Diving Deep Into The History of The Tetrapharmakon / Tetrapharmakos

Post by “Cassius” of February 2, 2019 at 2:34 PM

From Bernard Frischer, "The Sculpted Word"

Epicurean Policy on Recruitment 73

only randomly and as little more than a rhetorical topos is in Epicureanism a leading idea that coalesces in the doctrine of the tetrapharmakos.[12]

The tetrapharmakos, or fourfold medicine, consists of four simple precepts, the acceptance of which, according to Epicurus, forms the foundation of the soul's health.[13] As such it makes up only one part of Epicurean psychiatry, for, though offering a remedy for the mind's sickness, it includes neither an analysis of the aetiology of the disease nor a method of recruiting and persuading "patients" to accept treatment. To be faithful to his own proudly proclaimed conception of philosophy, Epicurus must treat these two related questions. In the transmitted writings there is a good deal about aetiology. Briefly put, the root of the problem is traced back to κενοδοξία, or vain longings arising from an incorrect grasp of what is natural and necessary for man.[14] In fr. 471 (Usener) the link between sickness and false longings is made explicit: "Just as men with fever through the malignance of their disease are always thirsty and desire the most injurious things, so, too, those whose mind is in an evil state are always poor in everything and in their greed are plunged into ever-changing desires" (Bailey's translation).[15] What is, however, lacking in the preserved works is any discussion of the means by which the philosopher-physician should initiate the process of change from vain longings to correct desires by

nor *disciples* (τοιούτοις, and especially Diogenes of Oinoanda fr. 3, col. 4.4–8 (Chilton), ἀπεὶ δὲ/ . . . οἱ τηλικοῦτοι/ κοσμίωνες δι᾽ ἀκμὴν τῆς περὶ τὰς πράξεις ἀμεριμνίας/ ἀποδεδεμένοι τοιούτοι/ ποιοῦσι . . . It is significant in this regard that in Περὶ παιδειῶν L. Sedigitus may praise Epicurus, see C. Jacobi, *Die neuen Bruchstücke* (Berlin 1928 [= Ἐπίκουρος παιδείας L. col. 3.1]). This passage will be discussed in more detail below in Section 1 of Chapter V.

12. See M. Pohlenz, *Die Stoa* (Göttingen 1964[2]) vol. 1, p. 85, for a list of Stoic passages; cf. Schmid, op. cit. (supra n. 11) cols. 1308ff., on the τετραπλοῦς; and see M. Gigante, "Philosophia Medicans" in Filodemo," *Cron. ec.* 2 (1972) 13–61.

13. See C. Bailey, *Epicurus, the Extant Remains* (Oxford 1926) 347.