



FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA  
Univerzita Karlova

## Zápis o obhajobě disertační práce

Akademický rok: 2023/2024

**Jméno a příjmení studenta:** Mgr. Vojtěch Linka  
**Identifikační číslo studenta:** 38603775

**Typ studijního programu:** doktorský  
**Studijní program:** Filozofie  
**Studijní obor:** Filozofie  
**ID studia:** 626280

**Název práce:** Approaches to pain in classical Greek philosophy and medicine  
**Pracoviště práce:** Ústav filosofie a religionistiky (21-UFAR)  
**Jazyk práce:** angličtina  
**Jazyk obhajoby:** čeština  
**Školitel:** doc. Mgr. Hynek Bartoš, Ph.D.  
**Oponent(i):** Chiara Thumiger, Ph.D.

Wei Cheng

**Datum obhajoby:** 13.10.2023    **Místo obhajoby:** Praha  
**Termín:** řádný

**Průběh obhajoby:** At 10:00, Karel Thein (KT), the chair of the committee, initiates the defense of Vojtěch Linka's (VL) doctoral thesis. He extends a welcome to the opponents, Wei Chang (WCh) and Chiara Thumiger (ChT), supervisor Hynek Bartoš (HB) and introduces the rest of the committee, including Matyáš Havrda, Robert Roreitner, and Jakub Jirsa.

KT then outlines the schedule for the thesis defense: first, VL will present his thesis. Following his presentation, the supervisor will provide comments. Afterward, both opponents will have the opportunity to raise objections, followed by VL's response to which the opponents can subsequently react. Finally, an open discussion will conclude the proceedings.

At 10:03, VL commenced his defence with a brief introduction, swiftly delving into his presentation. The focal point of his discourse centred on the concept of pain within in ancient philosophy and medicine, with an inclination to explore the broader interplay between these two disciplines in the ancient world. The pivotal questions guiding his examination were "What constitutes pain?" and "What are the various forms of pain?"

VL proceeds to elucidate the structure of his dissertation, which begins with a comprehensive introduction displaying the use of pain-related words and descriptions of painful states from Homer onward. The core chapters delve into the notion of pain within the Corpus Hippocraticum, focusing particularly on its presence in dietetic texts,

as well as Plato's and Aristotle's approaches to this complex phenomenon. In his exploration of these two philosophers, VL also aims to incorporate some insights from contemporary discussions found in secondary literature.

The central theme of VL's thesis revolves around the linguistic analysis of four key Greek terms used to describe pain, namely ἄλγος, ὀδυνή, λύπη, πόνος. While these terms can be employed in contexts unrelated to pain, VL's primary focus lies in their usage within the realm of the experience of pain.

Through the analysis of the HC, VL identifies four distinct frameworks through which ancient physicians conceptualized and dealt with the notion of pain. Firstly, pain is viewed as a bodily phenomenon, making it a relevant symptom for physicians to address. Secondly, pain serves an explanatory role, not limited to practical application but extending to the theoretical understanding of the functioning of human body. Thirdly, pain is closely associated with healing and therapeutic procedures, such as exercise, highlighting its beneficial aspects. Lastly, the fourth framework extends beyond the physical realm to include "extrasomatic" pains related to the soul and emotions.

An essential assertion made by VL is the presence of these four frameworks not only in medical contexts but also in philosophical ones, particularly in the works of Plato and Aristotle. This observation underscores the close connection between ancient medicine and philosophy, as exemplified by the phenomenon of pain.

VL's presentation concludes at 10:20, and the supervisor gives the overall evaluation of VL's doctoral studies, giving them high praise due to VL's active involvement in numerous research, teaching, and publishing activities. The supervisor also expresses a positive opinion about the originality of the dissertation and suggested that it could be published with some minor adjustments. Consequently, the supervisor recommended the dissertation as "passed."

At 10:22, ChT begins her critical remarks regarding the dissertation. She briefly touches on both its positive and negative aspects before delving into a series of questions. ChT questions VL's assertion that medicine served as a precursor to philosophy and raised concerns related to the broad scope of the investigation. Additionally, ChT was curious about the way VL posed philosophical questions across vastly different genres without adequately considering the specific contexts. Furthermore, ChT felt that VL should have provided more insights into the subjective aspects of pain.

At 10:30, WCh presents his critical remarks. His first remark pertains to the ontological nature of pain, specifically whether it was a process or a state. The background of this question is the way VL interprets Plato's theory of pain and its treatment in contemporary literature on Plato's theory. WCh also questions VL's approach to analysing pain-related words, suggesting that there was an excessive focus on vocabulary and semantics rather than concepts and theories. He also raised concerns about how VL elucidated the concept of pain within the context of Aristotle's ethics.

VL began addressing these objections at 10:38, responding to the concerns raised by his opponents. He acknowledges that the term "precursor" might be too strong when linking medicine to philosophy but points out that both Plato and Aristotle had knowledge of the medical context and frequently employed Hippocratic language, imagery, and examples. VL also admits that his exploration of the broader context was lacking but maintained its importance even in a

more focused examination of pain. He argued that asking the same philosophical questions across different genres does not necessarily distort the original context and enables him to capture the relationship between ancient medicine and philosophy. Additionally, VL clarified that the subjectivity of pain was not his primary focus, as ancient authors themselves treated it as an objective phenomenon.

Turning to WCh's objections, VL agrees that he should have included relevant literature regarding the ontological status of pain within the main text instead of relegating it to a footnote. Regarding the tension between processual and state-based descriptions of pain in Plato, VL contends that both aspects were present. Regarding the evaluation of pain in Aristotle's ethical and political contexts, VL maintains that pain has to be assessed as at least instrumental good. Finally, he acknowledges that more attention should have been given to the conceptual and theoretical aspects of pain, although he still regarded the linguistic analyses as an important initial step in the overall analysis of the phenomenon.

Both opponents offered some additional remarks on these topics but ultimately found VL's answers satisfactory within the context of the defence.

At 11:11, KT opens the floor for questions from the audience, with several follow-up questions related to the earlier discussions between VL and the opponents. These questions covered topics such as the nature of pain as both a process and a state in Plato, the role of pain in the development of character in Nicomachean Ethics, and the claim that a particularly vivid representation of pain could be found in the Iliad.

After a brief discussion, the chairman, KT, concludes the defence and asks all non-committee members to leave the room before the deliberation and vote.

At 11:40, KT announced that the jury had unanimously voted "Passed."

<b>Klasifikace obhajoby:</b>	prospěl/a (P)	
<b>Předseda komise:</b>	prof. PhDr. Karel Thein, Ph.D.	.....
<b>Členové komise:</b>	doc. Jakub Jirsa, Ph.D.	.....
	Mgr. Matyáš Havrda, Ph.D.	.....
	Mgr. Robert Roreitner	.....