



Universität
Basel

Forum Basiliense

Workshop with Omri Boehm

CRITIQUE OF PROPHECY. SPINOZA AND OTHER HERETICS

Date: Thursday, 31. October

Time: 15:00-18:00

Location: Alte Universität Basel

Spinoza's Tractatus Theologico-philosophicus [TTP], which some view as the opening shot of the radical political enlightenment, begins with a definition of prophecy and prophets. «Prophecy,» he argues, «is a certain knowledge given by God to men». A «Prophet», in turn, is he who receives such certain knowledge and delivers it to those who «cannot themselves» acquire it. In this light, the institution of prophecy is seen as the hallmark of guiding one's thought by accepting authority over our thinking -- of failing the task of enlightenment, literally defined, by Kant, as refusing the «guidance of another» and having the «courage» to «think for oneself».

Spinoza's account has left its footsteps in conservative (Leo Strauss), liberal (Michael Walzer), and postmarxist (Antonio Negri) political thought until today. Does this *Auseinandersetzung* between prophecy and enlightenment, religion and reason, hold up? Or does enlightenment require thinking prophecy after all? What is the relation between prophecy and politics? Revolution? We will be focusing on Spinoza's account of prophecy and, reading Kant, its relation to Enlightenment. Texts include specific locations in Spinoza's TTP; Kant's «What is Enlightenment» and paragraphs in his 3rd *Critique*, along with recommended references in Maimonides and Walzer.

**registration via: j.buechele@unibas.ch
with a short motivation letter until the 24. October**