

Note XIV

On Leibniz as Librarian

We know that Leibniz was named librarian to the duke of Hanover in 1676, and in addition, in 1691, librarian to the duke of Wolfenbüttel. In order to learn how he understood his duties and how he discharged them it is useful to read his *Representation to His Serene Highness the Duke of Wolfenbüttel, for the Purposes of Encouraging the Maintenance of His Library*.¹

To this memorandum are joined two plans for a classification of the library based on the classification of the sciences which was also to have served as a basis for the encyclopedia.² In the first and most extensive of these (*Leibniz's Plan for a Public Library that is to be Ordered According to the Classification of the Sciences*),³ the sciences are arranged in the following order (which recalls that of the four faculties): Theology, Law, Medicine, Physics, Philosophy, Pure and Applied Mathematics, Philology, Oratory and Poetry, Geography, History.

In the second (*Leibniz's More Limited Plan for an Ordered Library*),⁴ physics is listed after mathematics, as is more natural. The order of the main headings is as follows: Theology, Jurisprudence, Medicine, Intellectual Philosophy, Philosophy of Imaginable Things or Mathematics, Philosophy of Sensible Things or Physics, Philology, Civil History, Literary History.

We may note the order of the three parts of philosophy (metaphysics, mathematics and physics), as well as the distinction between them, which is based on that of their objects or our faculties of cognition: objects of pure understanding, objects of the imagination, objects of sense.

¹ Dutens, V, 207.

² He wrote: "It is necessary that a library be an encyclopedia." Leibniz to Duke Johann Friedrich, 1679 (Klopp, IV, 426).

³ Dutens, V, 209.

⁴ Dutens, V, 213.