

Diving Deep Into The History of The Tetrapharmakon / Tetrapharmakos

Post by "Cassius" of February 2, 2019 at 2:29 PM

In Bailey's "Epicurus, the Extant Remains" there is no reference to any appearance of this formulation anywhere in the ancient world other than the above-referenced Herculaneum scroll:

Cyril Bailey - Epicurus The Extant Remains

COMMENTARY. § 139 347

guidance for life intended for the professed Epicurean, that it does not claim to be a consecutive treatise on ethics, but deals successively with the various topics of importance for its own practical end. With all the ancient testimony which we have to its favour, there seems no sound reason for doubting that it is the work of Epicurus himself, nor, if its character be rightly understood, does its working out seem unworthy of him or more appropriate to an intelligent compiler. The picture of the 'true Epicurean' which it represents is consistent with what we learn from other sources, and in particular from the third letter, to Menecrates. It is based on a mistaken working out of the idea of pleasure as the end of life (which is characteristically never stated in the aphiormata), and though in some details, such as the conceptions of justice and friendship, its individualities irritate the reader as almost insupportably cynical, yet the image of the tranquil life has its strong attractions, and the vision of the Epicurean community with which the series concludes has a considerable beauty of its own. We may safely regard the 'Principal Doctrines' as *Stoia*, the authentic dicta of their Master, and also as *Schoola* in the sense that they do not attempt to cover the whole field of ethics, but only to lay down the conditions for the true Epicurean life.

The four aphiormata hang closely together and form the basis of the Epicurean moral system. The principles which they enunciate were known to the school as the 'quadruple remedy' (*tetrapharmakon*), and are found summed up under this title in the Herculaneum Roll (frag. 101). A full summary of the text is given in the Appendix to the edition of the text by Bailey (1908). The four principles are again summed up as the full equipment for the moral life in Ep. II, § 139, and are dealt with fully and in order in the earlier part of that letter. The right belief about the gods and about death, and the true understanding of pleasure and pain, were *propaedia* for the mind and enable us to *stare* at *deum* for the body.