Christian Wolff Encyclopedia Article

Christian Wolff

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Christian Wolff

1679-1754

German philosopher whose systematic treatises were enormously important in diffusing Gottfried Leibniz's ideas and introducing Germany to recent scientific discoveries. He sought rapprochement between Scholasticism, modern science, and the new mathematics in a formal system where everything followed from self-evident axioms or preceding truths. This approach greatly influenced his contemporaries. Wolff was a confirmed corpuscularian, believed the physical world to be a deterministic machine obeying the laws of motion, and established German philosophical terminology.