

Preface

The genesis of this book begins with an Alexander von Humboldt fellowship that I had achieved in the period 2003–2005 at Ludwig Maximilians University, Munich though in those years I did not focus on Leibniz. Some years later I extended the privilege of this Fellowship during a three month period from December 2013 to February 2014 at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Science, Berlin. The host of my fellowship was Professor Dr. Eberhard Knobloch. In the previous six months, I had frequent e-mail contacts with Professor Knobloch and we shared the idea that, during this time period in Berlin, I would focus my studies on the influence exerted by Kepler on Leibniz's planetary theory. Therefore, I began my research with this clear intention. However, my reading of Leibniz's works and the existing literature on the subject, as well as discussions with Professor Knobloch, convinced me to extend my research beyond this narrow intention. Thus, my aim was widened to frame Leibniz's planetary theory inside his physics and metaphysics. In particular, I wondered if planetary theory was, for Leibniz, something like an academic exercise or, in any case, a secondary part of his general order of ideas, scarcely connected with the whole of his production or if, in contrast, it played an important role in the development of his entire way of thinking. My attempts to answer such questions are the core of this book, inside which, without entering into details, which the reader will control in the running text, it is possible to recognize three main conceptual centres:

- 1) Description and specification of the details (in particular mathematical and physical details) of Leibniz's planetary theory, also considering its historical evolution. The Chaps. 2 and 4 are dedicated to this problem;
- 2) Connection between Leibniz's gravity theory—perhaps better to speak of Leibniz's ideas on gravity rather than a theory in a proper sense—and planetary theory. This is the subject of Chap. 5;
- 3) Kepler's influence on Leibniz. This was my original project. It is developed in Chap. 6, where I show the influence exerted by Kepler on Leibniz's planetary theory, but where I try to extend the argumentation, as I attempt to prove that

Kepler was also influential on Leibniz's metaphysics, in particular as far as the concept of pre-established harmony is concerned.

Chapter 1 is a historical and conceptual introduction to the scenario described in the book, while Chap. 3 has to be interpreted as a brief parenthesis concerning the concept of inertia in Leibniz, especially focusing on the aspects connected to planetary theory. To be clear, my intention has not been to deal with the complex general problems of Leibniz's physics, on which a huge and profound literature exists.

As to the quotations, in the running text I have always offered the English translation from original works or letters, which are almost exclusively written in two languages: Latin (in most cases) and French (in several cases). If not explicitly specified otherwise, the translation is mine.

I wish to express my particular gratitude to Professor Dr. Eberhard Knobloch. He followed my research in Germany and he read the whole of my work, giving me precious advice. Finally, he contacted the publishing house Birkhäuser to propose the publication of this book. Without his collaboration and precious help, this research would have been neither written nor published.

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It is obvious that possible mistakes or imperfections rest entirely upon the author.

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Udine, Italy

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