

*Blackwell  
Companions to  
Philosophy*

# A COMPANION TO SPINOZA



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WILEY Blackwell

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## Notes on Contributors



## List of Abbreviations

### Descartes's Works

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

### Hobbes Works

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

### Spinoza's Works

- CM *Cogitata Metaphysica* (an appendix to Spinoza's DPP)
- DPP *Renati des Cartes Principiorum Philosophiae Pars I & II* | *Descartes's Principles of Philosophy*)
- Ep. *Epistolae* | *Letters*
- G *Spinoza Opera*. Edited by Carl Gebhardt. 4 volumes. 1925.
- KV *Korte Verhandeling van God de Mensch en deszelfs Welstand* | *Short Treatise on God, Man, and his Well-Being*)
- TIE *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione* | *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*
- E *Ethica* | *Ethics*
- TTP *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*
- CGH *Compendium Grammatices Linguae Hebraeae* | *Compendium of Hebrew Grammar*

NS *Nagelate Schriften* (1677 Dutch edition of Spinoza's Works)

Vat *The Vatican Manuscript of Spinoza's Ethics*. Edited by Leen Spruit and Pina Totaro.  
Leiden, NL: Brill, 2011.

E PUF *Spinoza Oeuvres IV: Ethica*. Texte établi par Fokke Akkerman et Piet Steenbakkens.  
Traduction par Pierre-François Moreau. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2020.

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

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

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

## Introduction

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

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

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

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

There are several substantial editorial decisions I wish to explain here briefly. To facilitate diversity (of gender, geography, philosophical tradition, and stage of career development), I have decided to commission a larger number of chapters. This decision has also allowed the Companion to cover topics which are rarely addressed in similar publications. Yet, insofar as the length of the entire Companion had to be restricted within certain reasonable limits, most of the chapters had to be concise. Moreover, in order to recruit top scholars – who are frequently not tempted to write mere summaries and textbook entries – I invited contributors to use their chapters to develop new ideas and cutting-edge research, rather than *merely* summarize existing scholarship. Thus, the contributors were placed – by me – in an uneasy and challenging situation: they were asked to provide a brief overview of their subject matter while presenting serious, original scholarship, all in a rather short space. While I do not wish to break the Talmudic rule that a “baker may not attest to the quality of his own loaf,” my personal feeling is that this challenge has been met even better than I could have hoped, and I would like to thank my collaborators in this volume for their immense investment, talent, and intellectual generosity.

In January 2020, the Maimonides Center at Hamburg University hosted a workshop in which a small group of the papers in this volume were presented, and I would like to thank

the center and its co-director, my friend, Stephan Schmid for this generous initiative. Finally, I wish to thank Jonathan Arking \*\*\*\*, for their outstanding assistance in the copyediting and production of this Companion.