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Edited by

Jacqueline R. Clarke
Daniel King
Han Baltussen

BRILL

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Preface

This project took shape in Adelaide when Jacqueline Clarke became very interested in the poems of Prudentius and wanted to explore the pain narratives. She invited Han Baltussen to join her in preparing a grant application to fund the activities (it was submitted but not supported). We were fortunate to have Daniel King join us as collaborator (and co-applicant), bringing great expertise in Hellenistic literature and the history of medicine. His input and network enhanced the scope and depth of the project considerably.

When Daniel offered to organise a conference in Exeter, we seized the opportunity to bring together other colleagues working on similar topics. The conference took place in April 2018. We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the A.G. Leventis Foundation through its establishment of the Initiative in the Impact of Greek Culture at Exeter University for supporting the conference where many of the current contributors presented first drafts of their papers. We thank all contributors for their wonderful papers, their responsiveness and patience, while we were preparing the volume for the press during the Covid years (2020–2021). We also thank Mary Harpas (PhD candidate at Adelaide), Taylor Westmacott and Emily Chambers (MPhil candidates at Adelaide) and Dr Silke Sitzler for their editorial assistance.

CHAPTER 2

Labelling Pain: Early Greek Concepts from Homer to the Hellenistic Era

Han Baltussen

1 Expressing Pain[1]

Until a few decades ago, the topic of pain in the archaic and classical Greek world had received limited attention, and a primary focus had been on philosophy and pleasure.[2] The recent upsurge of the study in ancient emotions has made scholars in the humanities more aware of the issues and questions, and the importance of a more integrated, multi-disciplinary line of investigation.[3] Much remains to be investigated in literary, philosophical and medical texts regarding pain, not just the language of pain but also to integrate some of the modern research on emotions where possible. The broader aim of this volume is to change focus from theory and treatment to the subjective side of pain experiences, referred to in this volume as pain *narratives*.[4] With this in mind the present chapter explores the vocabulary of pain from Homer to the Hellen-

1 I would like to thank the participants of the Exeter workshop in April 2018 for valuable feedback, in particular Wei Cheng, when I presented my first sketchy draft on the topic. I am also grateful to Daniel King for his perceptive comments on the penultimate draft which saved me from several errors, and to my research assistant Mary Harpas for finding much good material on pain in the Hippocratic Corpus.

2 See the important volume edited by Harris (2018) *Pain and Pleasure in Classical Times*, the long article by Holmes (2007), and King (1998), 118–131. For Plato, see Frede (1992), Peponi (2002) on pleasure, or Wolfsdorf (2015) and Erginel (2011), (2019) on pain; for Aristotle, see Agonito (1976), Dow (2011), Cheng (2019). Cf. Bourke (2012) for the last three centuries. This chapter cannot cover the whole range of classical philosophy since Plato (well-studied) and Aristotle (well-studied, but more for the concept of pleasure) are huge topics; but see esp. Cheng's contribution (this volume, Ch. 8) with references.

3 E.g., Hadjistavropoulos & Craig (2004); Moseley (2007), Coakley & Shelemay (2007), cf. Holmes (2007) on wounds in the *Iliad*, Budelmann (2006) on famous examples in tragedy (Heracles, Philoctetes) and the disconnect with Homer (p. 123). For an emphasis on context, see Konstan (2006), x. But his reliance on an example from a dialectical handbook like *Topics* 4.5 (42–43, with n.6) to clarify the issue is not ideal for capturing broad trends.

4 A pioneering study utilising anthropological insights to explore subjective perspectives on medicine in literary sources is Lloyd (2003). I cannot go into the philosophical research based on, and interacting with, neuroscience (e.g., Seth [2013], Klein [2015]).

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istic age, so as (1) to examine its semantic range and diversity and how these may inform us about the particular choices of words in certain contexts when ancient authors label pain, and (2) to determine whether—and if so, how—reflecting on pain in the emerging philosophical and medical traditions after Homer led to a clearer conceptualisation of pain.[5]

Before I delve into these issues concerning the meaning, role, and development of the early concept of 'pain', it will be imperative to place some restrictions on our vast subject. Obviously, a comprehensive treatment of all the materials over five centuries is not feasible. My primary concern is to sketch the linguistic and conceptual antecedents in such a way that it may assist in familiarising the reader with the terms and concepts found in the Greek world, in particular the domains of early Greek philosophy and medicine. The areas included are in need of additional analysis, whereas areas not included (drama, lyric poetry, and the classical philosophers Plato, Aristotle) have been studied well and would provide too much material to fit in.[6] By selecting the more salient texts for scrutiny and evaluation, viewed against the background of Homeric epic, we will be able to examine the growing diversity and sophistication in the use of terms labelling pain, in particular with the rise of a more rational approach in philosophical and medical thought.

Lastly, an important fact to keep in mind is that ancient notions of pain arose in a world which had to cope with pain without painkillers.[7] The absence of *effective* pain killers is of course an important difference with the modern era; the use of silphium, willow bark or opium remained unpredictable and ineffective.[8] This fact also raises the question whether this meant that the average Greek or Roman had developed a higher pain threshold or was taught to have one, which would suggest a cultural origin of pain resistance. The question about a pain threshold is important, because the two possible explanations mentioned (the one naturalistic, the other cultural) already indicate how one can approach the topic from very different angles (and we cannot even exclude

5 Nicole Wilson's article (2013) is very succinct and not always correct in its translation of terms.

6 For drama and lyric poetry see e.g. Cerroni (2019) on ἄλγος who identifies a significant shift in Pindar (222) and has brief notes on Sophocles and Aristophanes (223–229). Plato and Aristotle have been studied (cf. n.2 and below nn.41–44, 50) and would each require separate treatment. Theophrastus' works *On pleasure according to Aristotle* and *Another book on pleasure* (D.L. 5.43) are not extant (but some fragments may have survived, see FHS&G 549–556; on 556 see Cheng [2017]). See also the chapters by Lawrence and Cheng (this volume).

7 Cf. the opening page of Harris (2018a), 55.

8 On opium see, e.g., Scarborough (1995) and Keyser (2022) with further literature; on willow bark, Mackowiak (2000).

that both are involved).[9] Moreover, modern perspectives on a topic like pain add further complexity, in that recent research has found that pain can be studied more fruitfully from a multi-disciplinary perspective.[10] However, such an inquiry cannot be attempted here in full, even if recent work can be brought in for the purpose of offering theoretical grounding, in particular studies on pre-modern pain.[11]

The selective approach has led to the following order of discussion in sections 2–5: by way of background (a kind of 'origin story'), I will use selected passages to illustrate how Homeric epics refer to pain (§ 2), how early Greek thinkers conceptualised pain as sensory and affective (§ 3), to what extent that they were aware of certain nuances in the process of feeling and acknowledging pain. I then argue that the articulation of pain in philosophical and medical sources (§ 4–5) seems to show a progression, based on a growing awareness of the cognitive and emotional entanglements of pain in correlation with a new model of the mind.

2 Archaic Pain Terms: Homeric Variations

In the surviving texts of the ancient world, we find considerable linguistic diversity, reflected in the range of terms used to label different types of pain. The Homeric epics *Odyssey* and *Iliad* offer a useful starting point to explore pain terms as the earliest Greek evidence for pain language. Suffering, trauma, and anxiety are major themes in both works, and, as we will see, the various types of discomfort already cover both the physical and the mental. This early stage of Greek thought usually refers to pain in a way typical of the pre-scientific mind. The experience of pain is not theorised or described in reflective terms, nor is the language analysed: various terms are used habitually and, while broad patterns can be detected, this usage cannot be easily categorized in a rigorous way.[12] Unsurprisingly, in the *Iliad* many (but certainly not all) cases occur in

9 The point regarding integration of pain into a meaningful account within one's own life story is connected to how the experience of pain becomes integrated into one's own belief system; while this is an important aspect for the right attitude to coping with pain, relevant to our understanding of its function in human life, this point cannot be developed in this chapter.

10 E.g., Hadjistavropoulos & Craig (2004); Coakley & Shelemay (2007), and Ch. 1 (present volume), p. 4, and next note.

11 Rey (1995), Perkins (1995), Moscoso (2012), Harris (2018) and Cobb (2017).

12 Nutton (2013), 37 usefully comments: "The Homeric poems afford us a glimpse of medical ideas and practices long before any of our strictly medical literature, and [...] it can be

the battle scenes and are the result of weapons impacting on bodies: the battle-intensive books *Il.* 5, 11, 13 and 16 abound in painful wounds, described in great detail.[13] While in many cases we learn about the physical effect (for example, blood spurting out), we learn less about the *emotional* effect on the victim. The poet's language may sometimes hint at such effects by way of adjectives to describe the weapons (a "bitter arrow" 13.591; a "sharp sword", etc.) or the target area (a "soft hand", 5.336). These are useful qualifiers, since it would be implausible to assume that all adjectives are added merely for metrical reasons. At *Il.* 13.546–549, the soldier is wounded in a vein located along the back and his response strongly suggests an emotional state in his dying moment, in which his gesture betrays his distress about the enforced separation: "so he sprawled into the dust backward |reaching out both hands to his beloved friends" (13.548 f.).[14]

The most important and frequent pain terms in Homer are ἄλγος (79), ἀλγέω (8), ἄχος (45), πόνος (55), ὀδύνη (28 = 21 *Il.* + 7 *Od.*), and πάθος (10), παθέω (51).[15] Among these occurrences some examples can illustrate the most salient features of the Homeric usage and variety of terms. Translators of Homer are not infrequently seen to specify in English what type of pain it is (sharp, dull, unbearable, etc.), even when the Greek phrasing lacks any adjectives.[16] Such speculative additions are based on the specific context and not always problematic, but occasionally modern notions may have crept in.

Battle wounds are described with almost clinical accuracy in the *Iliad*, notably in book 13. Arrows and spears pierce all kinds of body parts, showing a remarkable knowledge of the internals of the human body, of both organs and

used to illustrate what the poet's audience would have expected or taken for granted in the late eighth century."

13 For instance, at *Il.* 5.19, a spear strikes between the nipples (cf. 145); 55–56, spear into the back and "driven through to the chest beyond it"; 80–82, arm cut off; 98, arrow into the shoulder, etc. On pain from wounds in the *Il.* see Holmes (2007); on wounds, see Salazar (2000).

14 Not noted in Holmes (2007) who at 46 suggests (against Morris) that the poet has no opportunity to "focalize the experience of the warrior". Her comment that "the agony of dying goes unremarked by Homer" (53) seems to overlook examples like this which imply a certain pathos.

15 For ἄλγος I have benefitted from the useful analysis in Cerroni (2019). See also Holmes (2007) 47 for a list of terms. I note that ὀδύνη only appears in *Il.* books 4, 5, 11, 12 and 15, in which intensive battles occur. And, strikingly, A TLG search produces no results in a search for λύπη: it does not occur in the Homeric epics.

16 Frequent adjective: ἀλεγεινός (*Il.* 4.99; 5.658, etc.); less frequent: δυσηλεγής (*Il.* 20.154; *Od.* 22.325). See Appendix for a fuller list for Hippocratic works.

less discrete parts.[17] Thus the number of blows to head, arms, and torso is considerable, though expected and less interesting than those cases in which the details Homer offers reveal much about the era's knowledge of the organs, such as the lungs, liver, brain, bladder and heart.[18] It has long been remarked that the poet seemed to have extensive medical knowledge. He even puts a name to some who attend to wounds (Machaon and Podalirius, *Il.* 11.514 f., 832 f.; Paeon, 5.899; Patroclus bandaging Eurypylus, 11.828–832).[19] Despite the abundance of severe trauma, emotional impact is far less often recorded.[20]

And yet, in the *Iliad*, arrows are said to be "bringers of dark pains" (ἀβλῆτα πτερόεντα μελαινέων ἔρμ' ὀδυνάων, 4.117, cf. 4.191), Aphrodite can be wounded and suffer pain (ἀχθομένην ὀδύνῃσι, 5.354), body and spirit can be affected by pain (κῆρ ἀχέων ὀδύνῃσι, 4.397–401), and even medicines can be harsh means for healing (ὀδυνήφατα φάρμακα, 5.401).[21] Removing arrows is also very painful due to the multiple barbs, for instance, when Odysseus "pulled a fast arrow from Diomedes' foot", so that "the hard pain came over his flesh" (βέλος ὠκὺ| ἐκ ποδὸς εἷλκ', ὀδύνη δὲ διὰ χροὸς ἦλθ' ἀλεγεινή, 11.398–399). But the description offers an external perspective, reporting the pain from an observer's point of view.[22]

A passage at *Il.* 2.269–291, which gives us a better clue as to the impact of pain, offers the famous scene of Odysseus scolding and beating Thersites, because the latter spoke before his turn and without due respect for King

17 E.g., 13.412 a spear hits the liver; 13.546–547 "shore away a vein which runs up the back all the way to the neck"; 13.591 a spear "struck between the navel and genitalia" (cf. Holmes 2007, 47 n.4) and the entrails poor out, etc. For a comprehensive study of ancient war wounds, see Salazar (2000), Majno (1975).

18 E.g., brain *Il.* 12.183–186. See Lorenz (1976), Laser (1983).

19 See Nutton (2013), 37 with n.1, on how this was already discussed in antiquity (e.g., by Plutarch, Galen, Eustathius). At n.7 Nutton points out that sometimes incantations were used (*Od.* 19.455–458). Cf. Harris (2018), 58.

20 Holmes (2007) aims to evaluate this issue around major trauma lacking a comment on pain.

21 Not noted in Holmes (2007). Cf. *Il.* 5.900; 15.394 φάρμακ' ἀκέσματ'; 22.94 κακὰ φάρμακ' (= *Od.* 10.213); *Od.* 1.261 φάρμακον ἀνδροφόνον; 10.394 φάρμακον οὐλόμενον. The frequent dative plural form (ὀδύνῃσι) is probably chosen because it fits the hexameter very well. At *Il.* 16.524 Glaucon asks Apollo to "put his pains to sleep" (κοίμησον δ' ὀδύνας), upon which Apollo αὐτίκα παῦσ' ὀδύνας (528).

22 Such an indirect report which projects (or imagines) the effect of a sensory impact can even be found at *Il.* 12.205–206, concerning an animal: when an eagle has caught a snake and carried it off (δράκοντα φέρων ὀνύχεσσι), the snake was writhing (ἰδνωθεὶς) so much that it managed to bite the eagle, which then drops it "since it was in pain of the bite" (ἀλγήσας ὀδύνῃσι). The scene is interpreted as an 'omen'. For ἰδνωθεὶς in the sense of "double up in pain" said of Thersites, see *Il.* 2.266 and below.

Agamemnon. Thersites is said to be both in pain and tearful, "looking about helplessly" (**ἀλγήσας** δ' ἀχρεῖον ἰδὼν ἀπομόρξατο **δάκρυ**, 2.269).[23] Here the poet describes the effect of the beating by showing a behavioural response, and the clues in this one line suggest that it concerns both physical pain (from the beating with the sceptre) and emotional distress (the shame of public punishment and a feeling of abandonment). At 291ff. Odysseus goes on to speak about the possible return home and he uses πόνος to describe a mental state of longing for home, calling it "a hard thing to be aggrieved with desire for returning home" (ἦ μὴν καὶ **πόνος** ἐστὶν **ἀνιηθέντα** νέεσθαι)—an ironic comment from the man who in the *Odyssey* will be plagued by such 'nostalgia' in his own longing to return home after the war.

A surprising case in *Il.* 11.267–272 compares the pain of Agamemnon's wound on his arm from a spear to the pangs of childbirth.[24] The passage is worth quoting in full (tr. Lattimore) [**T1**]:

> Αὐτάρ ἐπεὶ τὸ μὲν ἕλκος ἐτέρσετο, παύσατο δ' αἷμα,
> **ὀξεῖαι δ'** ὀδύναι δῦνον μένος Ἀτρείδαο.
> ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἂν ὠδίνουσαν ἔχῃ βέλος ὀξὺ γυναῖκα,
> δριμύ, τὸ τε προιεῖσι μογοστόκοι Εἰλείθυιαι,
> Ἥρης θυγατέρες **πικρὰς ὠδῖνας** ἔχουσαι,
> ὡς **ὀξεῖ'** ὀδύναι δῦνον μένος Ἀτρείδαο. [= 268]
>
> But after the sore place was dry, and the flow of blood stopped,
> The sharp pains began to break in on the strength of Atreides.
> Just as a sharp bolt of pain descends on a woman in labor,
> the bitterness that the hard spirits of childbirth bring on,
> Hera's daughters, who hold the power of the bitter birth pangs,
> So the sharp pains began to break in on the strength of Atreides.

A modern reader is immediately struck by the comparison between the male and female pain experience.[25] Even if we consider it a helpful speculative analogy, we may well question the simile's appropriateness. Men may have 'sym-

23 ἀλγήσας appears only in three other places and always in first position of a line (*Il.* 8.85; 12.206; *Od.* 12.27).

24 Surprising, because other cases of wounds to arms and legs do not elicit such a comparison (cf. e.g., Glaucon at *Il.* 16. 509–526). The comparison has a parallel (echo?) in Euripides when Medea makes the claim that she "would rather stand three times in the line of battle than bear a child a single time" (*Medea* 250–251).

25 See also Holmes (2007), who calls it "one of the *Iliad*'s most perplexing similes" (49) and rightly points out that this simile is "unique" (71–74, at 71).

pathy pains' (as it is called nowadays[26]), but they will never experience the intense physical pain that often accompanies childbirth. The comparison of Agamemnon in full battle (his 'aristeia') to a woman remains awkward,[27] and not one that could be turned into a compliment (as the modern mind might do). Holmes argues that it is "the distinguishing invisibility [of the pain] that may recommend these darts to the description of Agamemnon's wound and the strange pain caused by the closure of the wound".[28] I suggest that what the two cases have in common is that this kind of pain is outside of the person's control. Whether the comparison based on the chosen words ("sharp"—ὀξεῖαι δ' ὀδύναι; "bitter"—πικρὰς ὠδίνας) holds for the nature or intensity of the pain remains uncertain.

Remarkably, the effect of wounds on the immortals can be quite strong. At least in the case of Aphrodite, when she is wounded by Diomedes (5.334 ff., "the spear tore the skin driven clean on", 337), the response is highly emotive and suggests both physical and mental pain: "she gave a shriek and let fall her son [= Aeneas] she was carrying" (343), "the goddess departed in pain, hurt badly" (352), or "still aggrieved in her heart, she mounted the chariot" (364).[29]

In the *Odyssey* too the use of ὀδύνη shows how this word is labelling serious pain and agony. In book 9, the mighty Cyclops experiences great pain, when his single eye has been destroyed by a sharp, hot stake (9.413–416), as the emphatic line at 9.415 shows (Odysseus narrates) [**T2**]:

ὣς ἄρ' ἔφαν ἀπιόντες, ἐμὸν δ' ἐγέλασσε φίλον κῆρ,
ὡς ὄνομ' ἐξαπάτησεν ἐμὸν καὶ μῆτις ἀμύμων.
Κύκλωψ δὲ **στενάχων τε καὶ ὠδίνων ὀδύνῃσι,**
χερσὶ ψηλαφόων, ἀπὸ μὲν λίθον εἶλε θυράων,

thus they spoke and went their way, my dear heart laughed
that my name and cunning trick had managed to deceive.

26 On sympathy pains or Couvade syndrome, see, e.g., Chase, Fusick & Pauli (2019) who mention that is occurs "most often during the first and third trimesters" (168). For ancient cases of Couvade syndrome, see Papadakis & Manios (2020).

27 In his commentary Hainsworth notes (1993, 254) "there is an inescapable irony at several levels in the comparison".

28 Holmes (2007), 72.

29 δόρυ χροὸς ἀντετόρησεν (337); ἡ δὲ **μέγα ἰάχουσα** ἀπὸ ἕο κάββαλεν υἱόν (343); ἡ δ' ἐς δίφρον ἔβαινεν **ἀκηχεμένη φίλον ἦτορ** (364). On "divine wounds" see Holmes (2007) 61, 64 with n.39; on the gods afflicted by emotions, see for instance Lateiner (2002) and my conclusion.

415 But the Cyclops, groaning and suffering in anguish,
groped with his hands and took away the stone from the door …[30]

The vivid and detailed description of the violent annihilation of the eye is reinforced by alliteration (verb and interior object: ὠδίνων ὀδύνῃσι) and two striking similes from carpentry (for the hot stake) and tempering of iron (for the sizzling blood); the line is clearly meant to convey the *intensity* of the resulting pain.[31] The similes effectively make an unusual event more familiar by using everyday examples of activities known to most people.

Evidence for physical distress continues at line 440 f. with the same word, when he is releasing the sheep from the cave (the sheep which carry Odysseus and his companions underneath their bellies): "their master, distressed with *grievous pains*, felt along the backs as they all stood up before him" (ἄναξ δ' ὀδύνῃσι **κακῇσι** | τειρόμενος πάντων ὀΐων ἐπεμαίετο νῶτα | ὀρθῶν ἑσταότων). The pains are now labelled κακός, "bad, evil", either because they are intense (a sensory aspect) or considered the result of a bad act (a moral aspect: he refers to Odysseus as ἀνὴρ κακὸς at 453). It is possible that both aspects are in play, as they gradually emerge one after the other over the course of these three lines. The mental impact is revealed in the self-pity of Polyphemus when he appeals to his favourite ram for compassion, imagining that the animal, which is uncharacteristically leaving last, does so out of empathy for his master's suffering. Thus physical pain and psychological aftermath are clarified by way of verbal expressions of suffering (415) and an act of emotional projection.

These selective Homeric examples illustrate well how pain terms are differentiated to some extent, but that their usage is also a matter of formulaic conventions. Intensity is regularly expressed by way of adjectives, which may indicate that the nouns themselves fail to convey such a quality. The distinction between mental and physical pain can be identified in some cases (Aphrodite, Cyclops), but it is clear that the vocabulary does not diversify in proportion to the kinds of pain the works are trying to describe.[32]

30 tr. Wilson (2018). Earlier at line 403, when the other Cyclopes responded to his wailing, they too described him as "distressed, pained" (ἀρήμενος, partic. perf. pass.), an emotional state they infer from *hearing* him express his misery in words and tone of voice (the word also occurs at *Il.* 18.435; *Od.* 6.2; 11.136; 18.53, 81; 23.283).

31 For the similes, see 9.384–387 of a carpenter drilling into wood (τις τρυπῷ δόρυ νήιον ἀνὴρ), and 391–394 of a black smith tempering an axe in cold water (ἀνὴρ χαλκεὺς πέλεκυν … ἐν ὕδατι ψυχρῷ βάπτῃ | φαρμάσσων).

32 To use modern terminology, the intended semantic range is not covered by the available lexemes.

3 Early Greek Philosophers on Pain, Discomfort, and Its Counterpart

That pain is a puzzle was nothing new to ancient philosophers. Like today, ancient attempts at defining and explaining its existence, its nature and its causes illustrate how much of a challenge it was to reach clarity about it.[33] The general approach among early Greek thinkers was to regard pain (and its companion concept, pleasure) as notions connected to both physiology and psychology.[34] The language of pain reflects the problem of semantic scope and meaning transfer: conceptual changes for terms such as πόνος (~ *dolor*) and λύπη (~ *aegritudo*) often result from efforts to analyse these emotions.[35] Generally speaking, early articulations of pain and distress were fairly intuitive and descriptive, but continued to gain in nuance and semantic range. An important question to consider is whether pre-Classical philosophers applied the same terms to both mental and physical pain. As we have already seen, context can be a crucial differentiating factor in how one should interpret and translate a word like *lupē*, which in the classical authors can cover both types of embodied experience (for example, 'being cut' and 'heart ache'). But was there no clear conceptual boundary yet between the physical and the mental? And can we ascertain the extent to which they understood how one's state of mind influences the degree of physical pain experienced (below section 5)? I will suggest that the shift to a more explicit distinction between the two was in part brought on by a new theoretical approach to the mind, a hypothesis which finds some support in the advent of λύπη during the fifth century as a label for non-physical pain.

Our information for early Greek philosophers requires careful exegesis, first and foremost because our *earliest* accounts predominantly originate in reports by Aristotle and Theophrastus. The two Peripatetics pioneered the historiography of early Greek philosophy but did not write their accounts in a dispassionate way: they mostly created them as preparation for their own philosophical expositions. This means that we need to assess carefully which parts of their reports might be close(st) to the original *ideas*. I refrain from saying 'words' because we only have a limited number of texts with a claim to being 'fragments' of the lost works.[36] In general, dialect forms and paratextual clues

33 For the subtleties involved see below section 5, and Lewis (Archigenes) and Cheng (on the commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias, second c. CE) in the present volume.

34 On the pairing of the two concepts, see also Harris (2018), "Introduction".

35 See also Courtil's chapter in the present volume on the Stoic use of these terms.

36 On how much has been lost see Mansfeld (1999), 3–5 (but the whole chapter is instructive).

("Democritus says …") can assist in this process of triage, as do comparisons with other sources, often from later authors.[37]

A highly relevant text for our purposes is Theophrastus' treatise evaluating early Greek ideas on sense perception.[38] In his *De sensibus* (*Sens.*) he discusses the connection these thinkers made between sensation on the one hand, and pain and pleasure on the other. More often than not, Empedocles and others focus on pain and its counterpart pleasure (ἡδονή) for the evaluation of these physiological processes, emphasising the sensory over affective properties of perception. Several cases will allow us to grasp the key points of their considerations regarding the mechanisms of human perception as they understood them.

At *Sens.* 16 Theophrastus proceeds to discuss pleasure and pain in the account of Empedocles' thought.[39] He reproaches Empedocles for not being consistent in his account of these notions (οὐδε τὴν ἡδονὴν καὶ λύπην ὁμολογουμένως ἀποδίδωσιν), for Empedocles explains pleasure by similarity (for example, light in the eyes meets light outside and is pleasant, if it is of "the same kind"), and pain by contrast (calling them "enemies", ἐχθρά). Theophrastus implies that Empedocles is not keeping to his basic principle (perception through like-by-like).

Against Anaxagoras (*Sens.* 29) Theophrastus constructs a critical argument that turns on the antithesis 'natural' (κατὰ φύσιν) vs. 'unnatural' (παρὰ φύσιν), and on the criticism that the sensory stimulus is not clearly distinguished from the affective responses it evokes. The first point concerns the scope of a claim. According to the report (*Sens.* 29; cf. 17) Anaxagoras held that *all* perceptive actions are accompanied by pain (or distress: μετὰ λύπης). After Theophrastus brings in concrete evidence to counter this claim (the opposite is often true), he also argues that such a claim is counter-intuitive (*Sens.* 31, οὐτ' ἐκ τῶν εὐλόγων), since perception agrees with nature (an Aristotelian view), that is, it works without violence or pain. Thus, a more general consideration is used to counter Anaxagoras' claim: the *paradoxon* that pain is natural is countered by the *endoxon* that pleasure is according to nature. In a further κατὰ φύσιν argument (*Sens.* 33), Theophrastus blames Anaxagoras for treating unnaturally what is actually *according to nature* since excess is not the natural state of affairs. While it is clear and generally agreed (φάνερον καὶ ὁμολογουμένον) that we do experi-

37 For earlier work on this issue see, e.g., Mansfeld (1999), Baltussen (2000), (2006), (2019).

38 Theophrastus' *Sens.* in Diels (1879), Stratton (1917; 1964[2]).

39 Though limited, we have two cases for Empedocles' pain terms in fr. 95 DK, ἀλγήδων (twice), cf. Harris (2018). Theophrastus offers what we now regard as 'testimonia', see Baltussen (2019).

ence pain or pleasure during acts of perception, this does not mean that either of these is more connected to perception. In fact, Theophrastus thinks that neither is. Concluding, Theophrastus adds one further remark to justify his doubts about Anaxagoras' position: "it would be impossible to discern if understanding were to be accompanied constantly by pain or pleasure" (*Sens*. 33).

The views examined so far indicate how the philosophers were searching for a new understanding of the world and creating novel ideas on how we perceive it by theorizing about perception itself. Yet their basic assumptions about the mechanisms of sensation and affection are not yet very far removed from the Homeric notions, in that they envisage the nature of the process as mechanical, while the boundary between the sensory and the affective remains porous.[40] When we turn to Theophrastus' discussion of Democritus (c. 460–c. 410? BCE), we encounter some very interesting views on pleasure and pain which reveal a shift away from the archaic world of Homer and even from the emerging medical positions of the fifth century BCE. Against this background, Democritus makes some advances by taking a hard look at the importance of pain (and pleasure). Let us consider a passage in which his novel perspective becomes apparent [**T3**]:

> For those who get their pleasures from their bellies, exceeding the measure in food and drink and sex, the pleasures are brief and short-lived, … but the **pains are many** (αἱ δὲ λῦπαι πολλαὶ) or they always have the same desire for the same things; and when they obtain what they desire, the pleasure swiftly departs … (Clement, *Paedagogus* III xviii 35 = 68B235 DK; tr. Barnes)

From this passage it is clear that he already infused the terms of pleasure and pain with a moral quality, clarifying the correlation between bodily experiences and good or bad behaviours. Pleasure and pain would now become viewed as the motivating forces in what humans pursue and avoid.

This 'ethical turn' was taken up in the fourth century, when Plato famously claimed that "the most natural concerns of humankind are pleasures, pains and desires" (*Laws* 732e).[41] While trying to describe more accurately what bodily pain is, he brought in the notion of motivation, as Evans has pointed out, and came close to a useful description when he said that "bodily pains

40 Another interesting transitional figure was Diogenes of Apollonia (late fifth c. BCE).

41 Transl. Saunders in Cooper (1997). In his *Philebus* he focused on establishing what bodily pain or discomfort was, defining it as a disruption of a desired physical or mental state, Frede (1992). Cf. Warren (2007).

[are] … disturbances which are intrinsically motivating".[42] So Plato occupies an important position in the development of articulating the phenomena of pain by allowing some pleasures and pains to be mental processes, not just physical ones. His prose has a marked increase in the use of words with the stem λυπ-.[43] In the Hellenistic world, we see that the greater focus on moral issues reframes the investigation into pain and pleasure (see section 5). The connection between physiology and moral attitudes, which had been initiated by Plato and developed by Aristotle, became a central focus in ethical discourse: pain (perhaps in the general sense of discomfort) and its counterpart, pleasure, often function as explanatory forces driving behaviour.[44]

4 Hippocratic Soundings: Pain, Its Risks, and Its Causes

As one might expect, the Hippocratic Corpus (HC) contains abundant evidence on pain, first and foremost mapping its role in physical suffering.[45] Many of the writings mention pain in various capacities, as a diagnostic factor or as one in the cluster of symptoms, taken as indicative of the patient's illness. As Scullin has shown, the role for pain can be a sign of something going wrong in the body.[46] For instance, to identify the location at which 'diseased' substances or a wayward substance and body part are interacting where they are not supposed to (for example, miscarriage at *Mul. I* 25, or internal suppuration/empyema at *Morb. I* 15, 17). But when it came to interpreting the 'symptoms' of pain, analysis was difficult: "Diagnosing pain is a particular point of anxiety for Hippocratic physicians."[47]

It is important to remember that the overriding perspective in the HC is not that of the patient. Most comments on pain (I come to the specific terms shortly) are observations filtered through the physician's viewpoint, and rarely do we catch a glimpse of the patient's express statement on their experience

42 Evans (2007), 71.

43 Frede (1992), 445 highlights mental processes. TLG shows there are 320 forms deriving from the stem λυπ- in Plato: the noun 179 times and the adjective λυπηρός 21, the remainder are verb forms.

44 For this aspect of pain in Plato, see n.43; in Aristotle, see *De an.* 3.7, 431a8–11, *EN* 7.11–14; 10.1–5. For the Stoics, see Courtil (this volume, Ch. 5). On Epicurus see below p. 32.

45 Cf. Villard (2006). A TLG search for the most important terms reveals their frequency: πόνος 499; ὀδύνη 623; ἀλγεῖν 120; παθήμα 61. All translations for the Hippocratic texts are taken from the Loeb Classical Library, unless stated otherwise.

46 Scullin (2012), 26–27, 113–114.

47 Webster (2016), 170. Cf. Byl (1992).

of pain. In other words, we can only access those indirectly. Thus, in *On the Nature of Women*, the physician's knowledge of pain (ὀδύνη) in the patient must be based on patients' reports, but the text rarely mentions this contribution to the diagnosis.[48] As we will see, this limits our access to the emotional or affective aspect of pain (the subjective experience), but the observations by doctors will inform us at least about the diagnostic place of pain. Much more analysis is needed than what I can offer here.

The terms for pain most frequently used in the HC are ὀδύνη (623) and πόνος (499), while the numbers for ἄλγος (10) and λύπη (11—the noun) are much lower.[49] The first two terms do not dominate the vocabulary of subsequent periods.[50] Such high occurrence cannot be discussed in full. I will highlight some broader patterns and individual cases to offer a preliminary assessment of their usage of these terms. We may start by observing that πόνος seems to take on a new meaning, given its original sense of "hard work, toil, labour, exertion, exercise", without an explicit link to pain. For ὀδύνη the semantic range seems simpler, usually relating to bodily harm or psychological discomfort. Examples for both can demonstrate the diverse use of each.

Medical explanations for pain pointed to a range of causes. Within the framework of the theory of humours (found mostly in *Nat.Hom.*, *VM*, *Morb. IV*, *Nat.Puer.*, *Genit.*)[51] and mechanisms of balance and opposites, the central idea connected to bodily pain and suffering was 'change' (of balance, disposition, state of an organ or interconnected body parts), which could take several forms and was regarded as "an objective event within the body" [**T4**]:[52]

(a) things entering the body (air, *Flat.* 11), change of the *dunamis* of substances in the body (a destructive force which causes ὀδύναι, *Loc.Hom.* 42).

48 See below (text to n.58) for a few clear examples in *On Barenness* 410 where there is questioning of the patient by the physician.

49 Numbers based on TLG search for αλγ- which produces 379 instances (including verb ἀλγέω and nouns ἀλγήμα [201], ἀλγηδών [13]); for λυπ- we find λυπέω (45), λύπη (11 + λυπήματα 1), and λυπήρος (3). Another frequent term is ἐπώδυνος (TLG, ἐπώδυν-, 53 in HC). See also Linka & Kaše (2021), for a statistical analysis of the HC; Cerroni (2019), 231–233 comments on the "rather measured use of ἄλγος in Jewish-Hellenistic literature" (incl. the Septuagint).

50 Plato prefers *lupē* (n.43); according to Cheng (2017, 53) Aristotle seems to prefer (in order of high to low frequency) *lupê, ponos, or pathos* (the latter with different meanings, see Konstan 2006, 3–4; Rapp 2002).

51 Works that seem less interested in humours *per se* notably include the surgical treatises (*On Wounds in the Head*, *On Joints*, *On Fractures*, *Mochlicon*, *In the Surgery*). I am grateful to Mary Harpas for advice on this point.

52 See also Scullin (2012), 6–7, 13–28 (esp. p. 20 "objective event within the body").

(b) internal parts changing place (uterus moving out of its natural position, *Mul. II* 28).
(c) bitter or astringent humours such as phlegm or bile in the wrong place in the body (*Aff.* 16).

The author of *Ancient Medicine* was keen to find out the causes of pain when discussing the deleterious effect of cheese (*VM* XX.23–27, my emphasis) [**T5**]:

> πονηρόν ἐστιν βρῶμα τυρός. πόνον γὰρ παρέχει τῷ πληρωθέντι αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ **τίνα** τε **πόνον** καὶ **διὰ τί** καὶ **τίνι** τῶν ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐνεόντων ἀνεπιτήδειον.
>
> It is not sufficient to learn simply that cheese is a bad food, as it gives a pain to one who eats a surfeit of it; we must know *what* the pain is, the *reasons* for it, and *which constituent* of man is harmfully affected.

The author also had a rather idiosyncratic view which held that it is not the place that is responsible for pain in the body, but rather that "all the causes of the pain can be reduced to one, namely, it is the strongest foods that hurt a man most and most obviously, whether he be well or ill" (*VM* VI.15).[53]

Many other authors in the HC mention the 'wrong place' as a cause of pain. In *On the Nature of Man* the author warns that, whereas health is the "duly proportioned" mingling of the four χυμοί, "pain is felt (ἀλγεῖ) when one of these elements is in defect (ἔλασσον) or excess (πλέον) or is isolated (χωρισθῇ) in the body without being compounded with all the others" (*Nat.Hom.* IV.1–9). One of the longer passages describing painful experiences is found in the treatise on women (*Mul.*). At *Mul. I* 3 pain is described with three different terms (ὀδύνη, ἀλγεῖν, and πόνος) [**T6**]:

> When the menses cease to appear, **pain** (ὀδύνη) occupies the lower belly, and a heaviness seems to be lying there; the woman suffers terribly (ἐκπάγλως πονέει) in her loins and flanks. […] If no flux follows, the woman will appear to be pregnant, and when she has intercourse with her husband, she will suffer a **pain** (ἀλγεῖν) that seems to indicate that some object is lying there. A weight (βρῖθος) is present in her belly, and it protrudes, rising up just as in a woman who is pregnant; she suffers heartburn, particularly after the fiftieth day, and **pain** (πόνος) from time to time occupies her belly down from the navel, as well as her neck, her groin and her lower back. (*Mul.* I 3, Loeb)

53 πάντα δὴ τὰ αἴτια τοῦ **πόνου** ἐς τὸ αὐτὸ ἀνάγεται, τὰ ἰσχυρότατα μάλιστά τε καὶ ἐπιφανέστατα λυμαίνεσθαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον καὶ τὸν ὑγιᾶ ἐόντα καὶ τὸν κάμνοντα.

It is not easy to determine the word choices for these various pain phenomena: does ὀδύνη reflect a type of pain for that location? Is the verb ἀλγεῖν chosen over ὀδυνάω? Would πόνος be reserved for intermittent pains? None of these questions can be answered in the positive without further investigation, but it is possible that ἄλγος is for more specific pains, while πόνος is used for general descriptions, even if this passage does not seem to allow for such an interpretation.

Sometimes the nature of this location (especially, hardness or softness) and the intensity of pain arising there is emphasised, as a passage in *Ancient Medicine* shows. It provides a detailed description of the correlation between the two (*VM* XXII.42–XXIII.1, tr. Loeb, modified) [**T7**, emphasis mine]:

> For when the flatulence does not fill a part so as to be at rest, but moves and changes its position, it cannot be but that thereby noise, and perceptible movements take place. In soft, fleshy parts occur numbness and obstructions, such as happen in apoplexy. [...] (49) But *owing to* (50) *its tenderness* and the blood it contains, the part *cannot be free from pain* (οὐ δύναται ἄνευ πόνων εἶναι), and this is why the *sharpest and most frequent pains* (ὀδύναι τε ὀξύταται καὶ πυκνόταται) occur in this region, and abscesses and tumours are very common. *Pain also occurs in intense form under the diaphragm, but much less so* (καὶ ὑπὸ φρένας ἰσχυρῶς, ἧσσον δὲ πόλλον). For the diaphragm is a broad and resisting region, of a stronger and more sinewy texture, and so there is less pain (διὸ ἧσσον ἐπώδυνά ἐστι).

The notion that hardness or softness influence the intensity of pain may originate in earlier theories of impact in the case of physical processes: the first part, where wind (flatulence or air) moves around and hits something, may be compared to sixth-century ideas about the air impacting on the cartilage in the ear—a process which in its essential workings is very mechanical.[54] The second comment "pain also occurs in intense form under the diaphragm, but much less so" (καὶ ὑπὸ φρένας ἰσχυρῶς, ἧσσον δὲ πόλλον) is puzzling in its wording but the juxtaposition of the adverbs (ἰσχυρῶς, ἧσσον) must be deliberate. At the same time, it relates to the affected area, "the diaphragm", said to be "a broad and resisting region" (that is, firm).

In the context of surgery, physicians often speak about extreme pains, and not only because surgical interventions were done without anaesthetic. But

54 E.g., how Empedocles imagined the impact of air on the inner ear (Theophrastus, *Sens.* 9–10). Aristotle holds a similar view in more general terms at *de An.* 2.8, 420b13–15.

how did they know that a patient was suffering? We have to assume they learned from the patient's reaction to certain procedures.[55] At *Fract.* XLIII the author sounds a warning about a dislocated shoulder which, if not treated correctly, could prove fatal [**T8**, emphasis mine]:

> if the humerus is dislocated backwards—this occurs rarely, and is *the most painful of all* (ἐπωδυνώτατόν τε τοῦτο πάντων), most frequently causing continuous fever with vomiting of pure bile, and fatal in a few days (θανατωδέων καὶ ὀλιγημέρων).[56] [...] If you happen to be quickly on the spot, you ought to extend the elbow forcibly, and it goes in of its own accord (αὐτομάτως ἐμπίπτει). But if he is feverish when you arrive, do not reduce, for the *pain of a violent operation would kill him* (κατακτείνειε γὰρ ἂν ἡ ὀδύνη ἀναγκαζομένου). (tr. Loeb)

This remarkable passage suggests that pain under certain conditions (fever, forced resetting of a dislocated limb) can be fatal.[57] This claim is of considerable interest, as it seems to ascribe some agency to pain itself within the body, that is, represents pain not just as a sufferer's awareness of an affect (perception), but as having an effect on the individual independently.

At *Art.* LXIX.23–26, the author discusses amputation and warns, "don't cut any living flesh because many patients have died from the associated pain". Pain as the cause of death would be very serious indeed! In *On the Nature of Women* we find out that physicians know about the pain (ὀδύνη) of a patient, which must (also) be based on what the patient reports, but the text gives no indication of how this kind of input occurs. This aspect of gaining information from patients remains mostly invisible. The only clear passages I could find in which we hear about a form of question and answer with the patient are *On Barenness*, 410 L. (= p. 332–333 Loeb), "by palpating and questioning" (ψηλαφήσει δὲ μάλιστα γίνεται δῆλον καὶ ἐρωτήσει περὶ τῶν εἰρημένων [sc. σημεῖων]), and ibid. 415 L. (= p. 338–339 Loeb), "each of these conditions is revealed by question and answer" (Δῆλον δὲ ἑκάτερόν ἐστι τῇ ἐρωτήσει καὶ ἀποκρίσει).[58]

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55 For similar cases of diagnosis by inference, see Lewis' chapter in the present volume. Cf. below n.58.

56 For θανατώδης, cf. *Progn.* 8.2–3 (ἐπώδυνοί τε εἰσί κάρτα καὶ θ.) and *passim* (TLG θανατώδ-, 114 cases).

57 The optative κατακτείνειε with ἄν presumably can also express possibility, not just future (Loeb: "will kill").

58 On the extent to which patient testimonials factored into Hippocratic medicine, see Lloyd (1983), 76 with n.68 (gynaecological works), Holmes (2010), 168 f., Webster (2016), 168. Letts

Specific uses of the verb ἀλγέω can serve to illustrate the variety of translations it evokes when the contexts suggest variations of pain [**T9**, emphasis mine]:[59]

> **(a)** *Morb.Sacr.* VI.4–9 [location]
> The brain of man, like that of all animals, is double, being parted down its centre by a thin membrane. For this reason, pain (ἀλγεῖ) is *not always felt* in the same part of the head, but sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other, and occasionally all over.[60]

> **(b)** *Vict. II* LXVI.60–66 [link to fatigue]
> Fatigue pains (κόποι) from accustomed exercises arise in the following way. Moderate toil is not followed by pain; but when immoderate it dries the flesh overmuch, and *this flesh*, being emptied of its moisture, *grows* hot, *painful* (ἀλγεῖ) and shivery, and falls into a longish fever, unless proper treatment be applied.

> **(c)** *Vict. II* LXXII.1–4 [like fatigue]
> The symptoms of surfeit are sometimes as follow. The body *aches* (ἀλγεῖ), in some cases all over, in others that part only of the body that happens to be affected. The ache (ἄλγος) *resembles the pain of fatigue* (κοπιῆν).[61]

> **(d)** *Fract.* III.52–54 [observation by touch]
> Of course, the hand of an experienced practitioner would not fail to recognise the prominence (at the fracture) *by touch*; also, there is a *special tenderness* (ἀλγεῖ) at the prominence when palpated.

The contextualised translations clearly show that ἀλγέω can represent a fairly broad semantic range, but in all cases it concerns physical pain, even if the creative flourishes of the translators add a plausible dimension beyond the

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(2016), highlighting Rufus of Ephesus (b. 70 CE) who wrote the only known work on the dialogue between patient and physician, points to a few additional examples in the HC (p. 96, n.56).

59 I note that ἀλγέοντες ("those suffering") can refer to patients.

60 Cf. *Morb. IV* 4 (550 L.), location and pain: "If much phlegm remains *in the head*, this will provoke **great pain** (πολλὸν πόνον) thereby occupying the vessels, whereas if only little remains, it will not do this, although it will give some indication more or less serious." (Tr. Loeb)

61 On the link between fatigue and pain, see also Theophrastus, *On fatigue* lines 5, 8, 26, 51, 67, 80–82, 86, 88 (ed. Sollenberger in Fortenbaugh et al. [2003], 265–277).

physical. While probably narrated by the physician, here too we suspect that knowing about the pain sometimes originates in a verbal statement or physical reaction by the patient (b, c), where a correlation is assumed between pain and fever (b), or a comparison is used to clarify the nature of the pain (c). But rather than just ask for verbal feedback, the physician could also find out for himself by examination, discovering a patient's reaction to the hands-on examination (probing or palpating in passages a and d).

When we turn to examine the usage of πόνος in the HC (499 instances), descriptions become more vivid and varied. One reason for this difference might be that it is combined with adjectives to represent the *intensity* of pain (cf. **T2** above). At least in two clear cases we can recognise this tendency [**T10**, emphasis mine]:

> **(a)** *Coac.* 138: Τῶν πυρεσσόντων οἷσιν ἐρυθήματα ἐπὶ προσώπου καὶ **πόνος κεφαλῆς ἰσχυρός**, καὶ σφυγμὸς φλεβῶν, αἵματος ῥύσις τὰ πολλὰ γίνεται· οἷσι δὲ ἄσαι, καὶ καρδιωγμοί, καὶ πτυαλισμοί, ἔμετος. οἷσι δὲ ἐρευγμοί, φῦσαι, ψόφοι κοιλίης, καὶ ἐπάρσις καὶ ἐκτάραξις κοιλίης.
>
> In fever patients who have redness of the face, *a strong pain in the head*, and throbbing of the vessels, a haemorrhage often occurs; if they have nausea, heartburn, and salivation, there will be vomiting; if they have eructations, winds, noises of the cavity, and swelling and diarrhoea.
>
> **(b)** *Int.* 50: καὶ τὸ σῶμα **κοπιᾷ ὡς ὑπὸ ταλαιπωρίης** καὶ ἐν τῇ κοιλίῃ βάρος ἴσχει καὶ **πόνος ἰσχυρός**· καὶ οἱ πόδες οἰδέουσι.
>
> the body *suffers weariness, as if from exertion*; in the cavity there is heaviness and a *violent* ache; the feet swell.

Again, the observed problems concern physical ailments, and they seem to combine with other physiological problems. From this sampling of the two primary terms in HC we can extract a few preliminary insights, even if a broader study is needed to draw more definitive conclusions (cf. p. 13). Firstly, the use of ἄλγος and πόνος suggests that they predominantly label physical pain. The physicians' preoccupation with physiology shines through in their descriptive accounts. Secondly, the patients' suffering seems to have a subordinate role in their observations and diagnosis.

A third and final term allows us to gain a glimpse of the evolving terminology and semantic extension. While in later texts it can serve to express several emotions (that is, psychological or mental states), in the HC we observe that

λύπη has limited use, yet is clearly on the rise.[62] Earlier I pointed to its complete absence in Homer.[63] Most modern discussions will emphasise the importance of λύπη (pairing it with *dolor* as its Latin equivalent),[64] but it remains to be seen to what extent λύπη in HC already labels mental states. That it is a latecomer on the scene of pain expressions suggests that it was becoming a linguistic marker for mental suffering.[65]

The noun λύπη is found in eight passages. Three provide some evidence for its use for a mental affliction, two of which are clear [**T11**, emphasis mine]:

> **(a)** *Regimen in Acute Diseases* (*Acut.*(*Sp.*) 40; tr. Potter, Loeb)
> ἢν δὲ … γουνάτων βάρος ἢ σώματος ὄγκος παρὰ τὸ ἔθος, ὅ τι ἂν συμβαίνῃ μήτε ὑπὸ πότων μήτε ὑπὸ ἀφροδισίων μήτε **ὑπὸ λύπης** μήτε ὑπὸ φροντίδων μήτε ἀγρυπνιῶν· ἢν μέν τι τούτων ἔχῃ αἴτιον, πρὸς τοῦτο ποιέεσθαι τὴν θεραπείην.
>
> If there is … heaviness of the knees or fullness of the body beyond what is normal, give hellebore, provided that the condition is not the result of drink, venery, *grief*, anxiety or sleeplessness; if the condition has one of these as its cause, let the treatment be directed against that.
>
> **(b)** *Epidemics III* XVII Case XI (tr. Jones, Loeb)
> Ἐν Θάσῳ γυνὴ δυσάνιος **ἐκ λύπης** μετὰ προφάσιος ὀρθοστάδην ἐγένετο ἄγρυπνός τε καὶ ἀπόσιτος καὶ διψώδης ἦν καὶ ἀσώδης. ᾤκει δὲ πλησίον τῶν Πυλάδου ἐπὶ τοῦ λείου.
>
> In Thasos a woman of gloomy temperament, *after a discomfort* with a reason for it, without taking to bed lost sleep and appetite, and suffered thirst and nausea. She lived near the place of Pylades on the plain.
>
> **(c)** *Cf. Epidemics III* XVII Case XV (tr. Jones, Loeb) In Thasos the wife of Delearces, who lay sick on the plain, was seized *after a discomfort* (ἐκ λύπης ἔλαβεν) with an acute fever with shivering (πυρετὸς φρικώδης ὀξὺς)

62 According to the TLG the noun λύπη occurs 8 times, the noun λυπήματα once, the cognate adjective λυπηρός thrice, and the verb once.

63 Above n.15.

64 See Konstan (2006), 245–246, and the chapters by Clarke, Courtil, and Lewis in the present volume. But Cicero is said to have paired *aegritudo* with λύπη (see *Tusc.* 3.61, with Graver 2002, 13).

65 Konstan (l.c., previous note) points out that Aristotle used *lupê* for 'pain', and refers to Harris (2001, 343) who claimed *lupê* is ambiguous (a claim in turn qualified by Konstan). Galen would develop it further as a label for 'anxiety disorder' (see Mattern 2016).

The limited number of instances in HC may constitute an early stage of its usage. The term may occur in a list of mental afflictions (*On Humours* IX.15, οἱ φόβοι, αἰσχύνη, λύπη, ἡδονή, ὀργή, ἄλλα τὰ τοιαῦτα; *On Breaths* I.10, οἱ δὲ νοσέοντες ἀποτρέπονται διὰ τὴν τέχνην τῶν μεγίστων κακῶν, νούσων, λύπης, πόνων, θανάτου), or even denote the unpleasant feeling from "a tongue out of tune" (*On Regimen I* XVIII.23), but may also appear as a result of "fellow-feeling" (διότι συμπάθησις ὑπὸ λύπης ἐοῦσα ὀχλεῖ, "fellow-feeling at grief causes distress"). These examples show how λύπη became the more appropriate term for the kind of suffering closest to mental discomfort, not physical trauma.

5 Sceptical about Sensory Impressions and Pain

To track another stage in the evolving notions of pain assessment, it is worth selectively reviewing some materials from Hellenistic philosophical schools.[66] The period offers uneven evidence from various schools of thought, with one in particular constructing a very unusual theory of pain. These examples will illustrate how both the diversity and sophistication increased as time progressed.

Our evidence for Aristotle's followers in the Peripatos, while fragmentary, offers some intriguing insights into the analysis of pain and related phenomena. One interesting case may be mentioned. Strato, the third head of the Peripatetic school, comments on the aspect of sensation and behaviour in a curious (and for antiquity quite unique) observation.[67] From a passage preserved in Plutarch's *On the Intelligence of Animals* 3, 960e–961a (fr. 62 Sharples), we learn about a peculiar notion held by Strato, when Plutarch discusses sensation and cognition. In support of his argument that animals lacking a rational capability to choose or avoid would be better off without sensation and distress (λυπεῖσθαι καὶ ἀλγεῖν), he reports a claim from Strato, as follows [**T12**]:

> there is an argument of Strato the natural philosopher which shows that not even sensation is present at all in the absence of mind (οὐδ' αἰσθάνεσθαι τὸ παράπαν ἄνευ τοῦ νοεῖν). For frequently we fail to notice letters when we traverse them with our sight and words that fall on our ears, because we have our mind on something else.[68]

66 See Prost (2004). As indicated in n.2, I lack the space here to cover the classical philosophers (Plato and Aristotle).

67 A useful discussion of Strato in Modrak (2011).

68 Text and translation in Strato ed. by R.W. Sharples in Desclos & Fortenbaugh (2011), 147.

The topic Strato comments on probably originates in Aristotle's discussion of the soul functions and which of these presupposes any of the others.[69] Strato is said to realise how we may lack awareness of a sensory experience, a step towards considering what it means not to feel pain when in shock after trauma (perhaps comparable to what we now call 'dissociation'). As before with the early Greek philosophers (see section 3), the analysis combines sensory and affective aspects of human perception (percepts and the response). But this time we hear about a form of distraction which is rare (cf. Aristotle, *EN* 10.5): obviously this example of reading is not about pain per se, but about sensory awareness failing due to mental distraction.

A close contemporary, Epicurus, seems to have considered similar mechanisms of mental 'malfunction' (for lack of a better word), but his approach shows a more active involvement. Epicurus is famous for having (i) at the core of his philosophy an elaborate theory of pleasure which is viewed as highly cerebral and not the conventional hedonistic notion, and (ii) for offering a four-part cure (his *Tetrapharmakos*) to cope with life's vagaries and anxieties. At the end of his own life, Epicurus was forced to apply his own ideas to himself, since he suffered from kidney stones (urethritis), a very painful and at that time incurable condition.[70] He also describes how he is coping with the pain in his *Letter to Idomeneus* (preserved in Diogenes Laertius) [**T13**]:

> When he was about to die, he wrote the following letter to Idomeneus [fr. 138]: "as we pass this blissful day that is the last of my life, we wrote the following for all of you. The effects of urethritis (στραγγουρία) and dysentery have kept me company without at all abating at all their extreme intensity (πάθη ὑπερβολὴν). Arrayed against all of that is the joy in my soul at the memory of the discussions we have had (ἀντιπαρετάττετο δὲ πᾶσι τούτοις **τὸ κατὰ ψυχὴν χαῖρον** ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν γεγονότων ἡμῖν διαλογισμῶν **μνήμῃ**). You in particular [*sc*. Idomeneus], in the way your lifelong attachment to me and to philosophy warrants, take care of the children of Metrodorus." That is the will he made.[71]

69 Arist. *de An*. 3.3 (perceiving and understanding are not identical) and 3.7 (pleasure and pain linked to the sensory).

70 He describes his experience in such detail, that it allowed modern physicians to determine the condition: Bitsori & Galanakis (2004) refer to it as "urinary calculus" (466) or "renal disease" (468). But *strangury* refers to "dysuria or retention" (468).

71 D.L. 10.22. Transl. Stephen White (2021) 418. For the potential self-contradiction and solution see O'Reilly (*forthc.*).

Epicurus creates an opposition between intense pain and joy, claiming the latter actually helps to battle the intense pains plaguing him. The joy (χαῖρον) is brought on by his memories of philosophical conversations (ἡμῖν διαλογισμῶν μνήμῃ) but also, it seems, by memories of Idomeneus' friendship.[72] This example importantly places the power of self-directed mental action in opposition to (passive) physical suffering.

My third and last example concerns a rather obscure school of thought, the Cyrenaics, founded by a follower of Socrates, Aristippus of Cyrene.[73] The specific examples from a discussion on the question whether the senses are reliable, are relevant here, as is the critique a later Peripatetic offered. The Cyrenaics were highly sceptical about perception. This had happened before in Greek philosophy (for example, Parmenides) but using the notion of *pathē* (παθή), "affections" or "feelings", they theorised about what humans can sense of the world and hence know about it. Their view was that *pathē* are affections in a special sense, labelling a passive experience of a sensible object (perhaps "stimuli"); they considered *only these* to be "apprehensible" by humans.[74] Although this implies some kind of criterion of infallibility regarding the *pathē* as *internally* perceived experiences,[75] their sceptical attitude towards such *external* sensory stimuli, their exact source or origin, had major consequences for their philosophical theorising.[76]

The most striking report comes to us from the fourth century CE bishop Eusebius, who in his *Preparatio Evangelica* (*PE*) explains that said 'stimuli' concern sensory effects which most people would consider painful. What we learn about the Cyrenaic view Eusebius reports in part *via* the critical comments of the Peripatetic Aristocles against the Cyrenaics. Aristocles formulated two distinctive points, so far as the evidence allows us to make out.[77] Both aim to ridicule the position by extracting absurdities from the basic premises (Eusebius, *PE* xiv. 19.1, italics mine) [**T14**]:

72 On χαῖρον, "joy", see also O'Reilly (*forthc.*).

73 It is uncertain whether he wrote anything (D.L. 2.84), and the 'school' did not last long (mid-third c. BCE).

74 The best modern study is Tsouna (1998) who in Ch. 2 clarifies the subtleties and pitfalls of the vocabulary.

75 As Voula Tsouna put it (1998, 53): "their contents are directly given to consciousness and are incorrigibly true".

76 It precluded them from further developing the traditional areas of philosophy at the time, that is, physics and metaphysics, because they claimed they "could not determine from these affections what caused them or even what they were."

77 I base my summative account on Tsouna (1998), 62–70 and the discussion of Aristocles in Chiesara (2001).

> These philosophers maintained *that they know nothing*, just as if a very deep sleep weighs down on them, unless somebody standing besides them struck them or pricked them. For they say that, **when they are being burnt or cut** they know that **they are undergoing something** (καιόμενοι γὰρ ἔλεγον ἢ τεμνόμενοι γνωρίζειν ὅτι πάσχοιέν τι). But *whether the thing which is burning them is fire or that which is cutting them is iron they cannot tell.* (tr. Tsouna)

I have here italicised the two parts which seem to represent the Cyrenaic claim as to what one can know in relation to sensory impressions. Aristocles' objections make clear how *pathē*, in previous authors used for "feeling", "affection" or "pain", focus on the fact that they exclude knowing anything about the nature of the external objects that cause the stimulus, yet they will *become aware* of it. Note how the examples refer specifically to unpleasant experiences such as being struck, pricked, or burnt. In other words, *pathos* here refers to a *painful bodily experience* (πόνος), not just a neutral experience of being affected in some way. Aristocles also emphasised that they used pleasure and pain for choice and avoidance but that they do not "welcome every pleasure and shun every pain" (Eusebius, *PE* xiv. 21. 3, αὐτοί γέ τοί φασιν οὐ πᾶσαν ἡδονὴν ἀσπάζεσθαι καὶ πάντα πόνον ἐκτρέπεσθαι.)[78]

In addition, the counterargument turns on extending the claim from "undergoing" (παθεῖν) to "*knowing that* they are undergoing something" (γνωρίζειν ὅτι πάσχοιέν τι), pointing out that this must mean they are contradicting the narrower state of awareness ("undergoing something"). In other words, Aristocles claims there is more to the experience than feeling something, but also an added awareness of a propositional nature: "for if they did not [sense something], they would not be able even to say that they know only *pathos*; … For 'I am being burnt' is an expression (*logos*), not a *pathos*." (Eusebius, *PE* xiv. 19.1).[79] Obviously, this is a shrewd move, although one might object that the negative claim about the cause was merely there to clarify the absence of an expected consequence, articulated in conventional language of perception.

The point is also raising a more fundamental issue: at the meta-level of making claims about experiences ("I am aware that I am affected"), Aristocles exploits the inconsistency that may arise, urging that these should not contradict the claims related to the experiences themselves ("I am affected").[80]

78 Text and translation from Chiesara (2001), 46–47.

79 Transl. Chiesara (2001), 33.

80 For an analysis of Aristocles' reasoning and how the Cyrenaics might respond, see Tsouna (1998), 63–65.

In addition, Aristocles goes on to extract a further inconsistency, by stipulating that the claim involves three factors: the percipient, the awareness of the affected percipient ('self-awareness') and the knowledge of the external objects, inferring that awareness of pain *includes* awareness of the percipient. Lastly, the Cyrenaic claim also implies that they cannot sufficiently differentiate between pain and pleasure, how it is that we know who is undergoing a sensation, or how we are aware of the sense organs themselves.

These examples, then, illustrate precisely how the modes of reasoning about pain became more detailed and subtle, and evaluation of its nature and the implications for the limits of perception and knowledge more sophisticated. While in Homer there is no analytical perspective on pain, subsequent analyses move from crude oppositions to nuanced observations on human physiology (perception), its associated stages, and the impact this evolving understanding of the sensory had on the affective and cognitive outcomes.

6 Conclusion

My dual aim for this chapter was (1) to examine the semantic range and diversity of pain terminology, and (2) to track the diachronic developments (if any) of the terminology over time and assess whether the conceptualisation of pain showed any advancement. The term 'labelling' in the title covers best how pain was given linguistic expression (nouns, verbs, adjectives) that refer to unpleasant sensory and affective experiences, conventionally translated as "pain" (ἄλγος, πόνος), "distress", "grief" (λύπη), etc. This approach was chosen to offer a wider exploration in terminology and because language is the best available starting point to reach an understanding of embodied experiences in history, which are themselves, strictly speaking, inaccessible to us. It allows us to explore the issues around meaning, semantic range and diversity.

The language-based angle using simple nouns may not cover emotions that have been paraphrased, or conveyed in analogy, simile, or another kind of periphrastic description. Ancient authors have described human emotions in the earliest writings we possess, but there is not always one easy expression used to label them: for instance, Zeus may be grieving in *Il.* 16.459, but his 'emotional state' (bereavement) is hinted at by mentioning "tears" (ψιάδας), and there is no single word for 'grief' to be found in the passage.[81] It is clear that different words may describe the same sensory or affective experience.

81 On Zeus' grief, see Lateiner (2002) who speaks of "tears of blood", "human-like affect", and

On the first aspect it emerged that higher frequency (preference?) for particular terms can be observed in Homer, the Hippocratic Corpus, and the philosophers, although some pain terms are consistently shared by all. On the second objective—the question whether ancient reflection on pain increased in the emerging philosophical and medical traditions after Homer—the answer is affirmative. Here I highlighted in particular the appearance of labels for psychological or mental states. We saw that the vocabulary did undergo changes over time, from terms that applied to physical pain only to terms that could label both physical and mental pain, with a pronounced role for λύπη.

Two striking points emerged in the process of illustrating selectively the terminology and its development. Firstly, we observed that λύπη for mental suffering makes its appearance in the Hippocratic Corpus and can later be seen to appear in authors like Anaxagoras (late fifth century), Plato, Aristotle (fourth century), the Stoics and Epicureans (third century).[82] From its first humble appearance (for example, Hesiod, *Works and Days* 401; Aesch. *Supp*. 442) it seems to be used in the sense of 'distress'—a mental affliction—and in particular grief.[83] A second interesting insight emerged in the discussion of the philosophers. The concept 'pain' would almost always occur in a context which emphasized the behavioural (and hence ethical): pleasure and pain came to be regarded as basic drivers behind behavioural patterns of pursuit and avoidance. Following the initial connections already introduced by Democritus (T3), Plato and Aristotle developed their analysis of pain and pleasure as foundational principles for behaviour, discussed in their works on ethics.[84]

Overall, the ancient evidence reveals a diverse palette of representations to express the experiences of pain. We also saw that different levels of intensity, particular contexts, and specialised domains (technical language) existed, and there is some evidence of linguistic expressions for phantom pain, dissociation, and lack of focus (distraction) to allow us a small window into such unusual observations. Pain terms in ancient Greek literary, philosophical and medical texts represent an evolving group of lexemes which are subject to a number of shifts and changes. In broad terms, several 'stages' can be distinguished (though not in any rigorous or deliberate sense). The Homeric usage prefers the nouns

"he grieves again" (p. 43); cf. his n.5, where other translators are quoted also speaking of "tears" (Pope), "tears of blood" (Lattimore).

82 For Plato and Aristotle see above n.2 and n.6. For the Stoics see Graver (2007); for the Epicureans, Graver (2001).

83 Its opposite ἀλυπία, "absence of grief", is found in the (reconstructed) title of Galen's work (Boudon 2005).

84 See above n.44.

ἄλγος and πόνος, the adjectives ἀλεγεινός and δυσηλεγής, and the verbs ἀλγεῖν, πονεῖν, but did not offer any instance of λύπη. Across these provisional stages, the most common pain terms could be seen to expand their semantic range or become replaced or redundant. The Hippocratic Corpus offers examples of variety that are based on direct observations and indirectly accessed pain experiences, but the two categories do not feature in a self-conscious discourse.

On the basis of this broad examination, I suggested that the emergent attention for psychological phenomena is perhaps connected to a growing awareness in the late fifth and early fourth centuries that one could construct a 'model' of the mind. When exactly the psychological dimension emerges is not clear, but it is striking that the rise of models for mental processes (a theory of the mind or primitive 'psychology') by Plato has some historical claim to functioning as a concept of mental health, given the increase in labels for emotional states.[85] While early Greek philosophers made many claims about perception and mind, it was Plato who first offered a model of the (tripartite) soul, which allowed for structured analysis of sensory, affective and cognitive experiences, when a person interacts with the world. That pain and pleasure now received an ethical reframing says a lot about the priorities of urban philosophers within the polis: they wanted to *regulate* behaviour, while physicians continued to *observe* patient behaviour. For both, the terminology was fundamental to perform these tasks.

Appendix A: Pain Terms in the Hippocratic Corpus

■ rows placed below each other, ok?

Coac. 137	ἐπώδυνος	(Bladder) will have pain
Coac. 138	πόνος κεφαλῆς ἰσχυρός	Strong pain in the head
Coac. 309	Πόνος	Pain settling in the chest
Coac. 310	ἀλγήματος	Migration of pain
Coac. 311, 312, 316, 317	ἄλγημα	Pain
Coac. 314	πόνος	Pain
Morb. I 26, 27, 28, 13	ὀδύνην	Pain
Morb. I 8	ἄλγημα	Pain
VM VI.3–4	ἀλγήματα	"fever and pain grow manifestly worse"

85 Kenny (1973), 1: "The concept of mental health was Plato's invention".

VM VI.15	πόνου	Pain
VM III.17	ἄπονοι	Without pain
VM XX.23–24	πονηρόν	Pain
Morb. IV 5	ἀλγέει	Pain
Morb. IV 24	πόνον	"when the phlegm has contracted and solidified, it will provide pain by striking the bladder"
Morb. IV 4	πόνον	Pain
Int. 50	ἐν τῇ κοιλίῃ βάρος ἴσχει καὶ πόνος ἰσχυρός	"in the cavity there is heaviness and a violent ache"
Art. LXIX.24	ὀδυνηθῇ ὀδύνης	Pain (during amputation)
Art. XIV.28	ἅτε οὐκ ὀδυνώμενοι	Pain ("feel no pain")
VC XIV.10	πόνῳ	Pain
Aër. IX.40	ὀδύνην	Pain
Mul. I 3, 50, 60	ὀδύνη	Pain
Mul. I 51	ἀλγέῃ	Pain
Mul. I 3	πόνος	Pain
Mul. I 61	ἀλγήσει	"If the patient is touched in the region below her navel, she feels pain"
Off. XI.14	ἐν σχήματι ἀπόνῳ	"(bandage) in a position causing no pain"
Gland. 12	πονέει	Pain
Aph. IV.XI	Ὁκόσοισι στρόφοι, καὶ πόνοι περὶ τὸν ὀμφαλόν, καὶ ὀσφύος ἄλγημα μὴ λυόμενον μήτε ὑπὸ φαρμακείης, μήτ' ἄλλως, εἰς ὕδρωπα ξηρὸν ἱδρύεται.	"Those who suffer from colic, pains about the navel, and ache in the loins, removed neither by purging nor in any other way, finish with a dry dropsy."
Alim. XXVI	ὀδύνη	Ache
Epid. 7 20	ἄλγος	Pain of feet, head

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