

How the Epicureans might have predicted Lorentz time dilation

Post by “Eikadistes” of December 15, 2025 at 4:31 PM

[Quote from jcblackmon](#)

I may post a simple version of my argument, if there is interest. Thank you.

Please do!

While none of the Hellenists predicted the wide spectrum of discoveries that the 20th-century uniquely hosted, Epíkouros seems to me to have anticipated more of the contemporary nuances than any other philosopher. One, subtle example I like to use is the question of the "Center of the Universe". Most of us believe that the Heliocentric model is the correct model ... for the Solar System. But at the time, we weren't modeling the Solar System. We were modeling **all** of the stars, and we put the Sun in the very middle of all of them. *Heliocentrism* in this regard is false. To my knowledge, only Epíkouros shared the subtle insight that, indeed, "there can be no center to infinity."

I have always seen there to be some level of a conceptual correspondence between *isotakheia* and Einstein's propositions about the nature and propagation of light, so I would **love** a general outline of some of these advanced topics in contemporary physics and mathematics.

Also, are you familiar with Einstein's introduction to Diel's German version of *De Rerum Natura*? His commentary makes me wonder if he found direct inspiration from Epicureans. Per Einstein:

"The work of Lucretius will work its magic on anyone who does not completely wrap himself in the spirit of our time and, in particular, occasionally feels like a spectator of the intellectual attitude of his contemporaries. One sees here how an independent man equipped with lively senses and reasoning, endowed with scientific and speculative curiosity, a man who has not even the faintest notion of the results of today's science that we are taught in childhood, before we can consciously, much less critically, confront them, imagines the world.

The firm confidence that Lucretius, as a faithful disciple of Democritus and Epicurus, places in the intelligibility, in other words, in the casual connectedness of everything that happens in the world, must make a profound impression. He is firmly convinced, he even believes he can prove, that everything is based on the the regular motion of immutable atoms, ascribing to atoms no qualities other than geometric-mechnaical ones. The sensual qualities warmth, coldenss, color, odor, taste, are to be attributed to the movements of atoms, likewise all phenomena of life. He conceives of the soul and mind as formed from especially light atoms, by assigning (in an inconsistent way) particular qualities of matter to particular characteristics of

experience.

He states as the primary objective of his work the liberation of humanity from the slavish fear, induced by religion and superstition, that he sees as nourished and exploited by priests for their own purposes. This certainly is a serious issue for him. Nonetheless, he does seem to have been guided mostly by the need to persuade his readers of the necessity for the atomistic-mechanical worldview, although he dare not say this openly to his much more practically oriented Roman readers. His reverence for Epicurus, Greek culture and language, which he considers greatly superior to Latin culture and language, is altogether moving. It redounds to the glory of the Romans that this could be said to them. Where is the modern nation that holds and expresses such noble sentiments with regard to one of its contemporary nations?

Diels's verses read so naturally that one forget it is a translation."

(Einstein, forward to: T. Lucretius Carus, *De rerum natura*, Vol. 2, *Lukrez, Von der Natur*, trans. by Hermann Diels, Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1924, pp. via-vib)