

Newton's draft response to the 'charta volans' of 29 July 1713

Author: Isaac Newton

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<94r>

After M^r Leibnitz had in two Letters directed to the Secretary of the Royal Society complained of M^r Keil & the Royal Society had appointed a Committee to search out old Letters & papers relating to the complaint & to report their opinion thereupon & ordered the Letters & Papers with the Report of their Committee to be published, the same was published in Jan. 171 $\frac{2}{3}$ & in August following there was printed in Germany the following Libel without the name of the Author Publisher Printer or place where the same was printed

29. July 1713

L....us nunc Viennæ — genti imputari debet.

Concerning this Libell it is to be observed that it was set on foot by M^r Leibnitz himself. For it represents Cum ipse [Leibnitius] per occupationes diversas rem nunc discutere non satis posset, ad iudicium primarij Mathematici & harum rerum peritissimi & a partium studio alieni recurrendum sibi putavit. Id vero omnibus excussis ita pronunciavit literis 7 Junij 1713 [ad Leibnitsium] datis: &c. And by this artifice the judgment of a nameless Mathematician is set up in opposition to the judgment of the Committee of the Royal Society.

2 It is to be observed that M^r Leibnitz sent this Letter of the pretended Mathematician to his correspondent to be published. For he that published it wrote that M^r Leibnitz nunc Viennæ Austriæ agens ob distantiam locorum nondum vidit libellum in Anglia nuper editum (i.e. commercium Epistolicum) & gave an account of M^r Leibnitz's referring the matte{r} to the judgment of a primary Mathematician: things which he could not know without keeping a correspondence with M^r Leibnitz.

3 The names of the great Mathematician & of the publisher are therefore known to M^r Leibnitz, & since they were employed by him he is answerable for the whole untill he produces their names; & if he refuses to produce their names he will deserve to be reputed the author of the Libel tho pretended to be written by other nameless authors. For the style is not unlike that of M^r Leibnitz. And the reflexions wherewith M^r Newton is treated are in pursuance of the designe of M^r Leibnitz expressed in his two Letters to the Secretary of the Royal Society, where he declined a dispute with M^r Keil & appealed to the judgment of M^r Newton in order to pick a quarrel with him.

After this Libel had been dispersed in Germany & some other places it was sent to the Hague with a paper of Remarques to be published in the Journal Litteraire. The author of the Remarques pursues the designe of M^r Leibnitz declining to meddle with M^r Keil & representing the dispute to be between M^r Leibnitz & M^r Newton. He tells us that M^r Leibnitz had not yet seen the commercium Epistolicum that he had not yet sent his reasons to the Royal Society in England beleiving the matter sufficiently evident so just; with other things which were known only to M^r Leibnitz himself & those to whom he communicated them. And therefore the

Author of these Remarks is also known to M^r Leibnitz & might copy from his Letters, or be M^r Leibnitz himself. The Remarques are as follows.

Let this note be in the Margin. M^r Leibnitz wrote to the Society to condemn M^r <94v> Keil without a hearing. The Society hath equal authority over them both. & M^r Leibnitz in complaining hath authorized the Society to leave the matter between them & obliged himself to produce his reasons least his complaint should be deemed a calumny. [make him liable to be censured by the Society as guilty of calumny.] And yet when M^r Keil wrote an answer to the accusation, M^r Leibnitz instead of producing his reasons wrote back that no just man would expect that he at so great an age & after so many documents of his life should defend his candor . That is he refused to give his reasons & insisted upon his candor alone. But the Society hath not yet censured him for this. They have only ordered the ancient Letters & papers & the Report of their Committee to be published.
