

Diving Deep Into The History of The Tetrpharmakon / Tetrpharmakos

Post by "Cassius" of December 7, 2024 at 4:45 PM

The "ultimate authority" in December 2024! 😊

I asked:

When was the word "Tetrpharmakon" first used?

ChatGPT said:

The word "Tetrpharmakon" (meaning "four-part remedy") is attributed to the later Epicurean philosopher Philodemus of Gadara (circa 110–35 BCE). While it encapsulates key aspects of Epicurean philosophy, its formulation as a concise term may not have originated directly from Epicurus himself. The phrase is most famously associated with a poetic fragment found in Philodemus' works, which outlines four key maxims derived from Epicurus' teachings:

1. **Do not fear the gods.**
2. **Do not worry about death.**
3. **What is good is easy to get.**
4. **What is terrible is easy to endure.**

The earliest surviving textual evidence of the term is in Herculaneum papyri linked to Philodemus' writings, dating to the 1st century BCE. This suggests that the term gained currency among Epicureans as a way to succinctly summarize their core ethical guidance during or after Philodemus' time.

Cassius said:

Who was the NEXT person after Philodemus to mention it?

ChatGPT said:

The term "Tetrpharmakon" is primarily associated with the Epicurean philosopher Philodemus of Gadara (circa 110–35 BCE), who utilized it to encapsulate four [principal doctrines](#) of Epicurean philosophy. The earliest known textual evidence of this term appears in the Herculaneum papyri, specifically in Philodemus' works dating to the 1st century BCE.

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/712-diving-deep-into-the-history-of-the-tetrpharmakon-tetrpharmakos/?postID=33287#post33287>

Subsequent explicit mentions of the "Tetrapharmakon" are scarce in surviving ancient literature. While later Epicurean thinkers and commentators, such as Diogenes of Oenoanda in the 2nd century CE, propagated Epicurean doctrines, it remains uncertain whether they specifically referenced the "Tetrapharmakon" by name. Therefore, based on existing evidence, Philodemus is the earliest and, perhaps, the sole ancient source to explicitly mention the "Tetrapharmakon."