chaque ligne..."

30 Recherches sur l'inoculation de la petite vérole (1756); Grimal Correspondance, III, p. 257; Traité des tumeurs et des ulcères (1759); 2 vols.; Lorry, Eloge, p. 1; Traité des maladies des femmes, (1761-65), 6 vols., Eng. trans., 1762, 2 vols., Latin trans. 1762, 1 vol, L'art d'accoucher réduit à ses principes (Paris, 1766; second edition, 1771); op. cit., p. 23.

31 Clement, op. cit., p. 8. On the title page, the publisher and place of publication are listed as Fricx, Bruxelles. However, A. A. Barbier, Dictionnaire des ouvrages anonymes et pseudonymes (Paris, 1806), 3 vols., I, p. 110, demonstrated conclusively that the Conjectures sur les manières originaires dont il parait que Moïse s'est servi pour composer le livre de la Génése was

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published in Paris at the firm which published most of Astruc's Parisian works. For a complete list of Astruc's medical treatises and an evaluation of his contribution to medicine, see H. N. Michard, ed., Biographie Universelle, (Paris, 1880), II, pp. 343a-345a.

35 Astruc, Conjectures, advertisement (two pages appearing before the table of contents), I, II. P. Alphandery, "Notice Biographique," Revue d'histoire de philosophie religieuses, IV, (1924), p. 18, suggests that Astruc was concerned lest the censors condemn his work. The policy of the head of censorship, Malherbes, was, on the contrary, quite liberal. The granting of permissives tacites for illegal books became a usual procedure in his department, cf. H. Robert, Malherbes (Paris, 1927), pp. 61-73; A. Bachman, Censorship in France, 1700-1750 (New York, 1934), pp. 246-256. One would imagine that Astruc's choice of the Bible or the Huguenots, the Geneva Bible, as the text with which is operates, would cause him some alarm. However, aside from explaining why he chose this text: "Ille suit 1. Hebraei et 10 suit 11 litteralement, qu'elle représente exactement 1. original," Conjectures, p. 12, Astruc offers no further explanation or defense. There is no doubt that his concern lest his conclusions be used to diminish the authority of Scriptures was not less grave than any worry that the publication of the Conjectures would lead to any personal harm, see above p. 59. It is possible that among the "learned and pious men" of whom Astruc speaks and who remain unidentified, was the Cardinal de Tencin. The Cardinal, a friend of Pope Benedict XIV, had already pleaded successful for the removal from the Index of works of the Abbe Fleury, who is among the few contemporaries Astruc cites. There is, however, no direct evidence bearing on the possibility that the Cardinal de Tencin was one of the men who apparently provided the assurance Astruc needed in order to publish his work. For the relationship of the Cardinal with the Pope, see J-B Vanel, "Le Cardinal de Tencin, fournesseur de la Bibliothèque de Benoît XIV," Bulletin historique du diocèse de Lyon, II (1902), pp. 118-124; Vanel, "J'Abbe Fleury et l'Index et la diplomatie du Cardinal de Tencin," Ibid., pp. 241-249; E. de Weckeren, "Benoît XIV et le Cardinal de Tencin: Leur correspondance," Ibid., VIII (1910-11), pp. 65-80, in which he says that the Cardinal was "le conseiller du Souverain Pontifice pour les affaires de France, p. 79.

32 Conjectures, pp. 2-6.

Notes (cont'd)

- ³³ Op. cit., p. 322, marginal note: cf. "La sagesse de Moÿse et infiniment plus encore, l'assistance de Dieu, qui l'a éclairé et dirigé dans la choix des mémoires qu'il a employés," p. 323.
- ³⁴ Op. cit., pp. 1, 2, 281-84, 286.
- ³⁵ Op. cit., pp. 288-89, 291-96, 298.
- ³⁶ Op. cit., pp. 10-18.
- ³⁷ Op. cit., p. 7 indicates that Astruc was aware of the conclusions of Simon and Le Clerc regarding Moses' use of ancient memories. His statement "M. Le Clerc et M. Simon... ont avoué l'un et l'autre (our italics), qu'il estoit trèsapparent que Moÿse, en écrivant la Genèse, (our italics), avoit eu le secours de quelques mémoires anciens," is not completely true since Simon emphatically denied Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, see above pp. 10-11.
- ³⁸ Op. cit., pp. 7, 9, 13, 15, 16, 21.
- ³⁹ Op. cit., avertissement, 1; see above, p. 1.
- ⁴⁰ Op. cit., pp. 310, 315, 17, 312, 314.
- ⁴¹ Op. cit., pp. 318, 320, 40-45, 319, 321. All the references to authorship of the memories refers to memoires A-Elohim. On the B-YHWH memories, Astruc writes, "il n'y a rien que indique l'auteur de memoire B," (p. 322).
- ⁴² Op. cit., pp. 352, 329, 331-32.

Notes (cont'd)

- 43 Op. cit., pp. 365-377.
- 44 Op. cit., pp. 378-430, especially pp. 378, 380-382.
- 45 Op. cit., pp. 433-435
- 46 Op. cit., p. 431: the heading to chapter 14.
- 47 Op. cit., pp. 435-437. Astruc assumes the reasons for the scribes discarding of the columnar arrangement were (1) they were careless in moving from column to column as they copied the text, (2) they became tired of using them, since the copyists did not understand the reason for the columns, and (3) they tried to improve upon Moses' arrangement by recasting the memoires into a continuous narrative.
- 48 See above, chapter on Hobbes and Spinoza pp. 18-36.
- 49 Op. cit., pp. 452-453. In a note, p. 453, Astruc cites the 1670 edition of the Tractatus and also the title and date of its French translation, Réflexions curieuses d'un esprit désintéressé..., (1678). Here Astruc cites chapter IX of the Tractatus.
- 50 Op. cit., pp. 453-454. Here he cites Leviathan, its English edition of 1651 and its Latin edition of 1668, part III, chapter XXXIII.
- 51 Op. cit., p. 9.
- 52 Op. cit., pp. 435-436.
- 53 Op. cit., p. 10.

Notes (cont'd)

- ⁵⁴ Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament (Amsterdam, 1778), I, pp. 32 ff.
- ⁵⁵ Conjectures, p. 435.
- ⁵⁶ Histoire, I, p. 24.
- ⁵⁷ Conjectures, pp. 366-378, 10.
- ⁵⁸ Histoire, I, p. 39
- ⁵⁹ Op. cit., p. 33.
- ⁶⁰ Op. cit., p. 26.
- ⁶¹ Conjectures, p. 454.
- ⁶² The relationship of Richard Simon and his Protestant critics is analyzed in H. Fréville, "Richard Simon et les Protestants," Revue d'histoire moderne, VI, (1931), pp. 30-55.
- ⁶³ Op. cit., p. 455.
- ⁶⁴ J. Le Clerc, Quelques sentiments de Théologiens de Hollande (Amsterdam, 1685), p. 171.
- ⁶⁵ Conjectures, p. 495.

APPENDIX A - Astruc's Use of Secondary Material

It has already been noted that Astruc prefers to derive his evidence directly from the Biblical text rather than from secondary material (above, p. 47). For the most part, Astruc quotes from works of classical authors, church doctors, and traditional commentators, only after he has already made his point decisively on the basis of material gathered from the text of the Bible.

Furthermore, the secondary material Astruc uses is rarely of contemporary vintage. The reference he makes to Le Clerc (above, p. 57) is one of the few times that Astruc alludes to the work of an immediate predecessor. Astruc often calls upon St. Augustine, Eusebius, and St. Cyrille of Alexandria, but rarely refers to a contemporary. Of the small latter group, a few authors are referred to more often than others: the Abbé Claude Fleury, whose books were on and off the Index (above, p. 65 note 32), Pierre-Daniel Huet, a noted erudit and a member of Bossuet's coterie of Bible scholars (above, p. 6), and Thomas de Vio, de Gaete, known as Cardinal Cajetan, a General of the Dominican Order and a leading exegete of the Catholic Reformation of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. It was Cajetan whom Pope Leo X sent to Germany to debate with and to silence Martin Luther.

Of all his references, however, only once does Astruc quote a citation in full. This citation is brought up to underscore a critical point in Astruc's argument. Astruc writes: "Je mets une grande différence entre supposer quelque omission dans les narrations de l'Ecriture, ou y admettre quelque faute de copiste dans quelques nombre, et entre soutenir un sentiment qui combat le text formel de l'Ecriture, et qui semble vouloir donner un dementi a l'Ecrivain sacre," Conjectures, pp. 393-94. Astruc needs this point of poor copyists having corrupted the Biblical text, for his main point that the text which he has before him is not the original, orderly text of Moses. But first Astruc must assume, and convince the reader that his assumption is correct, that the textus receptus is corrupt as it stands, and that in and of itself it is not divine. Here Astruc is on most dangerous ground. Here he must cite important and powerful precedent to demonstrate that the received text is faulty.

Astruc first cites Cajetan, whom he says, "dit qu'il y a des fautes dans quelques endroits de l'Ancien Testament," ibid., note 2. His quotation in full is from Bellarmin. Cardinal Bellarmin was a Jesuit, a leader of the Catholic Reformation and a professor at the University of Louvain. His disputations were considered the supreme effort of Catholicism to promote the work of the Council of Trent. Bellarmin, says Astruc, "dit la meme chose... voici ses termes:... 'Restat tertia sententia, quam verissimam puto, quae est Driedonis... hebraicas Scripturas... habere quosdam sous errores, qui partim irrepsierint negligentia vel ignorantia librariorum... partim ignorantia Rabbiorum, qui addiderunt puncta,' ibid. With the force of two mighty champions of the Catholic Reformation behind him, and believing his basic argument to be firmly ensconced in Catholic tradition, Astruc can now move on to his next point.

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