

Museum Het Spinozahuis

Factsheet 'Caute'

Conclusie:

- Caute was het motto op het was-stempel van Spinoza
- Niet bekend vanaf wanneer hij het lakzegel gebruikte
- Niet bekend is of Spinoza een zegelring of een zegelstempel gebruikte
- Vrij algemeen wordt aangenomen dat het motto caute een uiting was van behoedzaamheid en voorzichtigheid; er is ook een tegengeluid

Spinoza a life 2nd edition Steve Nadler: Pag 284

Spinoza was, by nature, a very cautious individual – his signet ring was inscribed with the motto Caute, "Caution!" – and he was hesitant about revealing the more profound and potentially troublesome aspects of his doctrines and their theological implications to people outside of the immediate circle of friends who had been reading the manuscript drafts all along. Even Oldenburg – who had been entrusted in 1661 with only a cryptic taste of Spinoza's ideas on God and substance101 – was now allowed nothing more than a partial explanation of the work's metaphysical theses. In a letter from around November 1665, Spinoza responded to Oldenburg's request to explain further to him and Boyle "how each part of Nature accords with its whole, and the manner of its coherence with other parts." Spinoza replied at length about how body and mind are parts of infinite extension and infinite thought, respectively, and thus "parts of Nature," but without mentioning (or even hinting) that extension and thought are attributes of God.102

Spinoza life and legacy; J Israel

17.1 Rivalry with England
At the peak of his creativity as a philosopher but avoiding any move towards open confrontation with the forces of the status quo, guided by his maxim "caute," Spinoza felt intensely engaged with everything transpiring around him but also daunted, he confided to Oldenburg, by the formidable barriers and difficulties obstructing his philosophical project.

29.iii Once the TTP appeared, in early 1670, and word got around that Spinoza was its author, the role of "caute!" in Spinoza's life apparently receded. It still mattered greatly not to be

caught propagating, or putting his name on anything in print that would generally be deemed blasphemous and could get him hauled, like the Koerbaghs in 1668, before the magistrates. Becoming something of a marked man, attracting local hostility and soon fierce attacks in the press, doubtless further heightened his propensity to reclusiveness, to shutting himself indoors for long periods. But this shift during the last six years or so of his life also created a situation in which there was less reason to restrain expression of his views whenever minor confrontations and serious conversation ensued.

31 Denying Supernatural
In his published work, in the 1670s, notably the TTP but also by implication the Ethics and in his correspondence, Spinoza, like the Koerbaghs, firmly indicates the nonexistence of spirits, ghosts, witchcraft, and apparitions of a supernatural character while avoiding drawing attention to or emphasizing his stance,8 a clear indication of his exercise of "caute."

33.iii
Meanwhile, the TTP had from the outset always been officially condemned and suppressed. Had the Dutch version actually appeared in 1671, the ramifications and repercussions for all concerned, given that the author's name was widely suspected, and the translator's and publisher's not too difficult to uncover, might well have been more drastic than anything seen thus far. The likeliest explanation for Spinoza's intervention at this particular point, through Jelles, was that the fury of the academic reaction and the Reformed consistories, over the last year, led Spinoza and his closest allies to realize that it was just too risky for now to go on with their plan. Contrary to the Spinoza circle's original strategy, during 1671 "caute" led to the plans to publish Glazemaker's translation being suspended, leaving what was probably the manuscript copy the printers were using (surviving today in the Royal Library at The Hague), only partly

Spinozablog
Meestal zie je het 'caute' in de zegelring van Spinoza vertaald worden als: 'behoedzaam', 'voorzichtig', of 'wees voorzichtig'. Hoe vaak heb ik niet kunnen lezen dat Spinoza hiermee zichzelf als het ware aanspoorde om toch vooral voorzichtig te zijn. Je komt allerlei speculatieve beschouwingen tegen (hier een van vele)

Maar moeten we er nu echt van uit gaan dat Spinoza met zijn onafhankelijke geest als een angsthaas zich een zegel liet maken, alleen maar om daarmee zichzelf tot voorzichtigheid te manen? Zal hij met deze term niet de latijnse uitdrukking voor het Aristotelische begrip phronesis in z'n zegelring hebben laten aanbrengen? Phronesis wordt soms vertaald als 'praktische wijsheid' en soms als 'voorzichtigheid' of 'omzichtigheid'. Ook: Phronèsis (griech.), Einsicht, Klugheit [hier]