

# The Twelve Fundamentals - Discussion on Lucretius Today Podcast

Post by "Don" of January 2, 2023 at 9:25 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

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Whether it's physics or sensation or the Canon or something else that needs to mention that color is a product of the arrangement of atoms, there's no way to tell from the context in Diogenes Laertius.

And thus DeWitt and Clay set out to "reconstruct" the list by looking for the common foundational points in Lucretius and Letter to Herodotus, which seems to be a pretty reasonable approach. I am not aware of other attempts to do that but seems like a fruitful topic for future writing.

Yes and no. There's no way to tell what those 12 basics were (other than the 1, 2, or 3 stated there). For example:

*Metrodorus in his Timocrates, whose actual words are : "Thus pleasure being conceived both as that species which consists in motion and that which is a state of rest."*

*Nor, again, will the wise man marry and rear a family : so Epicurus says in the Problems and in the De Natura.*

It's likely that Metrodorus talked about things other than the species of pleasure in his *Timocrates*, and Epicurus wrote about more than marriage in *Problems* and in *On Nature*. We know Problems was a complete work because it's in the list that Diogenes gives.

As for the "12 basics" it could be the title of a work or a list in another work, and it could be 12 basic principles applied to the senses like color is due to the arrangement of atoms, sounds are due to the ...?, touch is due to ...?... And so on with dreams, memory, taste, etc. They could be 12 foundational ideas of physics. They could be 12... etc. There's simply no way to tell. It's a quote from a commentator citing a quote out of context from a work or excerpt.

PS: That's not to say one can't try to pull together a list of "fundamental physics principles" if one wants to, be that 9, 10, 12, 20, 40. But they should be under no illusions that these are "The Twelve Rudiments " referred to by the scholiast adding notes to the manuscripts.