One Reasonable Explanation for the Terminology "Calling" a Function

In the 1960s when scientists at IBM were developing the Fortran programming language and using it to write programs for scientific problems, they often needed some mathematical function, e.g., a trig function such as sine. Since code for computing values of such functions (using infinite series) was nontrivial, a programmer would write it down and keep it in a notebook so he could look it up and copy it into a program when needed.

   If some other programmer needed one of these functions, she might remember that Joe had the code in his notebook, and she would ***call*** out, "Hey Joe, I need your sine function!"

   As this began to happen more and more frequently, creating more and more of a disturbance, these notebooks containing code for commonly used functions were placed in the company's ***library*** where programmers could get them and insert the code into their program.

   Today, we still use this language of *calling* functions, and (as we'll see later) we can put them in a *library* from where they can be automatically retrieved and *included* in a program.