"The Canon of Epicurus In Everyday Life" - An Article by George Kaplanis

Post by “Cassius” of July 31, 2019 at 10:45 AM

I agree that a lot of Epicurus' physics is based on deductive logic -- we can't see atoms so we have to deduce whatever we an know about them.

But as to this sentence "The three axiomata of classical logic (identity, excluded middle, non-contradiction) cannot be challenged by any empirical observation" I am not at all sure that Epicurus would agree, in fact I doubt he would. I believe Epicurus would say that the principals of logic are validated by empirical observations, not the other way around.

Diogenes Laertius (Bailey): "Logic they reject as misleading. For they say it is sufficient for physicists to be guided by what things say of themselves. Thus in The Canon Epicurus says that the tests of truth are the sensations and concepts (Bailey says concepts, most other translators say preconceptions or anticipations) and the feelings; the Epicureans add to these the intuitive apprehensions of the mind. And this he says himself too in the summary addressed to Herodotus and in the Principal Doctrines. For, he says, all sensation is irrational and does not admit of memory; for it is not set in motion by itself, nor when it is set in motion by something else, can it add to it or take from it. Nor is there anything which can refute the sensations. For a similar sensation cannot refute a similar because it is equivalent in validity, nor a dissimilar a dissimilar, for the objects of which they are the criteria are not the same; nor again can reason, for all reason is dependent upon sensations; nor can one sensation refute another, for we attend to them all alike. Again, the fact of apperception confirms the truth of the sensations. And seeing and hearing are as much facts as feeling pain. From this it follows that as regards the imperceptible we must draw inferences from phenomena. For all thoughts have their origin in sensations by means of coincidence and analogy and similarity and combination, reasoning too contributing something."