

Abstract

Linka, V. Dissertation: *Approaches to Pain in Classical Greek Philosophy and Medicine*

In this dissertation, I undertake an exploration of the approaches to the problem of pain within classical Greek philosophy and medicine. The aim of my research is to investigate the role of pain by analysing the most prevalent Greek words denoting pain in three ancient text collections: the *Corpus Hippocraticum*, *Corpus Platonicum*, and *Corpus Aristotelicum*. As an omnipresent phenomenon inherent to both human and animal life, pain held significant importance as a theme for medical and philosophical contemplation during antiquity. In the introductory section, I not only outline the theme, methodologies, and contemporary discussions on pain in antiquity but also provide an overview of the origins of classical Greek approaches to pain. This involves summarizing the conceptualization of pain in various genres and works from Homer to the authors who lived contemporaneously with Aristotle. Throughout the three central chapters of this dissertation, I concentrate on addressing the following research questions: What is pain? Are there distinct kinds of pain? What role does pain play? During the course of this dissertation, I elucidate and critically evaluate how these questions were addressed by the physicians and philosophers in the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, while also exploring the interdependencies and potential influences or connections between their viewpoints. Through an examination of medical texts, I demonstrate that pain was primarily regarded by their authors as a symptom aiding in the accurate diagnosis of underlying pathologies. However, pain also played a role in explaining more complex theories concerning the nature of the human body, health and illness, suitable therapies, and even acted as a therapeutic tool itself. In discussing the philosophical texts of Plato and Aristotle, I reveal that although pain ceased to be primarily viewed as a physiological issue, and instead acquired ethical and even political dimensions, the philosophers incorporated pain into their theories the frameworks, schemas, examples, and strategies used by their medical predecessors and contemporaries. By assessing the outcomes of these comprehensive analyses, I observe a common inclination within both medicine and philosophy to integrate pain into these disciplines and offer an answer to the question of what the role of pain in a good human life is. Consequently, this dissertation demonstrates that although physicians and philosophers may appear to approach pain from disparate perspectives, they ultimately share a fundamental framework. In addition to shedding light on the specific issue of the role of pain, this research contributes to the ongoing debate concerning the relationship between philosophy and medicine in antiquity.

Keywords: Plato, Aristotle, Hippocratic corpus, the problem of pain, the relationship between philosophy and medicine, meaning of pain in the human life