

Preface

The papers in this collection focus on the study of Leibniz's mathematical and philosophical thought and the interrelations between the two. They take advantage of the fact that we are today in the privileged position of being able to take a fresh look at material which has long been available in conjunction with those letters and papers recently published thanks to the remarkable efforts of the editors of the Academy Edition. With the benefit of a considerably extended textual basis, compared even to twenty years ago, we seek to examine Leibniz's mathematical practice with philosophical eyes exploring his goals and the underlying values and ideas that guided so many of his investigations.

The present volume traces its origin to a memorable workshop on the interrelationships between mathematics and philosophy in G. W. Leibniz which was organized by Mic Detlefsen and David Rabouin, and which took place at Université Paris Diderot (Laboratoire SPHERE, CNRS, UMR 7219) and at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris, 8–10 March 2010. The workshop was conceived within the framework of the “Ideals of proof” project under the direction of Detlefsen and funded by the Agence Nationale de la Recherche. Besides providing the ideal setting for discussion, that event revealed a common sentiment amongst all participants that a more in-depth study of the interrelations between these two fundamental aspects in Leibniz's thought was not only highly desirable, but also most timely on account of growing interest in the philosophy and history of mathematical practice.

Initial plans for this volume were drawn up immediately after the workshop by Norma Goethe during long hours of lively discussions over coffee and with three other participants, Richard Arthur, Philip Beeley, and David Rabouin, in the wonderful old Café Gay Lussac at the corner of Rue d'Ulm and Rue Claude Bernard. In fact, Norma Goethe, a fellow at the Lichtenberg-Kolleg (University of Göttingen) for the academic year 2009–2010, came from Göttingen with the undisclosed aim of persuading Philip and David of the timeliness of the project and invited them to join the editorial team. She should like to thank the Lichtenberg-Kolleg (University of Göttingen) and the German Research Foundation (DFG) for providing support for her participation in the workshop and the ongoing work towards the present volume which took her to Oxford and Nancy for exchanges with Philip and David. All of the editors should like to express their sincere gratitude to Jed Buchwald, editor of the

Archimedes series, for his interest in the project and also to Lucy Fleet and Mireille van Kan for their patience in the face of considerable delays in submission.

Some of the essays commissioned for this volume have grown out of papers presented in Paris, while others have been conceived and written since that time specifically for publication in this volume. All contributions have in no small measure benefitted from those three days of intense intellectual exchange and debate first in the Rue d'Ulm and then on the banks of the Seine in the Rue Thomas Mann.

The editors should like to thank all the participants of the workshop for the insights on Leibniz's mathematics which they shared and for the fruitful exchanges that were thereby made possible. Their thanks go especially to Mic Detlefsen who understood the significance of organizing such a scholarly gathering at that time and for the intellectually stimulating way in which he conducted the workshop. Particularly remembered is how his enthusiasm engendered lively interaction between all participants and how discussion continued through coffee breaks and well into the evenings.

In addition to thanking the authors who contributed to this volume, the editors should also like to thank all of the invited referees for the way in which they brought to bear their dedication to high scholarly standards. Besides those listed, we should also like to thank Marco Panza for the sound academic advice he gave. Special thanks go to Siegmund Probst for his unlimited generosity in providing all kinds of assistance to our book project. Finally, we should like to express our gratitude to Kirsti Andersen and Henk Bos for insightful exchanges and comments, wonderful conversations, and a most enjoyable time spent on the Rive Gauche after the conference was over.

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G.W. Leibniz, Interrelations between Mathematics and
Philosophy

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2015, X, 210 p. 27 illus., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-94-017-9663-7