

## Leibniz's *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice*, 1703-2003

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### I

Leibniz's *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice* (1703) is his most important writing on justice as “wise charity” and “universal benevolence” (viewed as quasi-mathematical, demonstrable “eternal verities”); we now observe the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its composition, and a reproduction of part of Leibniz's manuscript appears in the Appendix to this article. But Leibniz's essay might with equal justice be called, “Meditation on the Common Notion(s) of Platonism”—for the *Méditation* opens with a nearly-verbatim paraphrase of *Euthyphro* 9e-10e (in which the gods know and love but do not cause or change moral and mathematical “eternal truths”), moves on to reduce Hobbes to Thrasymachus (justice as power) in *Republic* Book I, and ends with Platonic “ascent,” in the manner of *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*, from mere negative forbearance from harm (the later *neminem laedere* of Leibniz's beloved Roman law) to justice as wise love, *caritas*, Roman-law *honeste vivere*, and benevolent “aid to others”—as in Augustine's Platonizing *De Civitate Dei XIX*).

### II

The *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice*, left behind by Leibniz as a manuscript in two parts<sup>1</sup>, was fragmentarily quoted by A. Trendelenburg (*Historische Beiträge zur Philosophie*, II, Berlin 1855, 261), and then fully published by Georg Mollat in Leipzig in 1885 (*Rechtsphilosophisches aus Leibnizens Ungedruckten Schriften*).<sup>2</sup> The first complete English translation, by the present author, appeared in 1972 in *The Political Writings of Leibniz* (Cambridge University Press).<sup>3</sup>

It is from Leibniz's letter of August 5, 1703, to his old philosophy pupil Queen Sophie-Charlotte of Prussia (who inspired the *Théodicée*), that we know that at least the first half of the *Méditation* on justice (“si la justice est arbitraire”) was written in summer 1703:

Ayant eu...une conversation avec Monseigneur l'Electeur [Georg Ludwig of Hannover] en presence de Madame l'Electrice [Sophie] sur la nature de la bonté et de la justice, si c'est une chose arbitraire, ou si elle est fondée dans les raisons éternelles, comme les nombres et les figures, j'ay fait un petit discours là-dessus, et je ne say si j'oseray mettre un jour les bagatelles sous les yeux de Votre Majesté [emphasis added].<sup>4</sup>

Why does it matter that Leibniz's only known letter concerning the *Méditation* should have been sent to Queen Sophie-Charlotte in Berlin, and that Leibniz should have gone out of his way to mention the "presence" of Electress Sophie (mother of the Queen) as auditor of a conversation with Georg Ludwig? Simply because, though the Elector Georg was a philosophical cipher, both Sophie and Sophie-Charlotte had strong philosophical-theological interests, and both had received important earlier letters from Leibniz dealing precisely with the demonstrable "mathematical" certainty of "justice" and "goodness."

In a letter of August 1696 to Electress Sophie, Leibniz had said that, "As for the order of justice, I believe that there are universal rules which must be valid as much with respect to God as with respect to intelligent creatures." Intelligible truths "are universal, and what is true here below with respect to us is also such for the angels and for God himself." The eternal truths "are the fixed and immutable point on which everything turns," such as "the truths of numbers in mathematics and those of figures in geometry." And for that reason it is "correctly said" (in the *Wisdom of Solomon*) that God "does everything through numbers, by measure and by weight."<sup>5</sup> (Here Scripture is authoritative because it is "mathematical.")

Obviously, then, Electress Sophie of Hannover was a highly suitable auditor of Leibniz's remarks (to Elector Georg Ludwig) pointing out that "justice" and "goodness" are not *une chose arbitraire*, that they are *fondée dans les raisons éternelles, comme les nombres et les figures*. And perhaps she even saw the *petit discours* on justice which Leibniz drew up as a *memorandum*—which we now know as the *Méditation* on justice.

But if Electress Sophie was a suitable auditor of Leibniz's remarks, her daughter Queen Sophie-Charlotte was at least as suitable a *reader*: for Leibniz had been her philosophy teacher, and in 1702 sent her a famous letter which is now usually called "On What is Independent of Sensation in Knowledge."<sup>6</sup> In this celebrated letter Leibniz urges that "that which the ancient Platonists have remarked is quite true...namely that the existence of intelligible things...is incomparably more certain than the existence of material things." Stressing the "necessity" of mathematics, Leibniz goes on to urge that the eternal necessity of morality is "seen" through the same extra-sensory *lumière naturelle* that reveals the truth of  $2+2=4$ . And he then discusses "justice" as an outgrowth of the "intelligible truth" which is "independent of the existence of sensible and material things outside of us."<sup>7</sup>

Queen Sophie-Charlotte, then, would not have been surprised to find Leibniz discussing the "eternal truth" of justice (only a year later) with her philosophical mother. Nor should it surprise anyone else that Leibniz—after the shockingly unexpected death of Sophie-Charlotte in 1705—should crown the *Theodicée* ("the justice of God"),<sup>8</sup> conceived in Charlottenburg, with the now-familiar question,

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“What idea shall we form of such a justice as has only will for its rule...unless it be the idea contained in that tyrannical definition of justice by Thrasymachus in Plato, which designated as *just* that which pleases the stronger?” But, Leibniz answers, “one will soon abandon maxims so strange and so unfit to make men good and charitable through the imitation of God.”<sup>9</sup>

The reference to Plato’s (anti-Thrasymachan) notion of justice as something supportive of “goodness and charity” (in an *imitatio Dei*)<sup>10</sup> reminds us that the second half of the *Méditation* on justice (“la notion commune de la justice”), which recommends ascent from negative forbearance from harm to doing positive good, cannot be conclusively dated to 1703—though it cannot be earlier than 1702 (because of a reference to Queen Anne of England, crowned in 1702), nor later than early 1705 (because of a personal compliment [“wise and beautiful”] to Queen Sophie-Charlotte herself, who died in February 1705.)<sup>11</sup> But is it not at least very likely that Leibniz conceived the two “halves” of the *Méditation* as complementary parts of a single piece? After all, the second half was written—in Leibniz’s own hand—*on the same paper* as the definitive copy of the first half (as lightly corrected by Leibniz himself)<sup>12</sup>; are the parts of the *Méditation* in the Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek, Hannover, bound together with the (consecutive) numbers Jur III, 1, 72-81 and Jur III 1, 82-87 by sheer chance and mere editorial discretion? It is not more credible that Leibniz, after writing to Queen Sophie-Charlotte in August 1703, completed his *bagatelles* on justice later in 1703 (or perhaps in 1704), but left them in a drawer (like so much of his work) after being devastated by the Queen’s death only a little later?<sup>13</sup> It is, after all, hard to believe that Leibniz would write a Platonizing critique of Thrasymachan/Hobbesian justice as *potestas*, then write a Platonizing encomium of “ascent” to justice as *caritas*, without thinking that these were *complementary halves* of a unitary Platonizing work. To be sure, it could be that Jur III, 1, 72-81 and Jur III, 1, 82-87 just happened to wind up together in the Leibniz-Archiv; but that would almost count as a proof of Providence.

### III

With history in place, one should now recall some key passages of the *Méditation* itself—beginning with the Plato-echoing opening lines:

It is agreed that whatever God wills is good and just. But there remains the question whether it is good and just because God wills it or whether God wills it because it is good and just: in other words, whether justice and goodness are arbitrary or whether they belong to the necessary and eternal truths about the nature of things, as do numbers and proportions. The former opinion has been followed by some philosophers and by some Roman

[Catholic] and Reformed theologians: but present-day Reformed [theologians] usually reject this doctrine, as do all of our theologians and most of those of the Roman Church.<sup>14</sup>

When Leibniz speaks of “some philosophers” who imagine that God makes or “wills” justice as something “arbitrary,” it turns out (as will be seen) that he means especially Descartes and Hobbes; and when he speaks of “some Reformed Theologians” he means precisely Calvin himself (and the Calvinist notion of an “absolute decree” of salvation regardless of merit). Indeed the principal modern enemies of the “eternal” and “necessary” justice of Plato’s *Euthyphro* (and *Phaedo*) will be—in both alphabetical and chronological order—Calvin, Descartes and Hobbes.

Leibniz goes on to urge that the voluntarist view of justice as arbitrary *fiat* ... would destroy the justice of God. For why praise him because he acts according to justice, if the notion of justice, in his case, adds nothing to that of action? And to say *stat pro ratione voluntas*, my will takes the place of reason, is properly the motto of a tyrant....

This is why certain persons, too devoted to the absolute right of God, who have believed that he could justly condemn innocent people and even that this might actually happen, have done wrong to the attributes which make God lovable, and, having destroyed the love of God, they have left only fear [behind]....

... Thus all our [Lutheran] theologians and most of those of the Roman Church, and also most of the ancient Church Fathers and the wisest and most esteemed philosophers, have been for the second view, which holds that goodness and justice have grounds [*ont leurs raisons*] independent of will and of force.<sup>15</sup>

The phrase, *stat pro ratione voluntas*, “let will take the place of reason” (from Juvenal’s *Satire VI*), summed up for Leibniz the unreasonableness of the voluntarist view—for Juvenal places that phrase in the mouth of an unjust woman who crucifies an innocent slave merely because she *wants* to.<sup>15</sup> (And this reminds Leibniz of *the Crucifixion*, in which charity incarnate suffered judicial murder.)

The “founder” of the voluntarist view, for Leibniz, was Thrasymachus in Plato’s *Republic* Book I—a Thrasymachus now brilliantly resurrected in Hobbes (who, as a *kind* of Calvinist, fused ancient Greek and modern Protestant *voluntas* in an especially dangerous and effective way):

Plato in his dialogues introduces and refutes a certain Thrasymachus, who, wishing to explain what justice is, gives a definition which would strongly recommend the position which we are combating, if it were acceptable: for that is just (says he) which is agreeable or pleasant to the most powerful. If that were true, there would never be a sentence of a sovereign court, nor of a supreme judge, which would be unjust, nor would an evil but powerful man

ever be blameworthy...

A celebrated English philosopher named Hobbes, who is noted for his paradoxes, has wished to uphold almost the same thing as Thrasymachus: for he wants God to have the right to do everything, because he is all-powerful. This is a failure to distinguish between right and fact. For what one can do is one thing, what one should do, another.<sup>17</sup>

If Thrasymachus—and also Thrasymachus in his Epicurean-Calvinist English incarnation, Thomas Hobbes—is wrong, then one must try to find the “formal reason” of justice, the “concept which should teach us what justice is”—and this formal reason or *notion commune* must be “common to God and man,” as arithmetic and geometry are not merely human but “agree with that of God or of the angels.”

Leibniz then speaks at length of the necessary truths of mathematics, offering a table of “square numbers” resembling Socrates’ geometric figures drawn in the sand in *Meno*.<sup>18</sup> And he then, still Plato-like, makes “the common notion of justice” logically parallel to numbers and geometry:

The same is true of justice. If it is a fixed term which has some determined meaning; if, in a word, it is not a simple sound, without sense, like *blitiri*; this term, or this word, justice, will have some definition or some intelligible notion: and from every definition one can draw certain consequences, by using the incontestable rules of logic; and this is precisely what one does in building the necessary and demonstrative sciences which depend not at all on facts, but solely on reason, such as logic, metaphysics, arithmetic, geometry, the science of motion, and the science of right as well.<sup>19</sup>

Having made justice Platonically parallel to mathematics, Leibniz Platonizes yet more radically by viewing that justice, in the manner of the *Symposium*, as an “ascent” to something morally higher. (This is a translation of what appears on the manuscript sheet in the Appendix.)

Most of the questions of right are confused, because everyone does not agree on a *common notion of justice*, with the result that everyone does not understand the same thing by the same name, and this is the cause of endless dispute. Everyone will agree, perhaps, to this nominal definition, that justice is a constant will to act in such a way that no one has a reason to complain of us. But this does not suffice unless one gives the means of determining these reasons. Now I observe that some people restrict, and that other extend, the reasons for human complaints. There are those who believe that it is enough that no one does them harm, and that no one deprives them of anything they possess, and that one is not at all obliged to procure the good of another, or to arrest evil, even if this would cost us nothing and would not cause us any pain. Some who pass for great judges [*justiciers*] in this world, keep

themselves within these limits; they content themselves with not harming anybody, but they are not at all of a humor to improve people's conditions [*rendre les gens bien aisés*]; they believe, in a word, that one can be just, without being charitable.

There are others who have larger and finer views, who would not wish that anyone complain of their lack of goodness; they would approve what I have put in my preface to the *Codex Iuris Gentium*, that justice is nothing else than the charity of the wise, that is to say goodness toward others which is conformed to wisdom. And wisdom, in my sense, is nothing else than the science of felicity. It is permitted that men vary in their use of terms, and if someone wishes to insist on limiting the term *just* to oppose it to that of *charitable*, there is no way of forcing him to change his language, since names are arbitrary. However, it is permitted that we inform ourselves of the reasons which he has for being what he calls just in order to see whether the same reasons will not bring him also to be good, and to do good.<sup>20</sup>

Using the mathematical idea of "degrees," Leibniz now says that precisely by degrees one should rise or ascend to justice as *doing positive good*—as in Plato's *Symposium* and (even more) in Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* XIX.

Led by degrees, one will agree not only that men should abstain from wrongdoing, but also that they should prevent evil from happening and even relieve it, when it is done.... The same reasons of complaint subsist always; whether one does evil or refuses to do good is a matter of degree, but that does not change the species and the nature of the thing. One can also say that the absence of good is an evil and that the absence of evil is a general good. Someone makes a request of you, be it to do or to omit something. If you refuse the request, he has reason to complain, since he can judge that you would make the same request if you were in the place of him who makes it. And it is the principle of equity, or, what is the same thing, of the equality or of the identity of reasons [*de la même raison*], which holds that one should grant [to others] whatever one would wish in a similar situation, without claiming to be privileged, against reason, or [without claiming] to be able to allege one's will as a reason.<sup>21</sup>

Undoubtedly Leibniz spoke of a *notion commune de la justice* (in the 1703 *Méditation*) because the term "common notion" is not only "Platonic" but (even more and above all) *mathematical*—as Leibniz was at pains to point out in the preface to the *Nouveaux essais* (written at almost the same moment as the *Méditation* itself):

The soul originally contains the principles of several notions and doctrines, which are merely roused on certain occasions by external objects, as I hold along with Plato.... The Stoics called these principles prolepses, that is,

fundamental assumptions or what we take for granted beforehand. Mathematicians call them *common notions* (*koinai énnōiai*). Modern philosophers give them other excellent names; and, in particular, Julius Scaliger named them *semina aeternitatis item zopyra*, as much as to say, living fires, flashes of light [*traits lumineux*], hidden within us but appearing at the instance of the senses, like the sparks which come from the steel when it strikes the flint. And not without reason it is thought that these flashes [*éclats*] indicate something divine and eternal, which appears above all in necessary truths... such as we find in pure mathematics and especially in arithmetic and geometry, [and which] must have principles whose proof does not depend upon instances nor, consequently, upon the witness of the senses, although without the senses it would never have come into our head to think of them. This is a point which should be carefully noted, and it is one which Euclid so well understood that he often proves by reason that which is evident enough through experience and through sense-images. Logic also, along with metaphysics and ethics [*la morale*], of which the one forms natural theology and the other natural jurisprudence, are full of such truths; and consequently their demonstration can come only from the inner principles which are called innate.<sup>22</sup>

Here Leibniz's strategy is to appeal *first* to acknowledged "common notions" in mathematics and geometry—even Hobbes, after all, revered Euclid—then to transfer that demonstrable necessity to "natural jurisprudence" (or what the *Méditation* calls "the science of right"). And to move from mathematical to moral "demonstration" is Platonic, in the manner of *Meno* and *Phaedo*. This is why Leibniz can say, in a letter to Bossuet, that "there is harmony, geometry, metaphysics, and, so to speak ethics [*la morale*] everywhere"<sup>23</sup>—for all of these are related quasi-Platonic *notions communes*.

But why does "demonstration" matter so much—as when Leibniz insists that such demonstration is possible not just in "logic" and "metaphysics" but also in *la morale*, of which "natural jurisprudence" or "right" is a branch? Here one should turn above all to Leibniz's letter to Landgraf Ernst of Hessen-Rheinfels from September 1690:

One cannot escape by saying with M. Arnauld that we must not judge God by the ideas we have of justice, for it must be the case that one has an idea or a notion of justice when one says that God is just; otherwise this would only be to attribute a word to him. As for me I believe that just as the arithmetic and the geometry of God is the same as that of men, except that God's is infinitely more extensive, in just the same way natural jurisprudence, in so far as it is demonstrative, and every other truth is the same in heaven and on earth. Failing this, God would act as a tyrant, would do what would be called tyranny

in a man, by using an absolute power. One must not imagine that God is capable of doing that which would be called tyranny in men.<sup>24</sup>

“Natural jurisprudence, *in so far as it is demonstrative*”: that is the key phrase in this letter. But how far can one “demonstrate” full Leibnizian justice from Platonic mathematical-geometrical “eternity” alone? One can’t, in a word—unless one “mathematizes” justice *very* radically, as Leibniz himself sometimes does (“now consist justice, goodness, beauty, no less than mathematical things, in equality and proportion, and are therefore no less *aeternae et necessariae veritatis*”).<sup>25</sup> And that is why Leibniz’ “perfectionism” must be folded in at this point (to account for *caritas*). For, as John Rawls has rightly urged, Leibniz “maintains that the principles of perfection...are [also] eternal truths: they rest on and lie in the divine reason. These truths are superior to and prior to the divine will.”<sup>26</sup> Indeed “also” would scarcely be the right word—for the necessary existence of “the perfect being,” God, is (*pour ainsi dire*) the privileged Anselmian “eternity verity” which is *primus inter pares*: without the eternal “mind” of God to know (but never cause) the eternal truths, there would be no “other” changeless verities at all, such as  $A = A$ . For Leibniz always insists that while God does not (*pace* Descartes) cause eternal, necessary truths by mere genesis, he nonetheless “finds” those verities “imbedded” [*inditus*]<sup>27</sup> in his understanding. First God must exist, *owing to* “perfection”; “then” (as it were) he finds eternal verity in his *sapientia*, not in his *voluntas* (as the *Méditation* urges). In this sense “Platonic” eternal verity needs a “necessary” *ens perfectissimum* as its “ground”—and therefore the Plato-Anselm connection is stronger than it might have seemed. “Perfection” yields a necessary God; he then finds all other truth in himself; and the perfection which necessitates him is the basis of love, the “feeling of perfection” in others which underlies justice as wise *caritas* (“to love is to find pleasure in the perfection of another”).<sup>28</sup> And that is why Leibniz can say that “the apex of metaphysics and that of ethics are united in one by the perfection of God.”<sup>29</sup>

One cannot love God without knowing his perfections or his beauty. And since we cannot know him except in his emanations, there are two ways of seeing his beauty, namely in the knowledge of eternal truths (which consist in reasons, numbers, figures, orders, changes)...and in the knowledge of the harmony of the universe.<sup>30</sup>

There, indeed, Plato and Anselm blend into each other; Athens and Canterbury timelessly occupy the same space.

Leibniz’s practical perfectionism emerges most plainly in his *Méditation*-anticipating *Observationes de Principio Iuris* from 1700, in which the claim that “God is the supremely perfect Being, and the supremely perfect distributor of goods” glides into the moral-political assertion that “the intrinsic perfection or badness of acts, rather than the will of God, is the cause of justice,” and that “the

basis on which a certain action is by its nature better than another comes simply from the fact that a certain other action is by its nature worse, such that it destroys perfection, or produces imperfection.”<sup>31</sup> Here Leibniz’s perfectionism and his quasi-Platonic anti-voluntarism all but *fuse*. And perfectionism and anti-voluntarist *wise* charity also fuse in Leibniz’s great essay, *Radical Origination of Things* (1697):

...The very law of justice declares that each should participate in the perfection of the universe and in a happiness of his own in proportion to his own virtue and to the degree in which his will has regard to the common good; and by this is fulfilled that which we call charity and the love of God, in which alone, in the opinion of wise theologians, consists the force and power even of the Christian religion.<sup>32</sup>

For Leibniz, twin-founded “demonstrative” natural jurisprudence (*justice universelle*), grounded doubly in Platonizing mathematical “eternity” and in (moral) “perfection,” is in a position to refute a bad voluntarist trinity: hyper-Calvinism, hyper-Cartesianism, and hyper-Hobbism.<sup>33</sup> (Hyper-Calvinism is a danger to true theology; hyper-Cartesianism is a danger to true philosophy; hyper-Hobbism is a danger to true justice—as the *Méditation* on justice insists in its opening paragraphs.)

#### IV

In the end it is quite clear what Leibniz opposes and what he favors in the *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice*: he is against tyranny, despotism, and willfulness, and he is for charity, benevolence, and reasonability. That is why he constantly argues against the “dangerous opinion” that “all justice, all morality comes not from the nature of things but from the despotic will of God [*non rerum natura sed despotico quodam Dei arbitrio constet*].”<sup>34</sup> If one historicizes and personalizes these dislikes and likes, he is hostile to Calvin, Descartes, and Hobbes (as radical voluntarists who deny or destroy Platonic eternal verities), and he is favorable to Plato, St. Paul, and Augustine (as *caritas*-lovers)—indeed unless one recalls Leibniz’s prominent place in modern mathematics and science (especially dynamics) he will look briefly (in the moral sphere) like an ancient chastising modernity. Robert Mulvaney, in his excellent “Divine Justice in Leibniz’s ‘Discourse on Metaphysics’” (1975), captures Leibniz’s philosophical likes and dislikes, hopes and fears, perfectly when he says that “Leibniz’s life-long opposition to Cartesian voluntarism and to the Hobbesian-Thrasymachan identification of justice and power” led him to insist that there is “a standard of goodness [which is] objective, so to speak, even for God.”<sup>35</sup>

As Leibniz, echoing the 1703 *Méditation*, said with final lapidary precision a

few months before his death (in the fourth letter to Clarke, 1716): “Will without reason would be the ‘chance’ of the Epicureans. A God who acted by such a will would be a God only in name.”<sup>36</sup> Leibniz’s mentioning of Epicurus is no accident: for it was Epicurus who famously said that there is “no natural justice”—in explicit opposition to Plato’s argument that in the field of “right and wrong” there is something *natural*, “with a reality of its own” (*Theaetetus* 172 b).<sup>37</sup> Is it (so to speak) Epicurean chance that Leibniz translated the *Theaetetus* only a few months after first insisting that natural justice is (eternally, necessarily, demonstratively) “the charity of the wise”? Or do not all of these “Platonisms” hang coherently together, making Leibniz the greatest “Christian-Platonist” after Augustine—not least in the *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice*?<sup>38</sup>

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*Notes*

<sup>1</sup> See Grua, *Textes inédits* (Paris 1948), Vol. II, p. 447.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> This was the first translation (or indeed edition) to show that Leibniz meant to continue the *Méditation*—writing “je” (I) at the end of the MS, but then breaking off.

<sup>4</sup> Leibniz, *Die Werke von Leibniz*, ed, Onno Klopp (Hannover 1877), Vol. X, pp. 212-213.

<sup>5</sup> Grua, *Textes inédits*, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 379.

<sup>6</sup> Ger. VI, pp. 502-503.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> In rendering ‘theodicy’ as “the justice of God,” I follow Leibniz himself, who says that “I use the title theodicy because it is the justice of God which is the principal subject of that work” (*Théodicée ou apologie de la justice de Dieu* [c. 1707], in Grua II, 495). Leibniz’s neologism ‘*Théodicée*’ is a Frenchification of *theo* (God) and *dike* (justice), from the Greek, and is perhaps meant as a Platonizing tribute to the *Timaeus* 41 b-d, where Plato draws together God, justice, immortality, and eternity, saying that “children of gods” will be worthy of immortality if they are “willing to follow justice”—whose “divine part” will be sown by God himself. In everyday usage, to be sure, “theodicy” has come to mean “justification of the ways of God to men”; but by grafting together *theo* and *dike* (*theo-dike*, “the justice of God”), Leibniz was paying yet another tribute to the “Greeks as the

founders of rational theology” (to recall the title of his 1714 lecture in Vienna—see note 27 below).

<sup>9</sup> Leibniz, *Theodicy* (trans. Huggard, New Haven 1952), “Preface,” pp. 58-59.

<sup>10</sup> To be sure, this is a Christianized “Plato,” à la Augustine; but it is a Plato grounded in *Euthyphro* 9e-10e (on religion and “eternal verity”).

<sup>11</sup> See Leibniz, *Scritti politici*, ed. Vittorio Mathieu (Torino 1965 [2<sup>nd</sup> ed.]), “Introduzione,” p. 67.

<sup>12</sup> Grua, *Textes inédits*, op. cit., II, 477.

<sup>13</sup> Leibniz, *Werke*, ed. Klopp, op. cit., Vol. X, pp. 231 ff. (on the death of the Queen). The likelihood that Leibniz himself conceived the two parts of the *Méditation* as complementary halves of a single Platonizing work has been (cautiously) confirmed by Herbert Breger, head of the Leibniz-Archiv in Hannover. Noting that the numbers assigned to the parts of the *Méditation* (Jur III, 1, 72-81 and Jur III, 1, 82-87) were written in by the great Leibniz-scholar Eduard Bodemann before 1895, Breger says that “in general he [Bodemann] seems to have left everything [in Leibniz’s papers] as it was”—adding that “in some cases we have the definite impression that a certain order which exists today must have been the order Leibniz gave to the papers.” While cautioning that “we do not know for certain,” Breger ends by saying that “it seems to me more probable that Bodemann in this particular case (as in most cases) just took the papers as they were and added the numbering” (letter to Patrick Riley, 20 October 2003).

<sup>14</sup> Leibniz, *Meditation on the Common Notion of Justice*, in *Political Writings*, trans. and ed. Patrick Riley (Cambridge 1972, 1988), pp. 45-46.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46

<sup>16</sup> Juvenal, *Satirae* VI, 223. For a fuller commentary see the author’s review of A, I, 17, in *The Leibniz Review*, December 2002.

<sup>17</sup> Leibniz, *Meditation* (Riley ed.), op. cit., pp. 46-47.

<sup>18</sup> Plato, *Meno*, 82b ff.

<sup>19</sup> Leibniz, *Meditation* (Riley ed.), op. cit., pp. 46-47.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>23</sup> Leibniz, *Nouveaux essais*, “Préface,” in *Monadology*, trans. and ed. R. Latta (Oxford 1898), pp. 360-364 (a wonderful old edition).

<sup>23</sup> Leibniz, letter to Bossuet (1692), in *Opera Omnia*, ed. Dutens (Geneva 1768), Vol. I, p. 531.

<sup>24</sup> Grua, *Textes inédits*, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 238-39.

<sup>25</sup> Leibniz, “Unvorgreifliches Bedencken” (1698-1704), in *Textes inédits*, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 434.

<sup>26</sup> John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, ed. B. Herman

(Cambridge, Mass., 2000), p. 110. Rawls notes, correctly, that this is aimed against the Cartesian notion of God's *creation* of (even necessary) truths in *Reply to the Six Objections*.

<sup>27</sup> Leibniz, "On the Greeks as Founders of Rational Theology," in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 13, no. 4 (1976) (trans. and ed. Patrick Riley), p. 379.

<sup>28</sup> Leibniz, "Felicity" (c. 1694-98), in Grua, *Textes inédits*, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 579 ff.

<sup>29</sup> Leibniz, "Thoughts on The Principles of Descartes," in *Philosophical Papers*, ed. L. Loemker (Chicago 1956), Vol. II, p. 676. See also the author's article in *Studia Leibnitiana* XV, 2 (1983), pp. 215 ff.

<sup>30</sup> Leibniz, "Felicity," op. cit., pp. 580-581.

<sup>31</sup> Dutens IV, iii, p. 274.

<sup>32</sup> In *Monadology*, trans. Latta, op. cit., p. 349.

<sup>33</sup> *Théodicée* parts 175-183 make it clear that Calvin, Descartes and Hobbes (for Leibniz) defend what Shakespeare called "hydra-headed willfulness" (*Henry V*, Act I).

<sup>34</sup> Leibniz, letter to Hansch (May 1712), in *Dutens* V, p. 167.

<sup>35</sup> *Studia Leibnitiana*, Supplementa XIV (Wiesbaden 1975), pp. 61-82.

<sup>36</sup> In *Monadology*, ed. Latta, op. cit., p. 104, n. 1.

<sup>37</sup> Leibniz, of course, had made his own Latin version of *Theaetetus* in 1679 (together with *Phaedo*). Leibniz defends Platonic "natural" justice (from the *Theaetetus*) in a letter of 10 July 1704 to Damaris Cudworth (Lady Masham), daughter of the "Cambridge Platonist" Ralph Cudworth: "I am for those who believe that the source of necessary truths is innate in our mind . . . The intellectual system of the late Monsieur Cudworth pleases me extremely . . . and I hold, as he does, that justice is natural, and not at all arbitrary" (in Leibniz, *Die Werke*, ed. Klopp, op. cit., Vol. X, pp. 287-289). Since Lady Masham was at once the daughter of Cudworth and the principal benefactress of Locke (who died on her estate in 1704), Leibniz is using her father's Platonism to (gently) chide Locke's empiricism.

<sup>38</sup> I wish to thank Philip Beeley for his kind work on my behalf to obtain from the manuscript department at the Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek a new scan of the manuscript that appears in the Appendix. Members of that department who were particularly helpful in this regard include Anke Hölzer and Birgit Zimny, though no doubt many others were involved in the effort. All have my deepest gratitude, and I am grateful to Herbert Breger for his very helpful letter concerning the *Méditation* (see note 13, *supra*).

*Appendix*

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Spanning the following two pages is a facsimile taken from the first sheet of the manuscript for the “second half” of *Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice*\*

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(To capture marginalia, the second page of the facsimile has been reduced in size more than the first.)

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