

Diving Deep Into The History of The Tetrpharmakon / Tetrpharmakos

Post by “Cassius” of May 14, 2025 at 1:19 PM

Prompted by some comments by [Rolf](#) , and then by Godfrey, I have a new question to add to this thread since a long time has passed since it started. I hope this hasn't been covered already but even if so it would be good to revisit this question:

We've had a number of references to statements like "the sun is the size it appears to be" as being in the nature of a "shibboleth" or in-your-face test of whether you understand a doctrine, as expounded by the article by Dr. Gellar-Goad.

I don't recall putting the "easy" wording of the Tetrpharmakon into that mold, but I suppose in thinking about it that the Epicureans might have over time developed such wording as a "test" of understanding, rather than as the kind of thing you'd say to your grandmother dying in the hospital.

I glanced back this morning at the word translated as "easy" and I see that there are also shades such as "readily" which arguably might not be so "in-your-face." And I stand firm in my general reservation that this formulation is not recorded to have been used by Epicurus, and apparently has never been seen other than in the fragment attributed to Philodemus in a book where he is critical of other Epicureans.

However for the sake of argument, to what extent might someone suggest that the "easy" phrasing as to the good and to the terrible was intended as a "make your point dramatically" shibboleth, rather than just a memory device or overgeneralization of [PD03](#) and [PD04](#)?