

ABSTRACT

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PANEL: The Philosophical Significance of Cosmology and Theology

TITLE:

Ita sentiebant veteres: use and omission of classical Latin poetry in Isaac Newton's Principia Mathematica

EXTENSION: 20 min.

ABSTRACT:

For the second edition of *Principia* (1713), Newton added the "Scholium Generale", which deals with the nature of God. Among others, he refers there to Vergil (*Georgics* 4.220; *Aeneid* 6.721) as a support of the idea of divine omnipresence.

Even though he also prepared a selection of ancient texts, the "classical scholia", which were intended to prove the existence in Antiquity of Newtonian concepts such as vacuum, inertia or gravity, he finally chose not to include them. It is specially relevant that these rejected "scholia" included large quotations from Lucretius.

This paper focuses on the relationship between the Vergilian passages present in the "Scholium Generale" and the Lucretian ones quoted in the rejected texts, and intends to provide possible reasons why Newton finally decided to publish the first and not the second.