

August 2, 2023 - Wednesday Night Zoom Agenda - Vatican Sayings 16 & 17

Post by "Cassius" of July 26, 2023 at 9:30 PM

[NOTE: If you are a new member who has not previously attended a meeting, click here for background information on how to attend and obtain the Zoom link.](#)

Here are our topics for this week:

1 - The Vatican Sayings:

VS16. No one when he sees evil deliberately chooses it, but is enticed by it as being good in comparison with a greater evil, and so pursues it. [7]

VS17. It is not the young man who should be thought happy, but the old man who has lived a good life. For the young man at the height of his powers is unstable, and is carried this way and that by fortune, like a headlong stream. But the old man has come to anchor in old age, as though in port, and the good things for which before he hardly hoped he has brought into safe harbor in his grateful recollections.

And Fernando has suggested that in connection with these (especially 16) we discuss the issue of the Greek view of whether there is a battle in the world/universe between "good" and "evil." See also this on the Socratic position: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moral_intellectualism Is this something with which Epicurus would have agreed?

2 - Our Special Topic

Aside from general guidance to follow pleasure and avoid pain, is there anything in Epicurean philosophy that tells a particular person what particular pleasure to choose or pain to avoid at any particular time. In other words, this is a variation of the old question: "Is one pleasure or activity in itself 'better' than another?" Is it possible to come up with a coherent analysis of how we would recommend a particular person at a particular time to proceed? Is all we can say "It's contextual and up to you!" Or is there more for which we can find justification in the Epicurean texts?

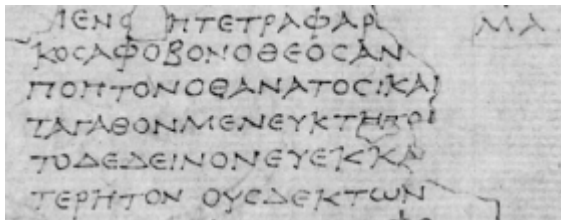
Attendees should also plan to be sure they are on Kalosyni's conversation list. If you are not already on that and want the Zoom link so you can attend, please message [Kalosyni](#) or any other [moderator](#).

Post by "Cassius" of August 3, 2023 at 6:16 AM

One of the things that came up in this session was discussion of the recent work by Don and Nate and others on how to number/organize/present the [Principal Doctrines](#). Seems like we are closer but not actually there yet to pin down when the numbering was "first" added and by whom.

A related question came up of "who was the first" to apply the label "tetrpharmakos" to the four statements that are preserved apparently by Philodemus in the Herculaneum papyrus.

This seems to be the record on which everything is based:



[Principal Doctrines - Wikipedia](#)

The "[tetrpharmakos](#)" was originally a compound of four drugs ([wax](#), [tallow](#), [pitch](#) and [resin](#)); the word has been used metaphorically by Roman-era Epicureans^[5] to refer to the four remedies for healing the soul.^[6]

Those notes are to Pamela Gordon who says this cannot be traced further back than Cicero (and doesn't in this source refer to anyone else who used the term):

5. [^] The name cannot be traced further back than Cicero and Philodemus. Pamela Gordon, *Epicurus in Lycia: The Second-century World of Diogenes of Oenoanda*, University of Michigan Press (1996), p. 61, fn 85, citing A. Angeli, "Compendi, eklogai, tetrpharmakos" (1986), p. 65.

And Liddel and Scott:

6. [^] See Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, New Edition revised and Augmented by Stuart Jones, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Those references would be interesting to track down to see how many "friendly" references to the term can be documented, or whether it was used disparagingly, especially in light of the ability to interpret it as disparaging or trivializing, as DeWitt hints here:

SOUL, SENSATION, AND MIND

careful to say "atoms resembling those of wind and heat." * Next, by naming four ingredients Lucretius has encouraged the notion that the number four was canonical with Epicurus as with Empedocles and Aristotle, which is incorrect. Even the name of the famous fourfold remedy, the tetrpharmacum, was not of Epicurean origin; Epicurus would never have compared his doctrines to a household concoction of wax, tallow, pitch, and resin.

Post by "Cassius" of August 3, 2023 at 9:10 AM

[Don](#) given that you are adept at Perseus, does this reference at Wikipedia mean that someone thinks there is a "page" at Perseus where we can find references in the ancient texts where the term tetrpharmakos is used? When you have time could you link that entry here? My first effort turned up nothing. Thanks.

6. [^] See Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, New Edition revised and Augmented by Stuart Jones, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Post by "Don" of August 3, 2023 at 9:48 AM

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, Τ , τετρα^φα^λαγγ-ία , τετρα^φάρμα^κος](#)

That's the Liddell and Scott entry for the 1940 edition: Henry George Liddell. Robert Scott. A Greek-English Lexicon. revised and augmented throughout by. Sir Henry Stuart Jones. with the assistance of. Roderick McKenzie. Oxford. Clarendon Press. 1940.

See also

[Tetrpharmacum - Wikipedia](#)

Post by "Cassius" of August 3, 2023 at 10:00 AM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3224-august-2-2023-wednesday-night-zoom-agenda-vatican-sayings-16-17/>

4007-pasted-from-clipboard-png

So I suppose we are looking for this so would need to figure out wha "Ph.1.433" references as well as Gal.1.242 - but I presume those are about the drug - unless Meno is as to the drug and Ph.1 is not.

I don't see what he is citing as a reference for the usage as to Epicurus two except the text from Philodemus, so is one of these words transcribed above translated as tetrpharmakos? That wikipedia entry doesn't look like it has a word for word transcription such as the epicurus wiki offers for other texts, which would be desirable.

A. *compounded of four drugs:—as Subst., [τετραφάρμακος](#), ἡ, a compound of wax, tallow, pitch, resin, Meno *latr.* 14.19, Ph.1.433 (= *Stoic.*2.154), Gal.1.242; also [-κον](#), [τό](#), Id.12.328.*

II. [-κος](#), ἡ, metaph., of the first four [Κύρια Δόξαι](#) of Epicurus, *Phld.Herc.1005.4*.

Henry George Liddell. Robert Scott. A Greek-English Lexicon. revised and augmented throughout by. Sir Henry Stuart Jones. with the assistance of. Roderick McKenzie. Oxford. Clarendon Press. 1940.

The National Endowment for the Humanities provided support for entering this text.

Post by “Don” of August 3, 2023 at 11:01 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I don't see what he is citing as a reference for the usage as to Epicurus two except the text from Philodemus, so is one of these words transcribed above translated as tetrpharmakos?

The word starts at the end of the first line of the manuscript image:

..... ΤΕΤΡΑΦΑΡ[ΜΑ]

ΚΟΣ

It's from Herculaneum manuscript P.Herc.1005.

Here's the full page/column, engraved 1844-1861 by Vincenzo Corazza



μνη[σθεῖς τῶν λόγων δεδει-]
γμέ[ν]ων καὶ τῶν [σοι] εὔ
γε[γ]ονότων τόδε π[άλιν]
ἐπιλογίζου καὶ κ[ενὰ]
περὶ τοῦ μέλλοντο[ς νό-]
[μ]ιζε καὶ...[.....]
[κ]αὶ πανταχῆι παρειρ[η-]
μένο[ν] ἢ τετραφάρμα-
κος· ἄφοβον ὁ θεός, ἀν[ύ-]
ποπτον ὁ θάνατος καὶ
τάγαθὸν μὲν εὐκτητον,
τὸ δὲ δεινὸν εὐεκκα[ρ-]
τέρητον. οὐς δ' ἐκ τῶν
βυβλίων φησὶν ἐκφέ-
ρειν ἀν[α]λογισμούς,
ταύτας εἴσει τὰς λέξεις
ἀνταποδόσεις δώδε[κ]α' [ἦ]
πεντ[ε]κάδεκα Μ[...]ΙΣ[.]
ΠΩ[.....]ΡΕΙ[]-ca.?- []

The four lines of the tetrapharmakos are underlined.

Post by "Cassius" of August 3, 2023 at 12:27 PM

Thanks Don!

Post by "Cassius" of August 3, 2023 at 2:17 PM

Ok thanks again. This is really interesting, in addition to being a good use of "sidenotes" we've discussed recently:



So this reference to the Galen and the Stoics does not refer explicitly or implicitly to our Philodemus reference (?) but to an independent Stoic concern for what happens to individual elements when they are mixed. So this reference appears to be a true discussion of physical medicine and is not related to our medicine for the "soul."

So there is apparently a reference to it in Cicero that we don't yet have nailed down (per the Gordon reference in wikipedia).

Quote

The point that might seem somewhat confusing is that, despite the process of fusion, the initial ingredients nevertheless always keep in a pharmacopoeia a form of presence, even if only etiological; we cannot explain the action of the *tetrapharmakos* only by the virtues of the ingredients which compose it, just as one can explain nature

only by the action of primordial principles which however no longer exist as such in the bodies of which they are causes. To really understand the scope of the argument, it is necessary to return to the distinction to be made between this type of fused mixture and the mixture of moods, which does not eliminate the identity of the elements which compose it. This distinction can allow us to underline the all-out very paradoxical relationship of Galien to Stoic physics. This provides him, with the total mixture, with an epistemological model almost perfect for thinking of the humoral mixture (*crash*), and this even though: 1) the physical background explicitly claimed by Galien is not Stoic but Aristotelian and 2) metaphysical reflection upstream of the properly physical content of *From elementis* uses, to think of the disciplinary division between physics, medicine and metaphysics, an example of mixture which is not total but fused³⁰.

Post by “Don” of August 3, 2023 at 11:32 PM

From P. Gordon: Epicurus in Lycia.

writings are rare in the generation after his death, and we have none at all in sources contemporary with him.⁵³ This was not due to any interdiction by Epicurus against the dissemination of Epicurean documents;⁵⁴ rather it seems to be due to the difficult style and specialized nature of Epicurus' writings.

The generations following Epicurus' lifetime produced Epicureans who wrote for a wider public. Although the texts themselves are not extant, we have evidence for the industrious production of epitomes of Epicurean theory, especially in the third, second, and first centuries B.C.E.⁵⁵ It is widely believed that the composition of epitomes had begun with Epicurus himself, who wrote several condensed outlines (including the extant *Letter to Herodotus*) "for those who are unable to work in detail through all that I have written about nature or to peruse the larger books which I have composed."⁵⁶ Because the epitomes written by Epicurus' followers have not survived, it is impossible to know whether the epitomes attempted to present the philosophy to newcomers.⁵⁷ But our extant treatments of Epicureanism were clearly meant to do so.

Lucretius, Diogenes Laertius, and Diogenes of Oenoanda popularized Epicureanism and made it accessible (in very different ways) to a broad audience. Some of the works of Philodemus may also be regarded as popularizing texts, although they may not have been intended for general circulation.⁵⁸ Lucretius was unusual in his selection of didactic poetry as a medium for the promulgation of Epicureanism, but there were many prose handbooks of Epicureanism, as is clear from the nonextant sources cited by Laertius.⁵⁹ The authors of later handbooks made frequent use of anecdotes, poems, and rhetorical flourishes,

53. See Usener, *Epicurea*, 34, 68–70, 85–90, 342–43.

54. D. Clay argues that Epicurus actually went so far as to ensure public access to his writings by depositing them in the Metroon or State Archives of Athens (*Epicurus in the Archives of Athens, Hesperia* Suppl. 14 (Princeton, 1982), 17–26. Such a measure would be extraordinary (as Clay acknowledges), and the evidence for it is inconclusive.

55. One epitomizer cited by Diogenes Laertius (10.118) is Diogenes of Tarsus; evidence for others is collected by A. Angeli, "Compendi, Eklogai, **Tetrapharmakos**: Due Capitoli di Dissenso nell'Epicureismo," *Chronache Ercolanesi* 16 (1986): 54–55.

56. This is Bailey's translation (*Epicurus: The Extant Remains* [Oxford, 1926], 19) of the beginning of the *Letter to Herodotus* (Diogenes Laertius 10.35).

57. Epitomizers and Hellenistic doxographers are discussed by Mejer (*Hellenistic Background*, 81–89), who laments that we know "deplorably little" (86) about works on dogmas for which only titles have survived.

58. De Lacy ("Lucretius and the History of Epicureanism," 21), points out the characteristics Philodemus' writings have in common with popular philosophical essays. Since Philodemus' Epicurean works are known only from Herculaneum and are not cited by any ancient sources, it can be



Result 2 of 4

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form of aphorisms. It seems improbable, however, that the entire collection of *Kyriai Doxai* was written as a forty-point creed to be memorized.

Nineteenth-century scholarship (mostly in German) rejected the ancient conception of the nature of the *Kyriai Doxai*.⁸¹ Usener formulated four main arguments against the contention that Epicurus wrote the forty sayings and published them as a distinct collection.⁸² First, if Epicurus had wanted to distribute forty “doctrines” he would have included all of his important ideas instead of omitting (as does the collection) references to the Canon and to physical theory. Second, the sayings are not preserved in any logical order, as would be expected if Epicurus had composed them as a series to be memorized.⁸³ Third, some of the maxims (*Principal Doctrines* 10, 20, and 24) appear to be excerpts from personal letters rather than succinctly formulated philosophical tenets. Fourth, there is repetition and duplication of sayings within the collection.⁸⁴

These arguments are compelling, particularly the last two, which are based not on expectations of what Epicurus would have done but on analysis of the sayings themselves. The logical conclusion is that the *Kyriai Doxai* as they appear in the manuscripts of Diogenes Laertius represent a collection that developed around a nucleus of a few sayings of Epicurus. Perhaps the original nucleus is represented by the first four sayings, which by the first century B.C.E. were called the *tetrpharmakos*.⁸⁵ Many of the additions may be extracts from the writings of Epicurus himself (or perhaps from those of Metrodorus, Polyaeus, or Hermarchus). Others represent variants that developed in the process of transmission; by the time Diogenes Laertius (or his source) obtained them, the variations on several sayings differed enough to warrant preserving more than one version in the same collection.

Despite the objections outlined by Usener, English-language scholarship generally postulates that Epicurus himself formulated and distributed a collection of *Kyriai Doxai* like that in Laertius’ text.⁸⁶ Diskin Clay, for example, endorses that approach in his recent book on Lucretius and Epicurus, although he

Post by “Don” of August 4, 2023 at 3:53 AM

does allow for some important subtleties.⁸⁷ Clay acknowledges that the collection of *Kyriai Doxai* (or *Master Thoughts*, as he calls them) may have been somewhat shorter originally, and he demonstrates how some of the sayings were altered by the process of oral transmission during the centuries after Epicurus. He also acknowledges that the *Letter to Menoeceus* may have been the source for some of the *Kyriai Doxai* and that some of the “prehistory” of the sayings can be found in Epicurus’ *On Nature*.⁸⁸ In general he affirms, however, that the sayings we find in the text of Diogenes Laertius represent a book that was published by Epicurus.⁸⁹ He emphasizes the occurrence in the title of the word *kyriai*, which is shown to mean “crucial.” He also emphasizes the fact that in antiquity the *Kyriai Doxai* were considered to be the authoritative sayings of Epicurus.⁹⁰

The issue ought to have been settled a century ago, when Diogenes’ inscription and the *Voice of Epicurus* were discovered. The *Voice of Epicurus* (Ἐπικούρου Προσφώνησις, also known as the *Sententiae Vaticanae*) is yet another collection of Epicurean aphorisms that was found in a manuscript in the Vatican. Both Diogenes of Oenoanda and the Vatican text preserve some of the Epicurean sayings (with variations) that appear in Diogenes Laertius, along with many previously unknown sayings. When the *Kyriai Doxai* of Diogenes Laertius are compared with the *doxai* of Diogenes of Oenoanda and the *Voice of Epicurus*, it becomes apparent that the three texts represent three rather different sets of *Kyriai Doxai*. It is impossible to say which of these three versions bears the closest resemblance to the text that Alexander sent up in flames (whether the burning took place in history or only in fiction).

The Vatican manuscript contains eighty aphorisms. The first two are equivalent to the first two maxims recorded by Laertius.⁹¹ *Kyria Doxa* 3 is not preserved in it at all, and after *Kyriai Doxai* 4 and 5 (*Sententiae Vaticanae* 3 and 5) are recorded with minor changes (usually in word order), the texts diverge.

Principal Doctrines 2 and 17. Long comments: “As these passages show, Epicurus was quite capable of writing in a pithy, aphoristic style, and there can be little doubt that such statements were intended for learning by heart” (“Epicurus and Philodemus,” 628).

87. *Lucretius and Epicurus*, 72–81. His argument has met with approval; see the review by

Only thirteen of Diogenes Laertius' *Kyriai Doxai* appear among the eighty *Sententiae Vaticanae*, and except for the first four just mentioned, they do not appear in the familiar order.⁹²

The text of the *Kyriai Doxai* inscribed by Diogenes of Oenoanda is in very poor condition, but the fragments of thirteen of his maxims have been identified with thirteen of the maxims in Laertius' text. Ironically, this poor state of preservation at Oenoanda is due largely to the high status accorded to the *doxai* by Diogenes. Because the maxims were originally displayed in large letters in one continuous line, a single maxim could extend across several stones. When the stoa was dismantled contiguous stones became separated, and for this reason the *doxai* are in worse condition than the rest of the passages, which were inscribed in narrow columns. Several years ago it was claimed that the fragments of the *Kyriai Doxai* in Oenoanda could help us calculate the original length of the whole inscription. Since the sayings were written in one unbroken line across its length, one could simply count the number of letters in Epicurus' *doxai* (i.e., in the version recorded by Diogenes Laertius) and multiply that by the number of centimeters each letter would require.⁹³ Such a method will not work: the recognizable maxims among the Oenoanda *doxai* are only roughly equivalent to Laertius' text, and the remains of most of them are so exiguous that exact correspondence cannot be argued with certainty.⁹⁴ Furthermore, one of the maxims of Diogenes of Oenoanda corresponds not to a text quoted by Laertius but to one of the *Sententiae Vaticanae*; and eight of Diogenes' maxims are not known from any other source.⁹⁵

In the case of one maxim preserved by Diogenes, scholars of Epicurus and Diogenes seem to agree that Diogenes of Oenoanda preserves a text superior to

175 ff. The manuscript is dated to the fourteenth century and also contains some Xenophon, Marcus Aurelius, and Epictetus.

92. In the Vatican manuscript, saying 1 = *Kyria Doxa* 1, 2 = *KD* 2, 3 = *KD* 4, 5 = *KD* 5, 6 = *KD* 35, 8 = *KD* 15, 12 = *KD* 17, 13 = *KD* 27, 20 = *KD* 29, 22 = *KD* 19, 49 = *KD* 12, 50 = *KD* 8, and 72 = *KD* 13.

93. See Chilton, *Diogenes of Oenoanda*, xlv; Smith, *Thirteen New Fragments of Diogenes of Oenoanda*, Denkschriften der österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philologisch-Historische Klasse, 117 (Vienna, 1974), 48; and Smith, "Fifty-Five New Fragments of Diogenes of

that of Diogenes Laertius.⁹⁶ The maxim concerned is a version of *Kyria Doxa* 5, which is preserved in the fifteenth line of fragment 37. In the text preserved by Laertius (which appears also in the *Sententiae Vaticanae*),⁹⁷ Epicurus says: “It is not possible to live pleasantly without living prudently and honorably and justly” [Οὐκ ἔστιν ἡδέως ζῆν ἄνευ τοῦ φρονίμως καὶ καλῶς καὶ δικαίως].⁹⁸ Following that statement, Laertius’ text adds the phrase “without (living) pleasantly” [ἄνευ τοῦ ἡδέως]. That last phrase is obviously missing something, and it was recognized long ago that Cicero’s translation of the maxim provides the missing phrase: “non posse iucunde vivi, nisi sapienter, honeste, iusteque vivatur, nec sapienter, honeste, iuste, nisi iucunde.”⁹⁹ In the seventeenth century Gassendi saw that if one translated Cicero’s version into Greek, one could add the reciprocal qualification (as stated in Cicero’s last six words) to Laertius’ text, so that the conclusion to the maxim would read: “nor is it possible to live prudently and honorably and justly without living pleasantly”¹⁰⁰ [οὐδὲ φρονίμως καὶ καλῶς καὶ δικαίως ἄνευ τοῦ ἡδέως].

Diogenes of Oenoanda’s text of the maxim, discovered more than two hundred years after Gassendi pointed to Cicero, has nine words intact: “. . . and honorably and justly, nor prudently and honorably and (justly) . . .” [[. . .]ως καὶ καλῶς καὶ δικαίως, οὐδὲ φρονίμως καὶ καλῶς καὶ δικα[. . .]].¹⁰¹ This fits Cicero’s translation extremely well, and Diogenes’ version is now used to supplement the text preserved by Laertius. Thus, Diogenes of Oenoanda preserves a version of the fifth maxim that contains the essential statement known also by Cicero, but which is missing from both Laertius’ text and the manuscript of the *Sententiae Vaticanae*.

The variations among the three collections of Epicurus’ sayings are precisely what we would expect to find if the *Kyriai Doxai* were an organic, expandable collection of Epicurean wisdom that was sometimes transmitted orally. The three extant collections must represent three different stages in development; no doubt there were other collections. The collection of *doxai* known by Lucretius probably represents yet another one. Lucretius seems to translate four *doxai* known from Diogenes Laertius, but only two of them correspond to the first four that Philodemus called the *tetrapharmakos*, and the other two are rather differ-

Post by "Cassius" of August 4, 2023 at 2:44 PM

Don's post as to the Julie G. article have been split out to a separate thread here:

Thread

[Julie Giovacchini - "The Tetrpharmakos, Authentic Formula Or Simplistic Summary Of Epicurean Ethics?"](#)

[CASSIUS ADMIN NOTE: Thanks to Don for finding these two articles by Julie Giovacchini. At present I only have the second in google translate form (see post below) but they look to contain a lot of interesting information and deserve a thread of their own - especially the one linked in post 2 below.]

Gal. (Galen) and the tetrpharmakos

<https://journals.openedition.org/aitia/1899>

(Suggest using Google Translate for French website)



Don

August 3, 2023 at 1:35 PM