

LEIBNIZ TEXTS

An Unpublished Latin Text on Terms and Relations* (LH 7 C Bl. 76 v.) Transcribed and Translated by Massimo Mugnai, University of Florence

*This text has not appeared in the *Vorausedition*. It belongs to the late period of Leibniz's life (after 1700), and is remarkable because it (i) discusses at length the relationships between the intension and extension of terms; and (ii) develops a quite interesting analysis of the nature of space, time, and, in general, relations.

Alia est rerum alia terminorum divisio.

Terminus est cogitabile quod potest esse subiectum propositionis verae estque vel implicans contradictionem, nempe *chimaera*, vel possibile seu non implicans, nempe reale.

Reale est terminus possibilis seu distincte cogitabilis, ut homo, doctus, causa, actio.

Rursus terminus sumitur vel materialiter, et ita est ens, cuius diversi termini sunt eadem res ut rex et propheta in Davide, nempe idem est rex qui est propheta. Vel terminus sumitur formaliter, ut rex qua rex, nempe etsi non sit alius rex quam propheta, tamen aliud est regem esse aliud prophetam esse. David qua rex differt a Davide qua propheta. Diversi ergo sunt termini sed ens idem. Interim in terminis quoque formaliter spectatis distinctio est. Interdum enim in idem resolvuntur veluti figura triangula et figura trilatera, item rectangulum aequilaterum et quadrilaterum aequiforme, ubi notio est eadem; interdum vero diversa notio est, ut aureum et rotundum, etsi monetae convenient quam ducatum vocamus. Termini ergo differunt re, cum diversa entia spectant, forma cum ad diversas notiones spectant, consideratione, cum diversa dicunt seu cogitanda exhibent. Idem est quidam rex et quidam propheta, omne triangulum et omne trilaterum. Stemus ergo in rebus ipasque notiones secundas ut res consideremus.

Terminus est vel *Nihil* ut *Blitiri*, vel aliquid.

Aliquid est subiectum propositionis verae, estque vel impossibile, quod dicitur Chimaera, vel ens.

Ens est aliquid possibile, ut Deus, homo, scientia, scriptio, motus.

Ens vel est *subsistens* quod tantum subiectum esse potest, vel *attributum*, quod est constituens praedicati alterius entis ut scientia constituit ut aliquis sit sciens. Actio ut agens. Sed nonne datur tertium? Sic tempus, locus, neque est subsistens

nec attributum. Idem est de numero, ordine. Sic decem non est attributum ullius rei. Neque enim de aggregato neque de singulis dici potest numerus denarius. Idem est de relatione quae communis, v. g. similitudo duorum. Datur itaque attributum quod est simul in pluribus subiectis. Talia ergo sunt ordo, adeoque tempus et locus.

Translation :

The distinction of terms is one thing, and the distinction of things another.

A *term* is something which can be thought and can be the subject of a true proposition: either it implies a contradiction as *chimera*, or it is possible (i. e., it does not imply any contradiction and it is *something real*).

A term which is possible (i. e., which can be thought in a distinct way, like, for instance, man, wise, cause, or action) is *something real*.

Again a term is taken either materially, and thus it is a being the different terms of which are the same thing, as king and prophet in David—i. e., the same person who is a king is a prophet as well; or a term is taken formally as a king insofar as he is a king—i. e., even though the king is not a different person from the prophet, yet to be a king is different from being a prophet. David, insofar as he is a king, differs from David insofar as he is a prophet. Therefore terms are different, but the being is the same. In some circumstances, however, even terms considered formally admit of a distinction. In fact, by means of analysis, they give rise, sometimes, to the same—as in the case of a triangular and a trilateral shape or in the case of an equilateral rectangle and an equiform quadrilateral, where the notion is the same; sometimes the notion is different, as in the case of “golden” and “round,” even if both apply to the coin which we name “ducat.” Therefore terms differ in the following way: about the thing—insofar as they concern different beings; about the form—insofar as they concern different notions; about the way of considering—insofar as they mention or show different thoughts. A certain king and a certain prophet are the same, and so are every triangle and every trilateral. Thus, we have to stick with things and to consider as things all second notions as well.

A *term* is either *Nothing*, like *Blitiri*, or it is something.

Something is the subject of a true proposition and it is either impossible, and in this case is said to be a *chimera*, or it is an entity.

An *entity* is something which is possible, like God, man, science, to write, motion, etc.

An entity is either *something which subsists*, and thus can be only a subject, or is an *attribute*, which constitutes the predicate of another entity, like knowledge, in

virtue of which someone knows, or like action, in virtue of which someone acts. But is it possible that a third kind of things exists?

Thus time and place are neither subjects nor attributes. And the same holds for numbers and orders. Thus “ten” is not an attribute of any thing. In fact the number ten can be said neither of the aggregate nor of the single numbered things. The same holds for relations which are common to the related things—for instance, the similarity of two things. Hence, there are attributes which are at the same time in several subjects: of this kind are, therefore, orders and even time and place.

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