

Tetrapharmakos in Philodemus's On Choices and Rejections

Post by "Cassius" of February 26, 2022 at 2:03 PM

What you are asking for (in my view) is the complete version of [PD03](#) and [PD04](#), which are at the links. To me, it is much easier to see from the full original [PD03](#) and [PD04](#) that Stoicism is not at all called for and is the worst possible answer. And for a full discussion of how [PD03](#) and [PD04](#) work together, you will want to check Chapter 12 ("The New Hedonism") of DeWitt's Book.

Even then, there are layers and layers of issues to be unraveled in "the good is easily obtained" and "the terrible is easily endured," not only superficially with the words used, but again in responses to Platonic arguments against Pleasure as the "highest good."

That's why at best I see the Tetrapharmakon as a memory device for those who take the time to study the details. At worst (and I expect this happens far too often) the third and fourth make the eyes glaze over, or act as turnoffs for people who see them as hopelessly unrealistic.

So I would say that you provide a good test! The discussion of the Tetrapharmakon can either (1) serve what I would say is its only real usefulness, that of reminding of the topics and spurring the reader to seek out the details and work understand them, or (2) turn the reader off to the work involved in finding out what they really mean, and encourage him or her to move on to an easier-to-follow philosophy.

Let's be sure to (1) answer all your questions, but also (2) let's keep in mind (since you are thinking a lot about how to jump-start Epicurean communities) the hazards involved in teaching from the Tetrapharmakon. I would like to see as much discussion as possible of both.