

Theory and History of Ontology (www.ontology.co) by Raul Corazzon | e-mail: rc@ontology.co

The Philosophy of Descartes. A List of Bibliographical Tools in English

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The Philosophy of René Descartes

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Ancient biographies

1. Boxhorn, Marcus Zuerius. 1670. *A Summary or Compendium of the Life of the Most Famous Philosopher Renatus Descartes, written originally in Latin by Peter Borellus ... ; to which is also added an epitome of his life by Marcus Zurius Boxbornius* London: George Palmer.
Translation of Pierre Borel, *Vitae Renati Cartesii, Summi philosophi compendium*, Paris, 1656.

Epitome by Marcus Zuerius Boxhorn (1612-1653) pp. 58-107.

"This Translation, or rather Collection, out of Peter Borellus, Physician to the French King; and Marcus Zurius Boxhornius Historiographer in the University of Leyden, presents you with the Life of the Famous Monsieur Descartes, giving you an account of his Parentage and Education, during his Minority, as well as the Course and Method of his Study, in his Riper Years; together, with an exact Catalogue of all his Manuscripts, which were found at Stockholm in Sweden, after his Death; and the names of all his Books that have been Published, with the Places where they were Printed; as also the several Epitaphs that were bestowed upon him by his Contemporaries, after his Decease. If this Epitome receive a kind entertainment; 'tis very probable (when the Author, according to promise, exposed a larger Treatise to public View, concerning this Subject) that it may be also taught to speak English, for the satisfaction of those who want the advantage of the Latin, and are only skilled in our Mother-Tongue. This Compendious Discourse of the Life of so Eminent a Person, and great a Light in the Firmament of Learning, is all that we can furnish you with at present, till we meet with an opportunity to gratify you with a more Complete Relation in a larger Volume."(orthography slightly modernized)

Pierre Bayle dedied to Boxhorn the article "Zuerius Borxhonijs" in his *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, fifth edition, Amsterdam, 1740, vol. IV, pp. 560-568.

Reprinted in Roger Ariew, Daniel Garber (eds.), *Descartes in Seventeenth-Century England*, Bristol: Thoemmes, 2002, vol. 3: *Biographies of Descartes: Pierre Borel, A Summary or Compendium, of the Life of the Most Famous Philosopher Renatus Descartes* (1670); Marcus Zurius Boxhorn, *Epitome of the Life of Descartes*, in: Pierre Borel, *A Summary or Compendium, of the Life of the Most Famous Philosopher Renatus Descartes* (1670); Adrien Baillet, *The Life of Monsieur Des Cartes* (1693).

2. Baillet, Adrien. 1693. *The life of Monsieur Des Cartes containing the history of his philosophy and works: as also the most remarkable things that befell him during the whole course of his life*. London: R. Simpson.
English translation of Adrien Baillet, *La vie de mr. Des-Cartes. Réduite en abregé*, Paris, 1692.
3. Sebba, Gregor. 1982. "Adrien Baillet and the Genesis of His *Vie de M. Des-Cartes*." In *Problems of Cartesianism*, edited by Lennon, Thomas M., Nicholas, John M. and Davis, John W., 9-60. Kingston & Montreal: McGill's Queens University Press.
"The story of the *Vie de M. Des-Cartes* begins with the unexpected death of Descartes in Stockholm in 1650, when the French ambassador Chanut his friend and host, took possession of the philosopher's unpublished manuscripts. He later turned them over to Claude Clerselier who published three volumes of correspondence, with enough manuscript left over to make one more. At his death in 1684 he left his material to Abbé Legrand with a sum of money for publishing this volume. (94) Instead of doing so, Legrand planned a new complete edition of the works and correspondence of Descartes.
A Life was to be added presumably a relatively brief one since it was to be part of this edition, Adam has described Legrand's editorial work in detail, using the information given in Baillet's preface. Legrand made a thorough and quite successful search for missing correspondence and sought out persons who had known Descartes. There is no indication that his biographical work went beyond writing minutes of the information he collected. Legrand seems to have been an excellent, careful editor, but he could never come to an end.
He worked for twenty years, died in 1704, and still nothing had been published. The biography would have shared the fate of Legrand's edition had it not been lifted out of its status as an introductory piece. The idea of making it an independent work cannot have come from Legrand, judging from his way of working. He had no sense for what was urgently needed at the time, or else he would have published Descartes's *inedita* without delay, following them up with the Life of Descartes. There is no doubt that Cartesians of all types kept abreast of Legrand's plans and

work. Unlike Legrand they were not concerned with editorial problems. A new edition including material as yet unknown would be a philosophical event, but the event took its time and the need for action was pressing. Somehow Descartes needed to be disengaged from the theological entanglement he had so carefully avoided in his own lifetime. When, where, and how the answer was found we do not know. But we can say what it was: the germ of an idea, embedded in a technicality. Detach the "Vie de Mr. Descartes" from the "Œuvres de Descartes" and make it a book in its own right, in the language and spirit of the *Discours de la méthode* not of the *Meditationes de prima philosophia*. Taking the biography out of the context of the "Œuvres" changed the concept and function of the proposed life of Descartes. The change made it necessary to find a swifter writer than Legrand." (pp. 48-49)

(...)

"Thanks to Baillet's hints, the pieces begin to fall into place. We know already from Frion that Baillet did the actual writing in "less than a year" before giving the manuscript to the printer at the end of February 1691; since it had to be submitted to the censor, actual writing would have begun between January and March 1690. He was able to complete the writing in such a short time thanks to his systematic way of putting "un peu d'ordre" into the material he had accumulated, so that the writing task consisted chiefly in producing a continuous narrative. The preparation of the material while waiting for information must have taken much longer than the writing itself." (p. 51)

"Perhaps it is not amiss to close with a word about the auteur *malgré lui*. Baillet preserved invaluable texts and information that would have been lost without him, but he preserved them in his own fashion. A thorough study of his style, his manner of translating and paraphrasing, and his scholarship is needed in attempting to reconstruct lost texts for which he is the only source. This requires following his development from the *Jugemens* to the *Vie*. As to his so-called hagiographic bias, we need to quote only one text. It stands in the second volume of the *Vie de Mr. Des-Cartes*, on p. 381. Speaking of Pascal, he says : "... au lieu de borner ses vues à la recherche de tout ce qui peut contribuer à la félicité temporelle de cette vie, comme avoit fait M. Descartes, il s'éleva ... jusqu'à celle des vérités de notre Religion, où M. Descartes ne s'était jamais jugé capable d'atteindre." It is as simple as that. One cannot rise to the "verities of our Religion" without putting the "temporal felicity of this life" down where it belongs. To the peasant scholar from Beauvais this was an indisputable fact, but he had enough discipline to make his confession of faith where nobody would look for it, instead of allowing his religious radicalism to distort his portrait of Descartes." (pp. 59-60)

(94) See Adam's summary in AT 1 XLII ff. and Baillet, *Vie de M. Des-Cartes*, I :XXII.

Adam's judgment of the value of Baillet's work is still the best we have (AT, I :XLV).

The mass of detail piled up by Baillet "sans faire grâce aux lecteurs de tant de menus faits" has become invaluable to the modern historian because of "ce souci minutieux du réel qui caractérise Baillet". This is a very different tone from that of Ménage, La Monnoye, and Boschet, but Baillet had learned meticulous scholarship in the hard school of the *Jugemens*. He now knew what to guard against.

Modern biographies

1. Haldane, Elizabeth Sanderson. 1905. *Descartes. His Life and Times*. London: J. Murray.
Reprint Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1992.
"Any Life of Descartes is, of course, mainly dependent upon his very considerable correspondence, principally written and framed with a view to future publication.

Of Descartes' *Letters* as MM. Adam and Tannery tell us, the first important edition is that of Clerselier, in three volumes, published at Paris by Charles Angot in 1657-67. Clerselier had at his disposal Descartes' manuscripts, copies of many of his letters and notes, taken by him to Sweden and enumerated in a catalogue made just after his death. These had been given to Chanut, the French ambassador in Sweden, and Descartes' great friend, who contemplated publishing them. This task, however, he handed over to Clerselier, his brother-in-law, and likewise the author's friend. The packet was duly dispatched to France, which, after many delays, it reached in 1653. It travelled by Rouen, and was entrusted to a vessel which made its way to Paris by river. Unluckily, near Paris, the boat was wrecked, and for three days the precious manuscripts remained submerged in water. Wonderful to relate, "by Divine permission," the papers were recovered some distance off, and were duly hung up in various rooms to dry; but since this was done by unintelligent servants, much confusion resulted, as can easily be imagined. (*) In endeavouring to rearrange the manuscripts, the greatest difficulty was experienced; and more especially was this so in reference to the *Letters*. The papers, all of which had not been used, were finally bequeathed by Clerselier, in 1684, to Legrand, who assisted Baillet in writing his *Life of Descartes*. Baillet and Legrand set about their work of writing the *Life* with the greatest vigour. Legrand, not content with handing over to Baillet Descartes' manuscripts and Clerselier's memoirs, made it his business, Baillet tells us, to go to see everyone in Paris from whom he might receive the slightest help. He wrote to Brittany, Touraine, Languedoc, Holland, Sweden, and Germany, in order to interest his friends and relations in the project, and recovered certain communications from Regius of Utrecht, and the greater part of those from Descartes to the Abbé Picot, to Clerselier, to Tobie d'André; as also some from Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia, Chanut, etc. Baillet also acknowledges the help received from Descartes' nephews, M. de Kerleau and M. de Chavagne (both Descartes' brothers being dead), and also from his niece, M.lle Catherine Descartes. These provided family papers regarding the philosopher's ancestry and private life, while the sons of Clerselier and Chanut supplied all that they could of what was useful in their fathers' manuscripts. M. le Vasseur, son of Seigneur d'Etioles, the relative, friend, and host of Descartes while in Paris, supplied what material he could, as did many others whose names Baillet gratefully quotes in his Preface." (*Prefatory note*, pp. VIII-IX)

(...)

For a *Life of Descartes*, besides the *Letters* and the most interesting bit of autobiography in the "Method," the *Life* of Baillet is naturally the source from which all others have been derived, and its value is largely due to its simplicity and accuracy. Baillet tells us that he aimed at saying what he had to say simply, telling just what his subject thought, saw, and did without adornment, and this is exactly what he accomplished. He does not aspire to criticise, but tries to tell his tale with exactitude and fidelity, not indulging in over-much laudation nor concealing faults where present. Baillet has no false estimation of his own powers. He regrets deeply that Chanut, who knew Descartes so well, and who was, in his eyes, so well fitted for the work, did not see his way to undertake the writing of Descartes' life. Failing Chanut, Baillet would have liked Clerselier to undertake the task. Clerselier knew Descartes; he had the material and leisure necessary, besides the ability, but he did not do more than collect and preserve his writings. The Queen of Sweden, seeing that these two refused, endeavoured to procure the services of Père Poisson of the Oratory, who had written on the "Method." Clerselier offered to assist him as far as material was concerned, but the plan fell through." (pp. X-XI)

(...)

"The only English life of Descartes of any importance is the excellent little book by Professor [John Pentland] Mahaffy, [*Descartes*] published as one of Blackwood's Philosophical Classics in 1880. Norman Smith's *Studies in Cartesianism*, 1903, is an acute criticism of his philosophy; and there is, of course, besides, the well-known article on *Cartesianism* in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, by the Master of Balliol." (p. XI)

- (*) *Vie de M. Descartes* par Adrien Baillet, 1691, vol. II., p. 428.
2. Shea, William R. 1991. *The Magic of Numbers and Motion. The Scientific Career of René Descartes*. Canton (MA): Science History Publications.
 Contents: Preface IX-X; 1. The young man from Poitou 1; 2. The early physics 15; 3. The Mathematical Breakthrough 35; 4. The Quest for musical harmony 69; 5. Descartes and the Rosicrucian enlightenment 93; 6. The Search for method and Rules for Direction 121; 7. The Optical triumph (1625-1628) 149; 8. Metaphysical Meditations 165; 9. Unweaving the rainbow 191; 10. The Action of Light 227; 11. Matter and motion in a new world 251; 12. The Laws and rules of motion 279; 13. Publish or perish 317; Conclusion 341; Appendix: Chronology or Descartes' life 351; Bibliography 355; index 365-371.
 "My goal has been to follow Descartes in his journey, and to provide a comprehensive, but by no means exhaustive, survey of his scientific career from his student days at the Jesuit College of La Flèche to his departure for Sweden where he had been summoned by Queen Christina. I have tried to follow Descartes' injunction to be clear (but not clear at all costs), and I am sanguine enough to hope that the reader will be sufficiently stimulated and intrigued by what he finds in this book to turn to Descartes' own works. I have kept my discussion of mathematics in Chapter Three as simple as possible, but anyone who wishes to skip this section at first reading has not only my sympathy, but the assurance that the gist is summarized in a few pages at the end. A chronology of the main events of Descartes' life will be found in the Appendix.
 My work could not have been undertaken without the pioneering efforts of Gaston Milhaud (*Descartes Savant*, 1921), Paul Mouy (*Le Développement de la Physique Cartésienne*, 1934), and J. F. Scott, (*The Scientific Work of René Descartes*, 1952)." (pp. IX-X).
 (...)
 "We have seen how Descartes called upon God to vouchsafe the reliability of our knowledge of the external world. Likewise he appealed to the simplicity and immutability of God's action to justify his laws of nature. The Second Law, for instance, "only depends on God conserving each thing by his continuous action, hence at the very instant that he conserves it. It so happens that among motions, only straight motion is entirely simple and such that its nature is comprised in an instant." (25) I believe that it is in passages such as these that we gain our best insight into Descartes' deeply entrenched belief in the basic unity of science, metaphysics, and natural theology. Whatever change is brought about in the world, it is caused by mechanical action, but this does not make it less marvelous. God implants simple and self-evident notions of matter and motion in the human mind at the very instant that he creates it. Likewise God produces and sustains the motion of bodies at each and every instant that they are moving. Without these God-given notions, we would be unable to perceive motion, and without God's direct intervention, there would be no motion to be perceived. The magic of numbers and motion is rooted in the transcendental rationality of the Ultimate Mind." (p. 349) (25) *The World*, Chap. 7, p. 45.
3. Gaukroger, Stephen. 1995. *Descartes. An Intellectual Biography*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
 Contents: Chronological Table XIV; Introduction 1; 1. 'A Learned and Eloquent Piety' 15; 2. An Education in Propriety, 1606-1618 38; 3. The Apprenticeship with Beeckman, 1618-1619 68; 4. The Search for Method , 1619-1625 104; 5. The Paris Years, 1625-1628 135; 6. A New Beginning, 1629-1630 187; 7. A New System of the World 1630-1633 226; 8. The Years of Consolidation , 1634-1640 293; 9. The Defence of Natural Philosophy , 1640-1644 354; 10. Melancholia and the Passions, 1643-1650 384; Notes 418; Biographical Sketches 471; Select Bibliography 481; Index 489-499.
 "I have a vivid and happy memory of my first reading of Descartes, for it was with unbounded enthusiasm that I devoured the Discourse on Method, sitting in the shade of a tree in the Borghese Gardens in Rome in the summer of 1970, just before

I started studying philosophy at university. But I cannot honestly say that my enthusiasm was fuelled by my subsequent undergraduate courses on Descartes, which simply followed the trade winds, in an obsessive but completely de-contextualized way, through the tired old questions of the cogito and the foundations for knowledge. So it was that my interest in the early seventeenth century came to be stimulated by Galileo rather than Descartes, and it was to Galileo that I devoted my main attention while a research student at Cambridge in the mid-1970s. While there, however, Gerd Buchdahl and John Schuster revealed to me a different Descartes, a more authentic and vastly more engaging one, whom I only began to explore properly ten years later. It is this Descartes who is the subject of this book, and I warn readers—if ‘warn’ is the right word, as some may breathe a sigh of relief—that it is not the Descartes from whom philosophers have made such a good living for decades that they will find here. But I have not simply set out to write the history of science or cultural history. Descartes is, after all, the figure who stands at the beginning of modern philosophy, just as Plato stands at the beginning of ancient philosophy. While I shall argue that his philosophical achievements are much more intimately linked to his interest in what subsequently have been considered ‘scientific’ questions than is commonly realized, my aim is not thereby to take Descartes out of the realm of philosophy, but rather to throw light on how he did philosophy.

It is with some trepidation that I pursued this goal through the genre of intellectual biography, even though my own early interest in philosophy had been fired by Simone de Beauvoir’s incomparable intellectual autobiography. People read intellectual biographies with different expectations, from the naïve attempt to understand, at a distance as it were, how a ‘great mind’ works, to attempts to model one’s own thought and career on that of someone one admires. Perhaps the most famous example of modelling is Thomas Mann, who evidently tried to mirror in his own intellectual development the stages in Goethe’s intellectual development, although I think there are very many less explicit cases, and that biography generally has played an important role in ‘self-fashioning’ since the nineteenth century. This makes it a rather delicate genre, both from the point of the view of the reader and from that of the writer. Self-fashioning is part of the rationale behind reading, and perhaps behind writing, intellectual biographies, but any self-fashioning will have to be very indirect in the present case. While the thesis of Jacques Le Goff, that modernity did not begin and the Middle Ages did not effectively cease until the French and Industrial Revolutions, is stronger than anything I would wish to argue in this book, I have no doubt that the culture in which Descartes lived and worked is much more remote from our own than is commonly recognized. This has consequences for biography, because a biography explores the emotional life of its subject, and the more removed from our own culture our subject is, the deeper the problems about how we are to succeed in this exploration. I have tried to be more responsive than my predecessors to the difficulties that these issues raise, with the result that there is much greater concentration on the culture in which Descartes worked than one finds in earlier biographies. But I am also very conscious of the problems of over-contextualization, and I have tried to make sure that neither the subject of my biography, nor his contribution, slips out of focus." (*Preface*, pp. VII-VII)

4. Watson, Richard. 2002. *Cogito, Ergo Sum. The Life of René Descartes*. Boston: Godin.
 "There are two main traditions of Descartes biography. In his *La Vie de Monsieur Des-Cartes* (1691), Adrien Baillet started the French Catholic apologetic tradition, the goal of which is to establish that Descartes’s life is worthy of the Great Metaphysician. It has been continued most recently by Geneviève Rodis-Lewis in her *Descartes: His Life and Thought* (1998). Baillet was recommended by the fact that he was undertaking a seventeen-volume *Lives of the Saints*. He demurred that he knew little about Descartes, but then he threw himself into the task with the zeal of a full-fledged member of the Saint Descartes Protection Society. The founder of

this society (this joke probably goes back at least to Descartes's death in Stockholm in 1650) was the French ambassador to Sweden, Hector-Pierre Chanut, who refused to allow Descartes's remains to be buried in a Lutheran cemetery. Descartes's reputation was then managed for many years by Chanut's brother-in-law, Claude Clerselier.

Clerselier edited Descartes's letters, deleting passages that conflict with church doctrine and adding passages of his own composition where they were most needed to illustrate the faith proper to a pious Catholic philosopher. This can be checked, however, only against a few letters of which there are independent copies, for none of the original manuscripts, papers, notes, and letters that Clerselier and Baillet had are extant today. They were given to Jean-Baptist Legrand, and after he died, to his mother in 1706. Despite many searches, that is the last we ever hear of them.

The second main line of Descartes biography has most recently been continued by Stephen Gaukroger in his *Descartes: An Intellectual biography* (1995). In this tradition, the stress is on the analysis of Descartes's works to show him as the Great Scientist who founded not only Modern Philosophy but also Modern Science. The present work belongs to neither the religious nor the scientific apologetic tradition. Given how much paper has been lost since the seventeenth century, I cannot look at original sources for much of the story I tell, but must depend on editors and chroniclers such as Clerselier and Baillet, who are not fully trustworthy. The result is a skeptical biography, as full of doubt about tradition and authority as was Descartes himself.

Here, then, is the life of René Descartes. It is the first biography of Descartes since 1920 that is based on substantial new research, and the only one ever written for general readers. It is the story of the man, not of the monument." (pp. 22-23)

5. Clarke, Desmond M. 2006. *Descartes. A Biography*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Contents: Preface and Acknowledgments VII; Note on Texts and References IX; Descartes Family Tree X; Introduction 1; 1. A Lawyer's Education 6; 2. In Search of a Career (1616-1622) 37; 3. Magic, Mathematics, and Mechanics: Paris, 1622-1628 67; 4. A Fabulous World (1629-1633) 97; 5. The Scientific *Essays* and the *Discourse on Method* (1633-1637) 126; 6. Retreat and Defence (1637-1639) 156; 7. Metaphysics in a Hornet's Nest (1639-1642) 184; 8. The French Liar's Monkey and the Utrecht Crisis 218; 9. Descartes and Princess Elizabeth 248; 10. *The Principles of Philosophy* (1644) 276; 11. The Quarrel and Final Rift with Regius 307; 12. Once More into Battle: The Leiden Theologians (1647) 337; 13. Thoughts of Retirement 366; 14. Death in Sweden 394; Appendix 1: Descartes' Principal Works 419; Appendix 2: Places Where Descartes Lived 421; Notes 425; Bibliography 489; Index 503-507.

"Descartes died in Sweden in 1650, a few weeks before his fifty-fourth birthday. He had spent most of his adult life in relative seclusion in what is now the Netherlands, while the Thirty Years' War waxed and waned around him. By 1667, when some French Cartesians arranged for the return of his remains to Paris, they had begun to publicize his works, to develop a characteristically Cartesian philosophy, and to be identified by critics as a 'sect'. These early supporters included many philosophers who, apart from Nicolas Malebranche, are probably remembered today only as marginal figures in the history of Western thought. The name of Descartes, however, remains readily recognizable. He has entered the canon of Western philosophy so securely that that there is no longer any dispute about his significance.

Why was he important? Hardly for the phrase by which he is popularly remembered today, both by students of philosophy and by other readers: '*I think, therefore I am*'. This was not an original insight on his part, and it had a relatively minor role in his work. During the past century, Descartes has often been read as a metaphysician or, perhaps as frequently, as a philosopher who took seriously the arguments of sceptics. Alternatively, he is classified as a philosopher of subjectivity, as someone who outlined an internal map of the human mind and defended the

irreducibility of conscious experiences. Finally, there are those, especially feminist critics, who think of Descartes as having exaggerated the significance and capacity of reason at the expense of the emotional life. For them, Descartes was a mere 'rationalist'.

Descartes' life reveals a much more complex and interesting character than any of these labels suggests. As an intellectual in the early seventeenth century, he might have directed his energies toward political philosophy (as Hobbes did), to theological disputes (as Pascal did), or to the renewal of humanistic and classical learning for which Erasmus had earlier provided an outstanding model. Alternatively, he might have channeled his genius exclusively into mathematics (as his contemporaries Fermat and Roberval did); had he done so, he would surely have exceeded by far the novelty and ambition of their achievements. Although all these interests featured to some extent in his life, Descartes' primary focus was elsewhere. He is best characterized as a philosopher of the Scientific Revolution." (pp. 1-2)

6. Nadler, Steven. 2013. *The Philosopher, the Priest, and the Painter: A Portrait of Descartes*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Contents: Illustrations IX; Acknowledgments XIII; 1. Prologue: A Tale of Two Paintings 1; 2. The Philosopher [René Descartes] 8; 3. The Priest [Augustijn Alsten Bloemaert, (1585-1659)] 36; 4. The Painter [Frans Hals, (1580-1666)] 55; 5. "Once in a Lifetime" 87; 6. A New Philosophy 111; 7. God in Haarlem 143; 8. The Portrait 174; Notes 199; Bibliography 219; Index 227-230.

"Exploring such art historical and biographical questions about a painting [*] might seem an odd way to frame a book about a philosopher. But Hals's image of Descartes, now the image of Descartes (primarily by way of the Louvre copy), has become quite familiar. Indeed, it has become too familiar. While Descartes's famous phrase "I think, therefore I am" has been transformed by overuse, parody, and misunderstanding into a kind of all purpose slogan easily adapted for a variety of occasions, philosophical and otherwise, Hals's depiction of the philosopher has been devalued almost to the point of anonymity by seemingly endless reproduction and caricature in a wide variety of media: innumerable book covers, works of fine and decorative art, commercial and editorial illustrations, even lowbrow entertainment.

One of the goals of this book is to restore to Hals's portrait of Descartes some of its originality and luster by reconstructing the biographical and historical contexts of its production. At the same time, such a project is a prime opportunity for presenting Descartes and his philosophy to a broad audience. The true story behind Hals's painting, as familiar as that image has become, can well serve as the scaffolding for an accessible study of Descartes himself. Just as "I think, therefore I am" represents only the starting point of a grand philosophical project that became the dominant intellectual paradigm of the seventeenth century, Hals's small painting can provide entrée to the life and mind of the ambitious thinker it so effectively portrays.

This is not a biography in the conventional sense. Most of Descartes's life, including much that happened during the decade on which this book is focused, lies outside the scope of its story. Nor is this book intended to be another detailed analytic study of Descartes's philosophy. There are many scholarly monographs exploring Descartes's work in epistemology, metaphysics, natural philosophy, and mathematics; there are also a number of fine general introductions to his thought, as well as several recent biographies. As valuable as such academic studies are, I would rather take my lead from Hals. The Haarlem artist has given us a small, intimate portrait of a great thinker. I want to do the same: a presentation of Descartes and his ideas in the form of a small, intimate portrait, a rendering of those years that culminated in some groundbreaking philosophical doctrines and a modest but intriguing work of art.

Descartes belongs as much to the intellectual culture of the Dutch Golden Age as he does to the grand history of Western philosophy whose development he so strongly

influenced. It thus seems perfectly appropriate, if a bit unorthodox, to use a seventeenth-century Dutch painting as a portal into his world." (pp. 6-7)
 [*] The portrait of Descartes made by Frans Hals in 1649.

Dictionaries, lexica and concordances

1. Cottingham, John. 1993. *A Descartes Dictionary*. Oxford: Blackwell.
 Contents: Preface VII; Note on the use of this book 1; Abbreviations 3;
 Introduction: Descartes' Life and Works 5; DICTIONARY ENTRIES A-Z 11;
 Bibliography 170; Index 175-187.
 "The secondary literature on Descartes is gigantic. Since almost all the topics covered in the entries that follow have been the subject of scores of learned articles, if not entire books, any attempt to aim for completeness in discussing the issues involved would be self-defeating. In what follows I have tried to trace out the main outlines of Descartes' thought, attempting as far as possible to let the Cartesian texts speak for themselves (though specialist readers will be well aware of the compression and selectivity that the demands of concision have inevitably required). Although Descartes is an astonishingly lucid writer, that very lucidity can be a pitfall, since terms whose sense at first appears transparent may in fact carry connotations or presuppositions whose import is far from straightforward; in such cases I have tried to show something of the intellectual background which shaped Descartes' ideas, despite his claim to be 'starting afresh'. Apart from citations from such early sources, and some writings from contemporaries or near contemporaries of Descartes, individual entries have been kept clear of references to the works of commentators and critics; a selection of some of the most important of these secondary works will be found in the Bibliography." (p. 1)
2. Ariew, Roger, Des Chene, Dennis, Jesseph, Douglas M., Schmaltz, Tad M., and Verbeek, Theo. 2003. *Historical Dictionary of Descartes and Cartesian Philosophy*. Lanham: Scarecrow Press.
 Reprinted in 2010 with the title: *The A to Z of Descartes and Cartesian Philosophy*.
 Contents: Jon Woronoff: Editor's Foreword IX; Preface XI; Chronology XIII;
 Introduction 1; THE DICTIONARY 13; Bibliography: Introduction 261; Texts and Editions: Descartes 265; Texts and Editions: Other Writers 267; Works on Descartes 281; Works on Cartesians and Other 17th-Century Figures 293; About the Authors 303.
 "This *Historical Dictionary of Descartes and Cartesian Philosophy*, as befits a dictionary, includes many entries on Descartes's writings, concepts, and findings. Since it is historical, there are other entries on those who supported him, those who criticized him, those who corrected him, and those who together formed one of the major movements in philosophy: Cartesianism. To better understand the period, there is a brief chronology, and to see how Descartes and Cartesianism fit into the general picture, there is a helpful introduction and a biography. Since everything cannot be summed up in one volume, there is an ample bibliography that directs readers to numerous other sources on issues of particular interest." (p. IX)
3. Smith, Kurt, ed. 2015. *The Descartes Dictionary*. London: Bloomsbury.
 Contents: Acknowledgments VI; About this dictionary VII; Introduction 1; A sketch of Descartes's life 1; A sketch of Descartes's philosophical system 5; Descartes in the classroom 24; Terms and names 29; Bibliography 123-131.
 "This dictionary has been geared specifically for undergraduate students. The terms and philosophical concepts included are those that have typically proven difficult for students coming to Descartes's writings for the first time.
 Descartes's philosophical career spanned almost his entire adult life. He was a living, breathing human being, warts and all. We need to remind ourselves of this because human beings, real human beings, change and grow. This includes what

they think about, how they think about those things, and so on. It would be unreasonable, then, when examining the entire span of Descartes's philosophical writings to expect to find a single, unified, perfectly consistent view.

We must allow for the likelihood of a change in mind. It would be equally unreasonable to expect to find just one set of terms whose meanings remained the same over that same span of work. An important aim of this dictionary is to track these sorts of changes if and when they occur.

(...)

When provoked by critics, Descartes (on occasion) admits that he was using certain philosophical terms differently from how they were used in the Schools. Johannes Caterus (1590–1657), for example, author of the First Set of Objections of the *Meditations*, expressed concerns over what he took to be Descartes's odd use of certain terms. He asks Descartes, for instance, to explain what he had meant by the terms “idea,” “objective being,” and “nothing.” Later in the First Set of Objections, he expresses concern over Descartes's use of “real distinction.” Caterus complains that Descartes uses these terms very differently from the way the Schools used them.

Descartes's replies to such critics are not always that illuminating, for he will sometimes simply shrug off the concern, or simply admit that he is using a term differently than it had been used by others.

Even so, he usually says enough in other places that allow us to figure out what he meant by the term in question. In light of this, where appropriate, the then-standard usage of a term will be noted in an entry, so as to help the reader better understand the import of Descartes's change in its usage.

Since Descartes wrote almost exclusively in Latin and in French (though he wrote some letters in Dutch), it is sometimes helpful to the English reader to see the actual words he used. To this end, when helpful, this dictionary will include the Latin and French terms that Descartes actually used. They will be provided directly following the term to be defined, and in many cases they will appear in the entry itself.

Concerning “definitions,” it should be noted that it is rare that a one-liner will suffice. In many cases, if not most, determining what a term means requires some discussion of other texts. Even in cases where Descartes provides an actual definition, simply repeating it will not be enough to understand the full philosophical import of the term defined. So, the reader should think of each entry not so much as a definition proper, but as a discussion of the term in question.

The following entries are based entirely on Descartes's writings—on the actual texts. Even so, the entries have been informed (and improved!) by looking to the secondary literature. It is worth noting that a careful study of the secondary literature reveals that there is, not surprisingly, no ultimate consensus on Descartes's views. Rather, one finds many interesting interpretations in scholarly competition with one another. With this in mind, and in trying to provide the reader with some sense of the array of interpretations available, the relevant secondary literature has been incorporated into certain entries, these influences provided at the end of each entry. But even here, these references are not definitive. They are only suggestions about where one might begin the next step in one's research." (pp. VII-IX)

4. Nolan, Lawrence, ed. 2016. *The Cambridge Descartes Lexicon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Contents: List of Figures XIV; List of Contributors XVII; Abbreviations XXIII; Introduction and Notes on How to Use This Work XXV; Acknowledgments XXIX; Chronology XXXI; Descartes' Life and Works XXXV; Annotated bibliography LXVII-LXVIII; Entries 1-767; Index 769-778.

"The *Cambridge Descartes Lexicon* is more like an encyclopedia or a compendium than a traditional dictionary, both in its scope and in its content. Many of the entries are fairly lengthy, especially those devoted to important subject terms such as “Cogito Ergo Sum,” “Free Will,” “God,” “Human Being,” “Idea,” “Law of Nature,” and “Representation.” Most of the subject entries are also “scholarly” in the sense that they introduce readers to debates in the secondary literature. The authors of

these entries sometimes present these debates without defending their own views, but in many cases they take an interpretive stand. Authors of overlapping entries were encouraged to stake out opposing positions (see, e.g., “Body,” “Individuation,” and “Substance”). The result is that by reading just a few pages, readers can familiarize themselves with almost any given scholarly dispute and get a sense of the arguments and textual evidence for various interpretations.

(...)

In addition to the 149 subject entries – which include articles on Descartes’ individual works such as the *Discourse on Method* and the *Principles of Philosophy* – there are 107 intellectual biographies of various figures, including official objectors to the *Meditations* such as Arnauld, Gassendi, and Hobbes; notable contemporaries and immediate successors such as Leibniz, Locke, Newton, and Spinoza; medieval and Scholastic predecessors such as Augustine, Aquinas, Eustachius, Scotus, and Suárez; important correspondents such as Princess Elisabeth, Constantijn Huygens, and Mersenne; and followers such as Desgabets and Régis. The intellectual biographies briefly sketch each figure’s life and accomplishments and then discuss the relation of that person’s thought to Descartes’. They also trace Descartes’ influences, record the reception of his ideas by critics, and discuss the ways in which his acolytes developed or adapted his views. All of the entries are written in a lucid style and thus accessible to a wide audience, including philosophers generally, those working in related disciplines, and students. Written by the largest and most distinguished team of Cartesian scholars ever assembled for a collaborative research project (ninety-one contributors from ten countries), the *Cambridge Descartes Lexicon* aspires to serve as the definitive and most comprehensive reference source on Descartes and Cartesianism." (pp. XXV-XXVI)

5. Murakami, Katsuzo, Sasaki, Meguro, and Tetsuichi, Nishimura., eds. 1995. *Concordance to Descartes’ Meditationes de Prima Philosophia*. Hildesheim: Olms-Weidmann.

Preface by Takefumi Tokoro.

"The present volume is a Concordance-Index to Descartes’ *Meditationes (Meditationes de Prima Philosophia)*, in Volume VII of the *Œuvres de Descartes*, published by Charles Adam & Paul Tannery), accompanied by a brief grammatical analysis of its text.

This Concordance-Index, for the main body of its text, relies basically on the standard edition of Descartes’ works, the one just cited above (hereafter abbreviated as AT). Assisted by First Computer, Tokyo (Yoshiaki YOSHIDA), we first translated it into machine-readable form, and then, using the OCP (Oxford Concordance Program) in operation at the Computer Centre, Tokyo University, made various attempts to obtain a series of outputs. This enabled us to base our further treatment of the text on a version which, while on the whole remaining that of the AT edition, is superior to it in a number of respects. The strategy we adopted might be in need of some explication.

It must be emphasized in the first place that conformity to the AT text does not necessarily mean conformity to the work of Descartes himself. As is well known, a simple comparison of the AT text with several editions of the *Meditationes* published in the seventeenth century suffices for illustrating many points where the former departs from the latter. This is particularly noticeable as regards indentation and punctuation. (The AT creates many new paragraphs of its own and has a tendency to cut Descartes’ long sentences into a number of shorter sentences.) And, of course, differences in indentation and punctuation result in differences in the use of capital letters. Furthermore, the use of diacritics even within the AT text falls short of being consequent in itself (for instance, no rule seems to govern the distinction of *multo* and *multò*, both used as adverbs). In the second place, however, we did not consider that these facts should prevent us from choosing the AT text as the basis of our project. On the contrary, in the absence of a rigorous critical edition of the *Meditationes*, upon a thoroughly exhaustive comparison of its First and

Second editions, the AT text rightly remains the standard reference for every serious student of Descartes and no other choice could be reasonably conceived. It is thus hoped that the present Concordance-Index will prove itself to be an indispensable tool for the preparation of a future revised edition of the *Meditationes*. These are the considerations behind our strategy.

Almost every inflectional word, as well as every indeclinable word judged to be of some interest to students of Descartes, are presented in context. Indeclinable words judged otherwise are presented in the word index format, i. e., without their contexts. Thus, in refusing to omit any word-forms actually occurring in *Meditationes*, we hope that the present volume will be useful to students not only of philosophy but also of language. Each word is accompanied by a brief grammatical comment, placed at the context headings of its inflectional variants. It is noted through a system of abbreviation and following an order of rank according to which these variants are arranged. The system of abbreviation and the rules governing the order of rank will be stated in the *Explanatory Notes*.

In the actual process of grammatical analysis, our first concern was to be as rigorous and precise as possible, to distinguish, for instance, the first person singular form of the future indicative from that of the present subjunctive, or the nominative case from the accusative case even when, for some verbs, nouns and adjectives, they happen morphologically to be the same. But after having kept unwaveringly to this principle, we finally decided to temper this rigour in the style of exposition, lest the inevitable subtleties it sometimes leads to should hinder, rather than help the reader, from having easy and natural access to our work. Thus, regarding nouns, adjectives and relatives, we give no indication to the case in which they are put in a given context, retaining the distinction only of number for nouns, and only of gender for adjectives and relatives. The distinction of degree is noted for adverbs only. With verbs, we had to be even more sparing of grammatical distinctions. For each verb entered as a lemma (except for SVM - see below), all of its occurrences are arranged in the simple order of their appearances within the text of *Meditationes*." (pp. I-II)

6. Janowski, Zbigniew. 2004. *Augustinian Cartesian Index. Texts and Commentary*. South Bend: St. Augustine Press.

Expanded English translation of: *Index Augustino-Cartésien. Textes et Commentaire*.

Augmented Augustinian citations, and added indices and commentaries for Saint Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus, Francis Bacon, and Montaigne.

"The present work was intended as a literal translation from the French original. I however, as I was working on it, I realized the considerable impact the Works of Francis Bacon have had on the formation of Cartesian philosophy. Although *The Augustinian-Cartesian Index* is, as the title suggests, devoted to Augustine's influence on Descartes, it is at the same time a work that is primarily concerned with the study of the sources of Descartes's philosophy. The inclusion of an appendix on Bacon is only consistent with the character of such a work. (In Appendix 4, I have included most of the passages identified by André Laland in his seminal article, "Sur quelques textes de Bacon et de Descartes," in *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 1911 [19, pp. 296 - 311]. These are marked as XI-XVI.) Likewise, the inclusion of an appendix on Montaigne seemed to me justified. In contradistinction to St. Augustine or Bacon, Montaigne's influence on Descartes has been recognized for a long time. A number of passages have been identified by Cartesian scholars in the past. However, they are dispersed through learned books and journals, and have never been collected in a handy form for comparative purposes.

While working on *The Augustinian-Cartesian Index*, I was finishing my *Cartesian Theodicy: Descartes' Quest for Certitude*, (*) in which I present an Augustinian reading of Descartes's Meditations. Although the topic and scope of the two works are different, I have included a few fragments from *The Cartesian Theodicy* in my commentary to the *Index*." (p. XI).

(*) Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2000.

Bibliographies

1. Sebba, Gregor. 1964. *Bibliographia Cartesiana. A Critical Guide to the Descartes Literature, 1800-1960*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
 Contents: Notes to the User VII; Preface IX; From the Preface to *Descartes and his Philosophy* (1959) XIII; Acknowledgments XV;
 PART ONE. INTRODUCTION TO DESCARTES STUDIES [1-562] 1; PART TWO. ALPHABETICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY 1800-1960 [1001-3612] 149; PART THREE. INDICES 419;
 Systematic Index 421; Analytical Index 434; Abbreviations 502-510.
 "This book offers a new type of working tool for Cartesian studies. It presents the literature of the last 160 years in alphabetical order (Part Two), combined with a systematic analytical survey (Part One) and a detailed topical index to the whole (Part Three). This organization makes it possible to turn bibliography from a repository of references into a workshop of research. The systematic survey of Part One and the topical index of Part Three, together, offer a *mise au point* of Descartes studies over their full historical and topical range.
 The results have often been surprising and illuminating to the author, and if his experience is any guide, the reader, too, will begin to wonder about certain seemingly well-settled points, or marvel at the Protean shapes which our elusive philosopher assumes when mighty commentators force him to reveal his true nature.
 (...)
 Part I (*Introduction to Descartes Studies*) divides the field into eleven broad areas. It offers critical notices and references to the bulk of significant contributions, covering as much as one-fifth of the whole literature. Other useful items which could not be incorporated in Part I for technical or other reasons will be found annotated in Part II; they are of course fully indexed. Each main title in Part I is annotated; in addition I have listed all reviews I could locate, discussions in books and articles as well as book reviews proper; condensed but detailed tables of content indicate the scope of works that cover a great variety of topics. If I could rewrite Part I in the light of the understanding I gained by making the detailed topical index, selection and emphasis as well as my evaluations of some contributions would be different. But the changes would not be decisive. Part I would still include every undoubtedly indispensable work, and most of the works I did select as being exceptionally useful. I would still add important older works of no great current value because they give the necessary historical perspective to the picture of Descartes scholarship. And I would still emphasize contributions neglected because they appeared where the Descartes scholar would hardly look for them, because they were written in a minor language, or because they just had bad luck. Nor would I tone down the language of my notices: I do not think that grey is the only color suitable for painting the Cartesian rainbow.
 As to my critical evaluations, they are no better than my judgment: *caveat emptor*. The user will form his own better judgment anyway, and to him the literature will look different, if only because there will be even more of it: "majoremque habemus rerum experientiam," as Descartes said when he was a very young man.
 Part II (*Alphabetical Bibliography*) is a comprehensive listing of all the literature on Descartes from 1800 to 1960 which I could locate, including the material contained in Part I. The total is close to 3000. I doubt that anything of major significance has been overlooked, but complete coverage cannot be claimed; besides, the limits of this type of compilation cannot be precisely drawn.
 Part III contains the indices that serve as key to the material presented in Part I and II. The Systematic Index gives a synopsis of the Analytical Index and draws

- attention to useful entries that might be overlooked. The Analytical Index is quite detailed. Every topic that appears in a title, notice, or table of contents (but not under reviews) has been indexed, with extremely few exceptions (*minima non curat praetor*). In addition, many books and articles of importance have been indexed from the original, including major works by Alquié, Bouillier, Gilson, Gouhier, Gueroult, Norman Kemp Smith, Thijssen-Schoute and others." (pp. (IX-X)
2. Chappell, Vere, and Doney, Willis, eds. 1987. *Twenty-Five Years of Descartes Scholarship, 1960-1984. A Bibliography*. New York: Garland.
 Contents: Introduction VI; Sources XI; Abbreviations XIII; Twenty-Five Years of Descartes Scholarship; Appendix: Editions and translations of Descartes's Own Writings 163; Index 175-183.
 "Scholarly interest in the work of René Descartes has burgeoned in the last twenty-five years. Much of the resulting literature has been produced by philosophers, who have approached Descartes not only as historians concerned to understand and interpret the Cartesian texts, but also as metaphysicians and epistemologists preoccupied with the same problems that confronted Descartes. But Descartes was not just a philosopher in the restricted twentieth-century sense of the word. He also made important contributions to the sciences—mathematics, physics, and biology. And his writings have influenced dramatists, poets, and novelists. Thus Cartesian studies have been pursued by recent historians of science and literary scholars as well as by philosophers.
 Our aim in this bibliography has been to document the entire scholarly literature on Descartes, from 1960 through 1984, in most of the languages in which it has been produced and in all of the fields in which Descartes is currently a subject of interest. We took 1960 as our starting point because that is the last year covered by Gregor Sebba in his monumental *Bibliographia Cartesiana*. Our reason for stopping with 1984 is simply that we had collected enough items by then to fill a sizeable volume. The items we have included are written in Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swedish. We have listed a few items in other languages in cases where a published translation into one of the above-mentioned languages exists. In the course of our investigations, we found references to a number of works on Descartes in Polish, Russian, and Japanese; to a few in other Slavic languages; and to one or two each in Hungarian, Romanian, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic. We have also been told of some recent studies in Chinese. Since we lacked the resources to verify these references, however, we have left them out of our list." (p. VI)
 (...)
 "It is interesting to note that, during our period, more items of Cartesian scholarship were published in English than in any other language. Of the 2,502 entries in our main list, 1,141 or 46% are in English. The next most prevalent language is French, with 747 entries (29%). Then come German, Italian, and Spanish, with 215, 214, and 116 (9%, 9%, and 4%), respectively.
 The work of Descartes had a strong impact on the philosophers, scientists, and writers who succeeded him. A good deal of Cartesian scholarship deals with these later "Cartesians" as well as, or instead of, with Descartes himself. It is impossible to draw a clear line between studies which are primarily devoted to Descartes himself and those in which the primary emphasis is on some other Cartesian thinker or thinkers. But we have sought to include everything that might reasonably be thought to belong in the former category; and we have deliberately excluded some items that we judged to fall in the latter. We have not in any case made a systematic survey of works in which Cartesian writers other than Descartes himself are the main object of concern." (p. VII)
3. Van Otegem, Matthijs. 2002. *A Bibliography of the Works of Descartes (1637-1704)*. Utrecht: Zeno institut for Philosophy.
 Two volumes.
 "With this thesis a complete bibliography has become available of all works of Descartes published in the seventeenth century, regardless the country or the

language the book was published in. Most of the texts are not preserved in manuscript so there was a strong need of a bibliography of the printed works. Half of the seventeenth-century editions of Descartes were published in the Netherlands. Descartes spent most of his philosophical career in the Low Countries and in this period Dutch printers controlled the larger part of the European book trade. Naturally, many of Descartes' works were published in France as well, but also editions were printed in England, Italy and Germany.

In this bibliography not only editions are described as such but also features of individual copies are recorded. By making detailed descriptions of the copies textual differences are discovered in the texts preserved, which is of interest to the study of Descartes' philosophy. Van Otegem not only visited Dutch libraries, but also libraries in England, France, Germany and Italy. Each text of Descartes' published separately is described in its own chapter, in which all editions are listed and their mutual relationships are determined. Each chapter starts with an introduction dealing with the historical context.

The results of this research are threefold. Firstly, the bibliography offers a complete survey of all editions of Descartes published in the seventeenth century. 15 previously unknown editions were found; 14 published in Latin and 1 in French. Secondly, the historical context is stressed in which all editions came about. New facts are unveiled about the involvement of Descartes and others in the printing of his works and about Descartes efforts to stimulate the reception of his works by distributing presentation copies. Finally, many variants are found between the collated copies, not only offering insight in the printing practices in the seventeenth century but also providing new leads for the study of the texts themselves. It has become clear that new scholarly editions are needed of some of Descartes' works." (From the Summary of the dissertation)