

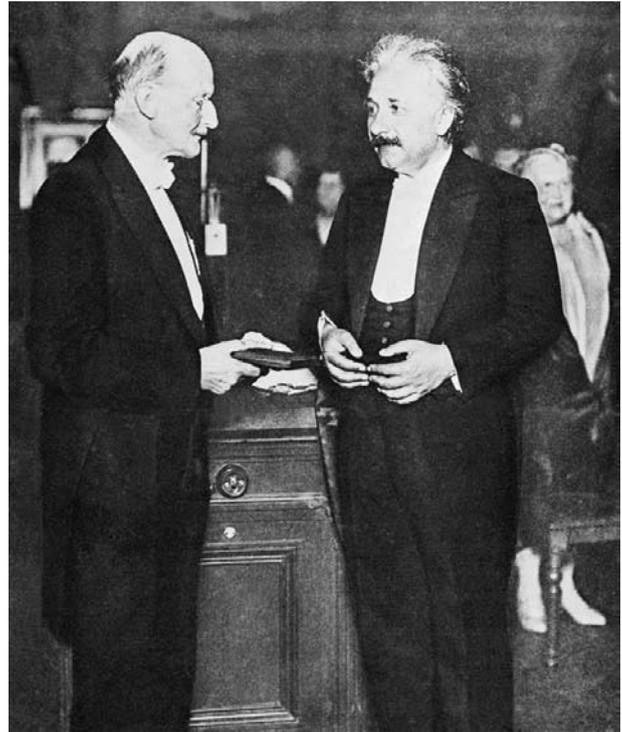
Einstein on Kepler

Here are excerpts from an essay by Einstein, in commemoration of the 300th anniversary of Kepler's death. It appeared in the Frankfurter Zeitung on Nov. 9, 1930.

In anxious and uncertain times like ours, when it is difficult to find pleasure in humanity and the course of human affairs, it is particularly consoling to think of the serene greatness of a Kepler. Kepler lived in an age in which the reign of law in nature was by no means an accepted certainty. How great must his faith in a uniform law have been, to have given him the strength to devote ten years of hard and patient work to the empirical investigation of the movement of the planets and the mathematical laws of that movement, entirely on his own, supported by no one and understood by very few!...

One can never see where a planet really is at any given moment, but only in what direction it can be seen just then from the Earth, which is itself moving in an unknown manner around the Sun. The difficulties thus seemed practically unsurmountable.

Kepler had to discover a way of bringing order into this chaos.



Max Planck gives a medal to Albert Einstein in Berlin, June 28, 1929.