

The Tetrpharmakon - Sound Epicurean Doctrine, or Oversimplification?

Post by "Cassius" of December 7, 2020 at 9:48 AM

1 - Godfrey you are on a roll with good papers recently - thank you!

[Quote from Charles](#)

If indeed Philodemus or Zeno (of Sidon) were pro-tetrpharmakon, perhaps the saying only circulated among the inner circles of students within various gardens, as opposed to being a means of teaching others who were unfamiliar.

2 - Don you are deeper into this now than I am so please keep me honest. It seems to me I am remembering that there are "zero" references to this precise formulation ****except for**** the passage in the Herculaneum scroll that was reconstructed after their discovery in the 1700's. Am I correct about that? Do we have any examples of any ancient Epicurean using this formulation other than that scroll?

3 - And I usually combine that caveat with the statement that there is also "zero" context in terms of surrounding material on that "page" of the scroll that would tell us how it is being used. Am I also correct about that? I don't even know if "page" is the right measure - I am not aware of anyone stating the content of the last remaining text before this occurs, of the first remaining text after it occurs. Don have you picked up anything on that? I think that would be very valuable information to know, but I have not seen it addressed anywhere.

4 - I make that last observation also in context of how Philodemus is regularly writing in opposition to non-Epicureans and/or some other Epicureans, so that I think we always have to keep in mind the peril of putting too much emphasis on an isolated passage that may not even be something that Philodemus was writing approvingly, since he regularly summarized opposing or incorrect doctrine so he could attack it.. On this point I don't think there's much doubt (of course correct me there too if I am wrong), but on points 2 and 3 I know that's an issue of fact that may actually change over time with new discoveries.