

THE
BLOOMSBURY
COMPANION TO
SPINOZA

EDITED BY
WIEP VAN BUNGE
HENRI KROP
PIET STEENBAKKERS
JEROEN VAN DE VEN

B L O O M S B U R Y

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GENERAL EDITORS

Wiep van Bunge
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Piet Steenbakkens
Jeroen van de Ven

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INTRODUCTION

Today, Baruch or Benedict de Spinoza (1632–77) is widely considered to be one of the greatest philosophers who ever lived. Despite his early death at the age of forty-four, his stature and reputation now equal those of contemporaries such as Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), René Descartes (1596–1650), John Locke (1632–1704), Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) and Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), who all lived much longer. Apart from his expulsion in 1656 from the Portuguese-Jewish community of Amsterdam and his recorded anger over the assassination, in 1672, of the Grand Pensionary of Holland Johan de Witt and his brother Cornelis, the story of his life seems relatively uneventful. His biography testifies first and foremost to the philosopher's total commitment to his work. Spinoza's correspondence, consisting of some eighty odd letters to and from the Dutch philosopher, is largely concerned with the details of his philosophy. Hence, much of Spinoza's life remains in the dark and research into the particulars of his biography continues to inspire the experts. We know much more about the details of the lives of Hobbes, Descartes, Locke, Leibniz and Bayle than we do about Spinoza's and they all produced much more voluminous Collected Works.

Spinoza's *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, published anonymously in 1670, has recently enjoyed considerable scholarly attention, yet to most contemporary readers Spinoza is still essentially the author of a single masterpiece, the *Ethics*, published posthumously in 1677. The *Ethics*, however, composed in Latin and modelled on Euclid's *Elements*, has always been regarded as an exceptionally difficult book, if only on account of the austerity of its language and its geometrical method. Up to this day it has given rise to diverging and even conflicting interpretations, as has the issue of the precise relationship between the *Ethics* and Spinoza's other works.

Following the format of this series, the opening section provides an overview compiled by Jeroen van de Ven of the documentary evidence now available relating to Spinoza's life. This chronicle aims to be complete, and it clearly shows the many lacunae still facing every potential biographer. The next section, on the influences on Spinoza's thought, was edited by Piet Steenbakkers. It does not claim to deliver a complete picture of all the sources at work in Spinoza's

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philosophy, but we feel it would be folly even to attempt supplying such an exhaustive list. More often than not Spinoza is silent about his sources, but then he was no humanist scholar: as a follower of the newly created Cartesian school in philosophy he attached small importance to traditional scholarly erudition and so he may not always have felt the need to clearly indicate where his ideas came from or how they related to those of other thinkers.

The appeal Spinoza's works held and still hold for many readers should not hide from view the widespread revulsion his ideas also incited. We now know that from a very early stage Spinoza was admired across the length and breadth of Europe, but the large majority of his early readers were appalled by his 'atheism', his 'materialism' and his 'fatalism'. From the 1670s onward dozens of 'refutations' were published, and the section *Early Critics*, compiled by Wiep van Bunge, provides an anthology of some of the objections raised against Spinozism as a comprehensive philosophy. Opinions will vary as to the effectiveness of much of the polemical energy vested in dismantling Spinoza's philosophy, but we feel the opposition to Spinozism remains an important and fascinating aspect of its presence in early modern philosophy.

The largest section fell under the responsibility of Henri Krop. The *Glossary* contains a rich collection ranging from short notes to minor essays on the concepts which together make up Spinoza's thought. By spelling out Spinoza's conceptual vocabulary, or rather by having a wide variety of experts do so, we hope to be able to shed new light both on the origins and inner logic of Spinozism as well as on its details. Fortunately, the contributors to this particular section disagree on several aspects of Spinoza's thought. As a consequence a multi-faceted picture emerges, which we hope will serve to provoke further reflection.

The next section is the work of Piet Steenbakkers. His *Synopses* provide a summary of Spinoza's writings, including the ones less familiar even to the experts such as Spinoza's *Hebrew Grammar*. The final section, a short essay on the history of Spinoza scholarship, was written by Wiep van Bunge. As editors we have also written many of the entries brought together in this volume, but we have constantly tried to keep the kaleidoscopic nature of this project intact, for this book was edited by Dutchmen, but co-written with a host of colleagues and friends from the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Italy, Switzerland, Finland, the United States and Canada.

Despite the quiet and brevity of his life as well as his relatively small output, Spinoza continues to inspire philosophers, historians, scientists but also laymen without any professional interest in Spinoza. We hope this *Companion* may help to stimulate further reflection and research on the Dutch philosopher's life and work.

The Editors

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The Editors

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Mark Aalderink
Department of Philosophy
Utrecht University
The Netherlands

Roberto Bordoli
Professor, Department of Philosophy
Universita degli Studi di
Urbino Carlo Bo
Italy

Bert Bos
Professor, Department of Philosophy
Leiden University
The Netherlands

Laurent Bove
Professor, UFR de Philosophie et
Sciences Humaines et Sociales
Université de Picardie Jules
Vernes

Amiens
France

Wiep van Bunge
Professor, Faculty of Philosophy
Erasmus University Rotterdam
The Netherlands

Filip Buyse
École Doctorale de Philosophie
Université de Paris 1, Panthéon-
Sorbonne
France

Thomas Cook
Professor, Department of Philosophy
and Religion
Rollins College
Winter Park, FL
USA

Herman De Dijn
Professor Emeritus, Institute of
Philosophy
Catholic University of Leuven
Belgium

Hans Gribnau
Professor, Faculty of Law
Leiden University
and Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Law
Tilburg University
The Netherlands

Michael Hampe
Professor of Philosophy,
Department of Humanities, Social and
Political Sciences
ETH-Zürich
Switzerland

Jonathan Israel
Professor, Institute of
Advanced Studies
Princeton, NJ
USA

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Chantal Jaquet
Professor, École Doctorale de
Philosophie
Université de Paris 1,
Panthéon-Sorbonne
France

Paul Juffermans
Lecturer, HOVO Brabant
Seniorenacademie
Tilburg University
The Netherlands

Olli Koistinen
Professor, Department of Philosophy
University of Turku
Finland

Henri Krop
Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Philosophy
Erasmus University Rotterdam
The Netherlands

Frank Mertens
Department of Philosophy
University of Ghent
Belgium

Jon Miller
Associate Professor,
Department of Philosophy
Queen's University
Kingston, Ontario
Canada

Pierre-François Moreau
Professor, Département des Sciences
Humaines
École Normale Supérieure des
Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Lyon
France

Gianluca Mori
Professor, Faculty of Letters and
Philosophy
Università degli Studi del Piemonte

Orientele Amedeo Avogadro
Vercelli
Italy

Jan Noordegraaf
Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Letters
Free University of Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Tammy Nyden
Assistant Professor, Department of
Philosophy
Grinnell College
Grinnell, IA
USA

Miriam van Reijen
Lecturer, AVANS Hogeschool
Breda
The Netherlands

Tamar Rudavsky
Professor, Melton Center for Jewish
Studies
The Ohio State University
Columbus, OH
USA

Han van Ruler
Professor, Faculty of Philosophy
Erasmus University Rotterdam
The Netherlands

Donald Rutherford
Department of Philosophy
University of California, San Diego
La Jolla, CA
USA

Tad Schmalz
Professor, Department of Philosophy
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI
USA

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Leen Spruit
Lecturer, Faculty of Letters and
Philosophy
Università La Sapienza Roma
Italy

Piet Steenbakkens
Professor, Faculty of Philosophy
Erasmus University Rotterdam
and Senior Lecturer, Department of
Philosophy
Utrecht University
The Netherlands

Marin Terpstra
Lecturer, Faculty of Philosophy
Radboud University Nijmegen
The Netherlands

Jeroen van de Ven
Boxtel
The Netherlands

Theo Verbeek
Professor Emeritus, Department of
Philosophy
Utrecht University
The Netherlands

Rienk Vermij
Assistant Professor, Department of the
History of Science
University of Oklahoma
Norman, OK
USA

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Spinoza's Life and Time. An Annotated Chronology Based Upon Historical Documents

The heading of each entry in this chronology provides (if known) both the date and, when applicable, the location of a historically documented event in the life of Spinoza, in italics. Dates in the chronology are given according to the Gregorian calendar, unless otherwise indicated. If relevant, a date is followed by the equivalent of the Jewish calendar. In some cases, the date of a historical event or letter is designated according to both the Gregorian ('New Style') and Julian calendars ('Old Style' (OS)), when discussing events that took place in those parts of the Dutch Republic or countries that adhered to the 'Old Style'. Conjectural dates, places and facts are always put between square brackets.

References to Spinoza's published correspondence (published letters (88) and all (lost) missives (37), in Latin and Dutch) are given according to the chronological numbering (Ep) introduced by Van Vloten and Land (1882–3) and to the original standard edition of Carl Gebhardt (1925, 1985, abbreviated G). Reconstructed letters postulated from

evidence in the correspondence or from other historical sources have been assigned a unique code entirely based on their dating (year, month and day) according to the Gregorian calendar. When unknown, the month or day is given as '00'. The mathematical symbols < or > in front of a letter code indicate a dating respectively 'before' or 'after'. Letter codes are followed by an asterisk if a letter has been reconstructed (e.g. 1663.01.11*). Standard reference works that have been used more than once in this study are specified in the list of abbreviations and reference works. In the seventeenth century, names were often spelled in a variety of ways. Dutch family names are given in the common form. Topographical names are indicated in their local form unless there is a more common equivalent in English. Dutch institutions and technical terms are given in italics if there is no satisfactory English equivalent.

The present chronology, modelled after the chronologies of the lives of Leibniz, Husserl and Hobbes (Müller and Krönert, 1969; Schuhmann, 1977 and Schuhmann,

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him by both a family member and a servant (see Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, pp. 234–6, nos. 56–7).

c. 1628, AMSTERDAM
[VLOOIENBURG QUARTER]

Exact date unknown

Michael d'Espinosa marries in second wedlock Hanna Deborah d'Espinosa. She is the daughter of Baruch Senior (fl. 1598–1619) and Maria Nunes Garces (c. 1577–after 1638) (if they are indeed her parents), who both left Portugal to settle in the city of Amsterdam as early as 1598. Michael and Hanna in all probability officially registered their intention to marry at the town hall of Amsterdam.

[c. 1629], AMSTERDAM
[VLOOIENBURG QUARTER]

Exact date unknown

Birth of Spinoza's sister, Mirjam d'Espinosa (c. 1629–50).

1631, AMSTERDAM
[VLOOIENBURG QUARTER]

February

A son named Isaac is born from Michael d'Espinosa's marriage with Hanna Deborah d'Espinosa. This is therefore the philosopher's elder full brother – a fact for which so far no conclusive evidence was available. The date of his birth can be inferred from the postscript to one of the autograph manuscripts with Hebrew sermons delivered by the Amsterdam rabbi Morteira, now preserved in the Library of the Rabbinical Seminary in Budapest (MS 12 'Giv'at Sha'ul', 5 vols; see Saperstein, 2005): 'The sermon I delivered in the year 5391 (1631) on the day of the celebration of

the son of the honourable Michael Espinosa' (MS 12 'Giv'at Sha'ul', vol. 2, fol. 177v (Exod. 35.21), quoted in Saperstein, 2005, p. 9). Isaac d'Espinosa attended the Amsterdam Talmud Torah School at the Houtgracht sometime in 1637, until the age of 13 or 14, together with his brother Bento. Isaac died on 24 September 1649. No further biographical particulars are known about him.

Tuesday 15 July

Michael d'Espinosa works in the import-export business of subtropical fruit in Amsterdam. According to a legal document of 15 July 1631, Michael together with a certain Philips Pelt holds the keys of a warehouse at the Prinsengracht, in which such goods as sugar, Brazilian wood and candied ginger were stored (Vaz Dias and Van der Tak, p. 53, a). In the affidavit, made by the notary public Daniel Bredan (fl. 1623–4) in Amsterdam, two men declare that they transported goods to the weighing house from the warehouse at the Prinsengracht on 27 May and 18 June 1631.

2. BIRTH AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

**AMSTERDAM: LATE NOVEMBER 1632–
AUGUST 1636**

We have very little and only fragmentary information about the early upbringing of the young Spinoza. He is born the [second] son of Michael d'Espinosa and his second wife, Hanna Deborah d'Espinosa, in Amsterdam on 24 November 1632. Since no archival records of Spinoza's birth in the municipal archives of Amsterdam have survived, the exact address where he is born remains unclear. The oldest, most reliable source claiming Spinoza to be born in

Amsterdam is the anonymous preface to the philosopher's posthumous works (1677). The Lutheran minister Johannes Nicolaus Colerus (1647–1707), Spinoza's eighteenth-century biographer, adds to this that he was born at the Burgwal, near the old Portuguese Church (Colerus, 1705, see Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 98). Spinoza has four siblings: Isaac, Mirjam, Rebecca and Gabriel.

LATE 1632, AMSTERDAM
[VLOOIENBURG QUARTER]

Wednesday 24 November

Spinoza is born the [second] son of Michael d'Espinosa and Hanna Deborah d'Espinosa, most probably in a house in the Vlooienburg quarter. According to Colerus, that house was a 'vraay Koopmans huis op de Burgwal naast de Oude Portugieze Kerk' (a handsome Merchant house at the Burgwal next to the Old Portuguese Church) (Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 98). Another short biography (1747) by Johannes Monnikhoff (1707–87) adds to this that the philosopher was born 'op de Hout-gragt, naast de oude Portugeesche Kerk...in een fraaij Koopmans huijs: waar voor in het Jaar 1743 een nieuwe gevel, en in die 't *oprechte Tapijthuis* is gezet' (at the Houtgracht, next to the old Portuguese Church...in a handsome Merchant house: which in the year 1743 was furnished with a new façade with the name 't *oprechte Tapijthuis*') (Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 172). Research has clearly established that Spinoza may have been born in the house described, though the name 't *oprechte Tapijthuis*' (the true Carpet house) dates from the middle of the eighteenth century (Vaz Dias and Van der Tak, 1982, pp. 172–5). Summing up, there is no historical evidence to confirm the claims made by Colerus and Monnikhoff.

[Wednesday 1 December]

The young Spinoza is ritually circumcised (Nadler, 1999, p. 42). During this (undocumented) circumcision ceremony ('Brit milah' or 'Bris'), which officially initiates him into the Sephardic community, Spinoza receives the name Bento (Baruch, or 'the Blessed').

AFTER 1632, AMSTERDAM
[VLOOIENBURG QUARTER]

Exact date unknown

Sometime after 1632, two other children from Michael d'Espinosa's second marriage are born: Rebecca (fl. 1632–95) and Gabriel d'Espinosa (alias Abraham d'Espinosa, fl. 1632–64).

1633, AMSTERDAM
(VLOOIENBURG QUARTER)

Friday 2 December

A legal document, made by the notary Bredan, confirms that 'Mr Michel despinosa Portuguese merchant of this city' is living with his family 'in a house here in Vlooienburg'. From this document, we also learn that he is active in the long-distance trade of raisins. The deed concerns the receipt of 50 small barrels of raisins from Malaga, which apparently did not arrive in good condition in Amsterdam (Vaz Dias and Van der Tak, p. 11, III, 2a).

1634, AMSTERDAM
[VLOOIENBURG QUARTER]

Thursday 29 June

The Jewish-Moroccan merchant David Pallache (fl. 1626–50) signs a legal document before the notary public Daniel Bredan. In an effort to clear some of his debts, Pallache in this document transports a

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carrier with its complete cargo to both Michael d'Espinosa and the brothers Pieter and Wijnant Woltrincx (Vaz Dias and Van der Tak, p. 53, b).

1636, AMSTERDAM

[VLOOIENBURG QUARTER]

August

Michael d'Espinosa is officially registered as an independent entrepreneur (Vlessing, 1997, p. 21). He is also mentioned as one of the *Par-nassim* of the Portuguese-Jewish congregation *Bet(h) Jacob* (Vaz Dias and Van der Tak, p. 15, III, 4a) for the period 1636–7. This is an indication that he acquired respect and status in the Amsterdam (Sephardim) community.

3. FORMAL EDUCATION AND INTELLECTUAL TRAINING

AMSTERDAM: 1637–MID-SEPTEMBER 1654

The life of the young Spinoza is marked by periods of mourning as well as celebration. As a young child, he experiences the death (1638) of his mother, Hanna Deborah d'Espinosa, but also the third marriage (1641) of his father Michael with Hester de Espinosa. Somewhere around Spinoza's thirteenth birthday (1645) the Espinosa family celebrates his *bar mitzvah*. During his teenage years, Spinoza is again confronted with distressing and sad events involving people who were very close to him: the death of his brother Isaac (1649), the death of his sister Mirjam (1651), and, finally, the passing away of his father Michael (1654).

We possess but very little information about Spinoza's formal schooling in Amsterdam. Almost certainly, he attends the Amsterdam *Talmud Torah* School (more commonly

known as *Ets Haim* School) at the Houtgracht (c. 1637) together with his brother Isaac until the age of 13 or 14, giving him a solid training in the Hebrew Bible and Jewish commentaries. There is however no documentary evidence to support this claim. Nevertheless, there is little reason to doubt that Spinoza attended the *Talmud Torah* classes, as his father was repeatedly chosen as one of the principal administrators (1635, 1636, 1642 and 1643) of this primary public school for the education of Jewish boys (cf. Vaz Dias and Van der Tak, p. 15, III, 4c). In addition, Spinoza is mentioned as a member of the society *Ets Haim* ('Tree of Life') of the *Ets Haim* School (1637). Next to nothing is known about Spinoza's upbringing and occupations in the ten-year period until 20 April 1655, when his name is mentioned in the notarial records of Amsterdam in relation to a financial business conflict of the trading firm which he took over from his father in the early spring of 1654. So we may assume that Spinoza came into business through the trading firm of his father. Historical facts about Spinoza's early intellectual training are also lacking. It is plausible that he was a pupil at the Latin School of the notorious free-thinker Franciscus Affinius van den Enden (1602–74) sometime in the mid-1650s, but there is no independent historical evidence to support this. War is declared by English Parliament on the United Provinces on 10 July 1652 (First Anglo-Dutch War, 1652–1654).

1637, AMSTERDAM

[VLOOIENBURG QUARTER]

Exact date unknown

Spinoza presumably receives his formal education at the *Ets Haim* School at the Houtgracht. Together with his brother, Isaac, he is mentioned as a member of the society

Ets Haim of the *Ets Haim* School (Vaz Dias and Van der Tak, p. 26, V, 1). The philosopher's name was later struck out, perhaps due to his subsequent ban from the unified Portuguese-Jewish congregation *Talmud Torah* in 1656. This is the earliest historical document known referring to the young Spinoza.

1638, AMSTERDAM [VLOOIBURG QUARTER] AND OUDERKERK AAN DE AMSTEL

Thursday 8 June

The Amsterdam *schepenbank* (local Dutch court of law) appoints Michael d'Espinosa and Ruy Gomes Frontera (fl. 1622–38) to step in for a certain Diego Cardozo Nunes (fl. 1624–47) as official trustees for the bankrupt estate of the recently deceased Pedro Henriques (d. before 1639) (Vaz Dias and Van der Tak, pp. 53–4, g). Another record on this same matter in the Amsterdam archives is dated 26 January 1639 (Vaz Dias and Van der Tak, pp. 54, h).

Tuesday 8 September

Michael d'Espinosa and his second wife Hanna Deborah are seriously ill and confined to bed in their house in the Vlooienburg quarter. That is confirmed in a legal document of 8 September 1638 made by the notary Jan Warnaertz (fl. 1621–45) at their house at the request of a certain Simon Barkman (fl. 1638–46). The deed concerns the refusal of a 'wisselbrief' (a bill of exchange, an unconditional order in writing (by the drawer) to pay a fixed sum of money at a nominated time to a nominated person, or to the bearer or holder of the bill) by Michael and Hanna Deborah 'because of the illness' (Vaz Dias and Van der Tak, 1982, pp. 187–8, Annex 1). That bill of exchange (worth 1,600 Taler and 34 copper coins) was

initially nominated by the deceased Henriques to a certain Lopo Nunes. Apparently, Michael, Henriques's estate trustee, took over the debt and agreed to make payment to Nunes through 'Simao Barquman' on 21/31 August 1638 (Walther and Czeliński, 2006, vol. 1, pp. 220–1, no. 48).

Friday 5 November (28 Cheshvan 5399)

Death of Hanna Deborah d'Espinosa. The philosopher's mother is buried on the same day at the Portuguese-Israelite cemetery *Beth Haim* (Vaz Dias and Van der Tak, p. 3, I, A).

1641, AMSTERDAM (VLOOIBURG QUARTER)

Exact date unknown

The business finances of Michael d'Espinosa's trading company are growing vigorously. His credit balance in the Amsterdam *Wisselbank* runs in five months to the impressive sum of 28,052 Dutch guilders and 88 *penningen* (about 300,000 euro nowadays).

Sunday 28 April

Michael d'Espinosa marries in third wedlock Hester de Espinosa. According to the Amsterdam marriage registers, the newly-wed couple was living in the 'Vloijenburgh' quarter (Vaz Dias and Van der Tak, p. 22, III, 11b).

1642, AMSTERDAM [VLOOIBURG QUARTER]

Saturday 1 February

The finances of Michael d'Espinosa's trading firm begin to grow rather problematical as compared to the far more prosperous year 1641. The credit balance of his account in the *Wisselbank* has now diminished to the sum of 1,323 Dutch guilders (now approximately 15,000 euro) ('Balansboek', Vaz Dias and Van der Tak, p. 55).

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1644, AMSTERDAM [VLOOIENBURG QUARTER] AND OUDERKERK AAN DE AMSTEL

Monday 25 April

Michael d'Espinosa enters into a Portuguese trading contract with Francisco Lopes d'Azevedo (fl. 1614–41). Also involved in the business agreement is the London-based merchant and shipping magnate Antonio Fernandes Carvajal (c. 1590–1659) (Vaz Dias and Van der Tak, p. 54, n).

[1645 OR 1646], AMSTERDAM [VLOOIENBURG QUARTER]

Exact date unknown

The young Spinoza leaves the *Ets Haim* School sometime in [1645 or 1646]. In the same period, he is to celebrate his *bar mitzvah* in the newly built Portuguese *Talmud Torah* synagogue at the Houtgracht. The ceremony in the Amsterdam synagogue is not documented.

[AFTER 1645–1646], AMSTERDAM [HOUTGRACHT]

Exact date unknown

We may assume that Spinoza, after leaving the Amsterdam *Ets Haim* School, enters the business trade, learning his managerial skills in and around the trading firm of his father or family. Apart from that, almost nothing is known about his intellectual training as a young man after his formal education at the *Ets Haim* School. According to Colerus, he was first tutored on a daily basis in Latin by a 'Hoogduitsch Student', most likely a tudesco, a German Jew of Ashkenazi extraction (Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 100), but this claim is not supported by any documentary evidence. After that, according to the same source, he was tutored

by 'that notorious Teacher and Physician Frans van den Ende', who may be identified as the free-thinker Franciscus van den Enden. There is, however, no independent historical evidence to confirm that Spinoza entered Van den Enden's Latin School. Contacts between Spinoza and Van den Enden have not been documented. An early documentary source suggesting that Spinoza learned Latin from the 'ex Jesuit' Van den Enden is a report on the life and works of Spinoza submitted by the Dutch vicar apostolic Johannes Baptista van Neercassel (1626–86) to the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition (or Holy Office of the Inquisition, the supreme Roman Catholic tribunal for the whole world founded in 1542) submitted on 9 September 1678 (Orcibal, 1949, p. 464, Annex 11; see also Bayle in Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 61).

1649, AMSTERDAM [VLOOIENBURG QUARTER] AND OUDERKERK AAN DE AMSTEL

Friday 24 September (18 Tishrei 5410)

Death of Spinoza's brother, Isaac d'Espinosa. He is buried at *Beth Haim*, probably on the same day.

1651, AMSTERDAM (HOUTGRACHT) AND OUDERKERK AAN DE AMSTEL

Wednesday 19 July

The Spinoza family lives in a rented house at the Houtgracht in the Amsterdam Vlooienburg quarter. According to the property tax register (concerning the so-called 'achtste penning', the 8th penny) of Amsterdam the house, owned by one Willem Kick, is located somewhere 'achter de Bree straet, nae d'oude Stadt' (behind the Breestraet, near the old city). According to the same source, Michael d'Espinosa pays the tax of 16 guilders and

(Orphan chamber) appoint Louis Crayers (1623–88) as legal custodian of ‘Bento d’Espinosa’ (Vaz Dias and Van der Tak, pp. 32–3, V, 10).

[Before Thursday 23 March]

Crayers, legal custodian of ‘Bento d Spinosa minderjarige naegelaeten soon van Michael de Spinosa’ (Bento d Spinosa underaged orphaned son of Michael de Spinosa) informs the Supreme Court of Holland in a legal deed that his pupil fully renounces the estate of his father. Crayers turns to the Supreme Court to relieve Spinoza officially from the debts of his father’s estate and from any legal action he has already taken with regard to this property. In this way, Spinoza is able to escape from his father’s financial obligations to the creditors of the insolvent estate of Henriques, of whom Michael had become the trustee on 8 June 1638 (see Vlessing, 1997, pp. 19–20). A rather serious accusation in this deed is that Michael did not give his son the appropriate part of the inheritance after the death of his second wife. In the deed, Crayers puts forward Spinoza as a preferential creditor of Michael’s estate based on his claim on the goods of his deceased mother (Vaz Dias and Van der Tak, pp. 32–3, V, 11).

Thursday 23 March

The Supreme Court of Holland, Zeeland and West-Friesland officially releases Spinoza from having accepted his father’s estate (Vaz Dias and Van der Tak, p. 32, V, 11).

Thursday 27 July (6 Av 5416)

The Amsterdam *Mahamad* officially places Spinoza under the ban (*herem*) of the unified community *Talmud Torah* (‘Escamoth’ (register of rules and regulations), Vaz Dias

and Van der Tak, 1982, p. 164, V, 12, p. 170). As the matter stands, many key questions remain about Spinoza’s problematic relations (if any) with the Sephardim community as well as the exact reasons for his sudden expulsion. The *herem* imposed on him may very well relate to the bleak financial situation of his father’s estate, rather than to the philosopher’s opinions in matters of religious revelation as is often assumed. For the writ, a ritualistic formula which seems to have been derived from late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century Venice, is in fact extremely vague, mentioning ‘abominable heresies’ and ‘monstrous deeds’ without any further explanation. So much is clear: there are no archival sources, testimonies or writings whatsoever to confirm or prove that Spinoza had any deviant ideas or publicly preached at the time (see Vlessing, 1997, p. 15; Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, pp. 262–3, no. 73).

1658, AMSTERDAM [HOUTGRACHT]

Between Wednesday 21 August 1658 and Friday 21 March 1659

Spinoza makes the acquaintance of the Augustine friar Solano y Robles, who found his way to Amsterdam where he waits for a ship to sail back to Spain. So apparently the philosopher is still living in Amsterdam. Sometime between November 1658 and 14 January 1659, Spinoza also meets the infantry captain Miguel Pérez de Maltranilla, one of Solano y Robles’s fellow travellers (cf. Revah, 1959, p. 32). Nothing precise is known about their relations, except that they met in Amsterdam and discussed matters of religion. Pérez de Maltranilla travelled back to Spain on 14 January 1659, while Solano y Robles set sail on 21 March 1659.

1659, [AMSTERDAM, HOUTGRACHT]

Friday 8 August

After his return to Spain, Solano y Robles is interrogated by the Inquisition in Madrid on the conversion to Judaism of the Spanish actor and musician Lorenzo Escudero (fl. 1659–1683). The Inquisition court however takes a much broader interest and also asks the Spanish monk to provide details about his contacts in Amsterdam. Solano y Robles testifies that he met many Jews in Amsterdam, specifically referring to his encounter with the physician De Prado and Spinoza, ‘whom he thinks is born in one of the cities of Holland, because he studied in Leiden and is a good philosopher’. The Madrid Inquisition report is the only known source to imply that the philosopher might have attended Leiden University before August 1658. We know with certainty that Spinoza did not officially matriculate as a student in Leiden, for his name is not mentioned in the official matriculation register of Leiden university. If we assume however that Spinoza may have taken private classes (for instance philosophy lessons under the supervision of Arnold Geulincx (1624–69)) there, it could perhaps be explained why he settled in early 1661 in the village of Rijnsburg, which is in the close vicinity of Leiden. Both De Prado and Spinoza, according to the Madrid interrogation record, had professed in a private meeting that they were banned from the Sephardic community for their atheistic preferences and their belief that the soul dies together with the body, claiming to believe in God only philosophically (Revah, 1959, pp. 32 and 64, Annex 2).

Saturday 9 August

One day later, Pérez de Maltranilla is also heard on the Escudero affair by the

Inquisition in Madrid. While staying in Amsterdam, he testifies, he made the acquaintance of several Jews in the house of a physician, called Joseph Guerra. There, he also met Michael Reynoso (fl. 1614–55), a physician from Seville, and a certain Samuel Pacheco, a confectioner from Seville who made a living in the trade of chocolate and tabacco. He also claims to have spoken with two apostates, Juan de Prado and Spinoza (Revah, 1959, pp. 32–3, 66–8, Annex 2).

5. OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF THE LEIDEN ACADEMY

[AMSTERDAM], RIJNSBURG: MID-MAY 1661–MID-APRIL 1663

Spinoza’s reputation as an original thinker begins to spread after his expulsion (27 July 1656) from the Portuguese-Jewish community in Amsterdam sometime in the early 1660s. The dissemination of his views among a group of admirers in Amsterdam presumably starts with the *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione*. In the early 1660s, Spinoza establishes close relations and enters into a correspondence with several of these admirers: the writer and medical doctor Lodewijk Meyer (1629–81), the Mennonite merchant Simon Joosten de Vries (1633/34–67), Pieter Balling (fl. 1647–64) and, presumably, Jan Rieuwertsz Sr (c. 1617–87), one of the most productive publishers and bookdealers in Amsterdam at this time. Many insiders of this talented study ‘circle’ are free-thinkers and non-academic radical Cartesians. Meanwhile, Spinoza is also composing another treatise, elaborating his own philosophical system of what would eventually become his posthumously

published *Ethics*. At this stage, however, he still plans to present his philosophy in a discursive form, surviving in a Dutch translation of his unfinished *Korte verhandeling van God, de mensch en des zelvs welstand* (the lost original was written in Latin), which he reworked in the geometrical style as late as 1665.

Five years after his expulsion from the synagogue, Spinoza finally leaves Amsterdam. He settles in a small house in Rijnsburg, where he will stay from the summer of 1661 until late April 1663. The philosopher never reveals his motives for moving there, and the exact date (sometime [before 29 July 1661]) remains unknown, too. In this period, Spinoza studies the New Philosophy of René Descartes (1596–1650), Francis Bacon (1561–1626) and Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) as well as the textbooks of various neoscholastics, such as Franco Petri Burgersdijk (1590–1635), Adriaan Heereboord (1614–61) and Bartholomeus Keckermann (1573–1609). Also, he is in close contact with a young Leiden student, named Johannes Casarius (c. 1642–77), whom he teaches Descartes's *Principia philosophiae*. To all appearances, Spinoza in this Rijnsburg period seems already a luminary of some renown who even attracts the attention of the international Republic of Letters. In the same interval, the first (indirect) reference by the Danish anatomist Olaus Borrichius (1626–90) is made to Spinoza not only as an atheist, but also as an optician manufacturing glasses and microscopes. Between the second half of 1660 and 1662, he makes the acquaintance of the Danish natural scientist and theologian Niels Stensen (1638–86), with whom he shares an interest in Cartesianism and human anatomy. Sometime before 29 July 1661, he receives a visit from the German scholar

Henry Oldenburg (c. 1615–77), one of the founding fellows of the British 'invisible college' of natural philosophers (the precursor of the Royal Society). Almost instantly upon his arrival in London, Oldenburg enters upon a lively philosophical exchange of letters with Spinoza starting 26 August 1661. Through Oldenburg as intermediary Spinoza communicates with the British naturalist Robert Boyle (1627–91). With Boyle he discusses the nature of experiment, particularly his *Certain Physiological Essays*, an account of experiments with pure nitre or saltpetre (the powerful fertilizer potassium nitrate KNO_3). In this way, Oldenburg becomes an important conduit for Spinoza into the world of science and the supranational Republic of Letters'. Their correspondence, a portion of which seems to circulate among Spinoza's friends, also yields information about the philosopher's own experimental work on nitre performed in Rijnsburg.

**1661, [AMSTERDAM, HOUTGRACHT],
RIJNSBURG [KATWIJKERLAAN]**

[Before Friday 29 July], Amsterdam,
Rijnsburg

From Amsterdam, Spinoza moves to Rijnsburg, where he takes up residence at the house (at the Katwijker Laantje or Kwakkel-, or Paradijslaantje, nowadays Spinozalaan 29, the house now known as the 'Spinozahuis') of a local surgeon, Herman Homan. The exact date of Spinoza's definitive departure is unknown, but it must have been sometime [before 29 July 1661]. In his early Rijnsburg period, Spinoza receives a visit from the diplomat and natural philosopher Henry Oldenburg, discussing with him various philosophical subjects, viz. God, the attributes extension and thought and their

differences, body and soul, as well as Cartesian and Baconian philosophy (cf. Oldenburg to Spinoza, Ep 1, G IV, 5–6).

Friday 26 August (16 OS)

Almost three weeks after his return to London, Henry Oldenburg dispatches a letter to Spinoza (Ep 1, G IV, 5–6), inviting him to start a philosophical correspondence. Oldenburg asks Spinoza to write to him on the distinction between extension and thought as well as the weaknesses in Cartesian and Baconian philosophy. Furthermore, he promises Spinoza to send him a copy of a pending publication ‘by an English nobleman, a man of extraordinary learning’ (i.e. Boyle), entitled *Certain Physiological Essays*. Oldenburg’s letter of 16/26 August 1661, the earliest surviving letter of Spinoza’s correspondence, marks the beginning of his long friendship with the young Dutch philosopher. They remained close (epistolary) friends until Spinoza’s death in early 1677, exchanging at least 31 letters (with enclosures) over the period from 26 August 1661 to 11 February 1676.

Early September [Rijnsburg]

Spinoza replies to Oldenburg’s letter of 16/26 August 1661. In his reply (Ep 2, G IV, 7–9), he brings up the definition of God, the relation between substance and God, without answering Oldenburg’s questions concerning his distinction between the attributes extension and thought. Furthermore, Spinoza propounds three propositions on substance. In his letter, he also encloses ‘a clear and concise proof’ of his theory of substance, arranged ‘in geometrical fashion’ (*more geometrico*). The enclosure itself is lost, but can be reconstructed. The stage of these philosophical views expounded in this letter to Oldenburg is a mixture between his *Korte verhandeling*

van God, de mensch en deszelvs welstand and what would later become his *Ethics*. The second part of his letter revolves around the defects in the philosophy of Descartes and Bacon concerning the conflict between free will and reason as the basis of all error.

Saturday 10 September

Olaus Borrichius, travelling in the region of Leiden, in his diary quotes the testimony of a certain Daniel Langermann from Hamburg, which may be interpreted as a veiled reference to Spinoza. Borrichius in his diary refers to someone who is almost an atheist, and ‘who has left Judaism and become a Christian’. That atheist, who is living in the vicinity of ‘Rensberg’ (Rijnsburg), does not bother about the Old Testament, the Koran, nor Aesop’s fables, but on the other hand he presents absolutely no harm to others, spending his time manufacturing glasses and microscopes (Borrichius, 1983, vol. 1, p. 128; see also Klever, 1989, p. 314).

Saturday 24 September, Rijnsburg

During Olaus Borrichius’s trip to Katwijk aan Zee, Valkenburg and Rijnsburg, a German physician named Menelaus provides him with some striking details about Spinoza. According to Borrichius’s travel diary, Spinoza, ‘who had left Judaism and become a Christian’, is living in Rijnsburg. The latter supposedly excels in Cartesian philosophy, even superseding some of Descartes’s distinct ideas. Borrichius also stresses the fact that Spinoza’s ideas even surpass the work of the Amsterdam mathematician Johannes Hudde (1628–1704), who appended a tract called ‘De forkeren’ to Descartes’s *Geometria* (i.e. the second Latin edition of Descartes’s *Géométrie* (1637), see Descartes, 1996, VI, 367–485). This much is clear, the information recounted to Borrichius by Menelaus seems to confirm the reputation Spinoza enjoyed as

an expert of some note in Cartesian philosophy in his early Rijnsburg period (Borrichius, 1983, vol. 1, p. 128; see also Klever, 1989, p. 314).

1661 OR 1662, RIJNSBURG
[KATWIJKERLAAN], [LEIDEN]

Exact date unknown

After moving to Rijnsburg, Spinoza makes the acquaintance of the young Danish intellectual Niels Stensen sometime between the second half of 1660 and 1662, either in Rijnsburg or in Leiden very likely. Their encounter is confirmed in a lengthy document ('Libri prohibiti circa la nuova filosofia dello Spinoza' (Forbidden books centering around the new philosophy of Spinoza)), which Stensen later submitted in Rome to the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office (4 September 1677). In the document, Stensen testifies that he was on familiar terms with Spinoza 'some fifteen or sixteen years ago' during the time (after 27 July 1661) he was studying medicine in Leiden. Spinoza, 'whose doctrines very much confused me', was of Jewish extraction, but he had no specific religious belief. Stensen furthermore asserts that Spinoza had studied for the rabbinate for some time and was in contact with a 'certain' Van Enden, who ultimately may be held responsible for his deviant, atheistic views. Also, Descartes's philosophy exerted a very profound influence on Spinoza's thinking (Totaro, 2000, p. 100; Totaro, 2002, Appendix, p. 33). What is biographically the most intriguing in the report is Stensen's claim that Spinoza daily attended his anatomical dissections of the brain of various animals, which he performed 'to find the seat of the principle of motion and the source of the human feelings' (Totaro, 2000, p. 100; Totaro, 2002, Appendix, p. 33).

AFTER 1661, [RIJNSBURG, KATWIJKERLAAN]

A manuscript copy in Latin of Spinoza's *Korte verhandeling van God, de mensch en deszelvs welstand* circulates among his friends and followers in [Amsterdam] very likely (cf. Akkerman, 2005, p. 230).

JANUARY–EARLY APRIL 1663, RIJNSBURG
[KATWIJKERLAAN], THE HAGUE

Saturday 24 February, Rijnsburg

From Amsterdam, Simon Joosten de Vries writes a letter to Spinoza in Rijnsburg (Ep 8, G IV, 38–41). Firstly, De Vries apologizes for not visiting him there, because the wintry weather prevented him from doing so. Then he expresses some jealousy about 'your companion Casuarius' (i.e. Johannes Casearius), who 'dwells beneath the same roof and can converse with you during breakfast, lunch and on walks'. So apparently Casearius shares lodgings in Rijnsburg with Spinoza. More importantly, De Vries's letter yields explicit information about the circulation of Spinoza's earliest writings among a small group of admirers in Amsterdam. He writes to Spinoza that his 'circle' recently resumed its meetings to discuss his writings on a regular basis. One member does the reading, gives his explanation of the passage and then continues with a demonstration of Spinoza's propositions. When they disagree, they make a note of it and write to Spinoza for more clarification and guidance to defend the truth against 'those who are religious and Christian in a superstitious way'. De Vries in his letter also raises questions about the nature of definition, axiom and postulate. To all appearances they read an early instalment of the first part of the *Ethics* rather than the *Korte verhandeling van God, de mensch en deszelvs welstand*.

unidentified scholar, whom he sees as a windbag and sardonically labels as ‘that petty man’. He promises Meyer to convey to him the printed sheets with the scholium to proposition 27 (starting on p. 75) of the second part of *Renati des Cartes Principia philosophiae*, which must absolutely be reset by the printer with his new corrections and additions.

After Friday 3 August

The Amsterdam bookseller Jan Rieuwertsz Sr publishes *Renati des Cartes Principia philosophiae*, the first book that appeared openly under Spinoza’s own name in his lifetime. The precise publication date of this quarto edition is not known, but the date *post quem* is Spinoza’s letter to Lodewijk Meyer of 3 August 1663. It is abundantly clear that Meyer edited *Renati des Cartes Principia philosophiae* and the *Cogitata metaphysica* rather heavily according to Spinoza’s explicit instructions (cf. Steenbakkers, 1994, p. 20). The work, according to Spinoza’s own testimony, is published ‘for the benefit of all men’. The preface to it is composed by Meyer. Spinoza’s lifelong friend, Johannes Bouwmeester, is credited with having composed the laudatory poem ‘Ad librum’. Appended to the work is an annex containing the *Cogitata metaphysica*. The manuscript of the work itself has been lost. As was shown by Gerritsen (1980; see also Gerritsen, 2005, p. 255), the main text of the Latin work was typeset from a case (dated 1663) from which were also set seven editions of works authored by the poet Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679). One of these is also typographically linked with a Vondel text set with a different case used by the Amsterdam printer Thomas Fonteyn (fl. 1630–61) between 1659 and 1662. Typographical research has now shown that

the printer who did typeset Spinoza’s digest of Descartes was Daniel Bakkamude (Jagersma and Dijkstra, 2014).

After mid-August

In all likelihood, Spinoza is spending a portion of his time in the study of light and colours, an aspect of mathematical physics. Shortly after publishing his *Renati des Cartes Principia philosophiae*, he disseminates another treatise concerning rainbows among the ‘circle’ of friends in Amsterdam (Akkerman and Hubbeling, 1979, no. 9, pp. 112–13). The manuscript and text of the work have been lost.

1664, VOORBURG (KERKLAAN), SCHIEDAM (AT THE ‘LANGEN BOGERT’)

Exact date unknown

Sometime in 1664, Rieuwertsz Sr publishes *Renatus des Cartes Beginzelen der wysbegeerte*, the Dutch adaptation of *Renati des Cartes Principia philosophiae*, under Spinoza’s full name. The work, augmented and revised in many places by its author most likely, was translated from Latin into the vernacular by someone who signed his name as ‘P.B.’. Presumably, the person responsible for this translation was Spinoza’s friend Pieter Balling, although there is no historical evidence to support that claim. The preface to the work is composed by Meyer. The work contains the Latin dedicatory poem ‘Ad librum’ attributed to Bouwmeester (I.B.M.D.), plus two other Dutch poems. One is a free translation of this dedicatory poem, the other poem is signed by ‘H. Van Bronchorst, M.D.’, who can be identified as the Cartesian physician Hendrik van Bronchorst (1636–78) from Amsterdam. The book was printed by the Amsterdam typographer

Aaltsz (Jagersma and Dijkstra, 2014). The manuscript of the work has also been lost.

Friday 12 December

From [Dordrecht], the grain broker and amateur philosopher Willem van Blijenberg writes a letter to Spinoza (Ep 18, G IV, 79–85). The letter is enclosed in another (lost) letter of Van Blijenberg dated 21 December 1664 (Van Blijenberg to Spinoza, 1664.12.21*). Spinoza, according to his own testimony, receives the packet on 26 December 1664 while staying at the homestead of the Mennonite merchant Alewijn Gijse close to the village of Schiedam (cf. Spinoza to Van Blijenberg, Ep 19, G IV, 86–95). The letter of 12 December 1664 marks the beginning of the exchange between Spinoza and Van Blijenberg, who was an enthusiastic reader of *Renati des Cartes Principia philosophiae*. Van Blijenberg's letter of 12 December 1664 is the first known reaction to Spinoza's *Renati des Cartes Principia philosophiae* and the *Cogitata metaphysica*.

Before Friday 26 December, Schiedam

Spinoza departs from Voorburg to stay three or four weeks in the vicinity of Schiedam at the homestead of Gijse (cf. Spinoza to Van Blijenberg, Ep 19), called the 'Langen bogert' ('Long orchard'). The reason for the philosopher's short stay there is very likely an attempt to diminish chances of infection from the plague that swept through The Hague and its region. Gijse's home was situated outside Schiedam (cf. Van Blijenberg to Spinoza, Ep 20, G IV, 96–125) in Oud-Mathenesse. Although Spinoza, according to his own testimony, planned to stay in Schiedam for almost an entire month, he only returns to Voorburg after 19 February 1665.

1665, SCHIEDAM (AT THE 'LANGEN BOGERT'), VOORBURG (KERKLAAN), AMSTERDAM

Friday 13 March, Voorburg

From Voorburg, Spinoza writes a letter to Van Blijenberg (Ep 23, G IV, 144–52) in response to the latter's objections and questions of 19 February 1665. In this reply, Spinoza presses his own arguments against Van Blijenberg's objections to his axioms of God and also answers three moral questions. His answers to Van Blijenberg's second question (whether stealing, in relation to God, is as good as righteousness) reveals the intriguing fact that the philosopher is now working on a treatise titled *Ethics*, 'which I have not published yet'. This is the first known occurrence of the title of Spinoza's exposition of his own philosophical system and also the first direct reference to his plans to put the *Ethics* into the press.

[May], [Amsterdam]

Spinoza, who is presumably still in Amsterdam, answers Henry Oldenburg's letter of 28 April 1665. His reply to Oldenburg (Ep 26, G IV, 159) clearly indicates that he is now in close communication with Christiaan Huygens. Spinoza in his letter reacts to Huygens's information that Boyle is still alive and that the latter's treatise on colours has been newly printed. Huygens is willing to lend him his own copy of that treatise, 'if I understood English', Spinoza says, so the letter clearly demonstrates that he was unable to read English. Spinoza also informs Oldenburg that Huygens owns a copy of 'the book of microscopic observations'. Without doubt, that book is Robert Hooke's *Micrographia* (1665). Spinoza's letter also yields information about the contents of his other conversations with Huygens. Apparently,

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they discussed a great variety of subjects, in particular issues of astronomy such as microscopes and Italian telescopes that were used to observe the eclipses of Jupiter and a shadow on Saturn (causing the image of a ring). Another subject was Descartes's explanation concerning the question why Saturn's satellites do not move.

7. PRACTISING PHILOSOPHY, CRAFTSMAN OF SCIENCE

VOORBURG: SEPTEMBER 1665–LATE 1670

In early September 1665, while lodging at Tydeman's house in the Kerklaan in Voorburg, Spinoza works intensively on the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, which slows down and influences the earlier exposition of his own philosophical system in the *Ethics*. Meanwhile, he continues his epistolary friendship with Oldenburg in London, with whom he discusses a wide range of subjects, ranging from philosophy, books and anatomical observations by Oxford scientists to the Second Anglo-Dutch naval war. In mid-December 1665, his exchange with Oldenburg is interrupted for an interval of approximately ten years. In the mid-1660s, contacts between Spinoza and Christiaan Huygens seem to become more intense. With him, he discusses various scientific matters, particularly their personal pursuits in the field of optics. Moreover, Huygens gives Spinoza access to the manuscript of his *Dioptrics*. In early 1666, Spinoza is also in contact with Johannes Hudde, who has some fame in practical optics, producing microscopes and constructing telescope lenses. A letter of (June) 1666 to Hudde clearly indicates that Spinoza is spending a portion of

his time manufacturing lenses. Apart from optics matters, Spinoza's correspondence from this period also proves that he divides his time between various subjects, such as the calculus of probabilities and alchemy.

Relatively little is known with certainty about the philosopher's personal life in the period between late March 1667 and 1670. No correspondence survives from 1668 and 1670, but we must surmise that Spinoza worked on the text of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*. The only palpable evidence that he is also continuing his optical work on (telescopic and microscopic) lenses can be found in his own personal correspondence and in the missives exchanged between Christiaan and Constantijn Huygens. To all appearances, Spinoza is also collaborating with Hudde in researching and manufacturing (telescopic) lenses, and, maybe, a refracting telescope. Another letter from this period (5 September 1669) to his close friend Jelles indicates that Spinoza devises an experiment in fluid mechanics. It is uncertain when Spinoza leaves Voorburg to settle in The Hague. That must be sometime after dispatching his letter to Jelles of 5 September 1669 and before early February 1671.

In the early spring of 1670, Spinoza causes a stir in the United Provinces with the publication (late 1669 or early 1670) of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, an uncompromising vindication of the liberty to philosophize against the encroachments of organized religion. Though contemporary politics are only touched upon in the preface and epilogue, public reactions are extremely hostile and the treatise remains the object of vituperation for many decades. The first known official response to the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* is dated 8 April 1670. Almost immediately upon publication, both the contents and impact of this work are intensely debated in

various meetings of local consistories, regional *classes* as well as provincial synods (the three-tiered system of the Dutch Reformed Church). As a result, the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* and its anonymous author are ranged among the worst enemies of Christianity. In addition, Spinoza's *Tractatus theologico-politicus* swiftly attracts the attention of prominent thinkers both in the Dutch Republic and abroad, provoking great controversy amongst intellectuals, among them Jacob Thomasius (1622–84), Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) and Hobbes. After the publication of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, the philosopher takes up his *Ethics* again.

1665, VOORBURG (KERKLAAN)

[Between Sunday 13 September and Sunday 20 September]

From [London], Oldenburg replies to Spinoza's letter of 4 September 1665. In his response (Ep 29, G IV, 164–5) he discusses the Latin edition of Boyle's treatise upon colours and refers to Kircher's *Mundus subterraneus*. Oldenburg also informs Spinoza that Boyle is about to put an account of his research into the origin of forms and qualities in the press. Accordingly, he refers to Spinoza's project on 'angels, prophecy and miracles', a work of which he urges his correspondent to outline the plan and object in his next letter. Oldenburg's intriguing remark concerns the early origins of Spinoza's *Tractatus theologico-politicus*. He also relates the latest scientific news communicated to him in a letter by the Danzig astronomer Johannes Hevelius (1611–87). That news concerns his *Cometographia* (a twelve-volume study upon two recent comets and sunspots) and his pending *Prodromus cometicus*. Oldenburg terminates his letter by asking Spinoza to express the view of the Dutch

on Christiaan Huygens's invention of the pendulum clock and its use in finding longitude at sea. He also longs for the latest news about Huygens's achievements in dioptrics and on motion.

Friday 20 November, Voorburg

From Voorburg, Spinoza writes a lengthy letter (Ep 32, G IV, 169–76) to Oldenburg. The first subject of the letter is the coherence of each separate part of nature with nature itself and other parts in relation to the universe. Furthermore, the letter proves that Spinoza is still in close contact with Christiaan Huygens, for he provides Oldenburg with some detailed information about Huygens's works on optics. Other subjects are his own criticism of one of Descartes's rules of bodily motion and the precise date of Huygens's migration to France. As regards Huygens's machine for grinding lenses, Spinoza continues, the latter is also able to craft special moulds for grinding and polishing lenses. Being a skilled, experienced optician himself, Spinoza suspects the contraption to be quite useless, for he reckons that a free hand brings much safer and better results in polishing lenses on spherical plates. This is the first known historical document confirming the fact that Spinoza is actually spending a part of his time grinding lenses. Many key questions about his interest in practical optics remain to be answered. A question of major importance is who trained him in the delicate skills of lens grinding and polishing glass. In the mid-1660s only a very small group of intellectuals in the United Provinces took a keen interest in the laborious job of grinding and polishing (telescopic) lenses. It is also unclear when exactly Spinoza took up the craft of lens making. If we assume Borrichius's account of 10 September 1661 to be reliable it may even have been as early as 1661. Likely candidates for initially having

introduced him to the exacting craft and maybe also having trained him are evidently the Huygens brothers, who took up lens grinding (of object glasses) in 1654. Another possible candidate is the Amsterdam mathematician Hudde, who in his own time enjoyed much fame in optics. On the other hand, Spinoza may also have learned the technical skills from professional opticians working in and around The Hague. A letter of [18] December 1665 to Spinoza is the last known to have been exchanged between Spinoza and Oldenburg for the next ten years. Spinoza does not restart their correspondence before April/May 1675.

1666, VOORBURG (KERKLAAN)

[June]

Spinoza replies to Hudde's (lost) letter of 19 May 1666. The subject of the second part of the letter (Ep 36, G IV, 183–7), practical optics, indicates that Spinoza is spending a large portion of his time manufacturing lenses. According to his own testimony, he is seriously considering to have crafted some new moulds for grinding lenses ('slijpschuttels') and so he welcomes Hudde's advice on that matter. He has doubts however about the use of polishing convex-concave lenses, which cause spheric aberration. Convex-plane lenses (bulging outwards) on the other hand, as he has calculated, seem to be more useful to him (to produce a telescopic effect). In this context, Spinoza brings up a treatise of Hudde ('your small Dioptrics'), the directions of which he follows for his own calculations of refraction. Hudde's treatise may be identified as his *Specilla circularia* (1656). This leaflet on convex-concave lenses (recently discovered, see Vermij and Atzema, 1995) demonstrated that aspherical lenses have no advantages (cf. Dijksterhuis, 2004, p. 71).

1667, THE HAGUE AND VOORBURG (KERKLAAN)

Thursday 30 September

Christiaan Huygens writes to his brother Constantijn from Paris. One of the main issues of his letter is the technical improvement upon the object lens (or object glass, the primary lens that receives the first light rays from the object observed) and the eyepiece lens (an ocular lens or lenses at the eye end) of a so-called 'Campanine' telescope (a refracting, optical telescope which solely uses an arrangement of lenses). From this letter, it appears that in this time frame Constantijn spends a portion of time on practical optics. Although he works alone on the improvement of the 'Campanine' telescope, he is in direct contact with Spinoza and 'Monsieur Hudde', with whom he seems to communicate about the object lenses of telescopes. For in his writing Christiaan urges his brother to convey to him the dimensions of the 'ouverture' (aperture, the diameter of the main optical lens of the telescope) calculated by 'Spinoza and Mister Hudde' for a telescope measuring 40 'pieds' (Huygens, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 6, p. 151). In short, the letter clearly indicates that Spinoza is actively working on the fabrication of (telescopic) lenses, and maybe even on the construction of a refracting telescope for either astronomical, terrestrial or maritime use, in close collaboration with Hudde. Up until recently relatively little specific was known about the work done by Spinoza in the field of practical optics. The philosopher's own 'dioptrical' letters as well as the correspondence on optics exchanged between the Huygens brothers (from early September 1667 to 1670) were the only independent historical sources to assess Spinoza as a craftsman in lens making so far. A newly

1670, [VOORBURG OR THE HAGUE]

Before Tuesday 8 April, Voorburg or The Hague

Spinoza anonymously publishes his *Tractatus theologico-politicus*. The publisher's name on the title-page of this carefully disguised Latin quarto edition, Henricus Künraht (in other editions also spelled as 'Künrath'), is a fiction and most certainly an alias for Rieuwertsz Sr, while the place of publication is falsely declared to be 'Hamburg'. The printer's device on the title-page of the treatise was first used by Rieuwertsz Sr and Fonteyn in 1650 and it was still in use in 1682. There is no independent historical evidence to establish an exact publication date of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, but the date *ante quem* is formed by the records of the Reformed *kerkenraad* (Reformed consistory, local church council) of Utrecht, which condemns the work in a meeting on 8 April 1670. Similar evidence is found in a work of the Utrecht theologian Frans Burman (1628–79), entitled *Burmanorum pietas* (1700). The publication date of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* proposed by Burman is sometime 'in the year 69, or was put into print in 70'. (Burman, 1700, p. 204, quoted in Bamberger, 1961, pp. 9 and 28).

Tuesday 8 April

Public reactions in the United Provinces to the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* are extremely hostile from the start, identifying its anonymous author as an outright atheist and condemning the book as dangerous to orthodox Christian religion. The first known official response to the treatise by the Dutch Reformed Church authorities is that of 8 April 1670, when the outraged Utrecht *kerkenraad* reports on the work, urging the city's Burgomasters to consider appropriate

measures against the treatise (Utrecht *kerkenraad* transactions, 8 April 1670, Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 287, no. 88).

Thursday 8 May

Soon after the publication of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, rumours about Spinoza's controversial treatise reached Protestant Germany and responses to the work there were similar to the reactions of the local church authorities in the United Provinces. The first intellectual to raise his voice against the book is the Leipzig professor of eloquence Jacob Thomasius. In an academic lecture programme ('Programma', 8 May 1670) published later that year in a work called *Adversus anonymum*, Thomasius indirectly refutes the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* as a threat to religion and society, denouncing its naturalism, contractualism and libertinism. Surprisingly, Thomasius seems to be already aware that Spinoza, 'a Jewish apostate and a formal atheist', is the originator of this work (Thomasius and Thomasius, 1693, p. 571). Thomasius also suspects that the anonymous treatise appeared in Amsterdam, and not, as its title-page falsely declares, in Hamburg. The German theologian is also the first to suggest a direct affinity between the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* and the work of the English philosophers Herbert of Cherbury (1583–1648) and Hobbes (Freudenthal, 1899, p. 192, no. 4).

Friday 9 May

The condemnation of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* by the Utrecht *kerkenraad* (8 and 11 April 1670) was soon followed by violent reactions in other towns (Leiden, Haarlem, Amsterdam, The Hague, Schieland). On 9 May 1670, the Leiden *kerkenraad* warns against the publication of a 'Notorious

libellous work', named 'Tractatus Theologico Politicus'. The consistory also decides that they are to request the Leiden Burgomasters 'that the same is to be seized and banned' (Leiden *kerkenraad* transactions, 9 May 1670, art. 4, Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 288, no. 90).

Between Tuesday 15 July and Friday 25 July

The violent response to the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* by local Dutch Reformed consistories and *classes* is soon echoed by strong religious reactions of the provincial synods. The first official response called forth by the treatise is given by the Synod of South Holland. One of the issues discussed during the synod's gathering in the summer of 1670 is the printing and selling of the treatise. The South Holland Synod roundly condemns the treatise, urging the gathered ministers to persuade the local magistrates to guard against it and suppress the work. The synod also resolves to appoint some representatives to inform the Court of Holland about this suspect work (South Holland Synod resolutions, 15–25 July 1670, art. 10 (ad art. 13, South Holland Synod of 1669), *Acta der particuliere synoden*, 1908–16, vol. 4, p. 531).

8. BUILDING A REPUTATION FOR CONTROVERSY

VOORBURG, THE HAGUE: 1671–LATE
DECEMBER 1676

Sometime between early September 1669 and mid-February 1671, Spinoza leaves Voorburg to settle in The Hague, for reasons unknown. First, he rents a room in a house at the Stille Veerkade, but later on he takes his

lodgings in a street nearby, in the house of the painter Hendrik van der Spijck at the (nowadays 'Gedempte') Paviljoensgracht, still standing today. His *Tractatus theologico-politicus* rapidly becomes notorious in the Dutch Republic, Germany and England. As his treatise provokes furious reactions in official assemblies of the Reformed Church and the Églises Wallonnes (the Dutch Walloon Church), Spinoza begins to worry about being accused of overtly preaching atheism with disguised arguments. In addition, many scholars, such as Lambert van Velthuisen (1621/2–85), his former Leiden friend Stensen and another erstwhile companion, Albert Coenraadszn Burgh (1650–1708) (both converts to Roman Catholicism), also declare Spinoza a threat to piety and society, rejecting the work as atheistic and totally abhorrent to Christian religion. Although many critics attack the treatise, the work continues to be attentively read and newly printed editions ([1672], 1673, 1674) seem to find easy circulation both in the Dutch Republic and abroad. Due to a relatively mild political climate in the United Provinces, the Supreme Court of Holland, Zeeland and West-Friesland officially bans the work only in a placard of 19 July 1674.

By the early 1670s, Spinoza's writings and networks seem to have established firmly his overall reputation of a talented mathematician and optician as well as an audacious, controversial free-thinker outside academe. As Spinoza's fame soon reaches a higher pitch, his philosophical views also attract the attention of influential intellectuals abroad. In October 1671, Leibniz, who is aware of Spinoza as a commentator on Descartes and as the clandestine author of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, cautiously tries to contact the philosopher by writing him a letter (22 April 1671) on the safe topic of optics. In

February 1673, Spinoza also receives a letter from the theologian Johann Ludwig Fabritius (1632–96) inviting him to take up the chair of philosophy in Heidelberg, an offer which he turns down decidedly. During Louis XIV's so-called 'Dutch War' (April 1672–78/9), Spinoza meets the military governor Johann Baptista Stoupe (1624–92/1700) in the French army headquarters in the occupied town of Utrecht sometime between 25 and 28 July 1673, following an earlier invitation of the French military commander Louis II de Bourbon (1621–86), the famous Prince of Condé ('le Grand Condé' or 'le Héros'). We do not know whether Spinoza played a role during the occupation of Utrecht, nor what the purpose of his visit was. The only independent documentary evidence we have confirms that Spinoza did travel to Utrecht and met Stoupe sometime between 25 and 28 July 1673.

During the 1670s, Spinoza maintains his relations with his longtime friends Jelles, Hudde and Rieuwertsz Sr, while strengthening new contacts with many other intellectuals, viz. Johannes Georgius Graevius (1632–1703), Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus (1651–1708), Georg Hermann Schuller (1650/1–79), Pieter van Gent (fl. 1640–93/4) and Van Velthuisen. In September 1674, he enters into a lengthy discussion with a legal scholar from Gorinchem, Hugo Danielsz Boxel (1607/12?–1680?), on apparitions, spirits and ghosts. In May 1675, Spinoza also renews his correspondence with Oldenburg after a ten-year interval, probably induced by the visit of the young German intellectual Tschirnhaus to London. Some months later, in late July 1675, he completes the *Ethics* and makes preparations for its publication in Amsterdam. Deterred by increasing hostility and rumours that he is about to put a work into print that seeks to show that there is no God, Spinoza decides

to cancel the publication immediately upon his arrival in Amsterdam. Another project probably commenced between 1670 and 1675 is the *Compendium grammatices linguae Hebraeae*, a Hebrew grammar presumably intended for the private use of friends, which was to remain unfinished. Between 1675 and 1676, Spinoza begins to compose new additional notes which he plans to include in a revised edition of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*. He presents (25 July 1676) an annotated copy of his treatise in his own handwriting to a Leiden law student from Pomerania, Jacobus Statius Cleefman (fl. 1646/7–75). In the second half of 1676, he embarks upon a new project, his unfinished *Tractatus politicus*. Finally, in late November 1676, the philosopher receives a visit from Leibniz in The Hague with whom he intensively discusses various subjects, particularly his arguments for the existence of God as propounded in his *Ethics*.

1671, VOORBURG AND THE HAGUE

Before Monday 16 March

After the fierce reactions of the Dutch provincial synods, new attempts are made at a high political level to place the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* under an official ban in the opening months of 1671. Representatives of the North Holland Synod deliberate with the Grand Pensionary (a sort of secretary-general) of Holland (Johan de Witt, 1625–72) on Spinoza's treatise. Shortly afterwards, they communicate to him several extracts from the work together with a request urging the Supreme Court of Holland, Zeeland and West-Friesland to ban the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (cf. North Holland Synod transactions, 16 March 1671, art. 37, Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 296, no. 100, see also Walther and Czelinski, 2006,

vol. 1, p. 292, no. 97). De Witt in his capacity as Grand Pensionary was directly involved in the joint efforts of the North and South Holland Synods to petition the suppression of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* on a province-wide basis. Claims however that the republican-minded Grand Pensionary would deliberately have hindered and slowed down the prohibition of Spinoza's treatise are actually not supported by any documentary evidence (cf. Israel, 2001, pp. 275–6).

Thursday 5 October

Leibniz has been informed about the full identity of the anonymous author of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* in a letter (22 April 1671) from the Utrecht professor of history and rhetoric Johannes Georgius Graevius. Then, in the fall of that same year, Leibniz decides to make an effort to come into contact with the Dutch philosopher, hoping to draw Spinoza into a correspondence. On 5 October 1671, he sends Spinoza a highly complimentary letter (Ep 45, G IV, 230–1) on the issue of optics. In the first part of his letter Leibniz politely invites Spinoza to express his view about his *Notitia opticae promotae*, a long section from his work on motion, *Hypothesis physica nova*. With the letter, he sends two copies of the tract as an enclosure (cf. Ep 46, G IV, 231–3). Furthermore, Leibniz in his letter brings up the book *Prodromo*, in which the Italian Jesuit Francisco Lana de Terzi (1631–87) expresses his views on optics. Another work discussed in the letter is a work by 'Johannes Oltius' (i.e. Johannes Heinrich Ott), called 'Cogitationes Physico-Mechanicas de Visione', about the use of a lathe for lensgrinding and the solution of the problem of spheric aberration. In the postscript to this letter, Leibniz finally encourages Spinoza to write back to him through the intermediary of one of his

correspondents, 'the esteemed legal scholar Diemerbroeck', who may be identified as Johannes van Diemerbroeck (fl. 1668–81). He also promises Spinoza to send him a printed copy of his *Hypothesis*, if he desires this work. Leibniz in his letter makes no mention whatsoever of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*.

Before Monday 2 November

Spinoza's erstwhile Leiden friend, Niels Stensen, writes an 'open letter' of justification (Ep 67A, G IV, 292–8) trumpeting his conversion to Roman Catholicism. Stensen composed his 'open letter' four years after his conversion on 2 November 1667 (see Totaro, 2002, p. 36). This document, entitled 'Nicolas Stenonis ad nova philosophiae reformatorem de vera philosophia epistola', was published as part of a four-part collection (*Ad virum eruditum*) of missives with religious reflections in 1675. Although lacking the name of an addressee, Stensen's text is unquestionably intended for Spinoza, to whom he indirectly refers as 'a man once rather familiar to me'. The bulk of Stensen's text, the first document originating in Italy that shows full interest in Spinoza's ideas, is altogether a brazen attack on 'your book of which others have told me that you are the author', which undoubtedly is the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*. It is unknown whether Spinoza was aware of Stensen's booklet and if his former Leiden companion ever dispatched this text in the form of a letter from Italy to the philosopher (cf. Christofolini, 2008). This may explain why the philosopher never wrote a response to this attack.

Monday 9 November

Spinoza replies to Leibniz's letter on optics of 15 October 1671, dispatching his learned response (Ep 46, G IV, 231–3) on 8 December

1671. Firstly, Spinoza asks for a clarification about Leibniz's remarks on the exact size of 'the aperture of the glasses' (the object lenses of refracting telescopes most likely) and the correction capability of his newly invented 'pandochal' (all-receiving) lenses compared with circular and large convex lenses as propounded in Leibniz's *Notitia opticae promotae*. In addition, he asks his correspondent to provide him with a copy of his 'Physical hypothesis' (Leibniz's *Hypothesis physica nova*), for the work is not for sale in The Hague. In the postscript to this letter, Spinoza informs Leibniz that his proposed intermediary, Diemberbroeck, does not live in The Hague. He will therefore dispatch his letters via the ordinary mail carrier and asks him to think of someone else in The Hague who may act as a trustworthy intermediary of their correspondence. Finally, Spinoza promises Leibniz to send him a copy of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* in return for his offer to send him his *Hypothesis* if the work has not reached him as yet. Spinoza's reply is the last known letter of their brief epistolary exchange.

1672, [THE HAGUE]

June

In the Franco-Dutch war, Louis XIV and Jean Baptiste Colbert (1619–83) wanted France to take over the supremacy in the European economy from the Dutch Republic. As a result, a secret treaty between France and England was signed in the port of Dover in May 1670 with the aim of isolating the United Provinces. Two years later, in April 1672, Louis XIV's army invades the southern bishopric of Liège (Lüttich) towards the United Provinces. In June, the troops of the Prince of Condé cross the Rhine, thus beginning the invasion of the United Provinces. In

the same month, the French armies gain complete control over the Provinces of Gelderland and Utrecht, capturing eastern cities like Arnhem and Nijmegen and the central Dutch town of Utrecht (13 June 1672).

1673, THE HAGUE (STILLE VEERKADE OR PAVILJOENSGRACHT), UTRECHT

Thursday 16 February

As Spinoza's fame increases, his philosophical views also attract the attention of intellectuals abroad. From Heidelberg, he receives a letter from the Calvinist theologian Johann Ludwig Fabritius (Ep 47, G IV, 234–5), writing on behalf of the Elector Palatine, Karl Ludwig (1619–80). In his letter, he forwards an official invitation from his master to accept the chair of philosophy (and mathematics) at Heidelberg University. The invitation may very well have been initiated by the French writer Urbain Chevreau (1613–1701) when visiting the Heidelberg court, but there is no independent evidence to support that hypothesis. In his *Chevraeana*, the latter gives a detailed account of the events preceding the invitation and claims that he was the one who promoted the mathematical work of Spinoza during his stay in Heidelberg. After inspection of some chapters of Spinoza's *Renati des Cartes Principia philosophiae*, Chevreau continues, the Elector Palatine took the decision to approach Spinoza about the chair of philosophy at Heidelberg University through Fabritius. The monarch's only condition was that Spinoza would not interfere with religious matters in the Rhenish Palatinate (Chevreau, 1700, vol. 2, pp. 105–6, see Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 305, no. 109). Fabritius had clearly opposed Karl Ludwig's choice to invite Spinoza for a professorship to Heidelberg. Since Fabritius was in the service of the Elector Palatine, he obeyed however, 'but

Holland, Zeeland and West-Friesland issues a public placard by order of William III aimed to prevent the printing, distribution and public sale of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, the *Bibliotheca fratrum polonorum*, Meyer's *Philosophia S. Scripturae interpres* as well as Spinoza's *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, pp. 315–16, no. 117).

Friday 14 September

Hugo Boxel, the former pensionary of Gorinchem, writes a short letter to Spinoza on apparitions and spirits or ghosts (Ep 51, G IV, 241–2). Accordingly, he refers to the belief in spirits held by many contemporary theologians and philosophers and to the numerous tales about ghosts, which seem to suggest that they may be real. Boxel inquires whether Spinoza believes in ghosts, inviting him to express his view on this matter, expecting however that the philosopher's response will be negative. The letter of 14 September 1674 marks the beginning of a series of six letters exchanged between Boxel and Spinoza on apparitions and spirits or ghosts.

1675, THE HAGUE (STILLE VEERKADE OR PAVILJOENSGRACHT) AND AMSTERDAM

Saturday 5 January

Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus writes a letter to Spinoza (Ep 59, G IV, 268–70). Firstly, Tschirnhaus asks Spinoza when he will deliver his 'method' of directing reason in seeking out unknown truths as well as his general principles in physics, directly referring to the subsidiary theorems in the second part of the *Ethics*, more particularly, which in his opinion will solve many difficulties in physics in an easy manner. So the letter

proves that by now Tschirnhaus has had access to the text of the *Ethics*. Next, Tschirnhaus invites Spinoza to give him a definition of motion and an explanation of that definition. Tschirnhaus refers to 'our encounter' during which 'you pointed out to me the method you adopt in seeking out truths as yet unknown'. The letter thus confirms that there has been a personal meeting between Tschirnhaus and Spinoza in The Hague sometime before 5 January 1675.

[*April/May*]

Spinoza resumes his long-interrupted exchange with Oldenburg after a silence of almost ten years. The philosopher sends Oldenburg a copy of his *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, which for some reason never reaches his correspondent (cf. Oldenburg to Spinoza, Ep 61, G IV, 271–2). We may assume that Spinoza sent him the package together with an accompanying letter, which is now lost (1675.[04/05].00*).

End of the first week in May

Tschirnhaus, travelling from France to England, is now intensively studying the *Ethics*, for in the letters he exchanges with Georg Hermann Schuller he asks him to approach Spinoza for a clarification of certain difficulties in the first part of the work (cf. Schuller to Spinoza, Ep 63, G IV, 274–6). This request proves that Tschirnhaus journeyed to England with a manuscript copy of the *Ethics* in his bags. In the same period, Oldenburg dispatches a (lost) letter (1675.[05].00*) from London to Spinoza to thank him for the copy of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (which, however, apparently had never reached him). In that (lost) letter, Oldenburg propounds his negative opinion about the work. It is unknown whether there is a connection between Spinoza's initiative

of sending a copy of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* to London in [April/May] 1676 and Tschirnhaus's travels to England.

Friday 21 June

The Reformed *kerkenraad* of The Hague warns (cf. The Hague *kerkenraad* resolutions, art. 5) against the spreading of 'the highly godless opinions of Spinoza'. The consistory urges its members to observe a high degree of vigilance to find out 'whether any other book written by him is about to be printed' and to investigate its potential danger. The warning almost certainly concerns rumours about the philosopher's plan to publish his *Ethics* (Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 320, no. 121).

Monday 22 July

From London, Oldenburg writes to Spinoza (Ep 62, G IV, 273) in reply to the philosopher's (lost) letter of 5 July 1675. Oldenburg answers Spinoza that he has learned from his (lost) letter of 5 July 1675 about his desire to publish 'your five-part treatise', undoubtedly the *Ethics*. So the letter makes it clear that Spinoza by this time had finished the work and was preparing to have it printed.

After Monday 22 July, The Hague, Amsterdam

Spinoza travels to Amsterdam to see the manuscript of his *Ethics* (cf. Spinoza to Oldenburg, Ep 68, G IV, 299) through the press. Just before leaving The Hague, he receives Oldenburg's letter of 22 July 1675 (see Ep 62, G IV, 273). Upon his arrival in Amsterdam, the philosopher begins to worry seriously about being accused of preaching atheism and about the increasing hostility towards his philosophy. Rumour has it that he is soon to put a work into print denying God's existence. Certain theologians have

now lodged complaints with the Prince of Orange and the magistrates. 'Stupid Cartesians' are constantly denouncing his opinions and writings in order to defend themselves against sympathizing with his standpoints. Spinoza decides to postpone the publication of his *Ethics* (cf. Spinoza to Oldenburg, Ep 68) and to wait and see what will happen. Nothing further is known about Spinoza's trip to Amsterdam, but most certainly he saw Rieuwertsz Sr to discuss with him the publishing of the *Ethics*. It is unknown whether some portions of the work were already typeset at the time of his stay in Amsterdam.

Tuesday 3 September

From [Florence], Albert Coenraadszn Burgh writes a letter to Spinoza (Ep 67, G IV, 280–91) on his recent decision to convert to Roman Catholicism. In the introductory part, Burgh refers to his promise 'to write to you, if anything worthy of note should occur on my travels'. The introduction of Burgh's letter stresses that they were still in contact shortly before the latter's departure from the Netherlands to Italy in 1673. In his letter, Burgh writes about his personal motivation for joining the Roman Catholic Church. He also gives his decidedly negative opinion about Spinoza's 'true' philosophy, which he thinks will only amount to 'illusion' and 'chimera'. In his view, Spinoza's philosophy is as unsure and futile as are all other philosophies. Next, he refers to 'your book, to which you have given that impious title' (i.e. *Tractatus theologico-politicus*), accusing his correspondent of purposely confusing philosophy and theology. He also rigidly denounces Spinoza's interpretation of Scripture and any doubts about its sacrosanct truth, preaching to him to acknowledge the infallible truth of Roman Catholicism in order to avoid eternal damnation.

[September/October]

From [The Hague], Spinoza writes a reply to Henry Oldenburg's letter of 22 July 1675. In his response (Ep 68, G IV, 299), Spinoza refers to his visit (after 22 July 1675) to Amsterdam to prepare the printing of his *Ethics* and his decision to postpone publication. The second part of the letter to Oldenburg yields explicit information on his intentions to publish a second, revised edition of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* in the near future.

Before Thursday 14 November

Tschirnhaus writes a (lost) letter (text unknown) from Paris to Georg Hermann Schuller. The contents of the letter are known exclusively from Schuller's letter to Spinoza of 14 November 1675 (see Ep 70, G IV, 301–3). Tschirnhaus informs Schuller about his occupations and encounters in Paris, where he met Christiaan Huygens, Leibniz and others. One of the issues of Tschirnhaus's letter concerns his objections against certain propositions in the first part of the *Ethics* (see Tschirnhaus to Spinoza, Ep 65, G IV, 279, Spinoza to Tschirnhaus, Ep 66, G IV, 280), so apparently he is still spending time studying Spinoza's unpublished work. Tschirnhaus also requests Schuller to ask for the philosopher's permission to allow Leibniz access to his manuscript copy of the *Ethics*.

Late 1675 or early 1676

From [The Hague], Spinoza replies to the letter of Burgh, dated 3 September 1675, in reaction to his announcement to convert to Roman Catholicism (see Ep 67, G IV, 280–91). Spinoza starts his letter (Ep 76, G IV, 316–24) by expressing his unbelief that Burgh has actually joined the Roman Catholic Church. He refers to 'other causes to which you once gave your approval' when

speaking about Stensen, 'in whose footsteps you now follow'. Spinoza counters the arguments in Burgh's letter to embrace Roman Catholic faith, referring to the period when 'you worshipped an infinite God by whose efficacy all things absolutely are started and preserved'. Another issue is Burgh's criticism of Spinoza's philosophy. In fact, Spinoza declares, he does not pretend that he has found the best philosophy, but simply knows that he understands the true philosophy, namely 'in the same way that you know that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles'. In turn, he reproaches Burgh for having given no reasonable grounds for his faith whatsoever. He finally calls upon Burgh to do away with superstition and to acknowledge reason. Spinoza ends his letter by defending himself against Burgh's objection to the fundamental principle of his *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, namely to give up the sacrosanct status of Scripture and to understand the Bible through itself alone. Finally, the philosopher invites Burgh to read his account closely and study the history of the Christian church, which, he surmises, will bring him back to reason.

1676, THE HAGUE (STILLE VEERKADE OR PAVILJOENSGRACHT)

Before Saturday 25 July

In his lodgings in [The Hague], Spinoza spends some time composing supplementary notes to his *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (cf. Akkerman, 2005, pp. 210–36). In the course of time, he enters these *Adnotationes* (Spinoza, 1802) into the margins of a personal copy of the treatise.

Saturday 25 July

In [The Hague], Spinoza receives a visit from a young German law student, Jacobus Stadius

Cleefman. The contact with the latter must have been of some importance, for the philosopher presents him with a copy of the first printing of his *Tractatus theologico-politicus*. That copy, now preserved in Haifa, not only contains a dedication on the title-page, but also five marginal supplementary notes (pp. 2, 70, 93, 116 and 117) in the philosopher's own handwriting.

Second half of 1676

Spinoza works intensively on a theory of politics, which will finally become his unfinished *Tractatus politicus*. In this work, the philosopher is to discuss three different forms of state government, i.e. monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. When composing the treatise on politics, Spinoza receives a (lost) letter from a close friend (> 1676.07.00*). Nothing is known about the contents of his friend's letter, but Spinoza's answer (Ep 84, G IV, 335–6) in any case seems to suggest that they were on a very firm footing at that time. Biographically most important is that Spinoza's letter proves that the unidentified friend is the one who had encouraged him to write a theory of politics.

Between Sunday 18 October and Thursday 29 October

After a four-year stay in Paris, Leibniz finally returns to Germany via a circuitous route to take up his new post as counselor and personal librarian in Hanover. After his departure from Paris (4 October 1676), he travels to Calais to embark on a ship for a brief second visit to England. After the crossing, he meets Oldenburg in London (after 18 October 1676). Nothing is known about their conversations, but they may well have spoken about Leibniz's imminent visit to Spinoza. During one of their meetings, Leibniz may

also have copied out three recent letters of Spinoza to Oldenburg (Ep 73, G IV, 306–9, Ep 75, G IV, 311–16 and Ep 78, G IV, 326–9). In addition, Oldenburg hands him a (lost) letter for Spinoza (> 1676.10.18*), which Leibniz however never forwards to the philosopher for reasons unknown (cf. Oldenburg to Leibniz, 22 February/4 March 1677). Leibniz plans to travel to the United Provinces in the first week of November 1676, but severe storms prevent his ship from sailing out of Fort Sheerness (cf. Müller and Krönert, 1961, p. 45).

[Between Wednesday 18 November and Saturday 21 November]

Leibniz makes some forays to Haarlem, Leiden and Delft, where he makes the acquaintance of the famous naturalist Antonie van Leeuwenhoek (1632–1723). Soon thereafter, he also travels to The Hague (cf. Müller and Krönert, 1961, p. 46) where he finally meets Spinoza (Leibniz, 1734, p. 231; Leibniz to Count Ernst von Hessen-Rheinfels, 4/14 August 1683; Leibniz, AA, 2:1, p. 535; Leibniz to Jean Gallois, 1676/77, Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 331, no. 139). Leibniz's visit to Spinoza must have taken place sometime [between 18 and 21 November 1676] (cf. Müller and Krönert, 1961, p. 46). Leibniz and Spinoza discuss various issues, ranging from the assassination of the Dutch politicians Johan and Cornelis de Witt (1672), Descartes's theory of motion, the 'characteristica universalis', to the arguments to demonstrate the existence of God. During their conversation, Leibniz writes down his ontological argument for God's existence (Leibniz, AA, 2:1, pp. 426–8, no. 131) on a slip of paper. Spinoza also gives Leibniz access to (some parts of) his manuscript of the *Ethics* (cf. Schuller to Leibniz, 16/26 February 1677, Leibniz, AA, 2:1, p. 304; 3:2, p. 46). This also

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becomes evident from Leibniz's critical remarks on Spinoza's ontological argument on the same piece of paper (quoted in Leibniz, AA, 2:1, p. 428, no. 131, see also Leibniz, AA, 6:3, pp. 578–80).

9. FATAL DISEASE, SUDDEN DEATH AND FUNERAL

THE HAGUE: JANUARY–LATE FEBRUARY 1677

Sometime in late 1676 or early 1677, Spinoza suffers from the physical consequences of some advanced incurable disease. Shortly before his death in late February 1677, the philosopher spends a portion of his time working on a naturalistic theory of politics, a tract that will eventually become his unfinished *Tractatus politicus*. On 6 February 1677, Spinoza's health condition is reported by Schuller to be deteriorating rapidly due to 'inherited' *phthisis* (tuberculosis). Then, unexpectedly, Spinoza dies in his rooms in Van der Spijck's house in The Hague on Sunday 21 February 1677. On the same day, a provisional, general inventory of the assets of his estate is drawn up by the notary Willem van den Hove (1650/51–after 1684). According to Spinoza's biographer Colerus, the philosopher did make some last arrangements by asking Van der Spijck to convey his *Ethics* safely to the Amsterdam bookseller and publisher Jan Rieuwertsz Sr upon his death with the aim of having it published. Rieuwertsz Sr confirms the arrival of Spinoza's writing box in a letter to Van der Spijck (25 March 1677), so we may assume that the latter shipped off Spinoza's writing box with all his papers from The Hague to Amsterdam in the weeks following the philosopher's death.

The greater part of the events surrounding his last hours and death are shrouded in mist and we have only a few indications about the primary cause of the philosopher's death. Although various sources (1677, 1680, 1703 and 1705) are at our disposal, they are for the greater part erratic, fragmentary, partly conjectural and incomplete, offering conflicting information or simply gossip. In the days following Spinoza's sudden death, his landlord Van der Spijck in collaboration with the philosopher's closest friends prepare for the funeral and make the necessary memorial service arrangements. On 25 February 1677, the funeral ceremony for Spinoza is held in the Nieuwe Kerk at the Spui in The Hague.

1677, THE HAGUE (PAVILJOENSGRACHT)

Saturday 6 February

From Amsterdam, Schuller reacts to a (lost) letter of Leibniz of 18 January 1677. He relates to his correspondent that Spinoza's health is deteriorating rapidly due to 'inherited' *phthisis*. Schuller clearly worries that the philosopher will die soon as a consequence of his *phthisis* (Leibniz, AA, 3:2, p. 37).

Sunday 21 February

At the age of 44 Spinoza dies in his rooms on the second floor of the house of his landlord Van der Spijck at the Paviljoensgracht in The Hague. The supposed time of his sudden death, 'at three o'clock', is given by Colerus (Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 158), who could rely on the testimonies of Spinoza's landlord and landlady, but that claim is not supported by any historical evidence. Colerus reports that a physician, 'L.M.', was with Spinoza when he died; the presence of a physician is also mentioned in an anonymous manuscript from 1678 to 1679 (see

1677

Friday 26 February (16 OS)

From Amsterdam, Schuller writes to Leibniz in response to a (lost) letter of mid-February 1677. One of the issues in Schuller's letter is the autograph manuscript copy of the *Ethics*, which 'you saw at his house' ([between 18 and 21 November 1676]). Schuller writes to Leibniz that the 'autograph' of the *Ethics* is now up for sale at the price of 150 guilders. He therefore urges his correspondent to convince his master Johann Friedrich, Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg-Calenberg (1625–79), to purchase the autograph manuscript for his Hanover library (Leibniz, AA, 3:2, p. 46; Steenbakkers, 1994, p. 15). This important statement is relevant for the history of the hazardous editorial process of the posthumous works, but we must approach it with care, since it is not supported by any other historical evidence. Apart from the author's copy, we have no evidence of how many transcripts of the *Ethics* were actually in circulation. That there must have been several copies of the work written out by various people is explicitly confirmed in the preface to the posthumous works (Akkerman and Hubbeling, 1979, no. 74, pp. 146–7). All in all, the only copy we know of with certainty is the manuscript that Tschirnhaus carried around in his bags in England, France and Italy between July 1675 and mid-1679. The existence of that copy (the Vatican codex Vat.lat. 12838; Spruit and Totaro, 2011) is confirmed in several letters to and from Spinoza. Spinoza's writing box, conveyed by Van der Spijck to Rieuwertsz Sr in Amsterdam on or shortly after 21 February (and at any rate before 25 March 1677), may have contained not only the original autograph manuscript of the *Ethics*, but also a manuscript copy (and maybe even a fair-copy) of the work (see Steenbakkers, 1994, pp. 55–8).

[Before or on Tuesday 2 March]

Rebecca d'Espinosa and her stepson Daniel de Carceris request the town secretary of The Hague, Anthony de Veer (1643–1716), for official permission to have a notary public draw up an inventory of the estate of their deceased brother and uncle. In the same period, Rieuwertsz Sr is present in The Hague and signs as witness to two notarial deeds in connection with the legal inventory of Spinoza's estate made by the notary Van den Hove (cf. Colerus, see Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 140).

Tuesday 2 March

Secretary De Veer signs a legal document in which he gives official permission to Rebecca d'Espinosa and Daniel de Carceris to have an inventory made of the estate of their deceased brother and uncle. In the same document, De Veer also instructs Van der Spijck to give a public officer full access to the assets of his deceased lodger (Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 339, no. 149). Apparently, Rebecca d'Espinosa and Daniel de Carceris agreed with Van der Spijck that he would further supervise the work surrounding the making of the inventory. For on the same day, Van der Spijck requests the notary Van den Hove in The Hague to investigate and break the door seals of the room in which are stored Spinoza's grinding device, his tools for grinding glass and a bookcase with books. He had locked this room immediately upon the philosopher's death in the late afternoon or evening of 21 February 1677 (Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 340, no. 150). After Van den Hove has broken the seals on the door to Spinoza's room and confirmed that these were all intact, he then authenticates an inventory of Spinoza's possessions, which to all appearances was drawn up by Van der Spijck (see Walther and Czelinski, pp. 341–59,

no. 151). The inventory includes common household goods, but also a list of Spinoza's books (160) and a brief description of Spinoza's instruments and material for grinding lenses and building telescopes (Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 358, no. 151).

Monday 29 March

From Amsterdam, Schuller dispatches a letter to Leibniz, which is a reply to a (lost) letter of Leibniz of mid-March 1677. Schuller, who temporarily lives in the house of his friend Van Gent, tells his correspondent that he is much relieved by the fact that he has not yet informed 'his Prince' (i.e. Johann Friedrich of Brunswick-Lüneburg-Calenberg) about his earlier offer to purchase the autograph manuscript of Spinoza's *Ethics* (see Schuller to Leibniz 16/26 March 1677). Confidently, Schuller then points out to Leibniz that there has been a radical change of plan since he has now accommodated the differences of opinions amongst Spinoza's friends about what should be ultimately done with the philosopher's written legacy. As a result, Schuller continues, he is now determined to have Spinoza's manuscripts published for the public benefit in their entirety, not only the *Ethics*, but also his other surviving writings as well as his exchange of letters. To prevent the project from being nipped in the bud, he urges Leibniz to tell nobody about it, 'not even the friends'. According to Schuller's own testimony, he now has in his possession the autograph manuscripts (cf. Meinsma, 1896, p. 443) or copies (cf. Steenbakkens, 1994, p. 60) of the (unfinished) *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione*, Spinoza's letter to Henry Oldenburg of [April] 1662 (see 1662.[04].00 (Ep 6)), the (unfinished) *Tractatus politicus* and an unknown number of letters (Leibniz, AA, 2:1, pp. 476–7; 3:2, pp. 52–3). Schuller's letter to Leibniz of 29 March 1677 is thus the

first historical document revealing the plan of a dedicated group of friends to publish Spinoza's philosophical writings posthumously. To all appearances, Schuller has firsthand knowledge of the project and is in close contact with that group. Still, there are no concrete indications of his direct involvement in the editorial process and Schuller's limited contribution should probably be assessed rather as organizational (cf. Steenbakkens, 1994, p. 63), mediating and facilitating.

Tuesday 30 March

In The Hague, Van der Spijck signs a power of attorney before the notary public Libertus Loeff (1647–1704), in which he grants one Robbert Smedingh from Amsterdam the legal authority to act on his behalf and to recover for him the costs made for Spinoza's living and funeral (Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 364, no. 153). Van der Spijck in the deed mandates Smedingh to summon Spinoza's legal heirs Rebecca d'Espinosa and Daniel de Carceris before the commissioners of *kleine zaken* (smaller claims) to recover all his expenses (now approximately 6,000 euro). Spinoza's biographer Colerus makes mention of this power of attorney and he recounts the fact that Spinoza's sister Rebecca came to Van der Spijck's house to announce herself as legal heir to her brother's estate with a view to claiming his property, but he adds to this that she refused to pay the costs of the funeral and other remaining debts of her brother (Colerus, see Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 166–8). The sum advanced by Van der Spijck for the lodging and funeral of Spinoza is not mentioned in the power of attorney, but we learn from another legal document of 8 July 1677 that the sum he demanded from Spinoza's legal heirs was 250 guilders, 14 *stuivers* and two *penningen* (now approximately 2,500 euro).

Thursday 8 July

Van der Spijck files an official statement of claim with the *vierschaar* (municipal court) of The Hague to take appropriate legal measures against the collective legal heirs of Spinoza. Van der Spijck's statement is repeated on 23 September and 13 October 1677 (see Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, resp. p. 370, no. 159, p. 372, no. 161). The final verdict of the *vierschaar* is unknown, but in all likelihood the case was unsuccessfully closed since Spinoza's heirs had officially renounced the estate of their brother and uncle in a disclaimer of 30 September 1677. In addition, Van der Spijck's legal representative Johan Louckers, the procurator of the municipal *vierschaar*, will have given official permission to his client to sell the estate publicly to pay for the debts owed by Spinoza.

Tuesday 27 July (17 OS)

Schuller writes to Leibniz to announce that all of Spinoza's posthumous works have now been conveyed to the printer. The philosopher's works, according to the letter, will be simultaneously published in Latin and Dutch (Leibniz, AA, 3:2, p. 202). Schuller's letter to Leibniz is the earliest historical document on the progress of the editorial labour by the group of friends that prepared Spinoza's writings for the press. From Schuller's letter it becomes clear that most of the work on the texts for the *Opera posthuma* and their translation for *De nagelate schriften* was done sometime between the first preparations in late March (see Schuller to Leibniz, 29 March 1677) and their completion in late July 1677. Biographically the most important issue is who were involved in editing Spinoza's posthumous works. As the matter now stands, Meyer and maybe also Van Gent are to be considered responsible for the Latin edition. Spinoza's friend Bouwmeester may also have

been involved in the editing project, but there is no conclusive historical proof for this as yet (cf. Steenbakkers, 1994, p. 17). As for the role of Schuller (who by late March 1677 possessed the bulk of the autograph manuscripts or copies of Spinoza's writings), there are no concrete indications for his direct involvement in the editing project of the posthumous works and his contribution (if any) will have been mostly organizational (cf. Steenbakkers, 1994, p. 63). The preface to the posthumous works was authored by Jarig Jelles and was presumably translated into Latin by Meyer (cf. Akkerman and Hubbeling, 1979, p. 105; see also Pierre Bayle to Theodorus Jansonius ab Almeloveen, 7 March 1686, Deckherr, 1686, pp. 387–8). The people involved in editing *De nagelate schriften*, the Dutch twin of the Latin edition, were presumably Jelles, Glazemaker and Rieuwertsz Sr (see [Duijkerius], 1991, p. 195). The *Opera posthuma* and *De nagelate schriften* consist of the following parts: preface, *Ethics*, *Tractatus politicus*, *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione* (both unfinished) and the edited version of Spinoza's correspondence (75 letters). In addition, the Latin edition includes the (unfinished) *Compendium grammatices linguae Hebraeae*. According to the preface to the posthumous works, particularly the *Ethics* was printed at the philosopher's own request. None of the proofs of the writings and correspondence are known to have survived.

August

Spinoza's erstwhile Leiden companion Stensen receives a visit from 'a foreigner of the Lutheran religion' in Rome. According to Stensen's own testimony, that foreigner showed him 'a manuscript without saying to him from whom it originated', of which Tschirnhaus revealed later on that it was authored by Spinoza (cf.

Totaro, 2000, p. 101; Totaro, 2002, Appendix, p. 33). The meeting between the Lutheran traveller and Stensen must be dated sometime in August 1677, shortly before or after the latter's nomination (21 August 1677) to the difficult post (on the request of Johann Friedrich, Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg-Calenberg) as vicar apostolic in the northern mission fields at the ducal court in Hanover. The date *ante quem* for the encounter is 4 September 1677, when Stensen hands in his report to the Holy Office of the Inquisition, in which the reference to his meeting with the unknown foreigner is made. The name of the Lutheran foreigner is not mentioned, but very probably he must be identified as the young German intellectual Tschirnhaus. During his Grand Tour, the latter spent time in Rome from mid-April 1677 (see Tschirnhaus to Leibniz, 17 April 1677) to 10 April 1678 and there is historical evidence to confirm that he made the acquaintance of Stensen in August 1677. Since Tschirnhaus is known to have journeyed in England, France and Italy (between July 1675 and mid-1679) with a manuscript copy of the *Ethics* in his bags (cf. note by Leibniz made in 1676, AA, 6:3, p. 384), we may assume that this was in fact the very manuscript he had shown to the Danish convert. Stensen somehow succeeded in obtaining the manuscript copy from Tschirnhaus. He later decided to submit it (23 September 1677) to the Holy Office of the Inquisition (Spruit and Totaro, 2011, pp. 2, 11–12). There certainly remain some questions surrounding Tschirnhaus's conduct during his encounter with Stensen in August 1677. Why did Tschirnhaus give Stensen access to Spinoza's *Ethics*? Stensen may have taken in Tschirnhaus (who was aware of Spinoza's warning not to show his *Ethics* too hastily to others, see Spinoza to Schuller, Ep 72, G IV, 304–5) by telling him that he once had been on friendly terms with Spinoza when studying medicine in Leiden in

1661 or 1662. And did Tschirnhaus also tell Stensen about Spinoza's death and about the preparations for publishing his philosophical legacy? It is unknown if Tschirnhaus had already acquired information about the editing of the posthumous works. If Tschirnhaus did tell Stensen, one can imagine that the latter hastened to inform the Roman Catholic authorities about the pending publication of the *Ethics* by submitting his report on 4 September 1677.

Saturday 4 September

In Rome, Stensen signs and submits his report to the Holy Office of the Inquisition. The aim of the report is to supply information on the dangers of the 'new philosophy' of 'a certain Spinoza in Holland'. The widely spread 'disease' of this dubious philosophy must be opposed with every possible remedy to prevent further infection and contagion and to provide suitable treatment to those already poisoned (Totaro, 2000, p. 100; Totaro, 2002, Appendix, p. 33). After a short account of his personal contacts with Spinoza in Leiden or Rijnsburg in 1661 or 1662, Stensen provides details about the philosopher's writings, 'some under his own name, others without a name'. Some years ago, he adds to this, he took the occasion to write Spinoza a letter, which he had published under the title 'Ad novae philosophiae reformatorem de vera philosophia epistola' (Ep 67a). To his knowledge, the philosopher also completed 'certain manuscripts' which he eventually decided not to have printed after warnings from his confidants (Totaro, 2000, pp. 100–1; Totaro, 2002, Appendix, p. 33). Stensen seems to be well informed about Spinoza's writings, both published and unpublished. He recounts his encounter with the Lutheran foreigner, who showed him one of the philosopher's manuscripts, presumably

the *Ethics* (Totaro, 2000, pp. 101; Totaro, 2002, Appendix, p. 33). Stensen continues his account with a harsh critique of Spinoza's philosophical views, particularly his theory of divine substance and its attributes. Lastly, he provides information about Spinoza's supporters and followers. All of them, he states, were specialists in mathematics and took a keen interest in Descartes. They studied either in the United Provinces or in England where they had been infected by Spinoza's mistakes. Even if they did not actively support the philosopher's errors, Stensen holds them at least responsible for spreading them further (Totaro, 2000, p. 102; Totaro, 2002, Appendix, p. 34). Stensen ends his report by stressing that the 'evil' must have spread widely, since Spinoza frequently received letters from as far away as England. He also recalls that a foreigner stayed in the philosopher's house to have a better understanding of his views. Stensen furthermore refers to a discourse he once had with someone in Holland, which fully proved to him that the principles in the manuscript were already widely spread among heretics, but not, as far as he could remember, among Roman Catholics (Totaro, 2000, p. 103; Totaro, 2002, Appendix, p. 35). The 'frequent letters from England' referred to by Stensen undoubtedly concern the philosopher's correspondence with Oldenburg in the early 1660s. His assertion about the visit of a foreigner to Spinoza may also relate to Oldenburg. Stensen's report marks the beginning of a more or less systematic search for incriminating information about Spinoza to find out whether he could be a threat to Roman Catholic doctrines. In mid-March 1679 Spinoza's correspondence, his *Ethics*, the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* and the *Tractatus politicus* are placed on the Index of prohibited books. Nothing is known about

Stensen's precise role in the targeted search by the Holy Office of the Inquisition in mid-September 1677, but we may assume that he provided the names of people in the Dutch Republic that could be helpful as informants or intermediaries in the Roman inquiries.

Sunday 12 September

Van der Spijck signs a legal document before the notary public Matijs van Lievendael (fl. 1671–81) in The Hague. In the deed, he appoints Johan Louckers, the procurator of the municipal *vijschaar*, to act as his legal representative in his statement of claim (filed with the *vijschaar* on 8 July 1677) against Spinoza's legal heirs, Rebecca d'Espinosa and Daniel de Carceris, to recover the payment of charges and debts advanced by him for the philosopher's living, rent and burial.

Saturday 18 September

From Rome, Cardinal Barberini, prefect of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, dispatches a letter of instruction to the Dutch vicar apostolic Van Neercassel. Barberini informs his correspondent that other cardinals in the Holy Office warned him about 'a manuscript book on matters of atheism by Spinoza', undoubtedly the *Ethics*. The Jewish author of that manuscript, according to Barberini, is supposed to have published other works in which he endangers the purity and the fundamentals of the Roman Catholic doctrine and Church. He orders Van Neercassel to investigate if the rumours reported to him are correct, to find out whether the manuscript has already been sent to the press and, if so, to procure a copy of it. He also charges Van Neercassel to purchase copies of all other works of that same author and to redirect these instantly to Rome together with all other information that could be relevant in any way (Orcibal, 1949, p. 460, Annex 2).

of some handwritten meditations on Descartes's *Principia* (i.e. *Renati des Cartes Principia philosophiae*). The only work published by Spinoza known to him, according to Rieuwertsz's information, is the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*. Van Neercassel ends his account of Spinoza by assuring his correspondent that he will immediately spring into action against any danger threatening Roman Catholic doctrines (Brom, 1911, p. 152).

Sunday 28 November

Van Neercassel writes a letter to Tanara in Brussels. Along with this letter, he sends him a copy for Barberini of the 'treatise of the Hebrew Spinoza', which in all likelihood is the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*. Tanara in turn must have redirected the work to Barberini in Rome (Orcibal, 1949, p. 462, Annex 6).

Friday 31 December (21 OS)

Schuller informs Leibniz in a letter that Spinoza's posthumous works are now printed. He expects that they will be sold soon after the start of the new year. Again, he assures his correspondent that he will be one of the first to receive a copy of the book (Leibniz, AA, 3:2, p. 304).

11. EPILOGUE: POSTHUMOUS WORKS, EARLY REACTIONS, BAN AND INDEX

1678–9

Spinoza's posthumous works, issued in two separate (Latin and Dutch) editions by the Amsterdam publishing firm of Rieuwertsz Sr, are offered for public sale in the first weeks of January 1678. Just as his anonymous

Tractatus theologico-politicus had provoked mixed reactions from intellectuals and theologians, the philosopher's posthumous writings immediately cause a storm of fierce sentiments in the United Provinces and beyond. Almost instantly his *Ethics* meets with opposition in various outraged assemblies of the Reformed Church. The first known official reaction is the condemnation by the Leiden *kerkenraad* (4 February 1678). One week later, the Leiden Burgomasters take the decision to seize copies of the posthumous writings in the local bookshops. Alarmed by the Leiden deputies, the Grand Pensionary of Holland, Gaspar Fagel (1634–88), informs the States of Holland on 17 March 1678 about the complaints submitted by the North and South Holland Synods concerning the dissemination of the *Opera posthuma*. Finally, after many intensive debates and internal deliberations the Supreme Court of Holland, Zeeland and West-Friesland decides to suppress the posthumous works in an official placard on 25 June 1678.

In the same period, the head of the *Missio Hollandica*, Van Neercassel, continues to dig up detailed information on Spinoza in the United Provinces. A vital role in the process of informing Rome about Spinoza is played by Tanara, the papal envoy in Brussels. Another important figure is the papal diplomat Lorenzo Casoni (1643–1720), to whom Van Neercassel sends a lengthy report on the philosopher's life and works (9 September 1678). Four days later, Van Neercassel forwards to him a copy of the posthumous works with the request to redirect the package to Barberini in Rome. Soon thereafter, in early 1679, the Holy Office of the Inquisition officially places most of Spinoza's works on the Index of prohibited books.

The provincial ban issued by the Dutch civil authorities forbids the printing, distri-

bution, sale and translation of Spinoza's posthumous works in the latter part of the seventeenth century and throughout the entire eighteenth century. Neither that ban, however, nor the decision of Rome to place almost all the philosopher's writings on the Index, can prevent the growing dissemination of Spinoza's ideas among both admirers and opponents. His writings continue to be read, circulated and translated during the early Enlightenment. This can be measured by the amount of newly printed editions of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*. Apart from editions in Latin ([1678]), renderings in both French ([1678]), English (1689) and Dutch (1693, 1694), clandestinely published with false titles and imprints, still find easy distribution for many decades. The profound impact of the provocative ideas of Spinoza in Europe diminished around 1730, but immediately prior to the French Revolution interest in Spinoza again intensified.

1678

Between Saturday 1 January and Monday 24 January

Barely eleven months after Spinoza's death and burial, his posthumous works are offered for public sale in a Latin language trade edition and in a Dutch language counterpart, both in quarto format, unbound and in sheets, as was the practice in those days. Details about the number of print runs of both editions are unknown. There is no independent historical evidence to establish an absolute publication date for the two editions, but we know from Schuller's letter to Leibniz of 21/31 December 1677 that their publication was scheduled soon after the start of the new year. The date *ante quem* is established by a reaction to the publication of the posthumous works in a letter by Graevius to Nicolaas Heinsius (1620–81) writ-

ten on 24 January 1678. In the two language editions, the philosopher's name is purposely suppressed into a monogram: *B.d.S. Opera posthuma; De nagelate schriften van B.d.S.* (see Akkerman and Hubbeling, 1979, no. 10, pp. 112–13). It appears from the preface that there had been deliberations with Spinoza about the printing of the *Ethics*, which he desired to be published anonymously. The friends who prepared the two language editions also omitted the place of printing (Amsterdam), and the name of the publisher (Rieuwertsz). Recent typographical research has proven that the work was typeset by the Amsterdam printer Israel de Paull (Jagersma and Dijkstra, 2014). Around 1680, an unidentified artist produced a copper engraving of Spinoza (usually referred to as the 'Opera portrait'), which was bound into some copies of the *Opera posthuma* (cf. Ekkart, 1999, p. 13, no. 7).

Monday 3 January

From [Brussels], Tanara writes to Van Neercassel. The letter concerns Tanara's reply to the receipt of a copy of the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* forwarded to him by Van Neercassel on 28 November 1677. He most certainly reacts in his letter to rumours that Spinoza's posthumous works were to be published in the United Provinces soon. Tanara in his letter urges the Dutch vicar apostolic to continue his search in the United Provinces for facts relating to Spinoza, particularly to find out whether the philosopher has recently published another book (Orcibal, 1949, p. 462, Annex 7).

Monday 24 January

From Utrecht, the humanist Johannes Georgius Graevius writes to the noted classicist and poet Nicolaas Heinsius in Vianen. In his letter, he informs his correspondent about the fact that a 'detestable' book on 'moral

doctrine and the soul' by Spinoza is now published in the United Provinces together with his other posthumous works. The letter, quoted in Burman's *Sylloge epistolarum a viris illustribus scriptarum*, is the first known historical document referring directly to the publication of the philosopher's posthumous writings, and more particularly, to the *Ethics* (Burman, 1727, vol. 4, p. 475).

Friday 4 February

Reactions to the publication of the posthumous works are hostile from the start. The first known official response by the Reformed Church authorities, dated 4 February 1678, is given by the Leiden *kerkenraad*. The gathering condemns the atheistic contents of the '*Opera posthuma* of one B.D.S.' (Leiden *kerkenraad* resolutions, 4 February 1678, Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 380, no. 171). In due course, the outraged *kerkenraad* instructs its representatives to take further steps to ban 'that harmful and poisonous book' (Leiden *kerkenraad* resolutions, 4 February 1678, Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 380, no. 171). The assigned deputies report to the Leiden consistory about their actions on 11 February 1678.

Friday 11 February

The *kerkenraad* of Leiden is further informed by its deputies about their efforts to have the city's Burgomasters ban Spinoza's posthumous works from the local bookshops. According to the *kerkenraad* resolutions, the Burgomasters had informed them that they had finally decided to seize the book and to request the States of Holland to consider an official interdict (Leiden *kerkenraad* resolutions, 11 February 1678, Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, pp. 381, no. 172). On

the same day, the *kerkenraad* of The Hague asks its members to guard against 'the newly published Books of Spinosa, both in Latin, and in Dutch'. The Council also decides to instruct the Reformed minister David Amya (fl. 1678–1711) of the local church at The Hague to urge the Supreme Court of Holland to take further measures to ensure 'that the distribution of the said books is to be stopped as much is possible' (The Hague *kerkenraad* resolutions, 11 February 1678, Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 382, no. 173).

Saturday 25 June

Shortly after 16 April 1678, the States committee on suspect books, consisting of deputies from Leiden and States delegates specially charged with matters of theology, renders its judgement about a total interdiction of Spinoza's posthumous works in the province of Holland and West-Friesland. Most likely, their spokesman was the city's pensionary Pieter Burgersdijck (c. 1623–91) (cf. North Holland Synod resolutions, 1 August 1678, ad art. 5, North Holland Synod of 1677, Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, p. 392, no. 180). Acting on the committee's advice, the States of Holland and West-Friesland by order of Stadholder William III issue an official placard to stop the printing, distribution, sale and translation of the philosopher's writings. The title of the decree, printed by Jacobus Scheltus, runs as follows: *Placaet van de Heeren Staten van Hollandt ende West-Vrieslant, tegens het Boeck geintituleert B.D. Spinosa Opera Posthum. In date den vijff-en-twintighsten Junij 1678 (Placard of the Lords States of Hollandt and West-Vrieslant, Against the Book Entitled B.D. Spinosa Opera Posthum. On the Date 25 June 1678)* (Walther and Czelinski, 2006, vol. 1, pp. 385–6, no. 177).