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## **“Crastinâ die loquar cum Celsissimo principe de Spinoza”. New perspectives on Spinoza’s visit to the French Army Headquarters in Utrecht in late July 1673**

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### **Introduction**

In 1672, Dutch political equilibrium collapsed when the United Provinces entered the Franco-Dutch War (1672–1678/9) of Louis XIV (1638–1715).<sup>1</sup> That war was fully focused on the Dutch Republic and also involved orchestrated hostilities by England, Münster and Cologne. In early April, France made a quick advance on the United Provinces and two months later the French army already controlled the Provinces of Gelderland and Utrecht. An assault on the Province of Holland, though, was stopped by the inundated Holland Water Line (a line of fortresses to be linked by flooding), leaving the French only a one day’s march from Amsterdam. In early 1673, the Sun King charged an officer residing in the French headquarters in Utrecht, the Swiss lieutenant colonel Jean Baptiste Stoupe (1624–92/1700), to write a text to justify the occupation.<sup>2</sup> In that broadsheet, entitled *La Religion des hollandois* (*The Religion of the Dutch*; hereafter *La Religion*), he declares the “True Liberty” and Calvinist Dutch state religion to be a complete delusion.<sup>3</sup> In his argument, he especially points to two seditious books printed anonymously in Amsterdam that were then still sold openly without official prohibition: *Philosophia S. Scripturae interpres* (*Philosophy as Interpreter of Holy Scripture*),<sup>4</sup> very probably written by Lodewijk Meyer (1629/30–81),<sup>5</sup> and *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (*Theological-Political Treatise*),<sup>6</sup> a passionate plea for the liberty to philosophise against the encroachments of organised religion, by Benedictus de Spinoza (1632–77).<sup>7</sup>

Stoupe, a well-informed libertine, is highly critical of Spinoza’s seminal treatise in *La Religion*, but he can also hardly conceal his admiration for the erudition of its anonymous author. Whilst preparing *La Religion* for printing, Stoupe became the linchpin in a secret plan to bring Spinoza to Utrecht. Wild rumours later circulating about this mysterious trip have long intrigued early authors writing on Spinoza’s life and works. They all agree that he went to Utrecht at the invitation of the celebrated Prince of Condé, General Louis II de Bourbon (1621–86), but the evidence they provide is speculative and some of their stories are ill-founded or simply untrue.<sup>8</sup> Yet, many modern historians, who mostly reiterate these accounts, continue that same reading but without adding new details or evidence.

I recently spotted two older publications on two contemporary letters regarding the philosopher’s trip to Utrecht. These intriguing letters have hardly been noticed in Spinoza scholarship

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before, but they produce compelling evidence that Condé was only involved in the plan by implication. They also bring new historical facts to the fore and affirm with certainty that it was, in any case, Jean Baptiste Stoupe who executed the plan to call Spinoza to Utrecht. The first letter reveals the unknown fact that another French military officer was also involved in that remarkable plan: the Marquess of Feuquières Antoine Manasses de Pas (1648–1711),<sup>9</sup> a relative and military adviser of the Duc de Luxembourg (1628–95), the commander of Utrecht.<sup>10</sup> That same document also confirms that the invitation to Spinoza was very likely forwarded by or through Johannes Georgius Graevius (1632–1703), a German scholar who taught history, politics and rhetoric in Utrecht.<sup>11</sup> This information is provided in a letter written by Stoupe to Graevius that was later published by Johannes van Vloten (1818–83) in *De levensbode* in 1880.<sup>12</sup> Yet, this letter was never mentioned in the Latin Spinoza editions by Van Vloten and Land and has since remained unnoticed. Fortunately, I rediscovered the original letter in Copenhagen and I now present a transcription of it, together with a photograph, in this paper.

Important additional historical information is supplied in the second overlooked letter, which is quoted in a publication by Gustave Cohen (1879–1958) on the French libertine author Saint-Évremond (1616–1703).<sup>13</sup> That letter, written on 28 July 1673 by Jean Baptiste's older brother Pierre-Alexandre (1620–1701, military governor of Utrecht) to Condé, proves that Spinoza went to Utrecht and also provides a rough date when he left The Hague and arrived in the French army headquarters: between 25 and 28 July 1673.<sup>14</sup> Pierre-Alexandre's letter of 28 July further establishes that Jean Baptiste's undated letter to Graevius, and likewise also the invitation, must have been written and dispatched shortly before 25 July 1673.

To understand the situation created by the French occupation in 1672–73, a brief historical account of the political and cultural changes and the shift of power (from the dominance of the Republican States of Holland to the rule of the new Stadholder William III (1650–1702) culminating in the killing of the brothers De Witt) in the Dutch Republic is now in order. The occupation of Utrecht also deserves historical commentary. Next, I turn to Jean Baptiste Stoupe and his 1673 *La Religion*, which undoubtedly led to the plan as conceived by officers in the French army staff to call Spinoza to Utrecht. The last part of this essay focuses on a historical reconstruction of Spinoza's visit and provides all contemporary reports surrounding the trip.

### The Franco-Dutch War

In the run-up to the war,<sup>15</sup> a secret treaty was concluded (1 June 1670) in Dover, demanding that France financially assist Charles II (1630–85) in his intent to become a Catholic, in turn requiring England to support France in a war with Holland.<sup>16</sup> That pact, undermining the Triple Alliance (1668) between England, Sweden and the Dutch, aimed at isolating the United Provinces and reducing them to the status of a second rate power.<sup>17</sup> Louis XIV also concluded a treaty (18 November 1671) with Leopold I (1640–1705). The German Emperor promised not to interfere as long as France refrained from attacking Spain or the German Empire.<sup>18</sup> Louis XIV also made a rapprochement with the bishops of Münster and Cologne to assure military intervention in the east and to facilitate an invasion through Liège.<sup>19</sup> Sweden supported the war only indirectly.

When the French capture of Lorraine (1670) became a *fait accompli*, the Dutch States General realised that after the Peace of Westphalia (1648) army budgets had been cut too drastically and that military training was urgently required to hold the Sun King at bay. Though political tension in the Dutch Republic was building up and war was clearly unavoidable, the Council of State decided against new training camps. Because of persistent rumours of an impending war with France, the Dutch States General on 26 February 1672 appointed the Prince of Orange William III as Field Marshall of the army, but this only for one military campaign.<sup>20</sup> On 6 April 1672,

France declared war on Holland, giving as pretext that the States General had not “returned” favours France had “always” granted them.<sup>21</sup> England declared war on the following day.

In early April 1672, French troops swiftly advanced on the United Provinces. They marched through Liège and laid siege to Maastricht. Manoeuvres in the English Channel began in late April when preparing for a landing on the Dutch coast. The attempt was warded off by the Dutch fleet under Michiel de Ruyter (1607–76) in the Battle of Solebay (7 June 1672) and the blockade plans were finally abandoned.<sup>22</sup> Although, the Dutch navy was at the height of its sea power, the States army was poorly prepared for war on land.<sup>23</sup> In May 1672, Louis XIV’s army penetrated deeper into Liège territory. Troops crossed the river Meuse, bypassed Maastricht and successfully attacked (1 June 1672) the Dutch strongholds Bûderich, Wesel, Orsoy and Rheinberg along the lower Rhine.<sup>24</sup> Christoph Bernhard von Galen (1606–78), Prince-Bishop of Münster, descended upon the east and attacked the regions of the Achterhoek and Twente in order to advance north. On 12 June 1672,<sup>25</sup> Condé’s army (118,000 infantry and 12,500 cavalry) outflanked the IJssel Line and crossed the Rhine to lay siege to the fortress of Schenkenschans (near Nijmegen).<sup>26</sup> The French army then rapidly captured Gelderland and Utrecht, cruelly raiding the eastern cities Arnhem and Nijmegen. The central Dutch town of Utrecht was however taken without violence on 23 June 1672.

Holland barely escaped from the French aggression by inundating the Dutch polders (8 June–8 July 1672).<sup>27</sup> The remainder of William III’s army entrenched behind the Holland Water Line. With the French invasion brought to a halt and the country largely occupied, the Dutch Republic soon fell into a state of chronic turmoil: people tried to flee to Holland and many withdrew their money from the Exchange Banks which precipitated a financial crisis.<sup>28</sup> The Republican regents were especially blamed for this and Orangists violently turned against Johan de Witt (1625–72) accusing him of handing over the Republic to France.<sup>29</sup> Local uprisings followed and demands to restore William III to his ancestral functions became increasingly stronger.<sup>30</sup>

### Occupation of Utrecht

In early June 1672, the Sun King’s cavalry (4,000 troops) marched on Utrecht. The city was left defenseless after the States General had ordered the Stadholder to pull back behind the Water Line. On 23 June 1672,<sup>31</sup> a town delegation started negotiations with the French army commander Henri-Louis d’Aloigny (1636–76), Marquess of Rochefort,<sup>32</sup> and lieutenant colonel Jean Baptiste Stoupe to spare the city. This delegation included its Burgomaster, Jacob van der Dussen (*fl.* 1669–86), and two *Vroedschap* magistrates, Nicolaas Hamel (*fl.* 1652–1677) and the influential Cartesian physician Lambert van Velthuysen (1621/22–85).<sup>33</sup> The French negotiators told them that they had no actual intentions of pillaging or destroying the city.<sup>34</sup> Subsequently, the *Vroedschap* handed over the town’s keys and Louis XIV’s cavalry started to close in on Utrecht whilst musketeers took up positions at the town hall and at the city’s gates.<sup>35</sup> On 28 June 1672, French and Swiss battalions marched through the town gates.<sup>36</sup> The occupation was completed in a few days and the Sun King made his *Joyeuse Entrée* (4 July 1672). Louis XIV gave Luxembourg the command over Utrecht and appointed Pierre-Alexandre Stoupe as its military governor.<sup>37</sup> The incumbent civic administration remained in office.<sup>38</sup> The two Stoupe brothers remained in Utrecht until the French forces finally withdrew on 23 November 1673.

### Conspiracy and political murder in The Hague

During the war, political and financial tensions in the largely occupied United Provinces further strengthened the political position of William III. Already a Field Marshall of the States army (25 February 1672), he became Stadholder of Holland on 4 July 1672. The States General restored the old combination of the offices of the Stadholderate and Field Marshall of the States army (8 July

1672) thereby abolishing the “Perpetual Edict” of 5 August 1667.<sup>39</sup> On 16 July 1672, William was also offered the Stadholderate of Zeeland.<sup>40</sup> In practice, he now virtually reigned like a dictator: he controlled the army and he could also influence the yearly composition of the ruling magistracies in the main towns. The Prince and his clique also immediately started a smear campaign to incite Orangist supporters against Johan de Witt.<sup>41</sup> They also accused his brother Cornelis (1623–72), a States deputy of Holland, of treason.<sup>42</sup> He had accompanied De Ruyter in the raid on the Medway (1667) and the Battle of Solebay, but sickness forced him to leave the fleet. The hatred against the De Witt brothers was further fuelled by vitriolic political pamphlets demanding the purge of the Republican government, accusing it of betraying the country and selling out to Louis XIV.

On 24 July 1672, Cornelis was arrested for his alleged involvement in a plot to kill William III and he was imprisoned in the “Gevangenpoort” (close to the *Binnenhof*, the residence of the States General) in The Hague.<sup>43</sup> Johan officially stepped down from office on 4 August 1672.<sup>44</sup> On 20 August, he was lured to the “Gevangenpoort” on the pretext that Cornelis, who was condemned for high treason, was in urgent need of his legal advice. In the preceding days and hours, rumours of attempts to let Cornelis escape had fuelled the indignation of people in the streets. Pamphlets appeared demanding the execution of the De Witt brothers.<sup>45</sup> Angry Orangist supporters then gathered and agitation was put into motion. States’ cavalry regiments and troops were called out to guard the governmental residence and the “Gevangenpoort” in case riots should break out. Holland deputies were told to stay in town and to wait and see how the crisis developed. The States then ordered the raising of the bridges and appealed to William III for assistance (which he refused). Civic guard companies turned against the cavalry and finally forced their way into the prison in the late afternoon of 20 August 1672. Johan and Cornelis were dragged out and killed instantly. Their bodies were left to a frantic Orangist mob, brutally mutilated and hanged for display on the nearby execution place.<sup>46</sup> Rumours also circulated that William III and some of his vindictive relatives played a vital part in the murder of the De Witt brothers. New evidence has recently shown that the Prince, together with his confidant Frederik van Nassau-Zuytlestein (1624–72), admiral Cornelis Tromp (1629–91) and Willem Adriaan van Nassau (1632–1705), were indeed crucially involved in the plot to kill the two brothers.<sup>47</sup> Three days after their savage assassination, the loyal Orangist Gaspar Fagel (1634–88) was appointed to the post of Grand Pensionary of Holland.<sup>48</sup>

### Stoupe’s *La Religion des hollandois* (1673)

Jean Baptiste Stoupe wrote the anti-Dutch pamphlet *La Religion* during his stay in Utrecht. This anonymously published booklet, comprising six letters (4–19 May 1673) to an unnamed Bernese theologian,<sup>49</sup> was commissioned by Louis XIV to justify the French occupation as well as the enlistment of Swiss Protestants in the French army.<sup>50</sup> The pamphlet was an indirect response to Dutch pamphlets reporting cruelties committed by the French in Zwammerdam and Bodegraven after an attempted breakthrough on the frozen Holland Water Line at Rietveld and Zwammerdam (27 December 1672). Stoupe sent his manuscript to Paris to obtain a royal printing patent for it.<sup>51</sup> Well before the publication of *La Religion*, Stoupe’s masked identity was unveiled by Johannes Baptista van Neercassel (1640–86), the Dutch vicar apostolic of the “Holland Mission”. In late July 1673, he communicated a manuscript copy of the work to Cardinal Giovanni Bona in Rome.<sup>52</sup> *La Religion* was printed by François Clousier (fl.1617–76) and Pierre Aubouyn (fl.1640–1712) in Paris on 23 August 1673. A second edition appeared later that year with the fictive imprint “Pierre Marteaux” at “Cologne”.<sup>53</sup> Stoupe’s name was first given away by the Walloon pastor Johannes Braun (1628–1708) in 1675,<sup>54</sup> who contested *La Religion* in *La Veritable religion des hollandois* (*The True Religion of the Dutch*; hereafter *La Veritable religion*). In the booklet, he accuses Stoupe of disseminating deceptive “lies”, engrossing “fables” and slanderous “half-truths” himself.<sup>55</sup>

The first three letters of *La Religion* recount the history of Dutch Protestantism in detail and point to the many religious denominations and sects that thrived in the Republic with hardly any restrictions or prosecution. In the fourth and fifth letters,<sup>56</sup> Stoupe then reaches the conclusion that the Dutch profess a Protestant state religion only outwardly.<sup>57</sup> That was not only shown, he argued, by the fact that the seditious Socinian anthology *Bibliotheca fratrum Polonorum* (*Library of the Polish Brothers*) was sold openly, but also by the lax attitude of the States General who refrain from banning a hideous book like Spinoza’s *Tractatus theologico-politicus*.<sup>58</sup> The sixth and last letter of *La Religion* explains why Swiss Protestants could proudly serve in Louis XIV’s war against Dutch Protestants. The Dutch “liberty”, Stoupe writes, reveals itself above all in tolerating someone like Spinoza.<sup>59</sup> Spinoza’s groundbreaking treatise is brought up for the first time in the third letter. From the commentary, it becomes evident that Stoupe was well-informed about Spinoza’s identity:

I do not believe that I have told you about all the religions of this country if I have not said a word about an illustrious man and scientist who, so they told me, has a large numbers of followers who concur with his views. It is a man who was born from a Jew, called Spinoza, who neither abjured Judaism nor embraced Christianity; so he is a very bad Jew and not a good Christian. Some years ago, he wrote a book in Latin with the title *Tractatus theologico-politicus* in which he seems to have as a primary goal the destruction of all religions and particularly Judaism and Christianity by introducing atheism, freethinking and the liberty from all religions.<sup>60</sup>

In the same letter, Stoupe also assumes that by 1673 the tract had already been banned in an official States decree.<sup>61</sup> Although such a decree was only issued in the summer of 1674, the book had indeed already been banned in two major Dutch cities: copies were seized from the local book-stores in Leiden (16 May 1670) and in Utrecht (between 14 and 18 September 1671).<sup>62</sup> In spite of his dislike of Spinoza’s views, Stoupe is also clearly impressed by his remarkable knowledge of Hebrew, of Jewish manners and customs as well as of philosophy and he can barely conceal his admiration. The central part of his argument is a reproach of the Dutch theologians for their persistent failure to rebut Spinoza’s doctrines:

This Spinoza lives in this country. He has lived for some time in The Hague where he was visited by inquisitive spirits and even by young ladies of quality who pretend to have more spirit than their sex admits of.<sup>63</sup> His followers do not dare to expose themselves, because his book absolutely overthrows the foundations of all religions, and it has been condemned in a public placard of the States and they have been prohibited to sell it, and yet it is still being sold openly. Among the theologians in this country there cannot be found one who dares to write against the opinions that this author puts forward in his treatise. I am quite surprised that, although the author shows a great knowledge of the Hebrew language, of all the customs of the Jews and of philosophy, the theologians have no more to say than that this book does not deserve the trouble of refuting it. If they persist in this silence one cannot help saying that they are either lacking in charity by leaving such a pernicious book unanswered, or that they approve the sentiments of this author, or that they do have the courage and the power to fight them.<sup>64</sup>

Very little is known about Stoupe’s contacts with intellectuals in Utrecht, but it is certain that he entertained relations with Van Velthuysen and also with Graevius. Stoupe met Van Velthuysen frequently, not only in late June 1672, but also during the further occupation when the latter served as a regent of the incumbent civic administration.

### **Double play: Inviting Spinoza to the French army headquarters in Utrecht**

Stoupe probably kept refining and revising the manuscript of *La Religion* before finally dispatching the definitive text to Paris for printing in July or August 1673. It is almost beyond doubt that

he had discussions about the contents of his upcoming booklet (and undoubtedly also about Spinoza's *Tractatus theologico-politicus*), with his fellow officers, but also with the celebrated Prince of Condé.<sup>65</sup> We may assume that during Stoupe's meetings with Condé and other officers argumentative topics in *La Religion* and *Tractatus theologico-politicus* as well as the intellectual stature of Spinoza sparked heated philosophical and political discussions. Their arguments and speculations about the mysterious Jewish author of this inflammatory treatise were further brought to a head when someone in their company broached the cunning plan of summoning Spinoza to Utrecht. It is not difficult to imagine that Condé greeted that plan with great enthusiasm. The French general is reported as having an avid intellectual interest in novel scientific discoveries and original thought and also that he entertained a libertine "circle" (including the Huguenot scholar and bibliophile Henri Justel, Molière, Racine and La Fontaine among others) in France at the Château de Chantilly.<sup>66</sup> Condé was also the patron of the atheist Pierre Michon Bourdelot (1610–85), the Epicurean Jean Dehénault (1611?–82?) and the millenarian Isaac La Peyrère (1596–1676). In addition, we also know for a fact that Jean Baptiste Stoupe secretly provided Condé with obscure libertine books (*livres rares*).<sup>67</sup>

We must assume that the Prince of Condé finally agreed to bring Spinoza from The Hague to Utrecht and gave Jean Baptiste Stoupe permission to implement the plan. Another officer we now also know of with certainty that he was also involved in that intriguing proposal was the Marquis de Feuquières Antoine de Pas. Condé charged Stoupe to make secret preparations for the trip, but only on the condition that his own involvement would stay unmentioned. How

Vir Christiane

Quis hinc die loquar cum Celissimo principe de  
 Spinoza, sed non credo ~~quod~~ nec hanc velle  
 remora cum venire ut veniat. N' aliqui qui eum  
 vocant nominat d'har, poter vir Christiane me, &  
 R. Equitem, & ego sponte me vobiscum & omnes  
 alios impetres, supplicatorem. Sicut enim sibi  
 conductus a Celissimo principe procuratoribus ad  
 quon mittentur. Modò etiam sibi sibi conductor  
 obstat, nulla in timere debet periculum. Nam quam  
 inire poterit vir Christiane ipsi indicabit. Valeat

Cl. N. K. M. Y.

J. Stoupe

Figure 1. Letter of Jean Baptiste Stoupe to Johannes Georgius Graevius, (before 25 July 1673) (Courtesy of the Royal Library, Copenhagen, Ms. Thott 1266 4°)

these arrangements were made is (partly) shown in an (undated) letter by Stoupe to Graevius (Document 2) which was published by Van Vloten in 1880.<sup>68</sup> The letter (see Fig. 1), written before 25 July 1673, decisively proves that Stoupe discussed the plan with Condé, that he called upon Graevius to invite Spinoza and had very probably informed him about the plan on an earlier occasion.<sup>69</sup> Stoupe writes to Graevius that he is to confer with the Prince about Spinoza the next day (tomorrow), but that “his Highness” will presumably have very strong reservations about inviting him in his own name. Therefore, he calls upon Graevius to communicate the invitation to Spinoza for him and, if necessary, mention his name or that of Feuquières if the philosopher should ask who summons him to Utrecht. He also promises Graevius that he himself will take care of travelling money and all other expenses needed. A “sauvegarde” (a dated passport) assuring Spinoza’s passage through French territory, Stoupe writes, will be procured “by his Highness” and then communicated to the philosopher. He leaves the decision about Spinoza’s route from the Hague to Utrecht in the hands of Graevius:

Dear Sir,

Tomorrow I will speak with his Highness the Prince about Spinoza. I do not believe, though, that his Highness is willing to invite him in his own name to come. If any names of those who summon him are to be mentioned, dear Sir, you can [mention] me and Mr Fequiere, and I promise to provide for travel expenses and all other costs. A safe conduct letter will be procured by his Highness and sent to him. And if he obtains this safe conduct, he should not be afraid of any peril. You, dear Sir, will point out to him the way he can take. Farewell, dear Sir,

Your most humble servant,

J B Stoupe<sup>70</sup>

What happened next is partly unclear and we can only fill in the blanks with circumstantial evidence. We are not informed what and when Graevius answered Stoupe, but somehow the invitation was communicated to Spinoza sometime before 1673, presumably by Graevius or through someone else in his immensely large correspondence network. He may also have been the middleman who passed on the money for the trip to Spinoza. A signed letter of safe conduct was procured from Condé and then “sent” to Spinoza, that is at least what Stoupe’s letter indicates. Presumably, only the invitation was forwarded to Spinoza, declaring that a passport was to be handed to him somewhere at the front line, but of this there is no certainty. One way or another, and either in a lost letter or through a go-between, Spinoza answered Graevius that he accepted the invitation and would come to Utrecht, also declaring that his arrival could be expected in late July 1673.

Other documents prove also that either Jean Baptiste or Pierre-Alexandre was in “frequent” communication with Dutch and French officials in The Hague and Amsterdam, which may also have facilitated contacts with Spinoza.<sup>71</sup> We cannot, therefore, rule out the possibility that the necessary papers and/or money were delivered to Spinoza personally, and that perhaps even one of the Stoupe brothers handed the package to him when journeying to meet contacts in The Hague. A letter from a certain Bardo di Bardi Magalotti (1629–77) to Condé proves that in any case one of them went to Holland in late May or early June 1673 and the same trip may have been made again in later June or July.<sup>72</sup> From that document, we can infer that one of the Stoupe brothers crossed the front line at Ameide (north of Gorinchem), a crucial place where water from the river Lek was pumped into the Alblasserwaard:

I have returned to colonel Amama the passport of Mr Stoupe, and ordered him [Amama], that he [Stoupe] may go down to do so (as I will do with all those who will have passports).<sup>73</sup>

The invitation and the papers may also have been sent to The Hague via the regular French mail service to Holland, but Jean Baptiste’s letter to Graevius shows that he distrusted the postal



service. Letters from Utrecht to Holland could only be sent through the French mail at that time and private individuals were heavily fined if such letters were found in their possession.<sup>74</sup>

### Spinoza's trip to Utrecht. A Reconstruction

Spinoza left The Hague and set out for Utrecht between 25 and 28 July 1673, alone or with a friend. To set the scene, it is important to briefly survey the possibilities of his travel route. If he made the trip overland, he must have approached Utrecht from the west to pass the Holland Water Line at some point, probably at the smallest strip between Gouda and Woerden; large parts in the north (defending Amsterdam) and in the south were inundated completely. We could also conjecture that Spinoza made the trip partly by barge. If he did so, he may have embarked in The Hague, travelling via Delft to Rotterdam. There, he perhaps took a *beurtveer* (a boat service between two fixed points) to travel along the river Nieuwe Maas via Dordrecht and the Merwede river to Gorinchem. From there, he could have continued on his way in a more leisurely fashion, travelling overland northwards to Utrecht by touring around the Holland Water Line.<sup>75</sup> We must exclude the possibility that he could have entered French territory without a signed passport declaring that he had permission to visit the town. Historical evidence decisively confirming that Spinoza indeed visited Utrecht and met lieutenant colonel Jean Baptiste Stoupe is provided in a letter of 28 July 1673 written by his brother Pierre-Alexandre to Condé (then encamping in Grave) published by Cohen in 1926.<sup>76</sup> In this first-hand document, which also provides a *terminus ante quem* (before 25 July 1673) for Stoupe's undated letter to Graevius, Pierre-Alexandre explicitly claims that Spinoza was summoned to Utrecht "at the request of my brother". That statement fully proves that Jean Baptiste was the linchpin in the plan to bring Spinoza to Utrecht. When "the said Spinoza" arrived in Utrecht, Pierre-Alexandre further informs Condé, he brought news that "Montbas" had been symbolically hanged "last Tuesday" (25 July) in The Hague:

The said Spinoza, who has come from The Hague, at the request of my brother, has told him that Mr de Montbas, who was put on trial in the month of November by the sentence of the War Council, has been hanged in effigy last Tuesday.<sup>77</sup>

The person referred to as "Montbas" was the French colonel Jean de Barthon (1613–73), Viscount of Montbas and Breet, the military commander of a cavalry regiment in the States army.<sup>78</sup> He had ordered his troops to leave positions at the Elterberg (11 June 1672), thus offering French soldiers the opportunity to cross the lower Rhine on the next day into Dutch territory. Montbas was sentenced (23 July 1672) in a court-martial in Bodegraven, but escaped to Utrecht one week later.<sup>79</sup> On 18 November 1672, he was sentenced *in absentia* to the death penalty. For the course of justice, his effigy was "hanged" for display on a gallows in The Hague (25 July 1673) and Spinoza apparently knew about this. He lived nearby and we may conjecture that he was still in The Hague waiting to leave the next day or so for Utrecht. Shortly afterwards, Spinoza left to arrive in Utrecht sometime between Tuesday 25 and Friday 28 July 1673. He was welcomed there by Jean Baptiste Stoupe and informed him that Montbas had been "executed". That news was subsequently communicated by Pierre-Alexandre to Condé in his letter of the 28th.

Nothing further is known about Spinoza's residence in Utrecht, his contacts or occupations there, but he undoubtedly visited the residence ("mevrouw Rodenborgh op het Sint Jans Kerck-hof" and "Mrs Rodenborgh at the Janskerkhof") of his host Jean Baptiste Stoupe and perhaps he also lodged there as his personal guest.<sup>80</sup> In addition to Jean Baptiste, it is virtually certain that Spinoza also met Graevius: he communicated an account of the death of Descartes to him and asked him in a letter of 14 December 1673 to return it to him.<sup>81</sup> It is also likely

that he met up with Lambert van Velthuysen. How long Spinoza remained in Utrecht is unknown and the date of his return to Holland is also unrecorded.

Rumours that Spinoza had been invited by Condé in person to come to Utrecht as disseminated by Braun (*La Veritable religion*, 1675; see [Appendix](#), document 1), Pierre Coste (*Histoire de Louis de Bourbon II*, 1693; Document 2), Pierre Bayle (*Dictionnaire historique et critique*, 1697, 1702; Documents 3 and 4), Johannes Colerus (*Korte, dog waarachtige levensbeschryving*, 1705; Documents 5 and 6), Henriquez Morales (*Mémoires du trevoux*, 1706, *Lettres de Mr. Bayle*, 1729; Document 7),<sup>82</sup> Paul Buissonnière (*Mémoires du trevoux*, 1706, *Lettres de Mr. Bayle*, 1729; Document 8),<sup>83</sup> and by [Lucas] (*La Vie et l'esprit de Mr Benoit de Spinoza*, 1719; Document 9) can now be refuted and replaced by what we now know to be historical facts. Condé may very well have been one of the originators of the plan, but Jean Baptiste's letter to Graevius clearly shows that the French commander was not keen on connecting his name with Spinoza in an invitation. Some of these early authors claim that Spinoza met Condé, but evidence proves that that was not the case. Historical documents clearly indicate that Condé left Utrecht on 25 July 1673 (the day of Montbas's public humiliation) to take up military positions close to 's-Hertogenbosch and according to his own testimony he arrived in Grave on 26 July 1673.<sup>84</sup> He did not return to Utrecht afterwards.

## Conclusions

The two letters published by Van Vloten and Cohen confirm that Spinoza was not invited by Condé, but by Jean Baptiste Stoupe. His letter to Graevius shows that the army officer probably forwarded the invitation to The Hague through the intermediary of the Utrecht professor before 25 July 1673, but of this there is no certainty. The same letter also proves that Jean Baptiste took care of the necessary travelling money and other expenses. He also arranged for a signed passport to be handed to Spinoza. The letter by Pierre-Alexandre Stoupe to Condé of 28 July 1673 securely dates Spinoza's departure for Utrecht between 25 and 28 July. We now also know that Jean Baptiste played a key role in bringing about the plan, but the exact role of both Condé and Feuquières is unclear. So, the conundrum of Spinoza's visit seems to be solved in terms of protagonists, dating and preparations, but the case is far from closed.

The true reasons how and why Spinoza found favour with the French army staff are still unknown and it is a complete mystery for what purpose he was invited to Utrecht in particular. Preparations for the trip were clearly surrounded with secrecy and it is highly doubtful that Spinoza was simply invited for "philosophical entertainment" alone. Another moot question, why he accepted the peculiar invitation in the first place, also remains unanswered. Spinoza could simply have refused and refrained from leaving his safe residence in The Hague. His biography suggests that he did not travel much, apart from short trips to and from Amsterdam. In addition, journeying in wartime and crossing guarded front lines was not only hazardous, but also difficult because of the many restrictions, even if he had money and the proper travelling documents. However, something urgent and compelling made him decide to go to Utrecht. Everything is possible, from personal motives to reasons of diplomacy: meeting friends, the printing or translation of his writings (into French) or even negotiations about Montbas, or perhaps peace, to mention just a few possibilities. As to philosophy, Spinoza had absolutely no aspirations to openly discuss or defend his radical views or his *Tractatus theologico-politicus* and certainly not with some sensation-seeking French aristocrats. By 1671, he had become deeply worried about being publicly accused of blasphemy and atheism when he heard that an unauthorised Dutch rendering of his tract was being published without his permission and he had urged his friend Jarig Jelles (1619/20–83) to prevent its printing.<sup>85</sup> Honour or money may also have been at stake, but that does simply not fit in with Spinoza's personality at all. Coste reports that Condé hoped to

procure a yearly pension for Spinoza from Louis XIV (Document 2). Colerus claims the same, suggesting that it was to be in return for dedicating one of his writings to the Sun King (Document 4). The physician Morales even suggests that Spinoza was promised a position in the service of Louis XIV, including lodgings close to court and a pension of a thousand ecu (Document 7). These claims are intriguing, but undoubtedly groundless. As the matter now stands, many questions about the real reasons for Spinoza's visit to Utrecht simply remain unanswered, but apart from the two letters discussed no other documents are known to have survived. The absence of other important contemporary sources detailing the visit can in fact point to the secrecy and confidentiality with which the visit and the actual purpose of it was surrounded and maintained.

The 1705 biography by Colerus is the only source hinting at a possible explanation of Spinoza's trip. Since his work is historically fairly reliable, one of his accounts may perhaps contain a clue which would help to solve the case should more documents be discovered. Colerus quotes the testimony of Hendrick van der Spijck (Spinoza's landlord in The Hague) concerning the philosopher's return from Utrecht.<sup>86</sup> That highly erratic account implies that Spinoza went to Utrecht on a diplomatic mission, apparently with the full knowledge of "prominent people". According to Colerus's report, Spinoza's return to The Hague almost caused an uprising incited by rumours about spying and treason, but his claim cannot be verified. We may ask what actually happened and wonder if those rumours were indeed circulating then in town. For now, we can best close our conclusions with what Colerus writes about Spinoza's return in The Hague:

Upon his return from Utrecht, he had been almost attacked by the populace, who saw him as a spy and gossip was rife that he was dealing with the French in matters of the state and the country. To his landlord, who had become very frightened about it and feared that they would use violence on his house to find Spinoza, he said: "Don't be afraid, I am innocent, and many among the prominent know why I went to Utrecht. Whenever there is some disturbance at your doorstep I will go out and meet those people, even if they treated me like the good lords De Witt. I am a true Republican and the Republic's best interest is my aim".<sup>87</sup>

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### Notes

1. See the following studies: Sonnino, *Louis XIV*; Jones, *The Anglo-Dutch Wars*; Lynn, *The French Wars and Nimwegen, The Dutch Army*, esp. 433–42.
2. Jean Baptiste Stoupe, from the Swiss Graubunderland (Chiavenna), worked as an agent (1653–4) for Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658). After serving in the Swiss "Stoppa" regiment of his uncle Johann Peter (1621–1701), he recruited for his own free Swiss mercenary regiment from 1677 onwards. See Feer, "Un Pamphlet" 80–91 and Oxford *Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter: ODNB).
3. Stoupe, *La Religion*. For more on this pamphlet, see: Feer, "Un Pamphlet"; Popkin, "Serendipity" no. 10, 4–7; Popkin, "The First Published Discussion" 101–9 and Gelderen, "Turning Swiss?" 151–69.
4. Meyer, *Philosophia S. Scripturae interpres*. Modern translations are: Meyer, *La Philosophie interprète; Philosophy* (translated by S. Shirley).
5. Lodewijk Meyer edited Spinoza's digest *Renati Des Cartes Principiorum philosophiae* (Amsterdam, 1663). On Meyer see: *Nieuw Nederlandsch biografisch woordenboek* (hereafter: NNBW), vol. 5, cols. 342–5 and Bunge, et al., *Dictionary*, vol. 2, 694–9.

6. Spinoza, *Tractatus theologico-politicus*. For a synopsis see: Bunge, Krop, Steenbakkens and Van de Ven, *The Continuum Companion to Spinoza*, 347–51. See also Bamberger, “The Early Editions” 9–33 and Steenbakkens, “The Text” 29–40.
7. For Spinoza’s life and writings, see Van de Ven, “Spinoza’s Life and Time” 1–53 and Van de Ven, *Spinoza. Facts in Focus*.
8. D’Orléans, Duc d’Aumale, *Histoires*, vols 3–7 and Béguin, *Les Princes de Condé*.
9. Feuquières was “aide de camp” to Luxembourg in 1673. He had his own regiment (Regiment de Feuquières) and was finally promoted a “maréchal de camp”. Feuquières became involved in a major murder and poison scandal (“L’Affaire des Poisons” 1677–82), but he was never tried. See Pas, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, i–ccviii.
10. François-Henri de Montmorency-Bouteville, Duc de Luxembourg, accompanied Condé to Utrecht on 21 April 1673. See Beaurain, *Histoire militaire*; Cannon, *Le Maréchal de Luxembourg* and Béguin, *Les Princes de Condé*, 430.
11. For Graevius, see NNBW, vol. 4, cols. 669–70.
12. Vloten, “Spinoza’s uitstapjen naar Utrecht”. Vloten published extensively on Spinoza: *Ad Benedicti de Spinoza; B. de Spinoza; Opera quotquot reperta sunt*. On Vloten see NNBW, vol. 8, cols. 1300–4.
13. Cohen, *Le Séjour*. The letter is briefly commented upon in Walther and Czelinski, *Die Lebensgeschichte Spinozas*, vol. 1, 168. The aforementioned work, a revised and augmented reedition of Freudenthal, *Die Lebensgeschichte Spinozas*, must be approached with much caution. Although undeniably invaluable and useful for modern Spinoza scholarship, the work contains a series of annoying errors, fuzzy misreadings and incomprehensible omissions in both headings, texts and comments. References to archives as given by Walther and Czelinski should always be rechecked.
14. Pierre-Alexandre was “brigadier” of the “Stoppa” regiment in the French army and Administrator-General for Switzerland in France. See Pinard, *Chronologie historique-militaire*, vol. 4, 305–6; Girard, *Histoire abrégée*, vol. 3, 103–10; Galiffe, *Notices généalogiques*, vol. 3, 465 and Cohen, “Le Séjour” no. 6, 61.
15. Louis XIV wanted to break down the Dutch Republic’s supremacy mainly for his own monarchical lust of conquest. See Sonnino, *Louis XIV*, 177 and Troost, *William III*, 71–2.
16. Cf. Hutton, “The Making”.
17. The Triple Alliance, aiming at maintaining equilibrium against the power and aggression of France, agreed to use military force to compel Louis XIV to make a peace with Spain. Charles II also signed the treaty to separate the Netherlands and France. See Westergaard, *The First Triple Alliance*; Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism*, 434–40 and Sheehan, *The Balance of Power*, 40–1.
18. Leopold made a treaty (February 1671) with Holland promising military assistance in the case of war.
19. Cf. Troost, *William III*, 72.
20. In the “Perpetual Edict” (1667), the States of Holland had abolished the Stadholderate and the combination of the offices of the Stadholderate and Field Marshall of the army. William was to be appointed Field Marshall at the age of 23 in 1673 (cf. Troost, *William III*, 52–3 and 58–9).
21. Troost, *William III*, 71
22. Prud’homme van Reine, *Rechterhand van Nederland*.
23. Cf. *Notulen*; Nimwegen, *The Dutch Army*, 434–5. Restoration started during the French occupation in the summer of 1672.
24. Since these strongholds were heavily neglected, the Dutch focus was to move troops along the IJssel Line to thwart a French attack, not on the Rhine.
25. *Notulen*, 110.
26. Troost, *William III*, 73–4.
27. Young, *International Politics*, 131–2.
28. Panhuysen, *De ware vrijheid*, 422.
29. De Witt was attacked on 21/22 June 1672 (cf. *Notulen*, 120 and Panhuysen, *De ware vrijheid*, 425–6). He was replaced by Nicolaas Vivien (1631–92). His duties in The Hague were taken over by the States secretary, Gaspar Fagel (1634–88).
30. Troost, *William III*, 75–6.
31. Booth, “Dagelijksche aantekeningen” 15 and Martens, “Verhaal” 233–5.
32. Béguin, *Les Princes de Condé*, 395.
33. Van Velthuysen corresponded with Spinoza, Leibniz, and van Leeuwenhoek, and introduced the political philosophy of Hobbes in the Netherlands. He refuted the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* in early 1671. Spinoza corresponded with him on a bruit that he was about to rebut his adversaries (1675.[09–12].00, Ep. 69; Spinoza, *Opera*, vol. 4, 300–1. Van der Dussen, Hamel and Van Velthuysen were

- ejected from the magistracy on 27 April 1674 in the Orangist “Regeringsreglement” (Government Regulation).
34. Jessurun-Ten Dam Ham, *Utrecht in 1672 en 1673*, 48.
  35. Booth, “Dagelijksche aantekeningen” 15 and Martens, “Verhaal” 1672, 236–7.
  36. Booth, “Dagelijksche aantekeningen” 16.
  37. Jessurun-Ten Dam Ham, *Utrecht in 1672 en 1673*, 60.
  38. Steenbakkers, Toubert and Van de Ven, “A Clandestine Notebook” esp. 239–41.
  39. Troost, *William III*, 77.
  40. *Notulen*, 199.
  41. Panhuysen, *De ware vrijheid*, 423–62 and Reinders, *Printed Pandemonium*.
  42. NNBW, vol. 3, cols. 1450–3 and Rowen, *John de Witt*.
  43. On the plot see Panhuysen, *De ware vrijheid*, 440–5.
  44. *Notulen*, 244–7.
  45. One pamphlet delivers a “prefiguration” of how their bodies were to be mutilated. See Stern, “Poison in Print,” 133; Bruin, “Political Pamphleteering” and Reinders, *Printed Pandemonium*.
  46. In the pamphlets the lynching was portrayed as a ritual “tyrannicide”. See Stern, “Poison in Print”.
  47. Prud’homme van Reine, *Moordenaars van Jan de Witt*. For the murder and its prologue see *Notulen*, 284–8 and Panhuysen, 2005, 453–62.
  48. *Notulen*, 289 and Troost, *William III*, 75. Fagel worked as a judge’s clerk for the States General. He was appointed Grand Pensionary on 23 August 1672. See NNBW, vol. 3, col. 382 and Edwards, “An Unknown Statesman?”
  49. The letters were reportedly addressed to the Swiss theology professor Hommel in reply to a letter of 15 April 1673 (Stoupe, *La Religion*, 3). See Braun, *La Véritable religion*, sig. \*\*3r.
  50. Feer, “Un Pamphlet” 80.
  51. Pfister, “Author and Work”.
  52. Van Neercassel to Bona, 25 July 1673. Letter preserved in Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Ms. AF IX 57. Cf. Benitez, “Le Jeu de tolerance”.
  53. The misleading name “Pierre Marteaux” (together with the fictitious printing place Cologne) was used by printers working in Holland and Germany. See Groenenboom-Draai, *De Rotterdamse Woelreus*, 144–6.
  54. *La Véritable religion*. Braun was professor of Hebrew and theology in Groningen. See Steenbakkers, “Johannes Braun” and DDP, vol. 2, 151–2.
  55. See note 49. *La Religion* was also refuted in *Gründlicher Bericht*.
  56. Van Gelderen, “Turning Swiss?” 152.
  57. *Ibid.*, 151–2.
  58. For Stoupe’s remark see *La Religion*, Letter 5, 106–7 (Cologne version).
  59. Van Gelderen, “Turning Swiss?” 153.
  60. Je ne croirois pas vous avoir parlé de toutes les Religions de ce país si je ne vous avois dit un mot d’un homme illustre & sçavant qui à ce que l’on m’a asseuré a un grand nombre des Sectateurs qui sont entierement attâchez à ses sentimens. C’est un homme qui est né Juif qui s’appelle Spinoza qui n’a point abjuré la Religion des Juifs ni embrassé la Religion Chrétienne: aussy il est tres-meschant Juif & n’est pas meilleur Chrétien. Il a fait depuis quelques années un livre en latin dont le titre est *Tractatus Theologo Politicus* dans lequel il semble avoir pour but principal de détruire toutes les Religions & particulièrement la Judaïque & la Chrétienne & d’introduire l’Atheisme, le Libertinage, et la liberté de toutes les religions.  
Stoupe, *La Religion* (Cologne version), Letter 3, 65.
  61. The Supreme Court of Holland, Zeeland and West-Friesland officially banned *Tractatus theologico-politicus* on 19 July 1674 alongside with Hobbes’s *Leviathan* (1651), Meyer’s *Philosophia S. Scripturae interpres* and *Bibliotheca fratrum Polonorum*.
  62. Van de Ven, “Spinoza’s Life and Time” 25–6.
  63. Spinoza lived in The Hague from September 1669/mid-February 1671 to 21 February 1677.
  64. Ce Spinoza vit dans ce país; Il a demeuré quelque temps à la Haye ou il estoit visité par les Esprits Curieux & mesme par les filles de qualité qui se picquent d’avoir de l’Esprit au dessus de leur Sexes. Ses Sectateurs n’osent pas se découvrir par ce que son livre renverse absolument les fondemens de toutes les Religions, & qu’il a esté condamné par un Decret Public des Estats & qu’on a deffendue de le vendre, bien qu’on ne laisse pas de le vendre publiquement. Entre tous les Theologiens qui sont dans ce país il ne s’en est trouvé aucun qui ait osé écrire contre les opinions que cet Auteur avance dans son traité. J’en suis d’autant surpris que l’Auteur faisant paroître une grande connaissance de la

langue Hebraïque, de toutes les Coûtumes des Juifs & de la Philosophie, les Theologiens ne sçauoient dire que ce livre ne merite point qu’ils prennent la peine de le refuter, s’ils continuent dans le silence on ne pourra s’empêcher de dire ou qu’ils n’ont point de charité en laissant sans réponse un livre si pernicieux, ou qu’ils approuvent les sentimens de cet Auteur, ou qu’ils n’ont pas le courage & la force de les combattre.

Stoupe, *La Religion* (Cologne version), 66–7, Letter 3.

65. Condé came to Utrecht with Luxembourg on 31 April 1673 and stayed there until 25 July (*Journal*, 191; Booth, “Dagelijksche aantekeningen,” 108). The Prince held court at the Janskerkhof (cf. Booth, “Dagelijksche aantekeningen” 106; *Journal*, 19).
66. Nadler, *Spinoza. A Life*, 334.
67. Condé to Monsieur de Ricous, 28 February 1685. Cf. Benitez, “Le Jeu de tolerance” 437.
68. Copenhagen, Royal Library, Special Collections, MS Thott 1266 4°. Autograph letter signed (see Fig. 1). Undated, no place or address. One leaf. 12 lines, separate signature. “Viro Clarissimo//Dno. Graevio” (back cover).
69. The date can be inferred from a letter by Pierre-Alexandre Stoupe to Condé of 28 July 1673.
70. Vir Clarissime. Crastinâ die loquar cum Celssissimo principe de Spinoza; sed non credo Celsitudinem suam velle suo nomine eum invitare ut veniat. Si aliqui qui eum vocant nominandi sunt, potes Vir Clarissime me, et D. Fequierem, et ego spondeo me viaticum et omnes alios sumptus suppeditaturum. Literae etiam salvi-conductus a Celssissimo principe procurabuntur, et ad ipsum mittentur. Modo etiam literas salvi-conductus obtineat, nullum timere debet periculum. Viam quam inire poterit Vir Clarissimus ipsi indicabit. Vale vir Clarissimus. Tibi addictissimus J.B. Stoupe. (New transcription from the original letter).
71. The Amsterdam Burgomasters wrote (4 September 1673) to Fagel that they were informed by the “governor” (Pierre-Alexandre) Stoupe about an alleged plot to kill Koenraad van Beuningen (1622–93). In another letter (2 January 1673), they refer to “a Bernese who keeps a large correspondence with some French inhabitants of The Hague” (cf. Cohen, “Le Séjour” no. 6, 71). Johannes Colerus (1647–1707) claims that Stoupe and Spinoza exchanged letters, but of this there is no certainty (Colerus, *Korte*, 158).
72. Magalotti, commander in the “régiment Royal-Italien,” took Ameide from the Dutch in 1673. See De Fresnel, *Un Régiment*, 690–1.
73. “J’ai renvoyé au colonnel Amama le passeport de M. Stoupe, et luy ay mandé que, quand il voudra descendre (ainsi que je feré de tous ceux qui auront des passeports), qu’il le fasse.” Magalotti to Condé, 1 June 1673; quoted in Cohen, “Le Séjour” no. 6, 70. That Ameide is meant, can be gathered from the comment by Cohen.
74. Booth, “Dagelijksche aantekeningen” 88 (12 February 1673).
75. Booth also went to Holland via Gorinchem: “31 [June]. I travelled to Holland. 8 [July]. I travelled from The Hague to Gorcum [Gorinchem]. 16 [July]. I returned from Holland” (Booth, “Dagelijksche aantekeningen” 114).
76. Date according to the Gregorian calendar.
77. “Le nommé Spinoza, qui est venu de La Haye, à la prière de mon frère, luy a dit que le s<sup>r</sup> de Montbas, qui avoit été condamné au mois de novembre passé par la sentence du Conseil de guerre, mardy dernier avoit été pendu en effigie.” 28 July 1673, quoted in Cohen, “Le Séjour” no. 6, 70.
78. Montbas was the son-in-law of Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) and had connections with William III. In 1661, he entered a French infantry regiment serving in the States army. See NNBW, vol. 8, cols. 48–52.
79. Booth, “Dagelijksche aantekeningen” 25.
80. Cf. *Journal*, 1674, 39.
81. 1673.12.14, Ep 49. See Spinoza, *Opera* (Gebhardt edition, 1925), vol. 4, 238.
82. Morales (*fl.* 1673–1715) provided the account to the Pierre Desmaizeaux (1666?–1745) in [early 1706], who published it in a review (of Colerus’s 1705 biography) in *Mémoires du trevoux* in May 1706. Reedited by Bayle (1647–1706): “Lettre CCLXXXII. A Mr. \*\*\* (Rotterdam, April 1706)” (*Lettres de Mr. Bayle* (1729), vol. 3). Morales was born in Cairo the son of a Jewish physician who settled in Amsterdam. He is reported as having converted to Roman Catholicism (Saint-Évremond, *Œuvres*, vol. 5, 274–5).
83. Buisnière’s testimony [1706] was printed in the *Mémoires du trevoux*, May 1706 (see 79) and reedited in *Lettres de Mr. Bayle* (Amsterdam, 1714); Document 6. The physician and anatomist Buisnière (c.1655–1739) was apothecary of Condé. See ODNB.
84. Condé to Le Tellier, 28 July 1673 (cf. Duc d’Aumale, *Histoires*, vol. 7, 399–400). Condé’s departure from Utrecht is also confirmed in another letter by Pierre-Alexandre Stoupe to Condé: “Depuis vostre depart,

- Monseigneur, nous n'avons point eu de nouvelles de Hollande [ ... ].” [Since your departure, Sir, we have had no tidings from Holland [ ... ].], 28 July 1673; quoted in Cohen, “Le Séjour” no. 6, 69).
85. 1671.02.17, Ep 44: B. de Spinoza, *Opera* (Gebhardt edition, 1925), vol. 4, 227–9.
86. Van der Spijck (*fl.* 1667–1715) worked as a decorative painter in The Hague. See Buijsen et al., 347. Spinoza relocated to his house at the Paviljoensgracht (nos 72–4) between 5 September 1669 and early February 1671.
87. Van Utrecht wedergekeert had hy byna het grauw op den hals gekregen, 't welk hem voor een Spion aanzag, en mompelde als of hy met de Franschen over Staats en Landszaken Correspondeerde. De Huisheer hierover zeer bedugt zynde, en vrezende, dat men hem wel met geweld in zyn huis mogt vallen, om Spinoza te zoeken, vertroosten hy hem, zeggende; Weest daar niet bekommert om, ik ben onschuldig, en daar veele onder de Grooten, die wel weeten waarom ik naar Utrecht ben geweest; zoo haast als gy maar eenigen overlast aan uw deur verneemt, zoo zal ik tot de menschen uitgaan, al zoudense met my handelen, als met de goede Heeren de Witten. Ik ben een opregt Republiquain, en 't beste van dezelve is myn oogmerk. Colerus, *Korte, dog waarachtige levensbeschryving*, 160.

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## Appendix

## Documents: Contemporary Accounts of Spinoza’s Visit to Utrecht

1. J.T. Braun, *La Veritable religion des hollandois* (Amsterdam, 1675), 164.

Car l’on m’a assuré, que le Prince de Condé, à sa sollicitation, l’a fait venir de la Haye à Utrecht, tout exprès pour conferer avec lui, & que Stoupe l’a fort loué, & à vescu fort familiarément avec lui. [Because they have assured me that the Prince of Condé, made him come on his invitation from The Hague to Utrecht explicitly to confer with him, and that Stoupe had much praised him and was quite close with him.]

2. [P. Coste], *Histoire de Louis de Bourbon II* (Cologne, 1693), vol. 2, 538.

Le Prince étant tombé malade à Utrecht, fut obligé de garder la chambre plusieurs jours, & se fit un plaisir un jouïr, durant ce temps-là, de la conversation des habiles gens qui étoient alors dans cette Ville. On dit même qu’il eût la curiosité de voir Spinoza, & qu’il le fit venir de la Haye à Utrecht tout exprès pour conferer avec luy.’ [The Prince fell ill in Utrecht and was obliged to stay in his room for several days. He did himself the pleasure to enjoy himself during this period by conversing with prominent people who were in this town. They even say that he was curious to see Spinoza, and that he made him come from The Hague to Utrecht expressly to speak with him.]

The English translation of the book (*The Life of Lewis of Bourbon, Late prince of Condé. Digested into Annals* (London, 1693), 173–4) has the following addition (source unknown):

It was reported that he was desirous to see *Spinoza*. *That if he would follow him into France, he would put him in a way to live comfortably to the Principles of Theology; that Paris neither wanted fine Women, nor Pleasures; although he look’d upon him as a Deist, and a Man who had no Religion, he was charm’d with the Conversation he had with him.*

3. P. Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, 3 vols (Rotterdam, 1697), vol. 2, 1088.

Feu Mr. le Prince de Condé qui étoit presque aussi savant que courageux, & qui ne haïssoit pas la conversation des Esprits forts, souhaita de voir Spinoza, & lui procura les passeports nécessaires pour le voyage d’Utrecht. [The late lord the Prince of Condé, who was almost as wise as he was courageous and did not disdain to converse with strong spirits, wished to see Spinoza and arranged for him the necessary passports for the journey to Utrecht.]

4. P. Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, 3 vols (Rotterdam, 1702, augm. edn.), vol. 3, 2772, note f.

M’étant informé plus exactement de cette affaire, j’ai appris que le Prince de Condé fut de retour à Utrecht avant que Spinoza en partît, & qu’il et très-vrai qu’il conféra avec cet auteur. [I have informed myself in detail about this affair, and I have learned that the Prince of Condé returned to Utrecht before Spinoza left there, and it is very true that he conferred with that author.]

5. J. Colerus, *Korte, dog waarachtige levensbeschryving* (Amsterdam, 1705), 158.

Dezen Heer Stoupa nu; hebbende verscheyde brieven met Spinoza gewisselt, verzogt hem op zekeren tyd van ’t jaar 1673. om naar Utregt te komen, alzoo zyn Hoogheid de Prins van Condé, te dier tyd de Landvoogdyschap van voornoemde plaats bekleedende hem wel eens wenschte te spreken, met verzekering, dat gemelde Prins hem by zyn Koning een jaarlykze Pensioen zoude te weeg brengen, indien hy slegts de eene of d’andere van zyn Schriften aan hem wilde opdragen: ten dien einde wierd hem een vrygeleits-brief toegezonden, en hy trok daarna toe. [Now about this Mr Stoupe. After the exchange of several letters with

Spinoza, [he] invited him at a certain time in the year 1673 to come to Utrecht, especially since his Highness the Prince of Condé, then the governor of the aforementioned place wished to speak with him. He assured him that the said Prince might procure from his King a yearly pension, provided that he would be willing to dedicate one of his writings to him: with that purpose, they sent him a letter of safe conduct, and after that he went there.]

6. J. Colerus, *Korte, dog waarachtige levensbeschryving* (Amsterdam, 1705), 159.

[...] maar de nog levende vrienden, daar hy te dier tyd by gewoonnd heeft, zeggen my, dat se van hem, 't huis gekomen zynde, vernomen hebben, doe hy den Prins van Condé niet gesproken hadde, alzoo dezelve eenige dagen, eer hy naer Utregt quam, vertrokken was, dog dat hy met de Heer Stoupa redenen gewisselt hebbende [...]. [but the friends still alive [van der Spijck and his wife] with whom he lodged in those days, tell me that they have heard from him upon his return that he had not spoken to the Prince of Condé, because he had left some days before he set out to Utrecht, but that he had conferred with Mr Stouppe.]

7. Testimony of Henriquez Morales. In: P. Bayle, *Lettres de Mr. Bayle*, 3 vols (Amsterdam, 1714), vol. 3, 1081–2, note 5.

Comme Mr. Morelli [...] avoit connu Spinoza, & m'en avoit dit plusieurs particularitez, je le consultai sur le fait dont il s'agit, & voici ce qu'il me repondit: J'ai connu très-particulièrement Mr. Spinoza. Il m'a dit plus d'une fois qu'étant à Utrecht avec Mr. le Prince de Condé, ce Prince après s'être entretenu avec lui, lui fit de grandes instances pour l'engager de le suivre à Paris, & d'y rester auprès de sa personne, ajoutant qu'outre sa Protection sur laquelle il pouvoit compter, il y auroit logement, bouche à cour, & mille écus de pension: à quoi Spinoza répondit, qu'il suplioit son Altesse de considerer que tout son pouvoir ne seroit pas capable de le soutenir contre la bigoterie de la Cour; d'autant plus que son nom étoit déjà fort décrié par le *Traité Théologique & Politique*; & qu'il n'y auroit point de sureté pour lui, ni de satisfaction pour son Altesse, les Prêtres etant ennemis jurez des personnes qui pensent & qui écrivent librement sur la Religion: mais qu'il étoit prêt d'accompagner son Altesse dans les Armées, pour le delasser, s'il en étoit capable, de ses travaux guerriers. Mr. le Prince gouta ces raisons, & le remercia. [Like Mr Morelli [...] he] knew Spinoza and told me various details. I consulted him on that fact and this is what he answered me: I [Morelli] knew particularly Mr Spinoza quite well. He has told me on more than one occasion that when he was in Utrecht he met Mr the Prince of Condé and after he discoursed with him, this Prince made great efforts to engage him to follow him to Paris and to stay in his company. He added to this that in addition to his protection, on which he could count, he would have lodgings close to the court, and a pension of a thousand ecu. To that Spinoza answered that he pleaded his Highness to consider that all his powers would not protect him against the bigotry of the Court. His name had already been strongly decried by the *Traité Théologique & Politique* and that therein was no surety for him or satisfaction for his Highness, because the priests, being hostile, judge all people who think and write freely about religion. But he was ready to accompany his Highness in his armies, to entertain him if he would be able to do so and distract him from his military duties. Mr the Prince approved these reasons and thanked him.]

8. Testimony of Paul Buisnière. In P. Bayle, *Lettres de Mr. Bayle*, 3 vols (Amsterdam, 1714), vol. 3, 1081–2, note 5.

J'ai aussi consulté Mr. Buisniere, qui étoit alors à Utrecht en qualité de Chirurgien de l'Hôpital de l'Armée: il m'a assuré qu'il avoit vû plusieurs fois, Spinoza entrer dans l'Apartment de Mr. le Prince de Condé. Ainsi, il n'y a plus lieu de douter que ce Prince ne soit effectivement entretenu avec ce Philosophe. [I have also consulted Mr Buisniere, who was also in Utrecht in the capacity of physician to the hospital of the army. He assured me that he had seen Spinoza entering the apartment of Mr the Prince of Condé several times. So, there can be no room to doubt that the Prince had actually conversed with this philosopher.]

9. [J.M. Lucas], *La Vie et l'esprit de Mr Benoit de Spinoza* (Amsterdam, n. d. (1719)), 63.

[Le Prince de Condé l'invite à lui rendre visite.] Sa renommée s'étant tellement répandue, que l'on en parloit dans les Cercles, le Prince de Condé, qui étoit à l'Utrecht au commencement des dernières Guerres, lui envoya un sauf-conduit avec une Lettre obligeante, pour l'inviter à l'aller voir. Spinoza avoit l'esprit trop bien tourné, & savoit trop ce qu'il devoit aux Personnes d'un si haut rang, pour ignorer en cette rencontre ce qu'il devoit à Son Altesse. Mais ne quittant jamais sa solitude que pour y rentrer bientôt après, un voyage de quelques semaines le tenoit en suspens. Enfin après quelques remises, ses Amis le déterminèrent à ce mettre en chemin; pendant quoi un Ordre du Roi de France aiant appelé le Prince ailleurs, M. de Luxembourg qui le reçut en son absence, lui fit mille caresses, & l'assura de la bienveillance de Son Altesse. [The Prince of Condé invites him to pay him a visit.] Because his fame was so widespread that they spoke about him in the circles, the Prince of Condé, who was in Utrecht at the beginning of the last wars, sent him a letter of safe conduct with an obliging letter inviting him to see him. Spinoza had a very bright mind and was well aware that he was obliged to obey persons of such a high rank. That he must not refuse that encounter and that he had to go his Highness. Because he never left his solitude without returning there soon afterwards, he kept postponing the journey for several weeks. Finally, after several postponements, his friends made him undertake the journey. In the interim, an order of the King of France summoned the Prince elsewhere and he was received by Mr de Luxembourg in his absence who warmly welcomed him and assured him of the benevolence of his Highness.]

