

Aetius and his "Placata"

Post by "Cassius" of October 10, 2024 at 3:09 PM

Starting a new thread on this 1st or 2nd century AD philosopher [Aetius](#) and his "Placata." Thanks to Bryan for this info and link to a reasonably priced edition of Aetius from Loeb. As Bryan says "It is a primary source in Greek, from around 50 AD, and mentions Epicurus over forty times."

<https://www.amazon.com/Placita-Loeb-Classical-Library-Aetius/dp/067499759X>

I am ordering a copy, and in the meantime I was able to find this example from its translation section:

Quote

§16 Epicurus, the son of Neocles, the Athenian, who philosophised in the line of Democritus, said that the principles of the things that exist are bodies that are observable by reason, not containing any void, ungenerated, indestructible, unable to be crushed or have its parts modified or be qualitatively altered. These bodies are observable by reason; and they move with the void and throughout the void. The void itself is unlimited (in size), and the bodies are unlimited (in number). The bodies possess these three (characteristics), shape, size, weight. Democritus stated that there were two, size and shape, but Epicurus added to these a third, weight. 'For it is necessary', he says, 'that the bodies are moved by the blow caused by weight, since they will not be moved (sc. otherwise)'. The shapes of the atoms are incomprehensibly many, but not unlimited in number. They cannot have the form of a hook or a trident or a bracelet, for these shapes are easily crushed, whereas atoms are impassible and unable to be crushed. They have their individual shapes, which are observable by reason. The term 'atom' is used, not because it is a smallest particle, but because it cannot be cut, being as it is impassible and not containing any void. As a result, when he speaks of an atom, he means what is uncrushable and impassible, not containing any void. That there is such a thing as an atom is clear. For there are elements that always exist, that is to say figures (without void), and the unit. (P9,S19, cf. Tvi)