

Short Statement in Response to Friedrich Winterberg

The paper by Prof. Winterberg¹ aims to refute our original claim in *Science*² that Hilbert did not anticipate Einstein in finding the correct field equations for general relativity. He stresses that two pages of the proofs of Hilbert's 1915 paper³ have been incompletely preserved,⁴ a fact without any bearing on the matter at hand as was already discussed in an extensive 1999 paper on the matter,⁵ which has been freely available from the website of the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science since 1999. In contrast, Prof. Winterberg fails to address the substantive difference between the theory expounded in the proofs (dated by a printer's stamp to 6 December 1915) on the one hand, and the version Hilbert eventually published, without altering the original dateline of 20 November 1915, in early 1916, i.e. after Einstein's conclusive paper, dated 25 November 1915.

Since Prof. Winterberg feels personally offended by the response to his paper that was previously featured on this site, which was in no way intended on our part, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science has decided to replace the original, more detailed response to his paper with this abbreviated version.

¹ Friedwart Winterberg, 2004. "On 'Belated Decision in the Hilbert-Einstein Priority Dispute', published by L. Corry, J. Renn, and J. Stachel." *Zeitschrift für Naturforschung A*, 59a: 715–719.

² Leo Corry, Jürgen Renn, and John Stachel, 1997. "Belated Decision in the Hilbert-Einstein Priority Dispute." In: *Science* (278) pp. 1270-1273.

³ David Hilbert, 1916. "Die Grundlagen der Physik. (Erste Mitteilung)." *Königliche Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Mathematisch-physikalische Klasse. Nachrichten* (1915): 395–407.

⁴ Facsimile available at < <http://echo.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/content/relativityrevolution/hilbert> >

⁵ Jürgen Renn and John Stachel. 1999. *Hilbert's Foundation of Physics: From a Theory of Everything to a Constituent of General Relativity*, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin. Preprint 118. (download at < <http://www.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/de/forschung/Preprints/P118.PDF> >.