

Albert Einstein, "Foreword to Lucretius"

Post by "Cassius" of March 5, 2021 at 9:17 PM

Thanks Don - not very long! Maybe [Martin](#) can let us know whether the full document is interesting enough to pursue further.

Clip of the English notes:

398 DOC. 260 INTRODUCTION LUCRETIVS

Published in *Diels 1924*, Vol. 2, pp. via–vib.

^[1]Hermann Diels (1848–1922), a classical philologist, died on 4 June 1922, before completing his edition of Lucretius. Einstein attended his funeral (see Otto Gradenwitz to Einstein, 1 July 1922, [Vol. 13, Doc. 259]). Diels’s annotated Latin edition and translation of Lucretius’s *De rerum natura* was published posthumously in two volumes, edited by Johannes Mewaldt. The first volume, published in 1923, contains the Latin text, a preface by Diels, a note by Mewaldt, and various supplements. The second volume, published in 1924, contains Diels’s translation of Lucretius’s text into German and a foreword by Mewaldt, completed in March 1924. Mewaldt (1880–1964) was a classical philologist and historian of medicine. In 1923 he was professor at the University of Greifswald, while by 1924 he had moved to the University of Königsberg.

The pagination to Einstein’s foreword (pp. via–vib) suggests that it was inserted into the volume in the later stages of production. Mewaldt’s foreword (pp. v–vi) makes no mention of Einstein. *Rösler 1999* speculates that Walther Nernst, who published a book review of the German edition (see *Nernst 1924*) in *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, may have suggested that Einstein write the foreword.

^[2]For a most recent expression of Einstein’s deep conviction in the correctness of causal interconnection of natural phenomena, see Docs. 256 and 240. See also Doc. 247, note 4.

^[3]For a recent published expression by Einstein on religion, superstition, and the liberating effect of the development of science, see “Answer to Questions on Religion” [Vol. 13, Doc. 398], and also Doc. 479.