

Two Leibniz Texts with Translations: LH IV 1, 9 r and LH IV 1, Bl. 24 r
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LH IV 1, 9 r

Monades non sunt in loco nisi per harmoniam, id est per consensum cum phaenomenis loci, a nullo influxu sed sponte rerum ortum.

Translation:

Monads are in a place only through harmony, i.e. by means of an agreement with the phenomena of place—an agreement which does not arise because of an influx of things, but spontaneously.

LH IV 1, Bl. 24 r

Lineam non componi ex punctis demonstratur per lineas transversas; eaque ratione ostenditur si secus sentias totum parti aequale fore.

Tempus vero videtur necessario componi ex instantibus, quia duo instantia simul existere non possunt; itaque existit tantum instans praesens; futurum extitit, futurum existet.

Sed linea videtur secari posse ut tempus, et cuilibet quod ponitur in linea respondere quod ponitur in tempore. Exempli causa in motu uniformi per rectam quovis momento punctum mobile existit in puncto spatii novo.

Video tamen nondum hinc sequi quod linea componatur ex infinitis punctis, sed tantum quod infinita puncta sunt in linea. Verum ecce difficultatem.

Si tempus componitur ex instantibus, determinata est in tempore instantium multitudo. Ergone et aequalis punctorum in linea multitudo?

Translation:

That the line is not composed of points is proved by means of transversal lines and this argument shows that if one believes the contrary, then the whole will be equal to the part.

Time indeed seems necessarily to be composed of instants, because two instants cannot exist simultaneously; thus only the present instant exists; the future one

suddenly emerges, it will exist.

But it seems possible to divide a line in the same way as time, so there is a correspondence between what is situated in the line and what is situated in time. For instance: in the uniform motion through a straight line a point exists at any moment in a new point of space.

However, I see that from this does not follow that the line is composed of an infinity of points, but only that an infinity of points are in the line.

Indeed, that's a difficulty: if time is composed of instants, then the multitude of instants in time is determined. But then, is this multitude the same as the multitude of points in the line?

Comments

The first text (LH IV 1, 9 r) was written on a very small piece of paper and probably belongs to a period after 1700. Very similar issues are discussed in the following passages from two letters, respectively, to De Volder (a) and to Des Bosses (b):

(a)

“Monades enim etsi extensae non sint, tamen in extensione quoddam situs genus, id est quamdam ad alia coexistentiae relationem habent ordinatam, per machinam scilicet cui praesunt. Neque ullas substantias finitas a corpore omni separatas existere, aut adeo situ vel ordine ad res caeteras coexistentes universi carere puto. Extensa involvunt in se plura situ praedita, sed quae simplicia sunt, etsi extensionem non habeant, situm tamen in extensione habere debent, quanquam illum punctatim ut in incompletis phaenomenis designare possibile non sit” (GP 2, p. 253).

“For although monads are not extended, they nevertheless have a certain kind of situation [*situs*] in extension, that is, they have a certain ordered relation of coexistence with others, namely, through the machine which they control. I do not think that any finite substances exist apart from a body and that they therefore lack a position or an order in relation to the other things coexisting in the universe. Extended things involve a plurality of things endowed with position, but things which are simple, though they do not have extension, must yet have a position in extension, though it is impossible to designate these positions precisely as in the case of incomplete phenomena” (to De Volder: 1703; L, p. 531).

(b)

“Monades enim per se situm quidem inter se habent, nempe realem, qui ultra

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phaenomenorum ordinem porrigatur” (GP 2, p. 444).

“For in themselves monads have no situation with respect to each other, that is, no real order which reaches beyond the order of phenomena” (to Des Bosses, 1712: L, p. 602).

The second text (LH IV 1, Bl. 24 r) is written on a small rectangular piece of paper; the handwriting is very clear and there are only few words crossed out. Probably it was composed after 1695.

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