

# Diving Deep Into The History of The Tetrpharmakon / Tetrpharmakos

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"[A Conceptual and Theoretical Analysis of Fear](#)" by Sergio Starkstein, including a reference that Long considers the tetrpharmakos encapsulates Epicurus' entire philosophy.

## 2.4.1 The Principal Causes of Fear

The main causes of human fear, which are described in the first four spheres of the *Artae Deana*, were briefly summarized by Epicurus' follower Philodemus in the famous *deophrastica* or the four-fold remedy (Eber and Schofield 1999): "Don't fear god, Don't worry about death, What is good is easy to get, and What is terrible is easy to endure." The *deophrastica* is structured in a hierarchy that facilitates a philosophical treatment of fears. The first step is to eliminate the fear of the afterlife, which should allow an easier removal of the fear of death. Once this step is achieved, the remaining fears can be diminished or removed by following the Epicurean ethics of a tranquil life and Epicurus' maxims regarding fear and safety (see below). I shall now analyze the *deophrastica* in its four individual components.

## 2.4.2 Don't Fear God

During the Hellenistic period, as already noted, there was a widespread belief that human life was in the control of gods, the goddesses of fortune. Religion became one alternative to escape from the grasp of an uncertain destiny, although requiring its own fears. For example, individuals could ask the gods for protection, but at the same time had to seek protection from the gods' anger. Gordon (Gordon and Stein 2004, pp. 5-16) considers this ambivalent status of the Hellenistic gods as the origin of the human fear of the divine. Tadokoro (2013, p. 8) suggested that in the Hellenistic era the Greeks were terrified by the powers of nature, which became impersonated in spiritual beings. Later these beliefs crystallized in a religious system that made the gods more familiar and natural phenomena less frightening. The Greek gods acquired a human form and could interact with human affairs in both positive and negative ways. According to Epicurus, fear of the gods is

<sup>1</sup>Philodemus, *De Ophephastica* (De Divi Computatio) (Philo 1985, vol. 43-14) (Eber and Schofield 1999). Long considers that the *deophrastica* "expresses some abstract principle" (Long 1985, p. 176).