

## ON THE PUBLICATION OF THE *ARS CONJECTANDI*

Extract from a letter of Johann Bernoulli to Niklaus Bernoulli  
15 July 1712?

*Die Werke von Jacob Bernoulli*, Vol. 3, p. 399.

“Mr. Christ will go on a trip to Neuchâtel a future week, he should have the corrections of the treatise *de arte conjectandi*, thus the Venetian<sup>1</sup> sells to the Messers Thurneysen<sup>2</sup> to print, takes over himself, but because he now wants to go away, so he wants mine, I to instruct Mr. Bringolf<sup>3</sup> on these obligations; it will come out somewhat beautiful, if neither the editor, nor the proof-reader, nor the printer understand anything of the material, and it is without that an incomplete and truncated work; the Venetian admittedly has revealed to me nothing of his design, but is glad, also due to well-known causes nothing will mix me in it.”

Extract from Letter 147 of Varignon to Johann Bernoulli  
17 March 1713.

*Die Werke von Jacob Bernoulli*, Vol. 3, p. 399.

“Apropos of this book, Mr. your Nephew has confirmed to me that which Mr. König had said to me a few days before, that one actually prints at Basel the book *De arte conjectandi* of the late Mr. your brother: I am delighted with it, it is perhaps that which makes Mr. de Montmort hasten to have his book reprinted. Whence therefore comes that you have said nothing to me of it? seeing that M. König has said to me that this book of the late Mr. your brother is under press since nearly three months. I know that you are not involved in it, & I am annoyed with it; because late Mr. your brother having not set the last hand, it is quite difficult that he had not some gaps, & many things that he would have corrected or changed, if he had lived. To your fault I would have strongly wished that Mr. your Nephew from here, had taken care of it, knowing from Basel only you two & Mr. Hermann proper to render this work correct, although there can be others who I know not. I am quite impatient to see this work.”

Extract from a letter of Johann Bernoulli to Varignon  
29 April 1713.

*Die Werke von Jacob Bernoulli*, Vol. 3, p. 400.

“It is true that one prints the book *de Arte conjectandi*, it is also true that I have said nothing to You of it, but that You wish that I said to you of it, since You know as much as me of it: perhaps even that You know rather than me that this book was under press, because it is only recently that one has said to me that one printed this book, and that the impression of it was nearly achieved, my Nephew the Painter, this amiable child, having

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<sup>1</sup>Niklaus, son of Jakob, the youth called Painter, then living in Venice.

<sup>2</sup>Publisher of the *Ars Conjectandi*

<sup>3</sup>Supposed proof-reader of the *Ars Conjectandi*, since Mr. Christ is absent due to his departure for Neuchâtel.

paid great attention, that one hid the secret from me, until the day of publication of the book; you see, I pray You, the confidence that he has in me: You have reason to believe that it will have some gaps, because not only has the Author not set the last hand, but hardly he has achieved the half of his project, so that this will be a very defective and very incomplete work; for the exactitude of the impression. You will judge it when You will have seen it; however I am able to say to You that neither the bookseller, nor the printer, nor the proof-reader understands a drop of the material of which the book treats; perhaps that the clearness with which the late my brother had the custom to copy his writings, will supply in default of the ignorance of these people.”

Extract of Letter 2 from Varignon to Niklaus Bernoulli  
May or June 1713

*Die Werke von Jacob Bernoulli*, Vol. 3, p. 400.

“I am impatient to see the book *de arte conjectandi* of late Mr. his<sup>4</sup> illustrious Father, who having not set the last hand, will have left without doubt some gaps and other negligences which could have had need by a man as able as Mr. your uncle today, or as you or as Mr. Hermann, in order to preside at the printing: At least before the book appear, you review the impression in order to mark in it the errata, to add the necessary clarifications, and an announcement on that which the too premature death of its illustrious Author has not permitted him to set this work into the last perfection which he was capable of giving to it: You will carve from it thence the negligences which one will be able to find, and you thus render service to the glory of which I am one of the most zealous defenders, and to the public.”

Extract from Letter 2 of Niklaus Bernoulli to Michelotti<sup>5</sup>  
29 August 1713

*Die Werke von Jacob Bernoulli*, Vol. 3, p. 400.

“The book of the late my Uncle is finally exiting the press, . . . I have made a small preface at the urgent request of the Booksellers and of my Cousin”

Extract from Letter IV of Niklaus Bernoulli to Leibniz  
9 September 1713 at Basel

*Leibnizens mathematische Schriften*, Bd. III, pp. 987–989

“I shall arrange besides, that the last post mortem Treatise *de Arte Conjectandi* of my father’s brother arrive to You, which recently escaped press.”

Extract from Letter 16 of Montmort to Niklaus Bernoulli  
25 December 1713

*Die Werke von Jacob Bernoulli*, Vol. 3, p. 400.

“It is true, that which you say, that there are few things for us to learn, who have much thought in these matters. The book omits nothing from being excellent.”

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<sup>4</sup>Painter Niklaus, son of Jakob.

<sup>5</sup>Pietro Antonio Michelotti (1673-1740), physician in Venice.