



## The Road to Relativity: The History and Meaning of Einstein's "The Foundation of General Relativity", Featuring the Original Manuscript of Einstein's Masterpiece

*By Hanoch Gutfreund, Jürgen Renn*



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This richly annotated facsimile edition of "The Foundation of General Relativity" introduces a new generation of readers to Albert Einstein's theory of gravitation. Written in 1915, this remarkable document is a watershed in the history of physics and an enduring testament to the elegance and precision of Einstein's thought. Presented here is a beautiful facsimile of Einstein's original handwritten manuscript, along with its English translation and an insightful page-by-page commentary that places the work in historical and scientific context. Hanoch Gutfreund and Jürgen Renn's concise introduction traces Einstein's intellectual odyssey from special to general relativity, and their essay "The Charm of a Manuscript" provides a delightful meditation on the varied afterlife of Einstein's text. Featuring a foreword by John Stachel, this handsome edition also includes a biographical glossary of the figures discussed in the book, a comprehensive bibliography, suggestions for further reading, and numerous photos and illustrations throughout.



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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Any devotee of Einstein will relish the chance to parse this annotated facsimile of the physicist's original manuscript on general relativity. . . . [Gutfreund and Renn's] cogent descriptions and the accompanying illustrations and documents open a fascinating window onto Einstein's otherwise inaccessible opus."--**Scientific American**

"[Gutfreund and Renn] remind us of the charm a manuscript affords: rare glimpses into the working process of a great mind."--**New Scientist**

"*The Road to Relativity* by Hanoch Gutfreund and Jürgen Renn reproduces the 45 handwritten--and hand-corrected--pages of Einstein's general theory, accompanied by extensive annotations on the science, its historical context and the implications for the future. The volume also includes a glossary of scientists and philosophers relevant to Einstein's work and some entertainingly lively illustrations--such as one of Einstein pouring coffee on a moving train to demonstrate that motion is relative--by Laurent Taudin."--**Nancy Szokan, Washington Post**

"Gutfreund and Renn dissect every page of the manuscript, explaining the meaning of each passage and describing Einstein's thought processes leading up to it. . . . *The Road to Relativity* is accessible and engaging."--**Tom Siegfried, Science News**

"[A] wonderful book that combines a facsimile of Einstein's original manuscript, an English translation and a rich annotation."--**Bill Condie, Cosmos Magazine**

#### From the Back Cover

"The feeling a physicist has in reading Einstein's handwritten manuscript on general relativity must be like what a pianist would feel upon seeing a draft of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*. What kind of human creativity can produce something like this? Gutfreund and Renn provide the context for the paper, and the English translation enables readers not fluent in German to see it as a whole. This book is a little treasure."--**Jeremy Bernstein, Aspen Center for Physics**

"We have in *The Road to Relativity* an approachable, precise, and riveting account of one of the great intellectual voyages of the last hundred and fifty years. I commend this book to anyone fascinated by gravity and the shape of the universe, to be sure, but also to anyone passionate about one of the great odysseys of modern science."--**Peter Galison, Harvard University**

"Gutfreund and Renn have compiled a wonderful book, a real primer to Einstein's long and complex journey to the general theory of relativity. In this well written distillation of several decades of historical-scientific scholarship, we find not only Einstein's own papers, concisely and clearly explained, but also a rich tapestry of the contextual background to the revolutionary transformations in theoretical physics initiated by an entire generation of scientists in the early twentieth century."--**Diana Kormos Buchwald, Einstein Papers Project, Caltech**

"This book takes you on a wonderful journey of discovery. Its centerpiece is Einstein's handwritten exposition of the general theory of relativity, written shortly after the decisive breakthrough of November 1915. In their splendid introduction and insightful commentary, Gutfreund and Renn tell the story of how Einstein found his new theory of space-time and gravity, making both the theory itself and Einstein's arduous path to it come alive for general readers."--**Michel Janssen, University of Minnesota**

"This is a lovely book and an excellent way to mark the centennial of Einstein's general relativity. The facsimile reproduction of Einstein's manuscript is wonderful to behold, and Gutfreund and Renn have done a superb job of guiding nonspecialists through Einstein's argument and placing the work in a broader intellectual and historical context."--**David Kaiser, author of *How the Hippies Saved Physics: Science, Counterculture, and the Quantum Revival***

"The centenary of Einstein's theory of gravitation is a fitting moment to recommend one of the greatest landmarks in the history of physics. The historical introduction and page-by-page annotations provide a careful narrative of Einstein's path from special to general relativity."--**Michael D. Gordin, author of *Five Days in August: How World War II Became a Nuclear War***

#### About the Author

**Hanoch Gutfreund** is professor emeritus of theoretical physics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he is also the academic director of the Albert Einstein Archives. **Jürgen Renn** is a director at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin.

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