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A Companion to Spinoza

Edited by

YITZHAK Y. MELAMED

WILEY Blackwell

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Contents

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List of Abbreviations

Descartes's Works

AT	Adam and Tannery (eds.), *Oeuvres de Descartes*
CSM	Cottingham, Stoothoff, and Murdoch (ed. and trans.), *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* (third volume edited by A. Kenny also)

Hobbes' Works

EL	*Elements of Law*
DC	*De Cive* (cited by chapter and paragraph)
L	*Leviathan* (cited by chapter, page and line number in Malcolm's edition)
DCo	*De Corpore* (cited by part, chapter, paragraph)

Spinoza's Works

CM	*Cogitata Metaphysica* (an appendix to Spinoza's DPP)
DPP	*Renati des Cartes Principiorum Philosophiae Pars I and II*| Descartes's Principles of Philosophy)
Ep.	*Epistolae*| Letters
G	*Spinoza Opera*, edited by Carl Gebhardt. 4 vols, 1925.
KV	*Korte Verhandeling van God de Mensch en deszelfs Welstand*| Short Treatise on God, Man, and his Well-Being)
TIE	*Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione*| Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect
E	*Ethica*| Ethics
TTP	*Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*| *Theological Political Treatise*
CGH	*Compendium Grammatices Linguae Hebraeae*| Compendium of Hebrew Grammar
NS	*Nagelate Shriften* (1677 Dutch edition of Spinoza's Works)
Vat	*The Vatican Manuscript of Spinoza's Ethics*, edited by Leen Spruit and Pina Totaro, Leiden, NL: Brill, 2011.
E PUF	*Spinoza Oeuvres IV: Ethica*. Texte établi par Fokke Akkerman et Piet Steenbakkers. Traduction par Pierre-François Moreau. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2020.

Passages in Spinoza's *Ethics* are referred to by means of the following abbreviations: a-(xiom), c-(orollary), e-(xplanation), l-(emma), p-(roposition), pref- (ace), s-(cholium), and app-(endix); "d" stands for either "definition" (when it appears immediately to the right of the part of the book) or "demonstration" (in all other cases). The five parts of the Ethics are cited by Arabic numerals. Thus "E1d3" stands for the third definition of Part 1 and "E1p16d" for the demonstration of proposition 16 of Part 1. Passages from DPP are cited using the same system of abbreviations used for the *Ethics*.

References to Spinoza's original Latin and Dutch texts rely on the pagination of *Spinoza Opera* (ed. Carl Gebhardt, 1925) and follow this format: volume number/ page number/ line number. Hence "II/200/12" stands for volume 2, page 200, line 12.

Passages from Adam and Tannery (eds.), *Oeuvres de Descartes*, are cited by volume and page number. Thus "AT VII 23" stands for page 23 of volume 7 of this edition.

Introduction

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed a substantial surge of interest in Spinoza's philosophy, first in France and in Europe more generally, and then, toward the end of the century, in North America as well. At present, Spinoza's philosophical legacy seems remarkably full of promise in comparison with other major figures in the history of philosophy, and it is part of the aim of this *Companion* to exhibit the vitality, versatility, and vision of scholarly attention devoted to Spinoza in recent years.

As this volume is about to go to press, we read about the just street protest targeting statues of Enlightenment philosophers such as Hume and Kant due to their disturbing racial prejudices. Spinoza, too, was not wholly immune to such prejudice, whether as expressed in his lazy inference that since women are subjugated everywhere, this must be due to their nature (TP 11 | III/360/14) – a claim one could expect from many philosophers, but not from one who relishes challenging commonly-accepted-yet-poorly-justified 'truisms' – or his occasional rehashing of anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim stereotypes. Still, I believe, it would be fair to say that in comparison with his contemporaries, Spinoza's views on politics and human equality are far more decent and far less naïve. Indeed, in many ways, his progressive realism is more morally and politically respectable than prevailing attitudes of our time.

The past three centuries have exhibited a wide plurality of different Spinozisms. While Spinoza has been celebrated as a paragon or precursor of a great variety of political stances, none (so far) has been of the monstrous kind. Is it a mere coincidence that the Nazi Kantianism fostered during the Third Reich, has no Spinozist twin? I would like to be able to answer the last question with a solid "no," but such an answer might be premature, and the question better be left hanging in the air.

The invitation to edit this volume came almost five years ago. At the time, I asked the Blackwell editors to postpone this project by a few years, in order to create a healthy distance between this volume and the *Oxford Handbook of Spinoza* which came out in 2017. During this long period – about as long as three elephant pregnancies – I have worked with several Blackwell editors: Charlie Hamlyn, Marissa Koors, Rachel Greenberg, Manish Luthra, and Mohan Jayachandran, and I would like to thank each and every one of them for their trust, care, and support.

There are several substantial editorial decisions I wish to explain here briefly. To facilitate diversity (of gender, geography, philosophical tradition, and stage of career development), I have decided to commission a larger number of chapters. This decision has also allowed the *Companion* to cover topics which are rarely addressed in similar publications. Yet, insofar as the length of the entire *Companion* had to be restricted within certain reasonable limits, most of the chapters had to be concise. Moreover, in order to recruit top

scholars – who are frequently not tempted to write mere summaries and textbook entries – I invited contributors to use their chapters to develop new ideas and cutting-edge research, rather than merely summarize existing scholarship. Thus, the contributors were placed – by me – in an uneasy and challenging situation: they were asked to provide a brief overview of their subject matter while presenting serious, original scholarship, all in a rather short space. While I do not wish to break the Talmudic rule that a "baker may not attest to the quality of his own loaf," my personal feeling is that this challenge has been met even better than I could have hoped, and I would like to thank my collaborators in this volume for their immense investment, talent, and intellectual generosity.

In January 2020, the Maimonides Center at Hamburg University hosted a workshop in which a small group of the papers in this volume were presented, and I would like to thank the center and its co-director, my friend, Stephan Schmid for this generous initiative. Finally, I wish to thank Jonathan Arking, Rosemary Morlin, and Shyamala Venkateswaran, for their outstanding assistance in the copyediting and production of this Companion.

Yitzhak Y. Melamed
Baltimore, MD
June 2020

Part I

Life and Background

1

Spinoza's Life

PIET STEENBAKKERS

Apart from his works Spinoza did not leave many traces. Though certainly not a recluse, he led an inconspicuous life. Some periods in it are hardly documented, so that any biography of the philosopher must to some extent be lacunary. The following account of his life is as coherent as the historical material and the format of this *Companion* permit. This chapter is an extract from a substantially longer, footnoted version that will appear in Garrett (2021), to which I refer for corroboration of the details presented here. My work on Spinoza's biography has profited greatly from a standing collaboration with Jeroen van de Ven, who is preparing a detailed chronicle of the philosopher's life.

1. Family

Spinoza was born in Amsterdam in 1632. He died in The Hague in 1677. As far as we know he never left the Dutch Republic. His mother was born in Amsterdam, but his father and his grandparents on both sides were from Portugal. From the end of the sixteenth century onwards, many Sephardic Jews came to Amsterdam to escape from the persecution they suffered in Spain and Portugal. Medieval Iberia (*Sepharad* in Hebrew) had been ruled by Muslims for a very long time, and though it was not free from oppression, it had allowed Jews to profess their religion. After nearly nine centuries, however, the situation changed dramatically: in 1492 Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile (known as *los Reyes Católicos*) conquered Spain, and immediately expelled the Jews. Most of them went to Portugal, but in 1497 the Portuguese king Manuel I married the daughter of the Spanish 'Catholic Monarchs.' On their insistence, he forced all Jews to convert to Christianity. Those who continued to practice Judaism were, however, not actively persecuted until half a century later. Then many *conversos* (or 'New Christians'), who were indiscriminately suspected of Judaizing in secret, fled Portugal to escape the Portuguese Inquisition. In 1580 Spain and Portugal were politically united under Philip II of Spain, and in the decades that followed many Jews sought refuge abroad, often in seaports – so as to stay in touch with their network of overseas merchants. Thus they came to French harbor towns (Bordeaux, Nantes, Rouen) and to Antwerp and Amsterdam in the Low

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Countries. Many Sephardi immigrants settled on Vlooienburg, an embankment in the river Amstel created in 1593 as part of the urban expansion of Amsterdam.

Michael de Spinoza, the philosopher's father, was born in 1587 or 1588 in Vidigueira, Portugal. In 1605 his parents, Pedro Rodrigues Espinosa and Mor Alvares, fled to Nantes with their three children. Michael moved to Amsterdam in the early 1620s. Around 1623 he married Rachel de Spinoza, a first cousin. They had two children, both stillborn. Rachel died in 1627. Michael then married Hana Deborah Senior, with whom he had five children: Miriam, Isaac, Bento (or Baruch), Gabriel, and Rebecca. Michael and Hana Deborah named their third child Baruch, after his maternal grandfather (who officially received that name only when he was circumcised after his death in 1647). As a child he was called Bento, the Portuguese translation of Baruch ('blessed'). The philosopher himself seems not to have used the Hebrew version of his name: he signed legal documents as 'Bento,' letters as 'Benedictus,' or just the initial 'B.' Just before Bento turned six, on 5 November 1638, his mother died. Michael's third and last marriage, with Hester de Spinoza, remained childless.

Spinoza's family lived on the edge of Vlooienburgh. The house in which Bento was born and raised, a handsome merchant's residence on the north quay of the Houtgracht, close to the old Amsterdam synagogue, was pulled down in the nineteenth century. On its premises the *Mozes en Aäronkerk* was built. The former island of Vlooienburgh has become a square, the *Waterlooplein*. Michael de Spinoza and his family stayed in the same house for decades, so Bento lived there from his birth on 24 November 1632 up to at least 1656, when he was expelled from the Portuguese-Jewish community of Amsterdam.

2. The Amsterdam Years (1632–ca. 1660)

As a child Spinoza attended 'Ets Haim', a nearby *cheder* (elementary school). He received a solid Jewish education, though he did not attend the school's highest forms. He was never trained to become a rabbi, but joined his father's trading firm in his early teens. Michael de Spinoza was a respected and active member of the Jewish community in Amsterdam. He imported and exported commodities such as raisins, almonds, wine, and olive oil. Bento's stepmother Hester died in 1652, and his father Michael in 1654. Isaac had died in 1649, Miriam in 1651, and Rebecca moved out in 1650, so after 1654 the two brothers Gabriel and Bento were the only remaining family members still living in the parental home on the Houtgracht. They took over their father's firm, but it soon became clear that it was weighed down with debts as a result of severe losses in the years 1651–1653, owing to piracy and war. In order to escape bankruptcy, Bento, then 23 years of age, had himself declared a minor under Dutch law and placed under tutelage on 16 March 1656. By this maneuver he was released from the insolvent estate. Apparently Gabriel managed to continue the company on his own until October 1664: he then granted power of attorney to the merchant brothers Moses and David Juda Lion, and set off to Barbados.

On 27 July 1656, just a few months after Spinoza's spectacular legal escape from the family business, he was ritually expelled from the Amsterdam Jewish community, with a formal ban (*herem*) pronounced in the synagogue of the Talmud Tora congregation. The exact reasons for the ban are not specified in the archival record we have of it – presumably a summary (in Portuguese) of a lost official text in Hebrew. It states that the synagogue's board of governors (the *Mahamad*) expelled 'Baruch espinoza' because of his evil opinions and activities, and of the horrible heresies he had practiced and taught, as well as the

monstrous acts he had committed. As far as we know, Spinoza had not yet published anything at the time when the *herem* was promulgated. Yet the wording of its record indicates that teaching heretical ideas was among the abominations he was accused of. To all appearances, Spinoza's philosophy was already gestating in the middle of the 1650s, in some form or another. As the earliest letters show, he had acquired a reputation as a redoubtable philosopher by 1661. He obviously flourished in the heterodox circles in which he moved in the latter half of the 1650s. Unfortunately, this formative period in Spinoza's life is very poorly documented. That his philosophical views had something to do with the heresies imputed to him is also asserted in testimonies of two Spanish travelers who had associated with Spinoza in Amsterdam in 1658–1659. Tomás Solano, an Augustinian monk from Tunja (in Colombia, then part of the Spanish empire) and Captain Miguel Pérez de Maltranilla were part of a group that frequently gathered in the residence of Joseph Guerra, a nobleman from the Canary Islands, who was in Amsterdam to be cured of leprosy. Spinoza and another excommunicated Jew, Juan de Prado, often attended these gatherings. In August 1659, Solano and Pérez de Maltranilla were interrogated by the Spanish Inquisition in Madrid, primarily about a Spanish actor who had converted to Judaism in Amsterdam. They also told the Inquisition about their meetings with Spinoza and Prado; according to them these men had been expelled from the Jewish community because of their rejection of Jewish law. Solano in addition mentioned their views that the soul is mortal and that God exists only philosophically.

It would have been possible for Spinoza to be readmitted to the community, if he had made amends. That was a price he did not want to pay. Spinoza accepted the *herem* as a fact: for him, the break with Judaism was definitive. He never joined another religious denomination either. There are some indications that he reacted to the ban with a written statement, a vindication of his dissent from Judaism. If that is true, it is tempting to assume that part of it may have found its way into his works, particularly the *Theological-Political Treatise*.

The five years after Spinoza's excommunication from the synagogue are shrouded in haze. All contacts with relatives (including his brother and business partner Gabriel) and Jewish acquaintances were severed. It is unlikely that he could have continued to live in the parental home on the Houtgracht with Gabriel. Just what he did in Amsterdam after 1656 and where he lived is a mystery. We know that he associated with freethinking Christians and apostate Jews. He had already befriended Jarig Jelles, Pieter Balling, and Simon Joosten de Vries – Mennonite merchants he had met while still in business. He became acquainted with his future publisher Jan Rieuwertsz, and with Jan Hendriksz Glazemaker, the professional translator who was to translate most of Spinoza's works. At the age of 25, in 1657–1658, Spinoza attended the private Latin school run by the former Jesuit Franciscus van den Enden. The story that he fell in love with the teacher's daughter Clara Maria (then 15 years old) has been eagerly exploited in biographical accounts and (more appropriately) in works of art and fiction about the philosopher, but it has an air of romanticized hearsay about it.

In the period between 1656 and 1661, Spinoza was setting out on a new course. One gets the impression that he left Vlooienburgh after the *herem* and found temporary accommodation with various friends. Thus, he may have lived as a boarder in Van den Enden's school. His talents burgeoned. By the time he moved to Rijnsburg, Spinoza had gained renown as a philosopher, had mastered the art of grinding lenses, and was proficient in Latin, the international language of scholarly and scientific communication. The genesis of his early works, the *Treatise of the Emendation of the Intellect* and the *Short Treatise*

of God, Man and his Well-Being, can be dated from the years before 1662. If the *Treatise of the Emendation of the Intellect* is indeed, as present-day scholarship is inclined to assume, the earliest of his extant works, it is likely to have been written during his last years in Amsterdam. Throughout his life, he entertained thoughts of revising and finishing it, but eventually he never updated the manuscript. When his friends decided to publish it as part of his posthumous works in 1677, they revised and polished the unsophisticated or perhaps even awkward Latin in which this early text was written.

In the remaining years in or around Amsterdam, Spinoza moved in various circles, with the common denominator that they were heterodox and tolerant. Quite a few of the people he associated with in the latter half of the 1650s stayed in touch with him and remained loyal friends. When Simon de Vries died in 1667, he remembered Spinoza in his will, leaving him a yearly pension of 250 guilders. Many of his old friends were actively involved in getting Spinoza's works published: Lodewijk Meyer oversaw the publication of his *Principia philosophiae & Cogitata metaphysica* in 1663, Pieter Balling supplied a Dutch translation in 1664, and Johannes Bouwmeester and Hendrick van Bronckhorst contributed dedicatory poems. Jan Rieuwertsz published all of Spinoza's works, both in Latin and in Dutch. Jan Hendriksz Glazemaker translated the remainder of the Latin texts. In 1677 Jarig Jelles, Bouwmeester, Meyer, and Rieuwertsz took care of Spinoza's philosophical legacy.

Colerus reports that Spinoza did not move directly from Amsterdam to Rijnsburg, but that he first learned how to grind lenses and then moved in with someone who lived outside town, on the road to Ouderkerk. Another early source, Monnikhoff, adds that Spinoza moved to Rijnsburg together with that same person. There is no further evidence to support this information. A persistent legend, relayed by the anonymous (and entirely unreliable) pamphlet *La Vie et l'esprit de Monsieur Benoit de Spinosa*, has it that Spinoza was banished from the city of Amsterdam by its magistrates, at the instigation of the spiteful rabbi Saul Levi Morteira. That story is certainly fictitious. Spinoza had nothing to fear from the city magistrates. Indeed, he returned there several times without any trouble. Another possible reason why Spinoza left Amsterdam is given by Pierre Bayle: allegedly Spinoza was attacked by someone with a knife. If, when, and why this attack took place remains in the dark. Spinoza's friend Jarig Jelles does not refer to it when mentioning his move in the preface to *De nagelate schriften*: "To get rid of all the worldly worries and troubles that commonly hinder the search for truth, and in order to be the less disturbed by all his friends, he left the city where he was born, Amsterdam, and took up residence first in Rijnsburg."

3. Spinoza in Rijnsburg (ca. 1660/61–April 1663)

Why Spinoza chose Rijnsburg, then the center of the Collegiant movement, is a matter of speculation. There are no indications that he himself was actively involved in the meetings ('colleges') of that informal latitudinarian current in Dutch Protestantism, which attracted Arminians, Mennonites, and Socinians. But several of his friends were Collegiants, so that may have played a part. An asset of the village was also that it was within walking distance of the university town of Leiden. Spinoza was in touch with students and professors of the university and he may well have attended lectures there, though concrete evidence that he did so is lacking.

When exactly Spinoza left Amsterdam and settled in Rijnsburg is unknown. One traveler's report of 17 May 1661 mentions atheists in Amsterdam, among them "an impudent Jew"; quite likely a reference to Spinoza. At any rate he had moved to Rijnsburg by July

1661, for in the first extant letter to Spinoza (Ep. 1, 26 August 1661) Henry Oldenburg refers to the visit he had paid him there. Travelers who came to Rijnsburg in September 1661 also mention him as a local celebrity. Spinoza rented a room in a cottage that had been built between 1656 and 1660 by his landlord, the surgeon Herman Homan.

Though he lived in Rijnsburg for just two years, this was a very productive period for Spinoza, in which he laid a firm foundation for his philosophical system. The first exposition of it was the *Short Treatise of God, Man and his Well-Being*. He wrote the *Short Treatise* in Latin, but the work has survived in a contemporary Dutch translation, which was only discovered in the 1850s. From its contents we can infer that the *Short Treatise* was initially intended as an outline of his thought for a small circle of friends. He never finished it. While Spinoza was in the process of revising it, in 1661–1662, he decided to start anew, this time rearranging the material in 'geometrical order': as a tight framework of definitions, axioms, propositions, demonstrations, and scholia. Because the argument is gradually put together, as it proceeds from elementary definitions to a highly complex concatenation of proofs, this type of presentation was traditionally called 'synthesis.' The model was Euclid's *Elements*, the classic geometry textbook. In the Rijnsburg years, Spinoza was experimenting with the synthetic form as a philosophical tool: he employed it in three texts, the (lost) enclosure to letter 6 (April 1662), the first appendix to the *Short Treatise*, and, more audaciously, his didactic précis of *Descartes's Principles of Philosophy, Parts I and II* (written in the winter of 1662–1663). Between May 1662 and January 1663 Spinoza embarked on what was to become the pinnacle of the genre: the *Ethics*. It took him 12 years to complete this unparalleled project. In February 1663, Simon Joosten de Vries wrote Spinoza a letter in which he describes the regular meetings of a group (*collegium*) of friends in Amsterdam to discuss a work by Spinoza. The references and quotations both in De Vries's letter and in Spinoza's reply leave no doubt as to what the friends had at their disposal: an early installment of the *Ethics*, consisting of definitions, axioms, at least 19 propositions, and several scholia.

Another lodger in Homan's house in Rijnsburg, at least for a while, was Johannes Casearius, a student of divinity. Spinoza gave him a private course on part II of Descartes's *Principia philosophiae*, writing a synthetic ('geometric') rundown of the text for the occasion.

4. Spinoza in Voorburg (April 1663–Winter 1669/70)

In April 1663 Spinoza moved to Voorburg, a village near The Hague. He rented rooms in the house of a painter, Daniel Tydeman, in the Kerklaan (now called Kerkstraat). During a visit to Amsterdam he showed his friends the partial adaptation of Descartes's *Principles* he had written for Casearius, with an additional set of remarks on metaphysics (*Metaphysical Thoughts*). They implored him to expand this material for publication. He did so, drawing on the *Principia* and on several other Cartesian texts. The result was edited by Lodewijk Meyer, who touched up Spinoza's Latin and supplied a preface. At the philosopher's own request, Meyer emphasized that the book presented Descartes's views, not Spinoza's. The book came out in Amsterdam in 1663, a Dutch translation (by Pieter Balling) followed in 1664.

Spinoza was well aware that his philosophical project would meet with formidable opposition from zealots. In fact, he had already acquired some notoriety in Voorburg. When his landlord Tydeman became involved in a quarrel in the local Reformed Church, the alleged atheism of his lodger was held against him. The public church was a political factor to reckon

with, and its power was supported by what Spinoza saw as an idolatrous interpretation of the Bible. Thus the authority of God's Word became a pivotal political issue. Rumor had it that Spinoza was the author of a notorious book that came out in 1666, *Philosophy the Interpreter of Scripture* (*Philosophia S. Scripturae Interpres*), but it is certain that he did not write it. It did, however, originate in the circle of Spinoza's friends: early on, Meyer had been identified as its author, and it is possible that Johannes Bouwmeester had a hand in it, too. Yet Spinoza's own view of the relationship between philosophy and Scripture, as developed in the *Theological-Political Treatise*, is markedly different from the argument set forth in the *Interpres*.

Spinoza lived in Voorburg for six years. Initially he continued working on the *Ethics*, but between the summer of 1665 and the end of 1669 he was immersed in the composition of his second masterpiece, the *Theological-Political Treatise*. It seems that work on the *Ethics* was temporarily suspended. There was much at stake. In the deteriorating political climate in the Netherlands, it would be difficult for Spinoza to publish his *Ethics*. Writing the *Theological-Political Treatise* became a priority: with this passionate plea for the freedom to philosophize, he took a stand in contemporary debates on religion, philosophy, and politics. He summarized his motives for doing so in a letter to Oldenburg: (1) exposing and repudiating the prejudices of the theologians, (2) rebutting the accusation of atheism, and (3) defending the freedom to philosophize and to say what we think, against the aggression of the preachers (Ep. 30, around 1 October 1665).

The letters Spinoza wrote when he lived in Voorburg testify to the broad range of his interests and activities. Several are related to his work on the *Ethics*. Thus letter 28 (June 1665, to a close friend, possibly Bouwmeester) reveals that by then he had advanced 'up to proposition 80 of part III.' This means that he must have split up the third part later, for in its final shape it has no more than 59 propositions. His exchange with the Amsterdam burgomaster Johannes Hudde (Ep. 34–36) is about God as substance, echoing propositions 8–14 of *Ethics*, I. With other correspondents Spinoza discusses philosophical issues in connection with his book on Descartes's *Principles* and its metaphysical appendix. A peculiar exchange that started from there was with Willem van Blijenbergh, a grain broker from Dordrecht (Ep. 18–24 and 27). The two men discussed a wide range of philosophical topics, without getting any closer to each other: free will, freedom, and necessity, determinism, the origin of evil, moral responsibility, the authority of Holy Writ, and reason and revelation. Letters with other correspondents deal also with scientific and alchemic experiments (Ep. 13, 40, 41), with dioptrics and lens-grinding (Ep. 36, 39–40) and with the calculation of probabilities (Ep. 38). By the way: two anonymous Dutch treatises on the calculation of chances and on the rainbow, published in The Hague in 1687, have been attributed to Spinoza, but erroneously so. It is now certain that their author was a certain Salomon Dierquens. Spinoza did indeed write about the rainbow (as Jelles asserts in the preface to *De nagelate schriften*), but that work is lost.

A dramatic episode took place in 1668–1669. Two brothers, Adriaan and Johannes Koerbagh, who had moved in the circle of Spinoza's Amsterdam acquaintances in the early 1660s, had developed radical views of their own, under his influence. They had met Spinoza several times, though there are no indications that they were very close. In 1668 Adraan was arrested for having attempted to publish a sacrilegious book, *A Light Shining in Dark Places*. When interrogated, he admitted to have visited Spinoza, but denied that he had spoken to him about this book. Adriaan Koerbagh was sentenced to ten years prison, subsequent banishment, and a huge fine. He died of exhaustion in October 1669. We do not know how Spinoza took the news. Neither in his works nor in his letters, as far as they are extant, did he ever refer to Koerbagh's fate.

5. Spinoza in The Hague (1669/70–1677)

No document indicates when exactly Spinoza left Voorburg, but toward the very end of 1669 or the beginning of 1670 he moved to The Hague. He first rented a room in a house on the Veerkade. In the summer of 1671 he moved to a cheaper accomodation, just around the corner, on the Paviljoensgracht, where he became a lodger of the painter Hendrik van der Spyck and his family. It was a fortunate coincidence that the pastor of the Lutheran parish in The Hague in the period 1693–1707, Johannes Colerus, later on rented a room in the very same house on the Veerkade, and even more so that the Van der Spyck family (with whom Spinoza spent his last years) belonged to his parish. Colerus thus was in a good position to collect material for the well-researched biography of Spinoza he published in 1705 – together with a sermon in which he denounced Spinoza's philosophy as incompatible with Christianity.

Just around the time Spinoza moved to The Hague, his *Theological-Political Treatise* came out. As soon as it began to circulate, church councils, clergymen, and academics started campaigning to have it banned. Though formally prohibited only in 1674, there were attempts to have it proscribed from the very beginning. In 1670 the Dutch political system was still officially that of the 'True Freedom' boasted by Johan de Witt, then Grand Pensionary, but tensions had been building up. They came to a head in 1672, known in Dutch history as the Year of Disaster, when De Witt failed to ward off simultaneous invasions from the south, the east, and the western seaboard, mounted respectively by the French King Louis XIV, two German bishoprics, and the English. The French gained several military successes and occupied part of the Republic, including the city of Utrecht. Incited by Orangist leaders, a violent mob brutally lynched Johan de Witt and his brother Cornelis on 20 August 1672 in The Hague. In the night after the murder of the De Witt brothers, Spinoza set out to go to the site of the crime (where the naked and mutilated corpses of the victims were still on display) with a placard that said 'Utter barbarians,' but his landlord blocked the door for fear that his lodger would be slaughtered, too.

The French occupation lasted until the end of 1673. In the meantime, Prince William of Orange had become stadholder of the Dutch Republic. He inaugurated a period of autocracy, zealously supported by the ministers of the public church. Though never a partisan of De Witt, Spinoza had enjoyed relative freedom as long as the latter's States faction was in power. After 1672, he thought it wiser not to publish anymore unless conditions improved. That, however, did not come to pass in his lifetime.

One of the most puzzling events in Spinoza's life is a visit he made to the occupied town of Utrecht in July–August 1673. Spinoza never was much of a traveler: as far as we know he had never been outside the province of Holland up to that point. Though Utrecht was not far from The Hague, it was at that moment a precarious destination, where no one would go without a very good reason. It required one to enter occupied territory that could be reached only by crossing the inundated area of the 'water line,' equipped with passports so as to be allowed to leave the United Provinces, enter the occupied town, and eventually return home again. What urgent reason did Spinoza have to go to Utrecht in those circumstances? His own motives for accepting the invitation and undertaking the journey, and his exploits there, remain obscure. Broadly, there are two options: Spinoza may have gone to Utrecht in order to be of service to friends or acquaintances (in the circle of Cartesians, or perhaps also among French officers), or for political reasons, such as negotiating with the French. There is, so far, not a scrap of evidence to substantiate the second option. Yet it seems that Spinoza's contemporaries did suspect a political motive, namely that Spinoza was a spy who had dealings with the enemy. These rumors alarmed his landlord, who expected a riot upon his return, but Spinoza assuaged his fears.

6. Final Years (1675–1677)

After having published the *Theological-Political Treatise*, Spinoza took up the *Ethics* again. He completed it late in 1674 or early in 1675. From his correspondence with Oldenburg, we know that he went to Amsterdam to have the work printed in the summer of 1675, but then decided to put the manuscript away. The recent discovery by Leen Spruit of a handwritten copy of the work executed by Pieter van Gent now enables us to date the completion of the text more precisely. The copy was made at the request of Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus, who took it with him on his Grand Tour through Europe. Tschirnhaus had been a student in Leiden from 1669 till early spring 1674, and became acquainted with Schuller, Van Gent, and (through them) with Spinoza. By the end of 1674 he returned to the Netherlands, where he remained until May 1675. During his stay he obtained Spinoza's permission to have Pieter van Gent copy the completed *Ethics*. This allows us to conclude that Spinoza had finished the text toward the end of 1674 or in the first months of 1675. A detailed comparison of the text as it appears in Van Gent's copy and the printed version of the *Opera posthuma* shows that Spinoza never systematically went through the entire work again after having completed it in 1674/75. Instead, he seems to have turned his attention mainly or exclusively to a treatise on politics that was to remain unfinished: the *Tractatus politicus*. This was conceived as a systematic exposition of his political thought, developed on the foundation provided by the *Ethics* and the *Theological-Political Treatise*. Spinoza's death prevented him from completing the work. It contains ten chapters and breaks off just after the beginning of Chapter 11, on democracy. Spinoza first deals with politics in general and then with the three forms of government he sees as basic: monarchy, aristocracy, and (a fragment on) democracy. From one of Spinoza's last letters we know that he had planned to add considerations on laws and on specific political issues.

Toward the end of 1676, Spinoza's health began to deteriorate. He died on Sunday 21 February 1677. Although it has commonly been assumed that his health had always been frail and that he suffered from (hereditary) phthisis, a fresh examination of the available evidence has shown that in fact his physical condition must have been surprisingly good – at any rate good enough to have an adequate resistance against many infectious diseases. 'Phthisis' is now commonly interpreted as a designation of pulmonary tuberculosis, but in Spinoza's time it was a catch-all term that covered a range of lung diseases involving coughing (and coughing up blood) and respiratory problems. When, therefore, his early biographers speak of phthisis or consumption as the cause of Spinoza's death, that does not get us very far. If it had been pulmonary tuberculosis, he would have died earlier, and he would not have been able to come down the stairs on the day he died. In a letter to Leibniz of 26 February 1677, Schuller wrote: "I had to tell you that the excellent and acute Mr Spinoza passed away on 21/11 February, after having suffered from extreme atrophy." If that is indeed a reliable and accurate description of the cause of Spinoza's death, he may have died of what is now designated as a cachexia, a wasting of the body due to severe chronic illness.

The most detailed report of his death is that by Colerus, based on the information he had obtained from the couple in whose house Spinoza breathed his last:

> I will now turn to Spinoza's demise. On this topic I find so many wrong descriptions, that I cannot help being astonished that scholars did not come up with better research, but divulged their stories merely on the basis of hearsay. [...] I will therefore give an impartial description of his death and corroborate it with proofs, given that his demise as well as his burial took place

> here in The Hague. [...] None of the others who lived in the house entertained the least idea that his end was so near and that death was to overtake him so suddenly. [...] Sunday morning before divine service he came downstairs again and talked with the landlord and his wife. He had sent for a doctor, a certain L. M. from Amsterdam. [...] In the afternoon the people of the house went to church together, while the aforementioned doctor L. M. stayed alone with him. Upon their return from the church, however, they were informed that Spinoza had passed away at three o'clock, in the presence of this physician. The latter did not bother about the deceased any more, but made off with some money that Spinoza had left lying on the table, viz. a ducaton and some change, as well as with a silver-handled knife.

The identity of the physician from Amsterdam, indicated by Colerus by his initials, L.M., is uncertain. Colerus obviously had in mind Spinoza's lifelong friend Lodewijk Meyer, whom he refers to as 'L.M.' elsewhere in his biography, too. There are, however, indications that the physician at Spinoza's deathbed may have been Georg Hermann Schuller rather than Meyer. In a letter to Leibniz, dated 17 April 1677, Tschirnhaus says that Schuller had informed him "that our friend died in The Hague, in the presence of Mr Schuller, clear-headed and after having arranged what was to be done with his manuscripts." The reliability of Schuller is problematic, so his testimony – here related by Van Gent – should be taken with a pinch of salt. There is more to it, though: the name of one of the witnesses mentioned in the first inventory of Spinoza's legacy, drawn up by the notary public Willem van den Hove on the day Spinoza died, is given as *d'heer Georgius Hermanus* (without surname). But the words have been struck out again, and Schuller did not sign. The evidence, then, is inconclusive. For Meyer we have the (generally reliable) testimony of the Van der Spycks, transmitted by Colerus, for Schuller his own (not always dependable) information, as well as the ambiguous indications in the notarial inventory. All we know for sure, then, is that Spinoza died in the presence of a medical doctor, who, unfortunately, did not leave a written report himself.

Immediately after Spinoza's demise, Van der Spyck sent for a public notary, Willem van den Hove, who came the same day to draw up a first, unspecified inventory of the goods Spinoza had left, after which he sealed the deceased tenant's rooms. Spinoza was buried on Thursday, 25 February, in a rented grave inside the Nieuwe Kerk, a nearby Reformed Church in The Hague. The burial was arranged by Van der Spyck, while Spinoza's publisher Jan Rieuwertsz stood surety for the expenses. Graves were rented for a certain number of years, after which the relatives (or acquaintances) of the deceased had to renew the lease. If they did not do so, the grave was cleared. Spinoza's grave was emptied sometime in the eighteenth century, and his remains (together with those of other bodies) were dispersed over the surface of the churchyard of the Nieuwe Kerk and dug in. Although he is, strictly speaking, indeed still buried on the site, there is no locatable plot that can be said to contain Spinoza's body. A monument just outside the Nieuwe Kerk commemorates the philosopher. In front of it is a large black slab with the Latin inscription: "The earth here covers the bones of Benedict de Spinoza, formerly buried in the New Church."

When Spinoza's relatives – his sister Rebecca and her stepson Daniel de Casseres – heard about his demise, they came to The Hague to claim the inheritance, if there was any. They asked for a complete inventory, which was made by the same notary public Van den Hove on 2 March. (It is in this inventory that we find a list of the books then in Spinoza's library.) Eventually, when they found there were still debts to be settled, Rebecca and Daniel waived all their rights to an inheritance.

Before he died, Spinoza had made arrangements with his landlord, his publisher, and his friends in Amsterdam that they would see to the publication of his *Ethics*. A writing box

that contained manuscripts and letters was sent to Rieuwertsz by Van der Spyck very soon after Spinoza passed away. A number of people were involved in preparing Spinoza's posthumous works for publication: Johannes Bouwmeester, Lodewijk Meyer, Jarig Jelles, Jan Hendriksz Glazemaker, Jan Rieuwertsz, Georg Hermann Schuller, and Pieter van Gent. In about nine months, they managed to bring out simultaneously the *Opera posthuma* (in Latin) and *De nagelate schriften* (in Dutch). The two tomes contained the *Ethics*, the *Political Treatise*, the *Treatise of the Emendation of the Intellect*, and the letters. The (unfinished) *Hebrew Grammar* was published only in the *Opera posthuma*. We have no clue as to when or why Spinoza wrote this grammar; perhaps when he was at Van den Enden's school, or when he was doing research for the *Theological-Political Treatise*. Around 1680, Rieuwertsz ordered an engraved portrait from an unkown artist. It was printed on a loose sheet, and could be bought by customers to have it bound in with their copy of the *Opera posthuma* or *De nagelate schriften*. The portrait came with a Latin poem, but there is also a Dutch version that is pasted on to the Latin text in some copies. Though made after Spinoza's death, it is assumed to present a fair likeness of Spinoza – one would not expect Rieuwertsz to sell it as a portrait if the resemblance had been poor. Another early portrait is the oil painting in the collection of the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel. The two portraits closely resemble each other. Perhaps the Wolfenbüttel painting was made after the engraving, or they may both stem from a common unknown original.

On 4 November 1677, Spinoza's possessions were auctioned. For our knowledge of Spinoza's development the most relevant element of the auction was his library, with his collection of optical instruments and tools for lens production as the runner-up. An almost complete reconstruction of the library as described in the inventory is now kept in the *Spinozahuis* museum in Rijnsburg.

The posthumous works were printed in December 1677 and distributed as from January 1678. Spinoza's life's work was completed, and salvaged for posterity – in spite of all attempts to suppress his works and discredit his thought.

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2

Spinoza Philology

PIET STEENBAKKERS

1. Introduction

In the present chapter we shall understand by 'Spinoza philology' the application of a specific approach to the texts written by Spinoza. In reading, translating, and editing his works, we encounter problems that are typical of the transmission of written heritage. This raises questions such as: does the text we have before us offer a reliable presentation of what the author wrote? How can this be assessed, and what does reliability mean here? How are we to understand the meaning of words in older texts, given the fact that languages are incessantly changing? How did specific historical practices and circumstances – such as oral transmission, copying, editing, censorship – affect the shape of a text? The scholarly discipline that seeks to answer these and similar questions is now generally known as philology. It investigates the provenance, vicissitudes, and credentials of written documents from a text-critical and historical perspective. As a method it first came into being in Hellenistic Alexandria in the last three centuries BCE, when poets and scholars sought ways to establish reliable texts of older Greek works (especially Homer's), which had been handed down in many different versions. In the Renaissance, humanist scholars successfully applied a philological approach to the Greek and Latin texts of Antiquity. It was especially in the area of classical studies that philology then further developed into a powerful tool. Its results inspired scholars to apply it to biblical texts as well. In doing so, they could build on earlier textual work (in particular the Septuagint and Jerome's Vulgate). Despite theological reluctance to treat the Word of God as a historically determined collection of stories, written by human authors and transmitted by fallible scribes, biblical criticism developed into an impressive line of research – Spinoza himself turned its results to his advantage in his TTP (Touber 2018; Grafton 2017).

In philosophy most philological efforts have traditionally been spent on the texts of ancient authors. Philosophers from later periods have on the whole fared less well: whereas it is obvious that texts from long ago, in 'dead' languages, cannot be understood without a thorough study of their linguistic peculiarities, historical context, and transmission, we do not usually deem this necessary for recent works, written in languages we are familiar with. As we shall see below, this asymmetry also accounts for the relatively late rise of a

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distinct Spinoza philology. Spinoza and his contemporary readers shared a common culture in which Latin was the preferred language for scholarly and scientific communication, and in which everyone was familiar with roughly the same classical and biblical sources. As long as the fabric of this shared culture remained intact, there was no incentive to question the constitution and transmission of the texts that circulated in print. As time goes by, and the past becomes more of a foreign country, we must deploy philological skills in order to arrive at a critical assessment of Spinoza's texts, and to establish reliable editions of his works.

Philological Spinoza scholarship has so far not been charted systematically, so the present chapter cannot be more than a first sketch. To begin with, it will be useful to call to mind some of the historical circumstances that are relevant for an understanding of the transmission of Spinoza's texts. I will then offer a brief chronological survey of Spinoza's works, explaining the particular aspects of the way they have been transmitted. The concluding section outlines the philological work done so far.

2. Historical Background

2.1. Spinoza's Languages

Spinoza wrote all his known works in Latin. Born in 1632 in Amsterdam into a Portuguese-Jewish family, his mother tongue was Portuguese. At the Jewish school he attended the language used for teaching was Spanish. At school and in the synagogue he acquired an excellent command of Hebrew as well. He received a solid training in Latin in the school of Frans van den Enden, in the late 1650s. Growing up in the Netherlands and moving in circles of Amsterdam merchants as a young man, he also had Dutch. Spinoza wrote a number of letters in Dutch, to gratify some of his correspondents, but he clearly preferred Latin when it came to expressing himself accurately in philosophical issues (cf. Ep. 19; G IV, 95.12–15).

Spinoza wrote the kind of Latin that had been the standard for scholarly and academic purposes throughout Europe since the Renaissance. Known as Neo-Latin, it would maintain that function well into the nineteenth century. Grammatically, it does not differ from the literary language of Ancient Rome. It consciously attempts to reinstate the norms of Classical Latin, rejecting the allegedly barbarian degeneration of the language in the Middle Ages. As the revived language was used for a wide variety of subjects unknown to the Ancients, Neo-Latin developed a rich vocabulary of its own. Though Spinoza did not receive an academic education, he mastered enough Latin to express himself clearly, accurately, and forcefully. In the TTP, he gracefully wields a range of effective rhetorical tools. In his maturest works, the *Ethics* and the *Political Treatise*, his Latin shows remarkable eloquence and sophistication (Leopold 1902, 2005; Akkerman 1977, 1989, 1985, 2013; Kajanto 2005; Beyssade 2005).

2.2. Manuscripts

In studying the transmission of Spinoza's texts we must be aware that none of them (bar a few letters and a handful of notes) has survived in the philosopher's own handwriting. Most of his works have come down to us in their seventeenth-century printed form only. The *Short Treatise* was never printed: it was preserved in a Dutch translation in two

manuscript copies. As a rule, printers would jettison the autograph manuscript or fair copy from which they had worked once a book was published. It is, however, certain that there was a lively circulation of manuscripts of several of Spinoza's works in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Hardly any have survived.

2.3. Editions

The Amsterdam publisher Jan Rieuwertsz brought out all Spinoza's books: DPP and CM in 1663 (Dutch in 1664), TTP in 1670 (subsequently reprinted four times) and *Opera Posthuma* (in Dutch *De Nagelate Schriften*) in 1677. In all these cases, a group of dedicated friends assisted the philosopher. Among them were Pieter Balling, Jarig Jelles, Simon Joosten de Vries, Lodewijk Meyer, Johannes Bouwmeester, Jan Rieuwertsz, Pieter van Gent, Georg Herman Schuller. They were involved in translating, copying, copy-editing, and proofreading his works. Spinoza supervised their activities and gave them instructions, but he was happy to let them decide in minor details. It is not always clear who did what, and in what follows, we shall refer to them generically as 'the editors.'

These original seventeenth-century editions have been studied by Land (1882a, 1882b), Bamberger (1961, 2003), Kingma and Offenberg (1977). An exhaustive descriptive bibliography is now being prepared by Jeroen van de Ven. Rieuwertsz was a publisher and bookseller: he never owned a printing press. Until recently it was unknown who printed Spinoza's books. Careful bibliographical research has now revealed that the TTP and the postumous works were printed by Israël de Paull, and DPP-CM by Daniel Bakkamude and Herman Aeltsz (Jagersma and Dijkstra 2013; cf. Gerritsen 2005).

It was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century that the need for a new edition of his works made itself felt. This was the result of a renewed interest in Spinoza's philosophy after the polemics known as the pantheism dispute (*Pantheismusstreit*) in Germany in the 1780s (see, e.g. Murrmann-Kahl 2012). In this dispute Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi had accused the late Gotthold Ephraim Lessing of Spinozism and thus – by implication – of atheism, and Moses Mendelssohn had come to Lessing's defense. Five new editions came out in Germany between 1802 and 1877: Paulus 1802–1803, Gfrörer 1830, Riedel 1843 (TIE and TP only), Bruder 1843–1846, Ginsberg 1874–1877. These were not critical editions, nor did they pretend to be. Even though these editors were capable of philological work, they limited themselves to making the texts available again to an academic audience for which reading (and writing) Latin was still the norm. Their editorial interventions did not go beyond minor typographical and orthographical adjustments (Kingma 2005; Steenbakkers 2007).

3. Spinoza's Works

It will be convenient to treat the transmission of Spinoza's texts in the following order:

- the works printed during Spinoza's lifetime, to wit DPP-CM and TTP (including the *Adnotationes*);
- the texts published in the posthumous works of 1677, OP and NS (1677): E, TP, TIE, the correspondence (as published in OP/NS, plus subsequent finds), and CGH;
- the manuscripts of KV.

Two anonymous Dutch treatises, on the calculation of chances and on the rainbow, published in The Hague in 1687, have erroneously been attributed to Spinoza. Though these spurious works have been included in Spinoza editions since Van Vloten and Land, it has now been established beyond doubt that their author was a certain Salomon Dierquens (De Vet 2005). They will not figure in this account.

3.1. DPP and CM

Spinoza's earliest publication, and the only one that has his name on the title page, was an outline of parts of Descartes's *Principia Philosophiae*, and its appendix *Metaphysical Thoughts*, drawn from contemporary scholastic philosophy. From the correspondence, we know that Spinoza wrote a substantial part of these texts for a private course he taught to a student of divinity who lived in the same house in Rijnsburg, Johannes Casearius (Ep. 8–9). After Spinoza had moved from Rijnsburg to Voorburg, in April 1663, he went to see his friends in Amsterdam and showed them the manuscript. They implored him to expand the text for publication. Spinoza complied: within the next two weeks he added DPP I, for which he drew on a broader range of Cartesian texts (Ep. 13). He was able to supply this well-wrought addition at short notice because in the preceding years he had already amassed notes on Descartes. Though written and published within half a year, his first book relied on an underlying manuscript tradition that must have reached back several years.

We know from Spinoza's correspondence (Ep. 12A, 13, 15) and from Lodewijk Meyer's preface (G I, 129.32–130.13) that the book was copy-edited by Meyer, under the philosopher's supervision. For the Latin text of DPP and CM, there is only a single source: the printed version of 1663. Within a year, a Dutch translation came out, made by Spinoza's friend Pieter Balling. (Balling died shortly afterwards, in December 1664.) The Dutch version contains some eight passages that are not to be found in the Latin original. Gebhardt concluded from these interpolations that the Dutch translation comes down to an authorized second edition of the text (G I, 611), but according to Akkerman (1982, p. 21) they must be explanatory elaborations added by Balling. As we shall see, this change of approach marks a turning point in Spinoza philology.

3.2. TTP

The only other book published by Spinoza himself (this time anonymously) was the *Theological-Political Treatise*. It came out in 1670. We know from the correspondence that he started writing it in the summer of 1665 (Ep. 29–30). He must have finished it towards the end of 1669 (Steenbakkers 2010, pp. 33–35). Again, his friends were keen on having the book published in a Dutch translation as well, and they asked the professional translator Jan Hendriksz Glazemaker to supply one. He must have worked fast (as he always did), for his Dutch version was being typeset as early as February 1671. Then, however, Spinoza intervened: the Latin TTP had already caused such an uproar that he implored his friends to call the whole project off, for fear that the publication of a Dutch translation would give the authorities a pretext to ban the TTP altogether, the Latin edition as well (Ep. 44). It would last until 1693 before a Dutch translation was published, followed by another one a year later. Between 1670 and 1693, however, handwritten copies were circulating – an instance of "scribal publication" (Van der Deijl 2020). One manuscript, which contains a corrected version of Glazemaker's translation, has survived. It is now kept in the Royal Library in The Hague, in a codex that also contains the oldest manuscript of the KV and a

scholars now share this view, although conclusive evidence remains one of the *desiderata* of Spinoza philology. From the correspondence it is clear that his friends knew about the existence of this treatise (Ep. 59), but they did not have access to it until after his death (Steenbakkers 1994, p. 56). As in the case of the TP, manuscript circulation can be excluded (Miginini 2009a, p. 36). The divergences between the OP and NS versions are mainly the result of the interventions of the editors in Spinoza's Latin – which they deemed immature and unsophisticated (Akkerman 1987).

3.7. Ep.

The correspondence gathered in OP and NS is a motley collection (for an overview see Steenbakkers 2019). The letters Spinoza's friends had at their disposal were partly in Latin, partly in Dutch. For the OP, they translated the Dutch letters into Latin, for the NS it was the reverse. (Van Vloten and Land mistakenly thought that Spinoza himself had done the translations; see Akkerman 1980, pp. 47–50.) Some of the manuscripts they had were drafts or copies, in other cases they could use the letters that had actually been dispatched. For quite a number of letters, additional witnesses (mostly manuscripts) are available. This means that the textual situation of each letter must be discretely assessed. The correspondence is also the section of the posthumous works in which the editors intervened most drastically: many names were replaced with initials so as not to endanger people; passages deemed irrelevant or politically hazardous were removed.

Of the 88 letters from and to Spinoza that are still extant, the vast majority (75) was published in the posthumous works: the correspondence section contains 74 of them, one served as a preface to the TP. The other 13 were discovered later. Eight letters have been transmitted in manuscript only; 20 both in manuscript and in the posthumous works. Thirteen letters have survived in Spinoza's own handwriting (Ep. 6, 9, 12a, 15, 23, 27, 28, 32, 43, 46, 49, 69, 72).

3.8. CGH

Among Spinoza's works, the unfinished Hebrew grammar is the odd one out. The only source for it is the OP; it is absent from its Dutch counterpart, the NS, and no other versions of it are known to exist or have existed. As with the other works printed in the OP, Spinoza's manuscript is lost. (Intriguingly, the Dutch jurist and civil servant Pieter van Ghert wrote in a letter to Hegel in 1813 that he had acquired a manuscript of Spinoza's Hebrew grammar; see Hoffmeister 1969, p. 10. It may have been copied from the OP. Unfortunately we do not know what happened to it.) According to the editors' preamble, Spinoza began writing the CGH at the request of some friends (G I, 286). It may have been intended as a textbook for private tuition, but it also develops a philosophical conception of the Hebrew language (Baumgarten, Rosier-Catach, and Totaro 2019). Because of its uncertain philosophical status, the CGH is not always included in editions and translations, not even in those that are otherwise complete. It is also the least studied of Spinoza's works. Not surprisingly, the research that has been done is predominantly linguistic rather than philosophical or philological (e.g. Klijnsmit 1992). Thematically, the CGH is obviously close to Spinoza's extended discussion of Hebrew in the TTP, but so far we have no clue at all to situate the work chronologically in Spinoza's oeuvre.

3.9. KV

Spinoza wrote the *Short Treatise* in Latin (Mignini 1986, pp. 71–80; Mignini 2009b, pp. 168–169). He never finished it: instead, he started composing an entirely new exposition of his philosophy, the *Ethics* in 1662–1663. His first attempt, the KV, was therefore never published, neither by Spinoza himself, nor by the friends who edited his posthumous works. No Latin manuscript ever came to the surface, but a few early allusions indicate that a Dutch translation did circulate in manuscript. In the early 1850s, a Dutch outline (*Korte Schetz*) of the argument of the KV was discovered (Boehmer 1852). Shortly afterwards, an eighteenth-century manuscript of the KV in Dutch came to light. It was published with a Latin translation by Van Vloten in 1862. Even while Van Vloten was preparing his edition, a seventeenth-century manuscript of the KV surfaced. That was published by Schaarschmidt in 1869. In the meantime, Antonius van der Linde (1864) had identified the scribe of the *Korte Schetz* and the eighteenth-century KV manuscript: it was the Amsterdam physician Johannes Monnikhoff. The two manuscripts turned out to be closely connected: the later one (edited in 1862 by Van Vloten), now known as manuscript B, had been copied by Monnikhoff from the older manuscript A (edited in 1869 by Schaarschmidt). Monnikhoff had also entered some captions, notes, corrections, and additions to A itself. He must have copied A when it was still in the possession of someone else, namely the sectarian Willem Deurhoff (of whom he was a follower), and later inherited Deurhoff's manuscript. Both manuscripts, A and B, are now kept in the Royal Library in The Hague (shelf marks 75 G 15 and 75 G 16); manuscript A is also accessible online.

Gebhardt and Mignini have taken manuscript A as their reference text. It must have been copied from a lost manuscript that contained a Dutch translation circulating among Spinoza's friends in the early 1660s. Its translator is unknown; again, Balling is a possible candidate.

4. The Development of Spinoza Philology in Outline

The initial transmission of Spinoza's works was taken care of by a small group of dedicated friends, who copy-edited his texts, had them translated, printed, and distributed. Spinoza himself explicitly asked them to polish his style when he published his first works, and they obliged. But they did not interfere with the content. When Spinoza asked them to publish the *Ethics* after his death, they limited their interventions to what they saw as mistakes, ambiguities, or awkward formulations. Inevitably, their assessment was sometimes off the mark. They also published three unfinished treatises and a number of letters, though Spinoza had not (as far as we know) explicitly asked them to do so. Since he had not destroyed them but left them in the writing box that was sent to his publisher at his request, one may say that Spinoza consented, at least tacitly.

The results of the editorial activities of the circle around Spinoza were sufficient to meet the demand for his works for 125 years. Then, between 1802 and 1877, as many as five editions of his works were published in Germany. As we have already observed, these were not critical editions. Still there was some progress in the nineteenth century. Several publications were occasioned by the manuscripts of the *Adnotationes* and the KV, as well as by newly discovered letters, and a noteworthy contribution towards a philological approach to Spinoza's texts came from translators. Unlike the editors, they could not just relay the Latin as they found it, but had to make sense of it in the vernacular (cf. Moreau and

Steenbakkers 2020, p. 39). Thus several textual conundrums in the *Ethics* were solved by the German translators Valentin Schmidt (1812) and Auerbach (1841), the French translator Saisset (1842) and others.

Spinoza philology in a strict sense only began to take off in 1880, with an analysis of the first edition of Spinoza's letters in OP and NS by the Dutch Hebraist Jan Pieter Nicolaas Land. Two years later he published two sequels: one on the text of the *Ethics* (Land 1882a) and another on the printing history of the TTP (Land 1882b). Land's significance for the rise of Spinoza philology is twofold. To begin with, he was the first scholar who realized the importance of the contemporary Dutch translations in *De Nagelate Schriften*: as Spinoza's posthumous works were published simultaneously in Latin and Dutch, the translations had been made from manuscripts, not from the printed Latin texts. The Dutch editions published in the seventeenth century thus constituted independent textual witnesses: when they contain a variant, it might indicate a manuscript reading different from the one found in the *Opera Posthuma*. A critical edition of Spinoza's works should therefore take the NS variants into account, not occasionally, but systematically. And second, Land identified the four successive impressions of the TTP quartos by studying their title pages as well as textual variants resulting from compositors' errors. He thus started a line of bibliographical enquiry in Spinoza philology that was further developed in the twentieth century. As Spinoza wrote his works in Latin, it makes sense to follow the models and practices of philology as applied to classical authors (*Altphilologie*, as it is called in German). Yet the age and culture in which Spinoza lived are decidedly modern, and so are the means of communication by which his works were transmitted. This means that we also need the scholarly tools developed for studying modern authors, mostly writing in the vernacular (*Neuphilologie*). Specifically, this requires a study of the impact of printing on the process of transmission. One of the received practices of *Altphilologie* is the presentation of ancient texts in regularized spelling and punctuation, whereas in the works of modern authors it is often deemed preferable to follow their own conventions in these areas. If we had autographs of Spinoza's philosophical texts, it would be requisite to edit them in a diplomatic transcription, that is, reproducing exactly what Spinoza wrote. As it is, editors must decide which seventeenth-century conventions they should follow, keeping before their eyes a twenty-first-century audience that is no longer familiar with Latin. (For some observations on spelling, capitalization, accents, and punctuation in Spinoza, see Akkerman 1999, pp. 22–26; Moreau and Steenbakkers 2020, pp. 52–54.)

As compared with the five editions that had preceded it, the *Benedicti de Spinoza Opera quotquot reperta sunt* edited by Johannes van Vloten and Jan Land in 1882–1883 was a major step forward: it had a modest critical apparatus, it justified its choices, and it was based on a comparison of all known sources, including the Dutch translations. Although the title page gives precedence to Van Vloten, the philological work was done by Land. Van Vloten died in 1883, Land in 1897. Their edition was reprinted in 1895, apparently without Land's supervision, for it has a number of printing errors not found in the first edition. A carefully corrected separate edition of Van Vloten and Land's *Ethica* text was published in 1905 by Willem Meijer (Moreau and Steenbakkers 2020, p. 44). A third printing of the entire *Opera quotquot reperta sunt* came out in 1914, adding a lot of new errors. In fact, the 1914 printing has been carried out so carelessly that it must be avoided for scholarly purposes. Unfortunately it also happens to be the most widely circulated of the three successive printings.

Though Land had pointed out the importance of variants in the NS translations, the Dutch classicist and poet Jan Hendrik Leopold criticized Van Vloten and Land's edition

precisely because in practice it had failed to comply with the principle that Spinoza's Latin works had to be collated systematically with the contemporary Dutch translations. In his trail-blazing treatise *Ad Spinozae Opera posthuma* (1902, in Latin) Leopold deftly formulates the exigencies of a truly critical edition: it should be based on a collation of the Latin and Dutch texts that is carried out sedulously, faithfully and comprehensively ("*sedulo* et *fideliter* et *per totum opus*," 1902, p. 57). Leopold's booklet is a treasure trove: in an appendix he treats seventy problematic passages in the OP texts. Disappointed by the shortcomings of Land's edition, Leopold wanted to bring out a new critical edition of Spinoza's works, together with Willem Meijer, but that project did not materialize.

Inspired by Land and Leopold, Carl Gebhardt turned their theses about the status of the Dutch versions into the guiding principle of his own edition of the complete works (1925). Unselfconsciously, he labeled it the *editio definitiva* (G IV, 437). Aware of the significant differences between OP and NS, in particular in the text of the *Ethics*, Gebhardt developed the hypothesis that Spinoza incessantly kept revising his texts and that the different stages reveal themselves in the variants between the Latin and Dutch versions of his works. In his view, the Dutch text of the *Ethics* was translated during Spinoza's lifetime from previous manuscript versions, and the printed Latin text was the final stage. Along the same lines, he argued that the differences between parts I–II on the one hand and parts III–V on the other were also to be accounted for as representing successive authorial versions (Gebhardt 1916, p. 22).

Once editions have established themselves as received texts, they are not easily dislodged. Decades after the publication of Van Vloten and Land's superior edition in 1882–1883, one still finds quotations and translations from Bruder's edition. Similarly, Van Vloten and Land's *Opera* edition was not immediately superseded by Gebhardt's. In the second half of the twentieth century, however, Spinoza scholars generally accepted Gebhardt's beautifully printed *Spinoza Opera* as the definitive edition: translations, commentaries, glossaries, and other scholarly publications were henceforth based on it. Yet in spite of its impressively rich *Textgestaltung* (a prolix apparatus at the end of each volume), Gebhardt's edition is fundamentally flawed. As Fokke Akkerman demonstrated in his PhD thesis (Akkerman 1980), Gebhardt misconstrued the way Spinoza worked and thereby the relationship between the Latin and Dutch versions of his texts. Akkerman studied the differences between these versions systematically, and came to a diametrically opposite conclusion: after finishing a text, Spinoza did not look back. The variant readings do not reflect successive stages in the composition of the work: they are traces of the activities of translators, commentators, editors, and typesetters. Owing to the status of Gebhardt's edition, however, his mistaken theory that Spinoza kept on changing his texts also gained acceptance.

Just around the time when Akkerman presented the results of his research, a group of French scholars headed by Pierre-François Moreau decided that new French translations were urgently needed. As a result of the surge in Spinoza studies in France and Italy in the 1960s and 1970s, the shortcomings of the existing translations became visible. Akkerman's work convinced Moreau that a new Latin edition was now in order, too. This was the beginning of the series *Spinoza Œuvres*. So far, four volumes have appeared: Volume I, *Premiers écrits* (KV, TIE) in 2009; Volume III, *Tractatus theologico-politicus/Traité théologico-politique*, in 1999; Volume IV, *Ethica/Éthique*, in 2020, and Volume V, *Tractatus politicus/Traité politique*, in 2005. A spin-off of the project is the edited volume *Spinoza to the Letter* (Akkerman and Steenbakkers 2005).

For Volume I, the early works, Filippo Mignini edited both the Latin text of the TIE (on the basis of the OP) and the Dutch text of the KV (based on manuscript A). For the TIE,

Mignini adopted the paragraph numbers Bruder had introduced in his edition of 1844. Mignini had already published KV editions in 1982 and 1986. His contribution to *Spinoza Œuvres* offers a slightly revised version of the same text, and (in line with the principles of this series, see Moreau 2009, pp. 14–17) a summary of the huge Introduction and commentary of the 1986 publication. Editors of Spinoza must deal with an oeuvre that came into being in a Dutch setting, and part of which has come down to us in Dutch. Not surprisingly, then, important philological work has been done by Dutch scholars (Land, Leopold, Akkerman). It is the more remarkable that the research into Spinoza's KV, philologically and otherwise, was innovated by an Italian scholar.

The Latin text of the TTP (and the *Adnotationes*) in Volume III was established by Fokke Akkerman, on the basis of T.1. For the TTP, too, Bruder had proposed a division of the almost uninterrupted chapters into short numbered paragraphs, but unlike his TIE numbers, they never caught on. (Recently, though, Curley 2016 adopted Bruder's system.) Akkerman applied a division into larger numbered sections, based upon the rhetorical structure of Spinoza's argument.

Volume IV contains the *Ethics*. The work on that edition set out as an elaboration of the drastic reorientation that Fokke Akkerman had accomplished in his PhD thesis (1980). This reorientation implied three things. To begin with, the Latin text was to based rigorously on the OP, which had to be collated fully and systematically with the Dutch translation in the NS. Second, the divergences between OP and NS had to be explained; at any rate they did not reveal successive layers in the composition of the work. Third, Spinoza's Latinity and its grounding in a culture of learning shared by scholars in early modern Europa was to be taken into account. Akkerman asked me to assist him in the project. Just when the constitution of the text began to take shape, in the spring of 2011, we received news from our colleagues Pina Totaro and Leen Spruit in Rome that they were preparing an edition of *Vaticanus Latinus* 12838, a manuscript Spruit had discovered in the Vatican Library in 2010 (see Spruit and Totaro 2011, p. 26, n. 74; cf. also Totaro, Spruit and Steenbakkers 2011). It was the manuscript copied by Pieter van Gent between November 1674 and May 1675. On the basis of her earlier research, Totaro had already inferred that this copy was to be found in the archives of the Inquisition or in the Vatican Library (Totaro 1995, 2000). Akkerman and I collated the Vatican manuscript with the OP, and took its variants into account in our edition. On 13 January 2017, Akkerman died unexpectedly. The constitution of the text of our edition was ready, and over the years we had gathered a lot of material for the apparatuses, Introduction and annotation. But it took three more years, and the steadfast support of Pierre-François Moreau, to turn all that into a book. In our Introduction (Moreau and Steenbakkers 2020, pp. 47–48), we have explained why Akkerman and I take the OP as our reference text. Van Gent's copy is a precious source that allows us to reconstruct the genesis of the text and to solve a number of problems, but it does not aim at presenting Spinoza's autograph verbatim. It was written in great haste, for the personal use of Tschirnhaus; the resulting manuscript had not been checked by Spinoza, nor even by Van Gent himself. The editors of the OP, on the other hand, published Spinoza's *Ethics* at the author's own request, and according to his explicit instructions. It is not without errors, but – as long as we cannot retrieve Spinoza's lost autograph – it is the only source that is authoritative.

Volume V of *Spinoza Œuvres* contains the Latin text of the TP, edited by Omero Proietti. It is again based on the OP, systematically collated with Glazemaker's Dutch translation in the NS. As Proietti points out in the Introduction (Proietti 2005, pp. 46–53), the Dutch version cannot have been made from the printed text, so it must have relied on the same manuscript

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3

Avicenna and Spinoza on Essence and Existence

STEPHEN R. OGDEN

> I do not think it worthwhile to refute here those Authors who think differently than we do, nor to examine their definitions or descriptions of essence and existence. For in this way we should render a clear thing more obscure. Since we can give no definition of anything without at the same time explaining its essence, what do we understand more clearly than what essence is, and what existence is?
>
> (Spinoza, B. (1985) CM I 2)

Just as some find in Spinoza's thought a maximal confluence of plenitude and unity, we can also find a maximal confluence of philosophical tradition and innovation. Following Wolfson's (1934) monumental study of Spinoza against the backdrop of medieval philosophy, many have written valuable contributions on Spinoza's relation to Jewish philosophy (e.g. Nadler 2014). The same goes for Latin Scholasticism and Descartes. Yet little in-depth work has been done on Spinoza and Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā, d. 1037) (though see Manekin 2014; Richardson 2014). I think of all precedents, Avicenna's system quite possibly stands the closest to Spinoza's own, affording unique opportunities for reading them in dialogue (cf. Carriero 1991, p. 55). Though I certainly cannot fully substantiate that claim here, my task is to highlight briefly this contention regarding essence and existence.

Spinoza's employment of essence and existence is well-known (Rivaud 1906; Jarrett 2001; Wolfson 1934, pp. 121–132). There are precursors to Avicenna for the essence/existence distinction – for example, in Aristotle, other Muslim philosophers, and Islamic theology (*kalām*) (Menn 2013; Wisnovsky 2003). Avicenna, however, firmly establishes the distinction and many of the surrounding arguments for the rest of the Islamic, Jewish, and Christian traditions. Although there are myriad possible links, it is worth considering how Avicenna himself factors into Spinoza's views since he is the major source for this essence/existence tradition. I aim to show even tighter textual and conceptual connections between these philosophers, delineating how Spinoza drew from Avicenna (directly or indirectly) on the definition of essence and the essence/existence distinction. Nevertheless, Spinoza departs from Avicenna, potentially regarding the tendency of essences for existence and especially regarding their universality and particularity.

A Companion to Spinoza, First Edition. Edited by Yitzhak Y. Melamed.

1. From Avicenna to Spinoza

While perhaps most scholars think it unlikely that Spinoza read Avicenna directly, it is certainly possible given that Latin and Hebrew translations of many of Avicenna's works were available and that Jewish commentators on Maimonides often noted Avicenna's doctrines (Melamed 2012, p. 91, fn. 43). It is even more likely that Spinoza read Avicenna (perhaps unwittingly) via al-Ghazālī's *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifa* (*Intentions of the Philosophers*, hereafter *IP*). The *IP* is mostly an Arabic translation (with slight adaptation) of Avicenna's Persian *Dāneshnāme* (Janssens 1986), which was then translated further into Latin and Hebrew. In fact, the Hebrew translations garnered extensive commentary from Jewish thinkers like Moses Narboni, and it served as a textbook within Jewish communities until the sixteenth century (Wolfson 1929, p. 10; Freudenthal and Zonta 2012).

If Spinoza did not read the *IP*, it was almost certainly used by one of his definite sources, namely, Ḥasdai Crescas. In addition to the *IP*, Crescas took major Avicennian teachings from al-Tabrīzī, a Muslim commentator on Maimonides's *Guide of the Perplexed* (Langermann 2012), including Premises 19–21 which feature Avicenna's essence/existence distinction (Wolfson 1929, pp. 302–305). While Scholastics like Duns Scotus may have impacted Crescas, too, he easily could have read Avicenna's *al-Najāt* (*Salvation*), which existed in both Latin and Hebrew translation.

Avicenna's *Najāt* and the *IP* are the most likely sources for Maimonides's own knowledge of Avicenna (Freudenthal and Zonta 2012). Regardless, the impact of Avicenna on Maimonides was surely transmitted to Spinoza, especially essence/existence in *Guide* I 57 (Maimonides 1963, I/132–133). The doctrine is also relayed by Averroes (Ibn Rushd) in works later translated into Latin (2003, p. 390; 2004, p. 313/6). Both Maimonides and Averroes fatefully and forcefully portray the Avicennian doctrine in such a way that existence is added to essence as an 'accident.' Finally, Spinoza probably knew Avicenna's distinction through Scholastics like Aquinas and through Descartes. In short, multiple doses of Avicennianism likely made their way into Spinoza's bloodstream.

2. Essence: The 'Definition'

Spinoza gives his definition of essence in E2d2:

> I say that to the essence of any thing belongs that which, being given, the thing is [NS: also] necessarily posited and which, being taken away, the thing is necessarily [NS: also] taken away; or that without which the thing can neither be nor be conceived, and which can neither be nor be conceived without the thing. (G II/84/17–20)

Numerous commentators question whether this can truly be a definition of essence given its placement in Part 2 of the *Ethics*, well after Spinoza has already given the notion a workout in Part 1. One partial explanation, however, might lie in the quotation from *CM* I 2, used as this chapter's opening epigraph above. Whenever we consciously attempt to define essence, we thereby reveal that we already understand it. Indeed, both 'essence' and 'existence' are already known more clearly than anything else.

That rationale follows Avicenna's. In his *Metaphysics* of the *Shifāʾ* (*Cure*) (hereafter, *Shifāʾ-Met.*) I 5, Avicenna begins with three primary notions (*maʿānī*):

> The notions of 'the existent' (*al-mawjūd*), 'the thing' (*al-shayʾ*), and 'the necessary' (*al-ḍarūrī*) are impressed in the soul in a primary way. This impression does not require better known things to bring it about. . . . If the expression denoting them does not come to mind or is not understood, then it would be impossible to know whatever is known through them. . . . (Avicenna 2005, p. 22, trans. modified)

Regarding 'thing,' Avicenna argues that the very idea of knowing *what a thing is* constitutes a prerequisite for the whole business of defining (things!) in the first place (2005, p. 24).

As Avicenna proceeds, he aligns 'thing' (prominent in pre-Avicennian *kalām* debates) with 'quiddity' (*māhiyya*), and he replaces 'existent' with 'existence' (*al-wujūd*) (2005, p. 24, cf. Druart 2001, Wisnovsky 2003, Bertolacci 2012). Then, he notes that 'quiddity' and 'existence' are two different concepts and, in fact (somewhat confusingly), mark two different kinds of existence: (1) 'affirmative existence' (*al-wujūd al-ithbātī*) and (2) 'proper existence' (*al-wujūd al-khāṣṣ*). This pair eventually becomes *esse existentiae* and *esse essentiae* in the Scholastics and Spinoza (*CM* I 2). Avicenna's point is that there is a clear distinction between a thing's actual (affirmative) existence and the reality by which a thing is what it is, namely, its essence. Again, these notions are 'primary' in the sense that they cannot be defined by any clearer or more basic terms (cf. Aquinas 1976, p. 369/3–5). Essence and existence also appear basic in Spinoza's *CM* I 2, while their distinction undergirds the *Ethics* 'definition' of essence (presuming it can be defined), especially in its criteria of mutual existential and conceptual relations – "be or be conceived."

Spinoza's definition bears an even more remarkable affinity to passages in the *Logic* of Avicenna's *Najāt* and al-Ghazālī's *IP* (for the former, see Arnaldez 1978, pp. 168–169). First, from the *Najāt*:

> The 'essential' (*al-dhātī*) sets down the quiddity (*māhiyya*) of that of which it is said. It is not sufficient in the explanation of the essential to say, "It is what does not separate." For many things which are not essential are still inseparable. Nor is it sufficient to say that its meaning is "what neither separates in existence (*wujūd*), nor truly separates in imagination (*tawahhum*), such that if it were removed (*rafaʿa*) from the imagination, the described thing [i.e., the subject] would go out of existence." Many things that are not essential have this attribute (*ṣifa*), such as the sum of the angles of a triangle being equal to two right angles. . . . For many necessary accidents (*lawāzim*) of a thing which follow after the fixed quiddity are [the quiddity's] clear consequence (*luzūm*). But rather the essential is that which, if its meaning is understood and brought to mind and [so too] is the meaning of [the subject] that has it. . ., then it is impossible that the essence of the subject be understood unless first this meaning [of the essential] is already understood to belong to it. For example, . . .you cannot understand 'human' unless you first understand 'animal.'(Avicenna 1985, 11/4–16; 2011, pp. 6–7, trans. modified)

This same idea is summarized in al-Ghazālī's *IP* (Avicenna's *Dāneshnāme*) both in the Arabic (al-Ghazālī 1961, p. 44) and in the Latin and Hebrew translations. The Latin reads: "When you understand the essential and what has the essential, it is impossible to imagine (*imaginari*) or understand (*intelligere*) the [latter] subject unless you understand the essential existing in it (*existere in eo*); nor can the subject be understood in any way without it" (al-Ghazālī 1965, 247; cf. the Hebrew with Narboni's commentary in Chertoff 1952, II/25 ff.).

In these passages, Avicenna argues that we cannot characterize the essential merely by way of inseparable (i.e. necessary) accidents, properties, or *propria*. The example of the sum of a triangle's angles is repeated as such a *proprium* in Avicenna (1985, p. 16); the

Just as a substance's essence involves existence, a mode's essence (like Avicenna's possibly existent) does not: "A7: If a thing can be conceived as not existing, its essence does not involve existence" (G II/46), so they "must, to exist, have an external cause" (E1p8s2 | G II/51/13–14; cf. *KV* I 6 | G I/42 and *TIE* §92 | G II/34). Since everything but God must be in and conceived through God (E1p15), and since everything else's essence does not involve existence (E1a7 and E1p24), God is the cause of their existence, both of their "beginning to exist" and "of their persevering in existing" (p24c | G II/67; cf. E2p10s | G II/93).

In fact, even this latter distinction boasts an origin in Avicenna. In his *Shifāʾ-Met*. VI 2, Avicenna identifies God and other eternal substances as "essential" or "true" metaphysical efficient causes, which are simultaneous with their effects. Because God is the ultimate cause "of the existence of the essence" and of the "complete existence" of a thing (2005, 203, pp. §§8–9), we might summarize that God is the cause of both the existence and the essence of everything that exists (cf. 2005, 287, §13; also Aquinas 1889, Ia.104.1, and 1976, pp. 376–377/90–146). This is precisely what Spinoza concludes in E1p25: "God is the efficient cause, not only of the existence of things [p24], but also of their essence" (G II/67; cf. E5p22 and *CM* I 3 | G I/241/17–22).

Modes, however, are not just the causal effects of God but are also affections or properties of the one substance: "outside the intellect there is nothing except substances and their affections" (E1p4d; cf. *Ep*. 4 | G IV/14, and E1d5). It follows that Spinoza must think that modes exist as particular accidents (Carriero 1995; cf. Melamed 2013, pp. 57–59). Though Spinoza had an explicit substance-accident ontology (*Ep*. 4), he later rejected the terminology because he came to regard accidents as modes of thinking and thus as insufficiently ontologically robust (*CM* I 1 | G I/236–237; cf. I/235–236/30–5). In medieval philosophy, including Avicenna, however, accidents are real (albeit not substantial) beings and are, therefore, isomorphic to Spinoza's modes. I have already explained that Avicenna does not really conceive of existence as an ontological accident, despite later development and criticism of his views. In light of this historical controversy, it is intriguing to discover a slightly different, but important, sense in which Spinoza's overhaul of Avicennianism implies that (modal) existence is very much an accident!

4. God's Essence is Existence

As may already be clear and is well-attested, Avicenna and Spinoza agree (along with Maimonides and Aquinas) that the essence/existence distinction only holds for things other than God. By contrast, essence and existence are identical in God. Though there is some debate about whether Avicenna considers God to even have an essence, I think it is clear that whenever Avicenna makes claims to that effect, he does so precisely to point out the failure of the distinction and the reality of the identity. God, as the Necessary Existent, "has (*lahu*) no quiddity" (Avicenna 2005, p. 276, §13) precisely because he *is* his essence: "The One, insofar as he is the Necessary Existent, is what he is through himself, and he is his essence (*huwa dhāti-hi*)" (2005, p. 278/17, my translation). "[T]here is no quiddity for the Necessary Existent other than its being the Necessary Existent" (2005, p. 276, §9). The same goes for Spinoza: "[T]hat itself which constitutes God's essence at the same time constitutes his existence. So his existence and his essence are one and the same" (E1p20d | G II/64–65; Melamed 2012). For Spinoza, the identity of essence and existence in God is evident "since his essence cannot be conceived without existence" (*CM* I 2 | G I/238/26–29).

5. Essentially Different?

Wolfson rightly argues that Spinoza draws his thought on the essence/existence distinction from two separate wells. Most of the preceding comes from the Islamic-Jewish tradition, but Spinoza takes from Descartes the conceit that the identity of God's essence and existence (seen above) furnishes the starring premise in an ontological proof for God's existence (Wolfson 1934, pp. 121–122 and 129). Though some scholars have attempted to find an ontological argument based solely on Avicenna's notion of the necessary in itself, Avicenna's theistic arguments are *a posteriori* demonstrations (see, e.g. McGinnis 2010, pp. 165–167; De Haan 2016). "Undoubtedly, there is existence (*huna wujūd*)," as one version begins, seemingly relying upon an indubitable datum of experience (Avicenna 1985, p. 566/16). He then proceeds to refute the notion that everything is merely possible in itself by showing how that supposition leads to contradictions. In other words, Avicenna's argument is a *reductio* from the assumption of possibility, not a deduction from the concept of necessity. On the other hand, the majority of Spinoza's arguments for God's existence in E1p11d are, as he tells us, *a priori* (p11s, G II 54/1–5), relying on the definition of God as *causa sui* in d1 (cf. E1p8s2 | G II 51/14–18). In fact, perhaps the thinkers' distinct paths for proving God's existence are related to Avicenna's apparent rejection of the notion of *causa sui* (if it means anything other than uncaused) (Avicenna 2005, pp. 30 and 277, §16). To close this chapter, however, I wish to identify at least two more differences with Avicenna regarding essence/existence, though each calls for further study.

First, there is a potential divergence between Avicenna and Spinoza concerning an essence's tendency towards existence, i.e. whether essence in itself has a 'default' for existence or non-existence. Sometimes each philosopher characterizes essences as purely indifferent, with both existence and non-existence requiring a cause. So Avicenna argues that "whatever is possible in existence when considered in itself, its existence *and* nonexistence are both due to a cause" (2005, p. 31). Spinoza's explanation is nearly identical, but without Avicenna's scope limitation: "For each thing there must be assigned a cause, or reason, as much for its existence as for its nonexistence" (E1p11d | G II/52).

Avicenna, however, further explains these causes:

> In short, one of the two cases [existence or non-existence] necessarily comes about for [the possible thing], not from itself, but from a cause. In the case of existence, it is by a cause, which is an existential cause (*ʿilla wujūdiyya*). In the case of non-existence (*al-ʿadamī*), it is by a cause, which is the non-existence of the existential cause. (Avicenna 2005, p. 31/10–12, my translation)

This looks like a purely privative account of the cause for non-existence, namely, a lack of an existential cause. In other places, Avicenna suggests that the default for an essence in itself is non-existence: "[Creation] is the giving of existence to a thing after absolutely not [existing]. For it belongs to *the effect* [i.e. the thing] *in itself* to be *non-existent* and [then] to be, by its cause, existing" (2005, p. 203, trans. modified).

Spinoza, on the other hand, in E1p11d, within the same proof for God's existence as above, states that "a thing *necessarily* exists given that there is no reason or cause which *prevents* it from existing" (G II/53/10–12, trans. modified). Also, in Spinoza's *conatus* argument: "Each thing, as far as it can, insofar as it is in itself (*quantum in se est*), strives to persevere in its being" (E3p6 | G II/146, trans. modified). His argument here and in following propositions depends on p4, the demonstration for which states that "the definition of any thing. . .posits the thing's essence and does not take it away. So while we

attend only to the thing itself, and not to external causes, we shall not be able to find anything in it which can destroy it" (E3p4d | G II/145). Spinoza's arguments in these early propositions of E3, then, strongly suggest the essence in itself leans towards (indeed, *strives* for!) existence, though E3p7 and *CM* I 3 (G I/240–241/26–7) may complicate matters.

Avicenna and Spinoza differ more obviously on the issue of whether the essences of things are *in themselves* particular: Spinoza probably says yes, and Avicenna says no. One of the most central and well-known corollaries of Avicenna's essence/existence distinction is (as we saw above) that the essence in itself is neither particular nor universal, but rather a "common nature." Avicenna meticulously argues for this view's coherence and thus provides an influential version of 'moderate,' Aristotelian realism about natures, underwriting an essential (pun-intended!) connection between the universal essence existing in the mind and the particular essence existing in the world. Again, Avicenna denies that the common essence in itself ever has independent existence; rather it *must* exist in one or the other of the aforementioned states. The only proto-existence Avicenna ever seems to attribute to essences in themselves falls within the divine mind. Animal in itself "is [the thing] whose existence is specified as being divine existence (*al-wujūd al-ilāhī*) because the cause of its existence, inasmuch as it is animal, is the providence of God" (2005, p. 156). Though the latter is ambiguous, Avicenna's standard view is that God knows only universals (and particulars only insofar as they are universal) (2005, pp. 287–291; 1985, pp. 246–249), so the essences in the divine mind must actually be universal.

Despite the marked similarity of Avicenna's and Spinoza's positions on essence/existence, Spinoza certainly has no such obvious doctrine of common natures. He acknowledges two types of essence – actual and formal. Actual essence is that of some singular thing existing now, responsible for that thing's striving to maintain its real existence (E3p7; cf. E4p4). Spinoza's actual essence is roughly akin to Avicenna's essence insofar as it exists in a particular. Arguably, however, Spinoza's more prevalent idea of essence and the one more readily distinguished from existence is that of a formal essence (Garrett 2009, p. 286). A formal essence appears to be the idea of a singular thing (mode) as contained in God's attributes: "The ideas of singular things, or of modes, that do not exist must be comprehended by God's infinite idea in the same way as the formal essences of the singular things, or modes, are contained in God's attributes" (E2p8 | G II/90). Similarly, E5p22 states that "in God there is necessarily an idea that expresses the essence of this or that human Body, under a species of eternity," and (p22d) that "God is the cause, not only of the existence of this or that human Body, but also of its essence" (by 1p25), (G II/295). Given the eternity of these formal essences, some argue they should be identified as infinite modes (Garrett 2009; Ward 2011). The most natural and common way to take the passages above is that formal essences (like actual essences) are also particular – my formal essence is *Stephen-Ogden-ness*, not a universal or common *humanity*. There are formidable arguments that the definition of essence in E2d2 and E2p37d rule out universal essences (Della Rocca 1996, p. 87; Ward 2011, pp. 26–27). In turn, there is ample evidence for Spinoza's general rejection of universals.

Avicenna and Spinoza remain comparable here, since both hold that the most prior existence of essences is (unsurprisingly) rooted in God – i.e. (for Avicenna) God's eternal and necessary emanation of all existence, including the various essences and (for Spinoza) the eternal containment of formal essences in (and their following from) God's attributes. On both views the consequent essences are involved as partial, but true, metaphysical causes of the particular and actual essence bearers generated and corrupted within time.

But the dissimilarity seems greater, even with respect to God. Spinoza attacks the notion of universal ideas in God's intellect and the especially Avicennian view that God's knowledge and providence only extend to universal kinds, rather than particulars:

> But we have rightly regarded this as indicating their ignorance; for all and only the particulars have a cause, not the universals, because they are nothing. God, then, is a cause of, and provider for, only particular things. So if particular things have to agree with another nature, they will not be able to agree with their own. . . .Peter must agree with the Idea of Peter, as is necessary, and not with the Idea of Man. . . ." (*KV* I 6 | G I/43)

He also deliberately upends Avicenna's explanation of God's knowledge of universals (and of particulars only insofar as they are universal), on the grounds that universals "neither exist nor have any essence beyond that of singular things. We, on the contrary, attribute a knowledge of singular things to God, and deny him a knowledge of universals, except insofar as he understands human minds" (*CM* I 7 | G I/263/4–9).

Some recent interpretations argue that Spinoza allows for universals and commonality (Hübner 2016; Martin 2008). But even so, the universality of essence would almost certainly be starkly derivative (produced by finite minds) in comparison with all the (primarily) particular essences (esp. Hübner 2016). Universality presents a neuralgic point for Spinoza's metaphysics, but, at the very least, he resists following the traditional Avicennian essence/existence distinction towards any clear system of common natures or of universal essences in God's mind. Spinoza's apparent insistence on essence as particular in itself seems to me a more fundamental contrast with Avicenna and a more obviously modern/late medieval innovation than Spinoza's utilization of God's nominal essence in an ontological proof.

6. Conclusion

While Avicenna's influence on Spinoza has often been acknowledged, it has not usually been traced in historical and conceptual detail, perhaps understandably because of the vast river of philosophy flowing under the bridge between the two. We rightly continue to study what Spinoza adopted and adapted from figures we know he read directly (Maimonides, Aquinas, Crescas). I would argue, however, that we have only just started to explore the potentially fruitful dialogue between Avicenna's and Spinoza's masterful and strikingly similar systems, not least with respect to essence and existence.

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[1] All translations of Spinoza are Curley's in Spinoza 1985, unless otherwise noted. I have indicated significant departures from Marmura's translation in Avicenna 2005 and other modifications. Other translations, where only an edition is cited, are my own.

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Spinoza's attack appears to strike at the very heart of Suárez's conception of eternity: the latter explicitly relates eternity with perpetual existence. However, Suárez's position seems (again) to stand much closer to Spinoza's, when considered in its entirety. In fact, in section III of the *Disputatio* L, Suárez specifies that "uncreated duration is said to be eternity *simpliciter*, or essential. [. . .] Eternity by essence is attributed exclusively to God" (my translation, adapted from Suárez 1856, vol. XVI, *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, disp. L, sect. III.1 and III.3). The Suarezian text, then, establishes a strong connection between eternity and God's essence (Esposito 2001), even though it does not push as far as Spinoza, and does not equate eternity with the involvement or entailment of existence in God's essence. Yet, it does equate "intrinsic time" with substantial being, and ultimately with the existence and motion of created beings (see *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, disp. L, sect. IX.1–2).

Similarly to Suárez (and even more, to Aquinas; see Coppens 2004), Heereboord also ascribes to God a kind of eternity which is centered on the immutability of the divine substance (see the accusation Spinoza moved to this kind of approach, in *CM* II.1 | I/251/17–19). However, he moves a step closer to Spinoza since he admits that God – properly speaking – cannot be measured, and therefore it is impossible for the human intellect to attribute to God any kind of duration. Through the notion of eternity, we are imperfectly trying to understand something unintelligible, the notion of "divine duration." Instead, following Boethius, Heereboord defines eternity as "life, possessed wholly and perfectly. . .an eternal *now*" (Heereboord 1665, I.XXV.1.II–IV, 94). However, he admits that such definition is "*quantum fieri potest*," only an approximation, and cannot be considered to capture eternity "properly speaking." To this admission, Spinoza would probably answer that the necessity of such approximation comes directly from the lack of consideration for God's form of existence – that is, essential necessity. In fact, he says as much in *CM* II.1. Scholastic authors failed to grasp the proper meaning of eternity, thus attributing God an eternal duration, insofar as they "attempted to explain eternity without attending to God, as if eternity could be understood without contemplation of the divine essence – or as if it were something beyond the divine essence" (I/251/9–11; see also Prelorentzos 1996). The "proper order of philosophizing," so important for Spinoza, had been disregarded.

Let us now move to the study of a third, classical, Scholastic problem that Spinoza takes into account in the *Cogitata Metaphysica*, i.e. God's omnipresence. This issue, already central for canonical Scholastic philosophers, gains paramount importance for Spinoza, who will later become – if he is not already in 1663 – a substantial monist who sees finite things as inhering in God as in their "place" (Melamed 2013, pp. 24–25; Schmaltz 2015).

Spinoza affirms that God is to be called "absolutely infinite, insofar as we find that he really consists of infinite perfection. But he can also be called immense, or interminable, insofar as we consider the fact that there is no being by which God's perfection can be limited" (*CM* II.3 | I/253/29–30). In this definition, he stresses that God's infinity is something "most positive," i.e. should not be understood – in the Ancient Greek fashion – as the lack of a limitation, and therefore of some conclusive perfection. "Nevertheless," Spinoza continues, "usually when authors deal with God's immensity, they seem to ascribe quantity to him" (I/254/9–10). As noted by Curley (1985, fn.5) the target of this polemical description is Burgersdijk. "If God, they say, is pure act, as indeed he is, he must be everywhere and infinite. For if he were not everywhere, either he would not be able to be wherever he wishes to be, or he would necessarily – note this – have to move" (I/254/16–19). Not only this is a *verbatim* quote of Burgersdijk's *Institutiones Metaphysicae* (1653, p. 267), as noted by both Freudenthal and Coppens, but it pinpoints exactly Spinoza's argument against the Scholastic conception of immensity – or omnipresence. The latter actually presupposes an understanding of

Principle of Sufficient Reason – that is, that there is a sufficient reason for everything. Because it forswears any explanatorily appeal to unsatisfying brute facts, such rationalism offers an attractive ideal in metaphysics and, as Della Rocca and Dasgupta both emphasize, Spinoza provides a powerful model of a thoroughgoing commitment to and use of the Principle of Sufficient Reason – one sufficiently strong to entail necessitarianism, the thesis that everything is metaphysically necessary (see also Garrett 1991). Moreover, Dasgupta explicitly construes sufficient *reasons* in terms of *grounding*.

A fourth important topic in recent metaphysics is *degrees of reality* or being, returned to prominence especially by Kris McDaniel (2013). As he observes, it is widely agreed that some things that exist are more fundamental, more 'natural,' and more explanatory than other things that exist; furthermore, he argues, this commonplace thesis is well conceptualized in terms of the historical theory of 'degrees of reality' or 'degrees of being.' In McDaniel's view, the *most* fundamental things are *completely* real, while other things exist with lesser degrees of reality. Moreover, he proposes that this same kind of fundamentality lies at the heart of the proposed relation of grounding, so that one thing's grounding of another can be understood as the first thing's being more real than second, together perhaps with a suitable further provision – such as, for example, that the second thing *inheres* in the first. The parallels to Spinoza's relation of *being in*, conceived as a relation of both grounding and inherence, are obvious.

In Spinoza's monism, of course, there is only *one* perfectly real being, which grounds and is more real than all of the other existing things, and in which they inhere. In addition, Spinoza deploys degrees of reality in explaining the principles governing *composition* – that is, the conditions that must be satisfied in order for a combination of things to constitute a real or existing whole of which they are parts. For him, as we have seen, a combination of extended things results in an existing whole when the result is a pattern of motion and rest whose essential tendency or striving to *persist* and maintain itself plays an *explanatory* role with respect to what occurs in its surroundings. (As noted, a parallel account of composition applies to other attributes.) The resulting existing whole has *greater* or *lesser* reality, moreover, the greater or lesser the explanatory role it is able to play.

A fifth important topic in contemporary metaphysics is *ontological pluralism*, also brought to recent prominence by Kris McDaniel (2009). This is the thesis that there are multiple kinds or manners of existence or being, each of which must be expressed in logical terms by a different kind of quantifier. McDaniel's proposed examples include concrete and abstract being, universal and particular being, divine and mundane being, existence and subsistence as distinguished by Meinong, and object and function as distinguished by Frege. For Spinoza, as interpreted here, the distinction between Extension and Thought – and among different attributes more generally – is a paradigm example of ontological pluralism. In most versions of ontological pluralism, however, the same things need not – and often even *cannot* – exist in more than one manner. For Spinoza, in contrast, God and all of the modes of God exist in *each* of the infinite manners of existence there are.

A sixth and final topic of importance in contemporary metaphysics is *panpsychism*, recently brought to renewed prominence by David Chalmers (2015) and others. Panpsychism is the doctrine that mentality is ubiquitous in nature. As Chalmers and others have argued persuasively, panpsychism has many theoretical virtues over purely materialist or dualist accounts of the nature of mind and its relation to body. Chalmers's recent proposals for defending panpsychism have appealed to *Russellian monism*, according to which physics describes only the extrinsic and relational qualities of things, whereas their intrinsic nature

is mental and so accounts for consciousness and thought. A fundamental challenge for panpsychism is to explain how the mental characters of wholes are related to the mental character of their parts. If the former are grounded in the latter, then there is a obvious 'combination problem' of explaining how this occurs despite their presumed mental differences. Yet if the specific mental character of a given whole is *not* grounded in the character of its parts, then it is hard to see how that character can be explained at all.

Spinoza's ontological pluralism of Extension and Thought, together with the universal identity of bodies and their corresponding minds, offers the prospect of an appealing non-Russellian alternative version of panpsychism in which the intrinsic character of the physical as well as that of the mental can be knowable. Several features of his psychology of sense perception (in *Ethics* Part 2) and of the emotions (in *Ethics* Part 3) offer resources for addressing the combination problem of grounding the mental character of wholes in the mental character of their parts, all the way up to the 'infinite individual.' Yet particular minds and bodies for Spinoza, while having parts and composing larger wholes, are not themselves substances and are not *parts* of any substances, but are instead modes of the one substance, God. Thus, Spinoza's panpsychism at the same time provides a model of *cosmopsychism*, in which the mental character of the cosmos – understood as the one monistic substance – grounds the mental character of each particular thing.

Much more deserves to be said both about each of these topics and about Spinoza's distinctive bearing on them. I hope, however, that this is enough to show that the recent resurgence of philosophical as well as historical interest in Spinoza's metaphysics in recent years is eminently justified.

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Index

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