

Leibniz's Correspondents and Encounters about Infinity - a preliminary draft

Compiled by Osvaldo Ottaviani

A. Correspondents

Sources:

Der Briefwechsel des Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz in der Königlichen öffentlichen Bibliothek zu Hannover, Hannover 1889 (Reprint Hildesheim 1966).

<http://www.gottfried-wilhelm-leibniz-gesellschaft.de/leibniz-digital-resources/4-briefwechsel.html>

Legenda:

(mainly) mathematical

(mainly) philosophical

(mainly) natural philosophy/physics

1) **Alberti, Antonio** (= Amable de Turreil) (1689-94)

Leibniz became acquainted with Alberti, the Jansenist agent and confidant of Amauld and Landgrave Ernst von Hessen-Rheinfels (whose real identity, Amable de Turreil, Leibniz only learned from Quesnel in 1706) in the summer of 1689 during his stay in Rome.

9 letters (6 from Alberti, 3 from Leibniz). Correspondence published in A.2.2.

2) **Antoine Arnauld** (1671-1690), Jansenist theologian and philosopher Correspondence entirely published in A 2.2

See R. Sleigh, *Leibniz and Arnauld* (1990); M. Bolton, *Leibniz to Arnauld*, in P. Lodge, *Leibniz and His Correspondents*, Ch. 5.

3) **Henri Basnage de Beauval** (1692-1708), French Huguenot, editor of the journal *Histoire des Ouvrages des Savans*. 37 letters (22 Letters by Leibniz, and 15 letters by Basnage). Correspondence published in GP III. Letters until 1706 are published in A.2.2/3/4.

4) **Pierre Bayle** (1698-1702)

11 letters (9 letters by Leibniz; 2 by Bayle). Published in A.2.3/4

5) **Jacob Bernoulli** (1687-1705), Swiss mathematician

23 letters (10 letters by Leibniz, 13 letters by Bernoulli). Correspondence published in GM 3. Letters until 1697 are also in A.3.4/6/7 until 1697.

- 6) [Johann Bernoulli](#) (1693-1716) *, Swiss mathematician (brother of Jacob)

Very long correspondence. Published in GM 3. Letters until 1701 are in A 3.6/7/8

Discussion on infinity in the years 1698-99, see Ariew-Garber pp. 167-70.

- 7) [Friedrich W. Bierling](#) (1709-1716), theologian and historian, professor at the University of Rinteln.

The letters between Leibniz and Bierling are printed in Dut V, pp. 353-392. GP VII, pp. 482-511 gives only Leibniz's letters.

- 8) [Jean Paul Bignon](#) (1693-1715), President of the Paris Academy of Science.

53 letters (26 letters by Leibniz, 27 by Bignon)

A 1.9/22, letters until 1703.

- 9) [Rud. C. Bodenhausen](#) (1689-1697), German mathematician based in Italy, discussed infinitesimal calculus and dynamics with Leibniz.

70 letters (34 letters by Leibniz, 36 by Bodenhausen)

Published in A.3. 4/7

- 10) [J. B. Bossuet](#) (1679-1702), Bishop of Meaux, theologian and historian

8 letters (7 letters by Leibniz, 1 by Bossuet), published in A.1 2-7-10-18-20.

- 11) [Louis Bourguet](#) (1706-1713), Swiss polymath (archaeology, geology, philosophy, biology).

The correspondence between Leibniz and Bourguet is partially published in GP III. Some letters are still unpublished.

- 12) [J. Bouvet](#) (1697-1707), French Jesuit, missionary in China

12 letters (8 letters by Leibniz, 4 by Bouvet), edited in series A.1

See especially Leibniz's letter of February 15, 1701, A I.19, N. 202

- 13) [Thomas Burnett of Kemney](#) (1695-1714), Scottish gentleman, Leibniz's source for the English philosophical and theological debates (esp. Locke)

86 letters (29 letters by Leibniz, 57 by Burnett)

Originally published in GP III, now in A.1 (until 1706)

See S. Duncan, "Toland and Locke in the Leibniz-Burnett Correspondence", *Locke Studies* 17:117-141 (2017)

14) [Pierre de Carcavy](#), French mathematician and librarian

9 letters (4 letters by Leibniz, 5 letters by Carcavy). The correspondence is published in A.2.1

>>(letter of June 22, 1671)

15) [Samuel Clarke](#) (1715-6), British philosopher
Leibniz's correspondence with Clarke is in GP VII
See E. Vailati, *Leibniz and Clarke* (1997)

16) [Detlev Clüver](#) (1680-98), German mathematician,
cf. Pasini, *Studia Leibnitiana* 26 (1):108-124

19 letters (8 letters by Leibniz, 11 letters by Clüver). Printed in A.3

17) [Pierre Coste](#) (1706-13), French theologian and translator (see Locke)

14 letters (7 letters by Leibniz, 7 by Coste), the correspondence is published in GP III. Letters until 1707 are now edited in A.2.4

18) [Pierre Dancicourt](#) (1705-16), French mathematician

3 letters (1 letter by Leibniz, 2 letters by Dancicourt). Dancicourt's first letter is in A. 3.8 n. 249. Leibniz's letter to Dancicourt of 1716 is in Dut III.

19) [Barthélemy Des Bosses](#) (from 1706 to 1716), Jesuit theologian and philosopher.

108 letters (41 letters by Leibniz, 67 by Des Bosses), published in GP II, partially published in A.2.4 (until 1706). See also *The Leibniz-Des Bosses Correspondence*, ed. by Look and Rutherford. Cf. also B. Look, "On Substance and Relations in Leibniz's Correspondence with Des Bosses", in *Leibniz and His Correspondents*, ed. Lodge, Chapter 11.

20) [Burchard De Volder](#) (1698-1706)*, Dutch scientist, Cartesian philosopher

The correspondence is now fully published in A.2.3. and 2.4. See also *The Leibniz-De Volder Correspondence* ed. by Lodge.

21) [Honoré Fabri](#) (1677), Jesuit, scientist and philosopher (see Encounters)

1 letters by Leibniz, 1 by Fabri. These letters are in A.2. 1

22) [Michelangelo Fardella](#) (1690-1714)* Italian Cartesian philosopher and scientist

130 letters (20 letters by Leibniz, 110 by Fardella). The correspondence is partially edited in A.2.2/3/4, until 1707.

See also A. Robinet, *L'empire leibnizien. La conquête de la chaire de mathématiques de l'université de Padoue. Jakob Hermann et Nicolas Bernoulli (1707-1719)*, Trieste 1991; S. Femiano, *Über den Briefwechsel zwischen Michelangelo Fardella und Leibniz*, *Studia Leibnitiana*, Bd. 14, H. 2 (1982), pp. 153-183; D. Garber, Leibniz and Fardella: Body, Substance and Idealism, In Paul Lodge (ed.), *Leibniz and His Correspondents*.

23) [Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle](#) (1700-1704)*, Secretary of the Academy of Science in Paris

15 letters (9 letters by Leibniz, 6 letters by Fontenelle). The correspondence is now edited in A.2.4

24) [Simon Foucher](#) (1676-95), canon of Dijon, philosopher

24 letters (9 letters by Leibniz, 15 letters by Foucher). The correspondence is published in A.2.1/2/3

See also S. Brown, "The Leibniz-Foucher Alliance", in Lodge (ed.), *Leibniz and His Correspondents*, Chapter 4.

25) [Jean Gallois](#) (1672-92), secretary of the Academy of Sciences in Paris

11 letters (9 letters by Leibniz, 2 letters by Gallois). The correspondence is published in A.3.1-5 and A.2.1

See especially *Accessio ad arithmetica infinitorum* (1672).

26) [Guido Grandi](#) (1703-14), Italian mathematician, professor in Pisa

11 letters (6 letters by Leibniz, 5 by Grandi). Published in GM IV.

27) [Domenico Guglielmini](#) (1690-1709), Italian physician and mathematician, Bologna

11 letters (4 letters by Leibniz, 7 by Guglielmini), partially edited in A. 3. 4-7, until 1697.

28) [Michael Gottlieb Hansch](#) (1706-16), theologian and philosopher

38 letters by Hansch, 10 by Leibniz in Hanover, but other letters are preserved elsewhere, and others seem to be lost. Letters until 1707 are now edited in A.2.4

29) [Nicolas Hartsoeker](#) (1706-12)*

31 letters (13 letters by Leibniz, 18 by Hartsoeker). Published in GP III.

See G. Mormino, "Teorie della coesione nell'epistolario Leibniz-Hartsoeker", *Rivista di storia della filosofia* 71, 4, 2016.

30) [F. M. van Helmont](#) (?-1699), Flemish alchemist and writer

Very short correspondence between Leibniz and Helmont (edited in A.2). Leibniz mainly discusses his views in the correspondence with Electress Sophie. Cf. the correspondence with Sophie

- 31) [Jakob Hermann](#) (1704-16), Swiss mathematician, professor in Padua, then in Frankfurt
The correspondence is partially published in GM 4.

See also A. Robinet, *L'empire leibnizien. La conquête de la chaire de mathématiques de l'université de Padoue. Jakob Hermann et Nicolas Bernoulli (1707-1719)*, Trieste 1991.

- 32) [G. F. L'Hospital](#) (1692-1701)*, French mathematician, author of *L'Analyse des Infiniment Petits* (1696), member of the circle of Malebranche in Paris.

25 letters by Leibniz, 21 by L'Hospital. The correspondence is published in A.3.5-8

- 33) [C. Huygens](#) (1679-95)*

32 letters by Leibniz, 26 by Huygens. The correspondence is now edited in A.3.1-6

- 34) [Isaac Jaquelot](#) (1702-1704), French Huguenot minister and theologian, ended his life in Berlin, where he met Leibniz in 1702

10 letters by Leibniz, 12 by Jaquelot. The correspondence is edited in A.2.4

- 35) [Adamus A. Kochanski](#) (1670-98), Polish mathematician

15 letters by Leibniz, 24 by Kochanski. The correspondence is edited in A.2.1, A.1.7, A.2.2, A.1.8-15.

- 36) [Anton Leeuwenhoek](#) (1715), famous Dutch microscopist. See also Encounters (Leibniz met him already in 1676)

Short correspondence between Leibniz and Leeuwenhoek in 1715-6 (Leibniz's letters where published in 1718 in <https://lensonleeuwenhoek.net/content/send-brieven>)

- 37) [Jaques Le Long or Lelong](#) (1704-16), French bibliographer and librarian

15 letters by Leibniz, 47 by Lelong. Letters edited in A.1.23-26 until 1706.

- 38) [Antonio Magliabechi](#) (1689-1711), Italian librarian

26 letters by Leibniz, 76 by Magliabechi. Letters are edited in A.1.5-24 until 1704.

39) [Nicholas Malebranche](#) (the exchange takes place from 1679 to 1711).

10 letters by Leibniz, 7 by Malebranche. Edited in GP I, now also in A.2.1/2/3 until 1699.

For all the letters and texts about Malebranche: Cf. Robinet, *Malebranche et Leibniz. Relations personnelles*, 1955.

40) [Damaris Lady Masham](#) (1703-4) >> Cudworth, Locke

6 letters by Leibniz, 5 by Masham. The correspondence is now edited in A.2.4

See P. Phemister, "The Principle of Uniformity in the Correspondence between Leibniz and Lady Masham", in Lodge (ed.), *Leibniz and His Correspondents*, Chapter 9.

41) [Gerhard Meier](#) (1690-1702) German theologian and pedagogist

28 letters by Leibniz, 100 by Meier. The whole correspondence is in A.1. 6-21, but the philosophically relevant letters are also in A.2.2.

42) [Otto Mencke](#) (1681-1706), German philosopher and scientist, editor of the *Acta eruditorum*

18 letters by Leibniz, 139 by Mencke. The correspondence is edited in A.1. 3-26

43) [André Morell](#) (1694-1703), Swiss numismatic, antiquarian, interested in J. Bohme

15 letters by Leibniz, 40 letters by Morell. The whole correspondence is edited in A.1. 10-22.

44) [I. Newton](#), see also Encounters.

Leibniz to Newton, 17-03-1693 (A.3.5 N. 139); Newton to Leibniz, 26-10-1693 (A.3.5 N. 194)

Cf. D. Bertoloni Meli, *Equivalence and Priority. Newton vs. Leibniz*, 1993.

45) [Henry Oldenburg](#) (1670-77) German theologian and scientist, secretary of the Royal Society

5 letters by Leibniz, 25 letters by Oldenburg. The correspondence is edited in A.2.1, A.3.1 and 3.2.

Cf. P. Beeley, "Leibniz's Correspondence with Oldenburg", in Lodge (ed.), *Leibniz and His Correspondents*, Chap. 3.

46) [A. T. Overbeck](#) (1705-1716) Cf. Fichant, *Apokatastasis* 1991. Leibniz discussed with him about combinatorics and dyadic, and the question of the eternal recurrence

25 letters by Leibniz, 21 letters by Overbeck, mainly unpublished

- 47) [D. Papin](#) (1692-1700), French physicist and mathematician, professor of mathematics in Marburg. He had a long discussion with Leibniz on dynamics

55 letters by Leibniz, 77 letters by Papin. The correspondence has been published in A.3.5-8.

See A. G. Ranea, "The a priori Method and the actio Concept Revised. Dynamics and Metaphysics in a unpublished controversy between Leibniz and Denis Papin", *Studia Leibnitiana*, 21, 1, 1989.

- 48) [V. Placcius](#) (1676-1699), German jurist and polymath

22 letters by Leibniz, 33 letters by Placcius. Correspondence edited in A.2.1/2/3

- 49) [N. Remond](#) (1713-1716), counsellor of the Duke of Orléans

14 letters by Leibniz, 13 letters by Remond. Edited in GP III.

- 50) [J. A. Schmidt](#) (1694-1716), German theologian

34 letters by Leibniz, 136 letters by Schmidt. The correspondence is edited in A.1.10-26, until 1706.

- 51) [Johann Christian Schulenburg](#) (1698-1701) rector of the University of Bremen

1 letter by Leibniz, 5 letters by Schulenburg. The correspondence is edited in A.2.3 and 2.4

- 52) [Hans Sloane](#) (1700-1711), Irish physician, Secretary and then President of the Royal Society (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Sloane)

7 letters by Leibniz, 8 letters by Sloane. Until 1701, this correspondence is published in A. 3. 8.

- 53) [Thomas Smith](#) (1693-1710), English scholar

11 letters by Leibniz, 14 letters by Smith. Until 1706 the correspondence is edited in A.1.10-26.

- 54) [Sophie + Sophie Charlotte](#) (1691-1714) see the letters edited and translated in Strickland, *Leibniz and the Two Sophies*.

- 55) [Georg E. Stahl](#) 1709-11 see *The Leibniz-Stahl Correspondence*

- 56) [Johann C. Sturm](#) (1694-98)* German philosopher

2 letters by Leibniz, 3 letters by Sturm (plus the materials concerning *De ipsa natura*). This correspondence is published in A.2.2. and 2.3.

Cf. A. Sangiacomo, Johann Christoph Sturm's Natural Philosophy: Passive Forms, Occasionalism, and Scientific Explanations, *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 58, 3, 2020.

- 57) [Jakob Thomasius](#) , German philosopher, Leibniz's teacher in Leipzig

Correspondence edited in GP 1, then in A.2.1, and Bodeus, *Correspondence Leibniz-Thomasius* 1663-72

- 58) [John Toland](#) (1708-10), Irish philosopher

Many aspects of Toland's philosophy are discussed by Leibniz in the correspondence with Sophie Charlotte (See *Leibniz and the Two Sophies*).

4 letters by Leibniz, 4 letters by Toland. Edited in: G. Carabelli, John Toland e G. W. Leibniz: otto lettere, «Rivista critica di storia della filosofia», 29 (1974), 4, pp. 412-31.

See also M. R. Antognazza, "Natural and Supernatural Mysteries: Leibniz's "Annotatiunculæ subitaneæ" on Toland's "Christianity not Mysterious", in W. Schröder (hrsg.), *Gestalten des Deismus in Europa: Günter Gawlick zum 80. Geburtstag*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2013, pp. 29-40.

- 59) [Giovanni Battista Tolomei](#) (1693-1705), Italian Jesuit priest, theologian and cardinal

7 letters by Leibniz, 4 letters by Tolomei. The Correspondence until 1707 is edited in A. 2.2. and 2.4

- 60) [E. W. von Tschirnhaus](#) (1677-1713)*, German mathematician and philosopher

20 letters by Leibniz, 30 letters by Tschirnhaus. Correspondence edited by Gerhardt in GM 4, now published in A. 6.3, A. 3.2.8 until 1701.

- 61) [Augustin Vegetius](#) (1692-98), professor of philosophy in Göttingen

9 letters by Leibniz, 27 letters by Vegetius. The correspondence is edited in A.3.5-7 and A.2.2.

- 62) [Pierre Varignon](#) (1701-1716), French mathematician

13 letters by Leibniz, 24 letters by Varignon. The correspondence is in GM IV

- 63) [Vincenzo Viviani](#) (1703), Italian mathematician, disciple of Galileo and Torricelli

Only 1 letter by Leibniz

- 64) [Gabriel Wagner](#) (1696-1708), German radical philosopher

13 letters by Leibniz, 19 letters by Wagner. The correspondence going from 1696 to 1704 has been published in A.2.3 and A.2.4. The last part of the correspondence should be published in A.2.5.

- 65) [Rud.Ch. Wagner](#) (1697-1716), professor of mathematics and physics at the University of Helmstedt, he had worked as Leibniz's secretary between 1697 and 1699. He also worked with Leibniz to the construction of a model of the calculating machine

Part of the correspondence is in Hanover, another part is conserved in Halle. Letters until 1701 have been published in A 3.7-8

- 66) [John Wallis](#) (1696-1700), British mathematician

10 letters by Leibniz, 12 letters by Wallis. The correspondence is published in GM IV, and now in A.3.7-8. [\[add reference to P. Beeley's edition, also to the Oxford site\]](#)

- 67) [Erhard Weigel](#) (1679-97), German mathematician, astronomer, and philosopher, former professor of Leibniz in Jena

The correspondence is edited in A.2.1 and 2.2, A.3.2, 3.4-7.

- 68) [Christian Wolff](#) (1704-16),* German philosopher and mathematician

41 letters by Leibniz, 78 letters by Wolff. The correspondence has been partially edited by Gerhardt, *Briefwechsel Zwischen Leibniz Und Christian Wolff*.

See also D. Rutherford, "Idealism Declined. Leibniz and Christian Wolff", in Lodge (ed.) *Leibniz and His Correspondents*, Chap. 10.

B. Encounters

- 1) Calculatores (Medieval philosophers)
- 2) Bonaventura Cavalieri
- 3) [Cordemoy](#)
- 4) Descartes
- 5) [Kenelm Digby](#)
- 6) Pierre de Fermat
- 7) [Honoré Fabri](#)
- 8) [Libertus Fromondus](#)
- 9) Gassendi
- 10) Galileo
- 11) [Gregory of st. Vincent](#)
- 12) Thomas Hobbes
- 13) Kepler
- 14) Joachim Jungius (+ Jungius' scholars as correspondents)
- 15) John Locke
- 16) Newton
- 17) Blaise Pascal
- 18) Spinoza

- 19) John Toland (also correspondent)
- 20) Evangelista Torricelli
- 21) [Thomas White](#)

Table of contents of the Book: G.W. Leibniz, *Writings on the Metaphysics of the Infinite*, edited and translated by R. T. W. Arthur and O. Ottaviani, OUP (forthcoming).

Introductory Essay —

1. **On the Infinite / De infinito** / (LH XXXVII, 5, Bl. 187-8) [after 1690] —2220/2700 words
2. **An Infinite Straight Line / Linea recta infinita** / (LH XXXVII, 4, Bl. 108) [1692?] 376/460 words
3. **On Whether Infinity has a Midpoint / Quaeritur an in infinito detur Medium** (LH IV, 3, 5e, Bl. 13) 406/510
4. **Reflections on Froidmont's Labyrinth** / (LH XXXVII, IV, 57r0-58v0) [1693?] 5855/7125 words
5. **On Line and Time / Linea et Tempus** [1693-5] (LH IV, 3, 5e Bl. 24) 257/310 words
6. **Every Thing Resists the Infinite / Omnis res infinito resistit...** (LH IV, 3, 5e Bl. 10) [1695?] 73/90 words
7. **On the Incredible Subtlety of Things / Qui incredibilem rerum subtilitatem ...** (LH IV, 2, 3, Bl. 5) [1698] 332/400 words
8. **From Leibniz's Exchange with Gabriel Wagner** / A II 3, 678-729 (selections) [December 1697-March 1698] —~8000/9740 words
9. **Selections from Leibniz's correspondence with Johann Bernoulli (1698-99)** —2522/3000 words.
10. **Metaphysical Precepts of Geometry / Scientiarum diversos gradus...** / (LH 35, 7, 10 Bl. 1–8. 4 Bog. 2o. 11 1 4 S.) [c. 1698?] —8642/10520 words
11. **Place and Time, Matter and Change / Locus et Tempus ...** (LH 37, 5, Bl. 134) [1705?] —985/1200 words
12. **Selections from Leibniz's correspondence with Electress Sophie, Burchard de Volder and G. B. Tolomei** / [1705] —1920/2360 words