

Diving Deep Into The History of The Tetrpharmakon / Tetrpharmakos

Post by "Cassius" of February 2, 2019 at 8:40 PM

Thanks for the comments above. Godfrey, in case I am not being clear, I don't really suspect that the phrasing indicates a divergence from Epicurus in Philodemus. Rather, what I suspect is that modern interpreters are reading into fragmentary remains something that probably is not there.

My greatest concern after the fragmentary nature of these lines is the lack of context before and after in the scroll. Based on what I read in Philodemus in "On Methods of Inference" and "On Rhetoric" it was common for him to quote opposing philosophers and discuss opposing views. For all we know he could have been writing something with which he did not agree, so he could explain the problems with it.

I agree also with the comments that there are aspects of the passage that are useful, even in prompting us to have discussions like this. It's certainly possible to interpret these in ways that are consistent, but I do question whether Epicurus himself would ever say that "what's good is easy to get" and "what's bad to easy to avoid." Those don't seem to me to be sympathetic interpretations of PD3 and PD4, or the way that someone who does have compassion for the suffering of mankind would talk, as Epicurus clearly had. So even if the translation and context are accurate, I'd question what is going on with this formulation.