

How To Place Epicurus In Relation To "Nominalism"?

Post by "Cassius" of June 13, 2021 at 7:17 AM

This is very close to what I was looking for and why I think Epicurus would object to a too-superficial labeling of being a "nominalist." What an on-point article!

Quote

This rapid overview is relevant to our present purposes in bringing forward one main point: namely that, in acknowledging certain 'mental capacities' (in the main, a form of reasoning and memory) in addition to sense-perception, the objects of knowledge do not shift to an intelligible realm⁵², but rather, on the contrary, are all the more tied down to what is observed⁵³. For it is possible, according to Epicurus, to recognize in the observable reality, with the help of memory and λογισμός, certain regularities which are the basis for knowledge - without these being immanent or separate universals. Thus, the distinction made by Aristotle in the first chapter of the *Metaphysics*, namely between experience on the one hand which yields knowledge of certain particulars (*Met.*, A 1, 981a9), and art, or science, which is of universals and of which particular individuals are instances (*Met.*, A 1, 981a10-12 and a16) - and which a person can have also without experience, given that an art can be taught (*Met.*, A 1, 981b9) - is resolved, on the Epicurean account, into one unique path towards knowledge. For experience is the art or science which is able to yield knowledge of regular and generic features of reality, exhibited by the individual beings which compose it, without this knowledge being limited to a specific knowledge of this or that individual. It is possible to have knowledge on the basis of experience, without there being universals and thus without knowledge being of universals.