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Aristotle's Vocabulary of Pain

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Abstract: This paper examines Aristotle's vocabulary of pain, that is the differences and relations of the concepts of pain expressed by (near-)synonyms in the same semantic field. It investigates what is particularly Aristotelian in the selection of the pain-words in comparison with earlier authors and specifies the special semantic scope of each word-cluster. The result not only aims to pin down the exact way these terms converge with and diverge from each other, but also serves as a basis for further understanding Aristotle's philosophical conception of pain.

Keywords: Aristotle, pain, pleasure, semantics, vocabulary

1

In Socrates' explanation of why even a hedonist needs an art of measurement, he urges his interlocutor Protagoras to concentrate upon the *concept* rather than to play with *words*. To illustrate this request, he parodies Prodicus' doctrine of synonyms as a counterexample (*Prt.* 358a5–b2), according to which four kinds of pleasure need to be differentiated, represented respectively by four terms: ἡδονή, χαρά, τέρψις and εὐφροσύνη (cf. *Prt.* 337a–c). Although Aristotle's version of Prodicus' classification of pleasure is a little different,¹ a similar critical attitude to the sophist's approach is also implied in his testimony (*Top.* 112b21–24). Regardless of who preserves a more reliable version of Prodicus' doctrine,² Aristotle's reservation indicates clearly enough that he, no less than Plato, attaches more

1 In Aristotle, the generic term ἡδονή includes three subparts: χαρά, τέρψις and εὐφροσύνη.

2 Classen (1986) 299 and Primavesi (1996) 192–194 support the Platonic version, whereas Mayer (1913) and Wolfsdorf (2009) 6 take Aristotle's version to be historically more loyal to Prodicus' division. For pleasure in Prodicus, also see Sansone (2004) (2015); Gray (2006); Dorion (2008); Mayhew (2011) 126–131.

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weight to the clarification of *concept* than to the differentiation of *words*. This fact explains why the two philosophers – in spite of developing their particular theories of pleasure at length – do not exhibit strong interests in the semantics of pleasure behind their choice of vocabulary.³ The same principle seems also to hold with respect to Aristotle's use of the vocabulary of pain, the antipode to pleasure, since he goes freely back and forth between different terms without providing sufficient information about how to distinguish their semantic scope.⁴ Given all this, then, why is an investigation into Aristotle's general vocabulary of pain⁵ still a desideratum?

In his ethical treatises, Aristotle emphasises that *both* pleasure and pain are crucial expressions of the character (ἦθος) or virtue (ἀρετή) of human beings, that is, as indicators and constituents of a person's tendencies of behaviour with regard to norms and values.⁶ This view can be understood adequately only if pain in addition to pleasure is subjected to the proper assessment it deserves. Moreover, on different occasions, he focuses on pain, primarily understood to be an awareness of something bad or a hindered activity (*Eth. Nic.*1153b1–3; 1154a19–20; 1175b1–23), as a necessary component of a series of cognitive phenomena

3 In *Cra.* 419c-d, Socrates offers another 'etymological' distinction between ἡδονή, χαρά, τέρψις and εὐφροσύνη, which is different from the Prodician doctrine in the *Protagoras*. It is uncertain, however, to what extent Plato is committed to the conceptual distinction between four kinds of pleasure in the etymological play of the *Cratylus*. At least, Plato's *prima facie* free use of pleasure-words does not seem to reflect the 'rule' set up in the *Cratylus* or in the *Protagoras*. In Aristotle, his favorite words for pleasure are ἡδονή and its derivatives. The other terms occur only occasionally, usually without exhibiting a serious conceptual peculiarity. The only exception may be χαρά when it is in his list of passions (πάθη) of the soul (e.g., *De an.* 403a18; *Eth. Nic.* 1105b22). There, this word seems exclusively to refer to emotional joy, which is not the paradigm case of pleasure addressed in *Eth. Nic.* 7 and 10, where pleasure is said to be an ἐνέργεια or something like ἐνέργεια, not a κίνησις/πάθος. In many other places, it is quite easy to see the interchangeable use of χαρά and ἡδονή (cf. *Eth. Nic.* 1152b8; 1153a2; a5; 1175b4–5).

4 For the way in which Aristotle, alternating or conjoining, uses different words for pain, e.g.: συναλγεῖν (*Eth. Eud.* 1240a33) = συνωδίνοντες (a36) = συλλυπεῖσθαι (a37); συναλγεῖν = συνάχθεσθαι (*Eth. Nic.* 1171a7–8); συναλγοῦντας = συστένουσι (*Eth. Nic.* 1171b10–11); ἀλγεῖ = λυπεῖσθαι (*Eth. Nic.* 1166b20–22); λυπηρῶν = ὀδυνηρῶν (*Rh.*1386a5); ἀλγεῖνόν = λυπηρόν (1117b4–5); πονεῖ = εἶναι λυπηρόν (*Eth. Nic.* 1154b7–8).

5 By the qualification 'general' I mean the terminology that signifies what can be translated into English as pain/suffering without strong specifications of further features. Hence I shall not address Aristotle's terminology for specific pain such as ὠδὶς (pain of child birth), κεφαλαλγία (headache) and the like. I shall not discuss the cluster of πάθος either, which, for Aristotle, has a much broader semantic scope, referring to anything insofar as it is affected. For a concise overview of the way in which Aristotle uses them, cf. Rapp (2002) 543–544.

6 *Eth. Nic.* 1104b3–5; b8–9; b27–28; 1105a6–7; a10–12; b23; 1106b19–21; 1152b1–5; 1172a20–27.

such as accidental pleasures,⁷ emotions,⁸ and desire.⁹ In view of its different roles in Aristotle's philosophy, the study of pain covers a wide range of theoretical fields including his theories of emotion, psychology, and ethics. Yet unlike pleasure, for Aristotle pain does not seem to be a theoretically consolidated and precisely determined concept, and even the evidence pertaining to this topic is fragmentary, sketchy, and scattered in nature. An investigation of Aristotle's pain-vocabulary can thus help us take a step towards his understanding of pain by exploring how lexical alternatives and (near-)synonyms are – consciously or unconsciously – selected from his mental dictionary and used in different conceptual networks.

To grasp the role of pain in Aristotle, there is also a particular worry about its evaluation, namely where we should place this experience on his evaluative scale. Aristotle's generous attitude towards emotions, especially his emphasis of their indispensable relevance to human well-being,¹⁰ requires creating a theoretical space in which pain, an important ingredient of the majority of emotions, can be generously treated. It is thus not accidental that contrary to Eudoxus and Speusippus, who take pain either as bad in itself or simply bad (*Eth. Nic.* 1172b19; 1173a7–8), Aristotle cautiously formulates that pain can be bad in a relative sense (*Eth. Nic.* 1153b2). But if so, how does pain (λύπη) in general count as bad while some instances of pain seem to constitute a virtuous life? Alexander of Aphrodisias is one of a few commentators who are sensitive to the Peripatetic *aporia*.¹¹ To solve the problem, he, adopting a linguistic approach, distinguishes between two kinds of pain by differentiating λύπη and πόνοϛ in a Prodician fashion and evaluates them in different ways. I think he is perceptive to pay attention to the significance of linguistic analysis for conceptual study, and he is also on the right track in underlining the distinct roles of λύπη and πόνοϛ in Aristotle. Nevertheless, he does not build his results through meticulous research into the semantics of the terms, nor does he even find a coherent way to pin down his distinction.¹²

7 *Eth. Nic.* 1152b32; 1154b12–19; 1173b7–16.

8 *Eth. Nic.* 1105b21–23; *Eth. Eud.* 1220b13–14; *Rh.* 1378a19–21; 1378a30–32; 1382a21–22; 1385b13–14; 1386b9–13; b18–21; 1387b23–25; 1388a32–34; *De motu an.* 702a2–4; For further discussion, see Fortenbaugh (2002) 103–114; Dow (2011).

9 See *De an.* 413b23–24; 414b1–5; 434a2–3; *Somn.* 454b29–31; For the relation between desire and pain, see Whiting (2002); Corcilius (2008) 67–102; Moss (2014) 23–38.

10 For Aristotle's understanding of emotions, see Fortenbaugh (2002); Rapp (2002) 543–583; Dow (2011).

11 For Alexander's reading of Aristotle's understanding of pleasure and pain, see Madigan (1987); Natali (2015); Cheng (forthcoming).

12 Alexander suggests at least three options. In *Pr. Eth.* 126.7–11, he seems to provide a Stoicism-like distinction between λύπη and πόνοϛ by defining the former as a contraction of the soul

To fix these problems, we need a new study of the semantic field of Aristotle's pain-vocabulary.

From a broader perspective, such survey can also contribute to illuminating the *Begriffsgeschichte* of pain. The last few decades have seen valuable studies on various Greek terms and formulae of pain, especially in Homer and the *Corpus Hippocraticum*.¹³ Some scholars even believe that the ancient taxonomy of pain could help us better classify the variety of this experience in modern society by providing a new mode of language.¹⁴ Unfortunately, Aristotle – who is supposed to play an indispensable role in this context – is either completely neglected or inaccurately presented in the works devoted to the history of pain.¹⁵

To bridge the gap, this survey will elaborate on Aristotle's use of the vocabulary of pain in an effort to figure out the relations and differences between the pain-words on the basis of what makes most sense of their semantic scope and of their nuanced implications in concrete circumstances. In spite of the interchangeability of these lexemes on many occasions, I aim to show a wide range of semantic nuances among their usages by exploring how they reflect correlated, but not always identical concepts. I shall not only provide a snapshot of the scope and character of Aristotle's approach to pain by manifesting its diversity and delicacy, I also attempt to articulate the subtle way in which πόνος and the other synonyms are distinguished in his works (against Alexander), which is of importance to the appreciation of the divergence between Aristotle and the ancient ascetic tradition that (in his eyes) improperly overstates the role of πόνος for the formation and maintenance of a virtuous and good life.

(ψυχικὴν συστολήν) and the latter as an affliction (θλίψιν) of the body. In *Pr. Eth.* 125.32–35, λύπη becomes the generic term for pain, while πόνος counts as its species. This relationship, however, is conversed in *Pr. Eth.* 127.8–10, where it is πόνος that becomes the generic term.

13 Cf. Mawett (1979); King (1988); Rey (1995) 11–14; Wöhrle (1995); Horden (1999); Holmes (2007).

14 Edwards (1984); Olivier (2007).

15 Morris (1991) and Rey (1995) leave Aristotle unmentioned. Olivier (2007) 16–17 uses Aristotle, together with Homer and Plato, to verify Heidegger's thesis that "Riss" is the most fundamental meaning of pain in ancient Greece. Keele (1957) and Gustafson (2005) 225–232 take an evolutionary approach, arguing that Aristotle's concept of pain represents a transitional stage of the understanding of pain from external attack to internal experience. Frede (2006) 258 correctly emphasises that λύπη in Aristotle covers a wide spectrum of experiences, but fails to pay attention to the subtlety in her usage of the other pain terms.

2

Rich vocabulary of pain can be found in Homer, including πόνος, πένθος, κῆδος, ἄλγος, ἄχος, ὀδύνη, πῆμα, and their cognates, as well as many others.¹⁶ Accordingly, a diverse range of pain-phenomena are depicted and integrated into the narratives of the two epics, serving, in scholars' eyes, either to embody heroic excellence in "the symbolic cartography of the manly body"¹⁷ or to build the epic plot in terms of wounds and blood.¹⁸ Despite a rich variety of formulation, physical and emotional pains are dominant in the epic narrative, whereas its ethical and metaphysical implication – which began to play a significant role in Greek tragedies and philosophy – did not take pride of place there.¹⁹ Morris, in his culture-historical account of pain, indicates that Homer seems to display little narrative interest in pain as a central human experience.²⁰ In a more refined way, Holmes also asserts that in Homer there is "a *lack* of difference between pains that allows them to be traded ... or substituted ... for one another",²¹ a phenomenon she terms "the economy of pain".

From Homer onward, the concept of pain underwent double transformations that are somehow opposed to each other, yet mutually complementing. The former is a tendency of differentiation manifesting itself as a conceptual proliferation in an enlarged semantic sphere, so that pain as a complex experience with multiple aspects can operate on different levels in different circumstances: physical and mental, natural and pathological, ethical and metaphysical.²² The expansion of the semantic nuance of pain is also found in Aristotle's works, and its metaphysical, ethical and psychological implications, as we shall see, are especially significant for apprehending the congruency of his practical philosophy, theories of emotions, and metaphysics.

Assimilation is the other tendency of the semantic transformation of pain from the archaic to classical period, through which pain-words are gradually

16 The most popular terms for pain in Homer seem to be ἄλγος, πόνος and their cognates (the family of ἄλγος: 92 occurrences; the family of πόνος: 82 occurrences). By contrast, the families of πένθος (30 occurrences), ἄχος (45 occurrences), ὀδύνη (25 occurrences), and πῆμα (45 occurrences) are relatively less widespread. It is also interesting to see that ἀλγηδών, ἀλγημα, and λύπη, the terms which are in circulation in classical antiquity, were not present there.

17 Loraux (1995) 96.

18 Cf. Holmes (2007).

19 Rey (1995) 12.

20 Morris (1991) 41.

21 Holmes (2007) 47–48.

22 On the discovery of the ethical and metaphysical implications of pain, see Holmes (2010) 106–108.

reduced to, and converge in, a few core terms; a phenomenon especially reflected by scientific and philosophical texts. This development, manifesting itself as a process of objectivization and conceptualization, reveals that a loose set of words covering a variety of unpleasant experiences becomes a relatively fixed category with more distinctive features. In the *Corpus Hippocraticum*, for instance, pain vocabulary tends to focus on the clusters of ἄλγος, ὀδύνη and πόνος.²³ This tendency is followed and strengthened by Plato, so that in his works, as *Cra.* 419c1–7 hints, the terminology for pain is basically limited to λύπη, ἄνία, ἀλγηδών, and ὀδύνη.²⁴ We cannot help but ask why an author decides to choose one lexeme over others, and what factor (if any) triggers the increase or reduction of its frequency.

The word λύπη and its cognates are worth mentioning. This is a new term which was never used by Homer and the other earlier authors. Although it has been attested in several places of the *Corpus Hippocraticum*, its frequency cannot be compared with ἄλγος, ὀδύνη and πόνος.²⁵ The rise of the family of λύπη in conjunction with the decline of the ὀδύνη-words can be seen even within the development of Greek tragedies, a genre which is more concerned with the psychological and social-political implications of pain than with its therapeutic relevance.²⁶ As in Homer, the πόνος-group is prevalent in Aeschylus;²⁷ yet in two later tragedians, Sophocles and Euripides, ἄλγος, λύπη and their cognates are more frequently found,²⁸ although πόνος still retains some import.²⁹ Afterwards, the rise of λύπη is strengthened and fixed as a relatively standard term in Plato

23 By the cluster of x I mean not only x and its derivatives (e.g. ἄλγος and its verbal and adjective forms ἀλγεῖν and ἀλγεινός), but also its cognates (e.g. ἄλγος, ἀλγηδών, ἀλγημα) as well as its compounds (e.g. συναλγεῖν and ὑπεραλγεῖν). I do not take into account the compounds with the prefix privative α.

24 In *Cra.* 419c6, Socrates also mentions ἀχθηδών in the list of pains. Yet unlike the groups of λύπη, ἄνία, ἀλγηδών, and ὀδύνη, which are used to signify pain in various places of Plato's works, ἀχθηδών (in its plural form) occurs only once in *Leg.* 734a6.

25 According to Horden (1999) 298, the word ὀδύνη occurs 772 times, ἄλγος over 400; πόνος over 700, whereas the occurrences of λύπη are only 59.

26 On the status of pain in Greek tragedies, see Holmes (2007) 76–81; (2010) 126–127; 265–274; Budelmann (2007) 443–446; Hall (2012).

27 In his seven extant works, the cluster of πόνος occurs 68 times (I take the *Prometheus Vincetus* into account [25 occurrences]), the cluster of ἄλγος 35, the cluster of λύπη 6, and the cluster of ὀδύνη 3.

28 The cluster of λύπη occurs 36 times in Sophocles' seven extant tragedies and 100 in Euripides (I do not count the *Rheusus* and the fragments).

29 The cluster of πόνος occurs 61 times in Sophocles' seven tragedies, the cluster of ἄλγος 68, and the cluster of ὀδύνη 9. In Euripides there are 183 occurrences of the cluster of πόνος, only 10 of the cluster of ἄλγος and 13 of the cluster of ὀδύνη.

and Aristotle.³⁰ It is in particular noteworthy that in his treatises on emotions (*Rh.* 1.11; 2.1–11), on pleasure (*Eth. Nic.* 7.11–14; 10.1–5), on the soul (*De an.* and *Sens.*) Aristotle continues using λύπη and its cognates.

Like Plato, Aristotle's vocabulary for pain is also limited to a few central lexemes.³¹ Some Homeric terms, such as ἄχος or κῆδος, are no longer in use, whereas ὀδύνη, a quasi-technical term for pathological pain in the Hippocratic treatises,³² is only occasionally employed.³³ The cluster of λύπη, as noted above, becomes the favourite expression (375 in total), of which the nominalised forms enjoy the majority (175 times), whereas its verbal forms also occur 105 times.³⁴ In contrast, the group of πόνος occurs less frequently (116 in total), and the proportion between nouns and verbs in this cluster is approximately 0.8 : 1 (52 : 64).³⁵ It is important to note that although the cluster of πόνος is also widely found in Aristotle, its semantic scope and its ethical implication have been changed in a subtle yet significant way, which I shall elaborate below in section 5. As regards the ἄλγ-group (50 occurrences in total), Aristotle uses its verbal forms³⁶ much

30 For Plato, e.g. *La.* 192b6; *Prt.* 356a8; *Phd.* 84d4; *Cra.* 419b5; c1; *Resp.* 583e5; 607a6; *Phlb.* 27e5; 31c2; 32d3; 37c5; 38b10; 41d9; e5; *Ti.* 42a6; *Leg.* 654d2. It is not the right place to provide a detailed exposition of Plato's understanding of pain (cf. Evans 2007; Wolfsdorf 2015), nor his use of pain vocabulary. Two remarks are enough. First, Plato also employs the ἄλγ- and πόνος-clusters at times, yet the ὀδύνη-family occurs much less frequently (cf. *Phlb.* 42d2; 52a8), which distinguishes him from the Hippocratic authors while resembling Aristotle's custom. Second, Plato uses the group of ἀνία in a handful of cases, most of which are adjective forms (24 occurrences, 8 occurrences of the noun, 2 occurrences of the verb). It is remarkable that the group of ἀνία, predominantly found in the *Protagoras* and *Gorgias*, never appears in Plato's more substantial discussion of pleasure in the *Philebus* and *Timaeus*. In the *Protagoras* and *Gorgias*, the nominalized forms τὸ ἀνιαρόν and τὰ ἀνιαρὰ are also used to denote the general concept of pain (e.g. *Prt.* 351d2; 355e5; e7; 356b6; 358a6; *Grg.* 497d8). In contrast, the adjective ἀνιαρός is attested in Aristotle's works only three times, all in Aristotle's quotations of Evenus (*Metaph.* 1015a29; *Eth. Eud.* 1223a32; *Rh.* 1370a11).

31 All of the following discussions, especially the statistical research, are based on Aristotle's authentic works. His fragments, works which were probably composed in a collective way (e.g. *Problemata*), and treatises whose authority is controversial (e.g. *Mag. mor.*) or denied (e.g. *de Ventis*) will usually not be taken into consideration.

32 Rey (1995) 13.

33 12 occurrences of the cluster of ὀδύνη in Aristotle: noun (5 times), adjective (6), and adverb (1).

34 The occurrences of the adjectives and adverbs are 95 times. In Plato, the occurrences of its noun are 218, whereas its verbs are 72.

35 I do not take its adjective forms πονηρ- into account (39 occurrences in Aristotle), because, in accordance with the noun πονηρία, the adjective predominantly denotes 'in bad condition', 'bad' or 'worthless' in classical antiquity, whereas it means 'painful' or 'troublesome' only in a few cases in archaic literature (cf. *LSJ* ad.loc.).

36 Simple forms: 21; compound forms: 15 (προ-: 1; ὑπερ-: 2; συν-: 12).

more often than its substantive forms (36 : 12).³⁷ If we follow Halliday's theory on scientific language,³⁸ the different proportions between nouns and verbs in different word-clusters also reflect their uneven status in Aristotle's works: whereas the family of λύπη, in which the nominalised forms prevail, stands for the concept of pain in a dominant way, the ἄλυ-group, an inverted case, represents a less developed degree of conceptualisation and authoritativeness.³⁹ Interestingly, Aristotle's account of the mixed feelings in the *Rhetoric* is illustrative of how he uses the new term λύπη to replace other old-fashioned words: in order to demonstrate the existence of the mixed feelings in different circumstances, Aristotle here appeals to different poets as witnesses, who, he believes, testify to different ways of mixing a particular pleasure with a particular pain. It is, however, remarkable that he refers to the pain-words in quotations – ἀνιαρόν in Evenus,⁴⁰ πόννοι in Euripides,⁴¹ ἄλγος⁴² and γόος⁴³ in Homer – all as λύπη in his paraphrases or explanations, without devoting himself to the possible semantic nuance of each term.⁴⁴

As the theorists of semantic fields state that “the meanings of words must be understood, in part, in relation to other words that articulate a given content domain”,⁴⁵ this study sets out to elucidate the semantics of the terms for pain in Aristotle by considering their semantic relationship and lexical competition. Since λύπη, as stated above, can refer to unpleasant experience as such and all of its particular forms and is especially linked to several forms of cognition such as emotion, desire, bodily pleasure, and perception, its uses in Aristotle should be devoted to an independent philosophical study rather than a semantic research.⁴⁶

37 ἀλγηδών occurs 8 times. Most instances are attested in Aristotle's report of the Pre-Socratic conception of pain in the *Topic* (see *Top.* 145b2; b6; b7; b13; b14; *Eth. Nic.* 1116b34; 1117a3; *Resp.* 479b28). ἄλγημα is exclusively found in the *Hist. an.* (512b18; b25; 635a12). ἄλγος is only used once by Aristotle himself (*Hist. an.* 635a27). The other two instances of ἄλγος are his quotations of Solon (*Ath. Pol.* 5.2.5) and Homer (*Od.* 15.400 in *Rh.* 1370b5).

38 Halliday (2004).

39 Plato never uses ἄλγος nor ἄλγημα, but he relatively often employs the noun ἀλγηδών (28 occurrences) and its adjective forms (19 occurrences), most of which are found in the *Philebus*, the most important dialogue for understanding his conceptions of pleasure and pain. By contrast, the verbal forms of ἄλυ-words are less present in Plato (10 occurrences).

40 πᾶν γὰρ ἀναγκαῖον πρᾶγμα' ἀνιαρόν ἔφην (fr. 8 West = *Rh.* 1370a10).

41 ἀλλ' ἡδὺ τοι σωθέντα μεμνήσθαι πόνων (fr. 133 Kannicht = *Rh.* 1370b3).

42 μετὰ γὰρ τε καὶ ἄλγεσι τέρπεται ἀνήρ / μνημένος ὅστις πολλὰ πάθη καὶ πολλὰ ἐόργη. (*Rh.* 1370b5–6 = *Od.* 15.400–401).

43 ὧς φάτο, τοῖσι δὲ πᾶσιν ὑφ' ἴμερον ὤρσε γόοιο (*Rh.* 1370b28 = *Il.* 23.108; *Od.* 4.183).

44 λυπηρόν 1370a3; a10; b26; b30; τὰς συντονίας λυπηράς a11; λύπη 70b9; b25; λυπούνται b31.

45 Lehrer/Kittay (1992) 3.

46 For pain (λύπη) as a philosophical concept in Aristotle and its relation to pleasure, see Cheng (2015) 334–80; for different discussions, also see Salim (2012).

Thus, the following discussion will focus on the clusters of ὀδύνη, ἄλγος and πόνος, three non-standard groups for pain in Aristotle, in order to clarify the scopes and particularities of each term as well as the way they are related to and different from the favoured term, λύπη.

3

Ὀδύνη is frequently used in Homer to signify episodes of extreme physical pain caused by various kinds of hurt, which is often taken as sharp, pointed, cutting, biting, and rapid.⁴⁷ Its effect is formidable. In order to highlight the severity of such anguish, the word family seems to have been etymologically bound up with the pains of childbirth (Hom. *Il.* 11.268–272):

ὀξεῖαι δ' ὀδύνηαι δύνον μένος Ἀτρεΐδαο.
 ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἄν ὠδίνουσαν ἔχη βέλος ὀξύ γυναικα
 δριμύ, τό τε προΐεσι μογοστόκοι Εἰλείθυιαι 270
 Ἥρης θυγατέρες πικρὰς ὠδίνας ἔχουσαι,
 ὡς ὀξεῖ' ὀδύνηαι δύνον μένος Ἀτρεΐδαο.

The sharp pains began to break in on the strength of Atreides.
 As the sharp anguish descends on a woman in labour,
 the bitterness send by the Eileithyai, spirits of hard childbirth,
 Hera's daughters, who hold the power of the bitter birthpangs,
 so the sharp pains began to break in on the strength of Atreides. (trans. Lattimore, modified)

It comes as no surprise that these words collocate with ὀξύ (sharp, quick) and πικρή (pointed, sharp), attributes which can also describe weapons (arrow or spear) that penetrate the body. This fits well into the traditional image of pain/suffering as something intruding upon a subject from outside, blurring the boundary between internal pain that is felt by the subject and the external weapon that causes this harm.⁴⁸ Rey even believes that a vivid phenomenology of ὀδύνη can be found in Homer, according to which “the wounded feel a sense of exhaustion, literally of wear and tear-τεῖρω, accentuated by the sweat that forms, whilst in other passages it is the feeling of weight or pressure linked to pain”.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Cf. Rey (1995) 12.

⁴⁸ Mawet (1979) 41–43; Holmes (2007) 58; Jouanna (2012) 81–96.

⁴⁹ Rey (1995) 12.

This aspect of ὀδύνη is more or less preserved in the later tradition, in particular in the *Corpus Hippocraticum*, although the physicians are of course more concerned with the diagnostic function than its phenomenological overtone. As Jouanna laconically points out, ὀδύνη “almost always signifies the pain felt by the patient on account of his illness. This pain interested the physician insofar as it was a meaningful symptom for establishing the diagnosis or prognosis of the illness”.⁵⁰

The ὀδύνη-family, however, is eclipsed by the clusters of λύπη, ἄλγ- and πόνος in Aristotle. The reason for the decline of this group is presumably that he is more interested in the ethical and psychological implications of pain, which play an indispensable role in his systematisation of virtues and passions and in his explanation of motivation and action, but is less concerned with the pathological aspect that the term ὀδύνη often indicates.⁵¹

In accordance with this tradition, Aristotle also often refers the ὀδύνη-group to physical pain, in particular if it is distinct, sharp and serious,⁵² closely related to disease, being wounded, and evil.⁵³ He even pushes this semantic connotation further in such a way that ὀδύνη-pains are repeatedly characterised as fatal and bound up with death. In discussing various virtues, for instance, Chiron is introduced as an example to show that those who are willing to die in order to avoid pain cannot count as courageous, since he “prayed for death and release from his immortality because of the ὀδύνη of his wound”.⁵⁴ In the *De partibus animalium*, Aristotle asserts that patients who suffer from kidney troubles will experience deadly pains (ὀδύναι θανατηφόροι, *Part. an.* 672a35) once their kidneys become overly fat. Likewise, he uses φθαρτικὴ ἢ ὀδυνηρά (“destructive or painful”) to characterise the scene of suffering (πάθος), one of the three key components of a tragic plot, associating it with public deaths, affliction and wounding (ἐν τῷ φανερωῷ θάνατοι καὶ αἱ περιωδυνίαι καὶ τρώσεις, *Poet.* 1452b12–13).⁵⁵ The conjunctions of ὀδυνηρά with destructive (φθαρτικὴ), and excessive affliction (περιωδ-

⁵⁰ Jouanna (2001) 127.

⁵¹ Notice that I am not claiming that Aristotle is *not* interested in the medical aspects of pain at all. He might address pain, from this aspect, in his lost writing such as *On Being or Having Been Affected* (Περὶ τοῦ πάσχειν ἢ πεπονθέναι DL 5.22), *Affections* (Πάθη DL 5.24), and *On Health and Diseases* (Περὶ ὑγείας καὶ νόσου, on this work see Strohmaier 1983, 186–189), and *Medical Issues* (Ἱατρικά DL 5.25) in a more substantial way.

⁵² Pain caused by the sting of wild wasps (*Hist. an.* 627b27–28) or pain in disease (*Hist. an.* 638b22). Cf. νόσους περιωδυνίας χειμῶνας (*Rh.* 1215b20; cf. *Hist. an.* 609b24–25).

⁵³ On a few exceptions, see *An. post.* 62a28–30; *Poet.* 1449a37; *Ath. Pol.* 16.6.6–8.

⁵⁴ διὰ τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἔλκουσ ὀδύνην εὐξασθαι ἀποθανεῖν ἀθάνατον ὄντα (*Eth. Eud.* 1230a3–4).

⁵⁵ It is interesting to see that comedy, accordingly, is characterised as ridiculous and ugly, but ἀνώδυνον καὶ οὐ φθαρτικόν (*Poet.* 1449a35).

υνία) with (violent) deaths (θάνατοι) are also echoed in the *Rhetoric*, where things that can arouse pity (ἔλεος) – one of the two most significant tragic emotions – are underlined as “painful and destructive” (ὀδυνηρὰ καὶ φθαρτικά, 1386a7–8; also see ὀδυνηρῶν φθαρτικά at 1386a5–6).

4

Unlike ὀδύνη, which is closely linked to the technical vocabulary of medicine, ἄλγος is a more general term, covering a wide range of unspecified pain experiences.⁵⁶ Presumably inspired by this semantic feature, Heidegger, who is inclined to trace a concept to its origin, notoriously takes ἄλγος – which, in his view, denotes “Riß”, a comprehensive and enduring suffering that disturbs and tears one’s existence as a whole⁵⁷ – as the paradigm term for all kinds of pain in the Greek tradition.

The occurrences of ἄλγ-terms in Aristotle are reduced, not only horizontally in comparison with the groups of λύπη and πόνος in his works, but also diachronically in comparison with occurrences of ἄλγ-terms in earlier authors (see section 2 above). In the zoological treatises, the ἄλγ-group seems to take over the role of ὀδύνη in the Hippocratic treatises, predominantly referring to pathological suffering, produced either by wounds or by diseases. Aristotle is often not reluctant to

56 For this feature, see Rey (1995) 12–13. Due to its unspecified characteristic, it comes as no surprise that κρατέρ’ ἄλγεα πάσχω can describe both the suffering of the wounded Philoctetes (*Il.* 2.731), which seems to refer to pains of the body and of the soul together (cf. ἔλκει μοχθίζοντα κακῶ ὀλοόφρονος ὕδρου / ἔνθ’ ὄ γε κεῖτ’ ἀχέων 2.732–733; for the ἀχέων as feeling psychological pain, see Mawet 1979, 347–348) and the suffering of Odysseus (*Od.* 5.13) when trapped by Calypso in Ogygia, which denotes merely emotional anguish. However, a scholiast, whose source might be Aristarchus, suggests replacing κρατέρ’ ἄλγεα πάσχω at *Od.* 5.13 with τετιμημένος ἦτορ (“grieved in his heart”, see schol. *Od.* 5.13 [Pontani]) on the grounds that the phrase κρατέρ’ ἄλγεα πάσχω is appropriate for Philoctetes but not for Odysseus. The reason for this emendation must be that he treats ἄλγεα as purely physical. This suggestion, however, is oversensitive and seems to read the body-mind-dualism prevalent since Plato into the Homeric text in a pedantic way. A scholiast (in Schol. *Il.* 2.721b, Erbse) and Eustathius (ad *Il.* 2.721 van der Valk) already – in my view correctly – point out that the ἄλγεα in question includes psychic pains as well (I owe this clue to an anonymous referee).

57 Cf. Heidegger (1976) 404; (1985) 24–25. He even speculates: “Vermutlich ist ἄλγος mit ἀλέγω verwandt, das als Intensivum zu λέγω das innige Versammeln bedeutet. Dann wäre der Schmerz das ins Innigste Versammelnde” (1976) 25.

specify which animal⁵⁸ and which part of the body⁵⁹ undergo pains, with occasional mention of their concrete causes.⁶⁰ Here, female animals seem to be frequently mentioned as the patients,⁶¹ which implies that for Aristotle, as for Hippocratic authors, female bodies are more vulnerable to suffering due to their physical constitutions.⁶² If there is any general theory behind these various experiences, Aristotle's explanation of the suffering in the heart indicates that his view also does not seem to deviate from the mainstream view of the Hippocratic tradition,⁶³ according to which pain comes about when an unnatural change destroys the initial balance of the body (*Resp.* 479b26–30).⁶⁴ As opposed to Plato,⁶⁵ he also manifests little interest in the ways pain is generated by the conflict among different powers or activities of the soul. Despite the principle agreement with the medical writers, we should nevertheless note that Aristotle's main concern in these treatises is biological rather than therapeutic, theoretical rather than practical. Following his philosophical method, he is more interested in the agent than the patient, more in the subject that can be hylomorphically and functionally analysed than in an object that manifests itself in purely flesh-and-blood physicality. In his zoology, therefore, pains of different kinds are usually adduced to explain the function (or dysfunction) of animals' faculties, not as a symptom to serve diagnostic or prognostic purposes. It is thus understandable that qualitative or quantitative specification

58 Animals that suffer from ἄλγος are horses (*Hist. an.* 604b15–16); female sheep (*Hist. an.* 522a8–9); camels (*Hist. an.* 499a30); elephants (*Hist. an.* 605b1–2); female elephants (*Hist. an.* 578a21–22); cows (*Hist. an.* 595b12–15) and women (*Hist. an.* 586b27–32; 635a12; a27).

59 E.g., heart and flank (*Hist. an.* 604b15–16); heart (*Hist. an.* 479b26–30); udders (*Hist. an.* 522a8–9); feet (*Hist. an.* 499a30; 595b12–15); leg, waist and belly (*Hist. an.* 586b27–32); shoulder (*Hist. an.* 605b1–2); uterine (*Hist. an.* 635a12; a27); pains in back and waist as well as in knee and ankle (from quotation of Polybus, *Hist. an.* 512b18; b25).

60 Caused by biting (*Hist. an.* 604b22–23), by rubbing (*Hist. an.* 522a8–9), by heart disease (*Hist. an.* 604b15–16), by childbirth (*Hist. an.* 578a21–22; 586b27–32; 635a12; a27).

61 See fn. 58.

62 On the weakness of women in ancient Hippocratic tradition, see King (1998) 7–11; 77; 134; 203; also cf. King (2005); Dean-Jones (1994).

63 For pain in the Hippocratic tradition, see Scullin (2012).

64 Note that *Resp.* 479b26–30 should not be regarded as Aristotle's last word concerning pain. His more elaborate account of pain can be found in *Eth. Nic.* 7.14;10.5; *De an.* 3.7; *De motu an.* 7 etc., for discussions thereof, see Corcilius (2008) 67–102; Aubry (2009); Salim (2012); Cheng (2015) 334–380.

65 For Plato's understanding of pain, see Evans (2007) and Wolfsdorf (2015). For a comparison of Aristotle's conception of pain with that of Plato's, see Cheng (2015) 364–371.

of pain – which might play a significant role for medical treatment – can be rarely found in his works.⁶⁶

Aristotle's use of the ἀλγ-family is different in his practical philosophy. To show why actions caused by λύπη (*Eth. Nic.* 1116b32) cannot be qualified as brave, he introduces a series of examples to illustrate what is meant by “being caused by λύπη”, which include “being wounded or being frightened” (τὸ πληγῆναι ἢ διὰ τὸ φοβεῖσθαι, b32–33) and “being driven by distress and rage” (ὑπ' ἀλγηδόνοσ καὶ θυμοῦ, b34). In this context, ἀλγηδών, among others, seems to be a subset of the genus λύπη. The phrase ὑπ' ἀλγηδόνοσ καὶ θυμοῦ refers, presumably as a hendiadys,⁶⁷ to painful wrath and anger,⁶⁸ which causes someone to meet danger hurriedly without foreseeing the potential perils he should note (cf. 1116b34–35).

The pain in question is emotional,⁶⁹ which is distinguished not only from physical pains, but also from many psychical pains such as pains of perceptual (e.g., visual pains caused by strong light or auditory pain by strident sound, cf. *De an.* 424a28–32) and intellectual types (e.g., pain generated by resolving a taxing problem in learning).⁷⁰ This fits well with the semantic development of ἀλγέω:

66 E.g. σφόδρα ποιεῖ ἀλγεῖν (*Hist. an.* 604b23); ἀλγοῦσα δῆλη (*Hist. an.* 578a22); ἴνα μὴ ἀλγῆ ἰσχυρῶσ, ἢ ἴνα μὴ ἡρέμα (*Eth. Eud.* 1225a23–24); quantitative aggravation of pain is also expressed by the addition of the prefix ὑπερ- (*Rh.* 1380b34; 1383b32).

67 The association of ἀλγ-terms with θυμός was traditional. In Homer e.g., *Il.* 22.53 (ἄλγοσ ἐμῶ θυμῶ); *Il.* 24.522–523 (ἄλγεα ...ἐνθυμῶ); *Il.* 24.568 (ἐν ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ὀρίνησ); *Od.* 1.4, 13.9 (ἄλγεα δὴν κατὰ θυμόν); *Od.* 5.85 (δάκρυσι καὶ στοναχῆσι καὶ ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ἐρέχθων); *Od.* 9.75 (ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ἔδοντεσ); *Od.* 10.143 (eating θυμός with pain); *Od.* 21.88 (κεῖται ἐν ἄλγεσι θυμός); for the phrase ἄλγεα θυμῶ see *Il.* 9.321; *Il.* 13.670; *Il.* 16.55; 379; *Od.* 12.427; *Od.* 13.263; *Od.* 15.487; *Od.* 17.13; In lyric, e.g. Theognis 1.1091 (ἀργαλέωσ...θυμός); 2.1295 (ἐν ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ὀρίνησ); cf. Snell (1975) 53–90; Jahn (1987) 9–27; 202–206; 212–240; Caswell (1990); Sullivan (1995) 36–70, (1996); Clarke (1999). Aristotle differs from the archaic thought in that he does not take θυμός as the location or the bearer of such unpleasant feelings.

68 For the connection of ἄλγοσ with anger, see also *Eth. Nic.* 1117a5–6: καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι δὴ ὀργιζόμενοι μὲν ἀλγοῦσι.

69 E.g., pain in love (τὸν ἔρωτα) and anger (*Eth. Eud.* 1225a22–24); pain caused by restraining appetite (*Eth. Eud.* 1224a30–37); pain in regret (*Eth. Nic.* 1166b24).

70 In *Eth. Eud.* 1232a18, Aristotle mentions this kind of pain (also cf. 1232a17–18: ἀλόγιτοσ δὲ ὁ ἐντῶ μὴ ὑπομένειν τὴν ἀπόλογιμοῦ λύπην). This is a particular intellectual pain of a fool caused by using his (underdeveloped) rational faculty – something to which he is unaccustomed. The intellectual ἐνέργεια in question is thus forced, hindered and imperfect. Pace Salim (2012) 104, who argues that the fool feels pain because of “bad *intelligibilia*”, which “create excessive inputs”. The intellectual pain in question, I believe, derives from a badly developed intellectual faculty and its bad performance rather than from bad or excessive *intelligibilia*. The reading of Salim seems to improperly apply the mechanism of the generation of pain caused by excessive percepts to the generation of intellectual pain.

from its etymological sense “taking care or heed” to “being worried or in grief”.⁷¹ The close link between ἀλγ-words and emotions is especially fortified by their frequent occurrences in Aristotle’s discussion of friendship. For him, friendship in its ideal form means sharing life with each other. Sharing pain is one of its key elements. Aristotle’s diction in spelling out this thought – “the sharing of distress (συναλγεῖν) lessens the pain” (λύπην, *Eth. Nic.* 1171a32) or “our pain (λυπούμενοι) is made lighter when our friends share the distress” (συναλοῦντων, 1171a29) – seems to have been deliberately selected, and a subtle distinction between λύπη and ἄλγος here cannot escape our attention. For what your friend undergoes can be any kind of pain, while what is shared by you as a friend is usually not a random thing – nor can it be the *same* pain that your friend is suffering if you are not doing the same thing within the same situation. In most cases, it is rather a sympathetic feeling elicited by your friend’s suffering, namely some sort of distress for her/his own sake that is based on the friendship between you and her/him. For this reason, the pains you and your friend are undergoing are usually not identical in kind.⁷² It is thus reasonable to believe that in the texts quoted above, two kinds of pain are represented by the λύπ- and ἀλγ-families respectively. In this context, the ἀλγ-pain seems, again, to be emotional, namely distress or grief based on the emotional response towards a friend’s suffering.

This semantic particularity of the ἀλγ-family helps us make better sense of their frequent occurrence in the treatises on friendship.⁷³ The sharing of emotions, as noted above, is deemed as substantial aspect of friendship as the sharing of life (τὸ συζῆν), which, according to Aristotle, essentially consists in various kinds of cognitive activities.⁷⁴ Yet unlike the sharing of knowledge and perception – which are characterised as intrinsically happy and pleasant (*Eth. Nic.* 1169b32; 70a20–26) – Aristotle’s attitude towards the sharing of pain among friends is ambivalent.

71 Cf. Szemerényi (1964) 148–150.

72 Aristotle seems to suggest that in an ideal situation, the pain shared among friends should be one and the same in kind. It is obvious that this highly demanding requirement cannot be fulfilled in ordinary cases. Aristotle also qualifies this claim by pointing out that it would also be good if the two kinds of pain involved are similar (*Eth. Eud.* 1240a33–b1).

73 συναλγεῖν (*Eth. Eud.* 1240a33; b9; 1244a25; *Eth. Nic.* 1171a7; a32); συναλοῦντα (*Eth. Nic.* 1166a7; *Rh.* 1381a4); συναλοῦντας (*Eth. Nic.* 1171b11); συναλοῦσιν (*Rh.* 1379b23).

74 *Rh.* 1381a3–5 even defines a friend as the person who shares your pleasure and pain for your own sake, without mentioning the sharing of understanding and knowledge as a necessary element of friendship. By contrast, *Eth. Eud.* 1244a24–25 leaves the impression that Aristotle places a constraint on the significance of emotion-sharing, downplaying τὸ συχαίρειν καὶ τὸ συναλγεῖν as a corrupted form of friendship, namely that for the sake of pleasure (τῷ δὲ καθ’ ἡδονῆν). His detailed accounts of friendship in the *Eth. Nic.* and *Eth. Eud.*, however, are sufficient for proving that his position is between the two extreme options.

From a certain vantage point of view, it is by sharing pain among friends that the pain suffered by someone can be alleviated or overcome by another pain, and Aristotle even admits the sharing of pain can contribute to the cultivation of self-knowledge in so far as he hints that in such experience the fragility of the other helps us realise our own weaknesses.⁷⁵ Sharing pain, however, has to involve a friend in an unpleasant experience, causing an increase of pain on her/his part. Aristotle, therefore, also maintains that only females or effeminate men are indulged in *this* kind of sharing life (1171b10–12). He thus mocks those who are too sensitive to the pain of other people and who are consequently always ready to share the pain of others, taking this as a sign of flattery (κολακεία, *Rh.* 1383b32–33).

5

In not a few passages, as noted, Aristotle seems to have no scruples about interchanging πόνος-terms with λύπη-terms.⁷⁶ It is thus fruitless to specify a systematic distinction between πόνος and the other words of pain. πόνος and its cognates can denote pain in general,⁷⁷ but it can also refer, notably in his zoological writings, to pain of a particular kind⁷⁸ or pain located in a particular body part,⁷⁹ sufferings

75 οἱ γὰρ φίλοι συναλγοῦσιν, θεώμενοι δὲ τὰ οἰκεία φαῦλα πάντες ἀλγοῦσιν, *Rh.* 1379b23–24. The sharing of pain (συναλγεῖν) functions not only at the *interpersonal* level but on the *intrapersonal* level, referring both to the emotional life among friends and to the emotional state of an individual (cf. συναλγεῖτε καὶ συνήδεται μάλισθ' ἑαυτῶ, *Eth. Nic.* 1166a27). The double fact is obviously based on his analogy between our relation to friends and our relation to ourselves – a key thought in Aristotle's account of friendship. This explains why, apart from “person” or “soul” (*Eth. Eud.* 1240b9), a certain *part* of the soul can count as a receptor of emotional pains in Aristotle (*Eth. Nic.* 1166b20–22). However, there is no Platonic story of the division of the soul here. By transferring the interpersonal relation to a self-relation with the analogy between friend and self, Aristotle intends to illustrate the psychological struggle and cooperation of different cognitive powers within an individual in a dramatic way, revealing the complexity of our mental life in which more than one kind of pain can interact with one another in various ways.

76 See *Pol.* 1139b37–38; 1154b7–8.

77 *Eth. Nic.* 1175b5; *Hist. an.* 590b7; 602a29.

78 Pain in childbirth (*Hist. an.* 582a20; 584a28; 586b28; b30; 587a2; *Pol.* 1335a18); pain because of superfoetation (*Hist. an.* 585a10); pain in pregnancy (*Hist. an.* 570b3; 584a10; b14); dysmenorrhoeal (*Hist. an.* 582b7).

79 Headache (*Hist. an.* 557a10; 586b28; 603b8); foot pain (*Soph. el.* 184a5); pain in the windpipe (*Hist. an.* 495b18; *Part. an.* 664b5–6; 672a34); toothache (*Hist. an.* 501b27); pain in the breasts (*Hist. an.* 587b25); pain in the liver (*Hist. an.* 514b3).

that any animal could undergo because of diseases or disadvantaged circumstances.⁸⁰

Although *πόνος* holds an important place within the kingdom of the animals, a particular aspect of its semantic connotation render it very human and, I would claim, very Greek: its association with physical labour, exertion, and toil, with the prolonged effort of someone who struggles, and in particular with the practices of war, athletics and hunting.⁸¹ This connotation results in an oscillation of the semantic field of *πόνος* between the physical energy to be invested and its corresponding unpleasantness (cf. *Pol.* 1339b16–17: τῆς ... διὰ τῶν πόνων λύπης). This equivocal aspect is well embodied in the role of *πόνος* in physical training,⁸² where this word family can represent not only the activity itself, but also the pain inherent in this activity.⁸³ Accordingly, a good athlete who struggles for his honor through his *πόνος* can be both the triumphant agent and the overwhelmed sufferer. This is reminiscent of Pindar's famous use of *πόνος* as a generic motif, which – both as physical effort devoted to athletic achievement and as pain which the athlete has to endure for the victory – functions as a sign of his character and virtue.⁸⁴ It is thus unsurprising that *πόνος*, a central human experience, is morally valued⁸⁵ and even extended to symbolise “the lot of human condition” in Pindar,⁸⁶ determining and constituting the vicissitude of human life as a dialectical alternation between happiness and suffering. Here we witness a paradoxical relationship between *πόνος* and the well-being of the human being, which offers us a clue to capturing the ambivalence of *πόνος*-pain in Aristotle.⁸⁷ Pain of this kind, from one perspective, can be regarded as a useful (if not an indispensable) means towards the healthy state or human flourishing; on the other hand, it is

80 For non-voluntary *πόνος*, e.g., caused by the cold and the heat (*Part. an.* 680a29–30); by winter (*Hist. an.* 601b29, 602a11); by frost (*Hist. an.* 590b7); by bad weather (*Hist. an.* 595b15); by smoke (*Hist. an.* 623b20).

81 Johnstone (1994) 235.

82 For *πόνος* as physical training in Aristotle, e.g., *Cael.* 292a27; *Eth. Eud.* 1220a24–28; 1222a29; *Eth. Nic.* 1096a34; *Gen. an.* 775b1; *Metaph.* 1013b9–11; *Ph.* 195a9–10; *Pol.* 1335b9; 1336a38; 1338b13; b41; 1339a6; a10; *Rh.* 1361b8.

83 Training (*πόνος*) is painful and unpleasant (*λυπηρόν, οὐδὲν ἡδὺ*), cf. *Eth. Nic.* 1117b5–6.

84 For *πόνος* in Pindar, cf. Segal (1967), Loraux (1995) 45; 49; 265–266.

85 For this aspect, see Dover (1994) 163–164.

86 Loraux (1995) 49.

87 The ambivalence of *πόνος*-pain in Greek culture is well discussed by Loraux (1995), in which Aristotle is also occasionally addressed. However, she does not pay due attention to the fact that Aristotle's play on the double meaning of this word is different from the Greek mainstream view, cf. below.

also somehow opposed to the human good to the extent that a salient feature of well-being/health is the ability to withstand or at least alleviate πόνος.⁸⁸

If πόνος comes from an agent's exertion of his/her power and makes some activities possible, it can be called *voluntary pain*. This indicates a crucial semantic distinction between the pain embodied by πόνος and other kinds of pain, which are usually passive or neutral to simultaneously ongoing activity. In the case of running, for instance, if we talk of its πόνος, this might denote the pain or hardship you undergo in order to initiate, maintain and strengthen the activity. If we instead point to its λύπη, this may refer to pain of another kind, regardless if it occurs a direct or indirect way, e.g. pain due to a wound, which is exacerbated by the activity.

In contrast to Xenophon, who tends to use πόνος as synonymous for education (παιδευσις),⁸⁹ πόνος and its cognates are seldom linked with the education of the soul or the exercise of virtues in Aristotle.⁹⁰ Although the role of πόνος for the

88 For the understanding of health as something that is unaffected by πόνος, cf. *Eth. Eud.* 1228b31–35: ὡσπερ γὰρ ὁ ἰσχυρὸς καὶ ὑγιεινὸς ἔχει. καὶ γὰρ οὗτοι οὐ τῷ ὑπὸ μηθενὸς ὁ μὲν πόνου τριβεσθαι, ὁ δ' ὑπὸ μηδεμιᾶς ὑπερβολῆς, τοιοῦτοι εἰσιν, ἀλλὰ τῷ ὑπὸ τούτων ἀπαθεῖς εἶναι, ἢ ἀπλῶς ἢ ἡρέμα, ὑφ' ὧν οἱ πολλοὶ καὶ οἱ πλεῖστοι. *Hist. an.* 633b18–20 and 22–23: φανερόν ἐστι ὑγιαίνει, ὅταν τὸ ἔργον τὸ αὐτοῦ ἰκανῶς ἀποτελεῖ καὶ ἄλυπὸν τ' ἦ καὶ μετὰ τὰς ἐργασίας ἄκοπον ... Οὕτω καὶ ὑστέρα ἢ πόνον τε μὴ παρέχουσα. Cf. *Hist. an.* 611b15–17 (being without πόνος as a sign of the maturity or perfection of some organ), *Rh.* 1361b8–14 (the beauty of the body consists in its defense against different kinds of πόνος). In addition, πόνος (labor or sport) would help women reduce the pain of childbirth, see *Gen. an.* 775a32–b2 (cf. *Gen. an.* 725a14–17, Platt's translation of πονοῦσι καταναλίσκεται as used in the case of illness is misleading, cf. ἀναλίσκει γὰρ ὁ πόνος, *Gen. an.* 775a35).

89 Loraux (1995) 48.

90 A few passages seem to suggest that there is a closer relation between πόνος and intellectual achievement for Aristotle. Consider the following claims from the *Protrepticus*: “Anyone who thinks that there is no need to endure living in every way already thinks it's ridiculous not to bear every burden and exert every effort (τὸ μὴ πάντα πόνον ὑπομένειν [or πόνον πονεῖν in the edition of Düring] καὶ πᾶσαν σπουδὴν σπουδάξειν) so as to possess this intelligence that will have a cognition of the truth” (*Protrept.* B103, trans. Hutchinson and Johnson). “So one ought not to flee from philosophy, since philosophy is, as we think, both a possession and a use of wisdom, and wisdom is among the greatest goods; nor should one sail to the Pillars of Heracles and run many risks for the sake of possessions, while for the sake of intelligence devoting neither effort nor expense” (διὰ δὲ φρόνησιν μηδὲν πονεῖν μηδὲ δαπανᾶν. *Protrept.* B53, trans. Hutchinson and Johnson). Such statements, however, cannot threaten our thesis that Aristotle, unlike Xenophon, is not a friend of πόνος. Of course he does not deny that the possession of virtue or knowledge usually requires a painful process of acquisition (cf. Curzer 2012, 318–340), but it does not mean that he thus appreciates the involved pain itself or the pain-involving process itself. For the emergence of πόνος is, rather, a sign of a transient stage for those who have not yet gained full competence, and thus cannot freely enjoy the actualization of their faculties. The emphasis of

education of the body is often paralleled to the good activities for the education of the soul,⁹¹ and although πόνος can contribute to the formation of virtues, it does not constitute their well-developed forms nor the well-being of a freeborn citizen. In fact, a central purpose of Alexander's distinction between πόνος and λύπη is to single out a particular kind of pain that is constitutive of, and is thus necessary for, the corresponding virtues in the soul.⁹² This view, however, can hardly be endorsed by Aristotle. He does not deny that the excellence of the soul needs the cooperation of physical goods, yet he is well aware that the body and the soul are not always in such a harmonious state as would enable them to enjoy such benefits from each other. At times the body is in competition with the soul, so that the πόνος that works in the interest of physical health can meanwhile undermine the intellectual activity of the soul (*Pol.* 1339a7–11). Even with respect to the physical goodness itself, Aristotle does not take the strength and beauty of the body to which πόνος is usually said to contribute as an indispensable part of a good life. Instead, he prefers a moderately healthy condition to the excellent constitution embodied by athletes,⁹³ because πόνος often harms, rather than improves, the health of the body.⁹⁴ It is thus understandable that whereas Xenophon bases his idealisation of Sparta on his praise of their πόνοι,⁹⁵ Aristotle faults the Lacedaemonians for attaching too much importance to the πόνοι upon which

πόνος fits well with the particular concern of the genre of this text as an introduction to philosophy, whose purpose is to call and attract outsiders – usually young people – to follow a philosophical and virtuous way of life (cf. Gaiser 1959). Leaving aside that B103 is attributed to Heraclides by Hutchinson and Johnson, who take the *Protrepticus* as a dialogue, it is remarkable that the value of πόνος is explicitly qualified by an articulated contrast between philosophy and other activities in this text, according to which the advantages of philosophy lie in its easiness and enjoyment, whereas the other activities are imbued with πόνοι. Cf. *Protrept.* B55: “those who do philosophy which would make them keen to exert considerable effort in this way (συντόνως οὕτως ἂν διαπονήσειαν), and despite having given to the other skills a big lead, nevertheless the fact that in running a short time they have surpassed them in precision seems to me to be a sign of the easiness (ῥασιτώνης) of philosophy. And again, the fact that everybody feels at home with this and wishes to occupy their leisure with it, renouncing everything else, is no slight evidence that the close attention comes with pleasure; for no one is willing to labour for a long time (προνεῖν γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἐθέλει πρὸς χρόνον)”. This thought is completely in line with the *Politics* passage, which highlights the point that ideal activity is without πόνος (*Pol.* 1337b38–40; cf. 1339b15–17).

⁹¹ For this analogy, see *Eth. Eud.* 1220a22–31; *Eth. Nic.* 1104a27–33.

⁹² Cf. *Pr. Eth.* 126.16–19.

⁹³ *Pol.* 1335b5–8; cf. 1335b9–11.

⁹⁴ *Pol.* 1338b9–14; b41; 1336a21–28; *Rh.* 1361b8–14.

⁹⁵ Johnstone (1994) 221. Also cf. Johnstone (1994) 238: “Hunting, which Xenophon considered the best form of education for the youth, required the endurance of πόνοι for its success and so taught love of toil”.

their military virtues rely.⁹⁶ He believes that the one-sided emphasis on the *πόνος* lead young people to wildness rather than to bravery (*Pol.* 1338b12–14), to fragility rather than to the superiority in war and sport they want to sustain (*Pol.* 1338b24–27).

So far, it is clear to what extent Aristotle bid farewell to the aristocratic world of Pindar in which the excellence (*ἀρετή*) of a person manifested itself in glorious deeds and victories through his choice of and willingness to endure *πόνος*. Even the ideal style of life endorsed by the democratic ideology – a proper balance between *πόνος* and relaxation (*ἀνάπαυσις*), explicitly praised by Pericles in his famous *Epitaphius*⁹⁷ – is not appreciated by Aristotle.⁹⁸ While Stephen Kidd has recently elucidated Aristotle's degradation of the value of relaxation (*ἀνάπαυσις/ἀνεσις*) and play (*παιδιά*) by grouping them with physical pleasure, drunkenness and even sleep,⁹⁹ it is often ignored that the distinction between the activity as *ἐνέργεια* and the activity as *πόνος* plays a no less significant (and even more important) role in the same context.¹⁰⁰ If Loraux has good reason to claim that “*πόνος*, thought of in terms of duration, is embedded in human temporality, something that has a beginning and end”,¹⁰¹ this description is well contrasted with Aristotle's famous (if not notorious) determination of *ἐνέργεια* as essentially a *timeless* event, which realises its completion in every instance (*Ph.* 201b31;

⁹⁶ *Pol.* 1324b7–9; 1333b12–14; 1334a41–b3; cf. Kraut (1997) 176.

⁹⁷ Fehr (2009) 141.

⁹⁸ It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider whether there is an essential distinction between archaic and classical antiquity in their attitudes towards *πόνος*. Whereas Loraux (1995) offers a basically homogenous picture, Fehr (2009) tries to trace a subtle conceptual transformation in classical antiquity in which *ἀνάπαυσις*, as a useful compensation of *πόνος*, is more generously treated, although *πόνος* itself is no less appreciated. The difference drawn by Fehr seems to find an echo in the dispute between *Kreitton logos* and *Hetton logos* in Aristophanes' *Clouds* 1043–1054, in which *Kreitton logos* finds fault with the warm bathing of Heracles, as if this practice – which is supposed to incarnate improper pleasure and relaxation – has to undermine his *πόνος* and excellence, whereas *Hetton logos*, who holds a generous attitude to this practice, seems to believe that *πόνος* and *ἀνάπαυσις* can be well combined. It is important to see, however, that both models – a life with pure *πόνος* and a life with constant alternation between *πόνος* and its release – are *not* taken as the ideal model of human life by Aristotle.

⁹⁹ Kidd (2016).

¹⁰⁰ In Loraux's otherwise excellent research, she does not mention the divergence between Aristotle and the Greek mainstream view in understanding and evaluating *πόνος*. In particular, she fails to note the significant distinction between *πόνος* and *ἐνέργεια* in Aristotle. In her explanation of philosophical *πνεῖν*, she improperly appeals to the passage in which only physical *πόνος* is under discussion (*Metaph.* 1013b9) and the passages in which *ἐνέργεια* rather than *πόνος* is addressed (cf. *ψυχῆς ἐνέργειά* in *Eth. Nic.* 1102a5, *θεωρεῖν* in 1177a33), cf. Loraux (1995) 48; 268.

¹⁰¹ Loraux (1995) 44.

257b8–9; *Metaph.* 1048b21–22; *Eth. Nic.* 1174a14–15) and cannot be divided into temporal parts (*Eth. Nic.* 1174a17–19; b3–12).¹⁰² In a similar way to the difference between making (ποίησις) and acting (πράξις), πόνος seems at best instrumentally useful to a certain goal which lies outside the activity, while the goal of ἐνέργεια is contained in, and has been realised by, the activity itself. Sometimes Aristotle sets the contrast between both concepts in such a dramatic way that ἐνέργεια is supposed to represent what a life essentially means, leading to the genuine human flourish, whereas πόνος qua activity would possibly result in premature aging and death.¹⁰³ With this distinction in view, Aristotle cannot be a democratic “gentleman” who seeks “to assign within the field of πόνος a place for the word σχολή”.¹⁰⁴ He goes further, in a radical way, to redefine the relationship of ἀσχολία (occupation) and σχολή (leisure), the twin concepts that correspond to the pair πόνος and relaxation (ἀνάπαυσις) in traditional Greek thought of the fifth century.¹⁰⁵ In Aristotle’s revisionist account, although the association of πόνος with ἀσχολία – which needs to be cured by relaxation as a therapeutic process – is retained, σχολή is nevertheless clearly demarcated from relaxation, coupling instead with the ἐνέργεια of theoretical contemplation, which, in its full realization, neither needs nor is disturbed by πόνος.¹⁰⁶ As a result, this also leads to a radical revision of the traditional sense of σχολή: a concept intertwined with time and duration in its common use¹⁰⁷ becomes an atemporal concept due its alliance with the timeless ἐνέργεια.

Aristotle’s distinction between ἐνέργεια and πόνος is not only operative in the social-political context, but it also plays a non-ignorable role in his metaphysics.¹⁰⁸ He thinks a fundamental mistake shared by all of his predecessors (Plato

102 I think that this contrast is better than the opposition drawn by Loraux (1995) 44 between the temporal πόνος and the allegedly non-temporal λύπη. It seems obscure for me that λύπη, in the sense of sorrow, “makes time stand still”.

103 *Long.* 466b12–14; see also *Hist. an.* 575a1–5; b2–4.

104 Loraux (1995) 48.

105 In accordance with this thought, he even draws a contrast between the πόνος of a slave and the σχολή of a free citizen (*Pol.* 1334a20–24, cf. 1252a31–34). Aristotle here seems to depart from the Greek mainstream culture in which “the register of πόνος contains scant mention of the slave” (Loraux 1995, 47). For his concept of σχολή and its historical context, see Stocks (1936); Koller (1956); Welskopf (1962); Solmsen (1964); Fechner/Scholz (2002).

106 *Pol.* 1337b38–40; 1339b15–17.

107 For the link of σχολή with time and duration, see Anastasiadis (2004) 60–61.

108 For a similar observation based on the parallel of Aristotle’s distinction between θεωρία/σχολή and παιδιά to his distinction between the circular motion of the immortal ether and the ἐπίστασις/ἄνεσις motion of all mortals, see Kidd (2016) 368, but he does not address the problem of πόνος in this context.

and the natural philosophers) is that they try to explain the motion of the world-order in terms of a certain force (whether it comes from the soul or something else). This line of thought, Aristotle believes, has to render the motion of the heavenly bodies or the motion of the soul full of suffering, an unwelcome state termed by him as *ἐπίπονος* (“toilsome”), because that something is necessitated (by force) is a process supposed to be painful. This is absurd however, since even his predecessors would agree that the divinities (the gods and heavenly bodies) should be immune to any kind of pain/suffering.¹⁰⁹

It has been clear enough that *πόνος* for him, due its Janus-face, does not deserve “the *logos* of glory” (cf. *πλεῖστον καὶ ἀξιαπηγητότατα*, *Hdt.* 1.177,4–5), although he leaves room for its relative value. We should not confuse his position with the austere thought of Xenophon, who, as the prophet of the value of *πόνος*,¹¹⁰ regards *ἐγκράτεια* (self-discipline) – a painful control of desire – as the most important foundation of a virtuous life.¹¹¹ Such a belief was then followed by the Stoics and Cynics and became popular in the Hellenistic spirit.¹¹² This tradition is alien to Aristotle. For him, the best *ἐνέργεια* – contemplation – is something opposed to, and detached from, any kind of *πόνος*, the struggle for life. In this sense, Aristotle’s virtuous man (*σπουδαῖος*) cannot be Heracles, who is characterised by Aristophanes as “the best” (*ἄριστον*) and “having experienced the most toils” (*πλείστους πόνους πονῆσαι*, *Nub.* 1048–9).¹¹³

6

To conclude: when Aristotle talks of pain, in accordance with the main Greek tradition,¹¹⁴ the concept he is keeping in mind is more complex and varied than modern scientific language usually implies.¹¹⁵ The *λύπη*-, *ἄλγ*-, *πόνος*-family are the three main clusters of terms for pain in Aristotle, whereas the more technical word *ὀδύνη* and its cognates are much less widespread than in the Hippocratic treatises. In many cases, admittedly, these lexemes qualify the same or similar

109 *Cael.* 284a11–20; *De an.* 407b1–3; *Metaph.* 1050b22–27; 1074b25–29.

110 Loraux (1995) 48; Johnstone (1994).

111 Cf. Dorion (2003).

112 Lau (1975) 32–36; Hoven (1996) 28–31.

113 For Heracles’ attitude towards pleasure and pain in Prodicus, see Sansone (2004) (2015); Gray (2006); Dorion (2008); Mayhew (2011) 126–31.

114 Lloyd (2003) 12.

115 Cf. the widely accepted definition of pain offered by the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP): an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described in terms of such damage.

unpleasant experiences in a loose way. Nevertheless, subtle distinctions can be discerned among them, some of which are rooted in the traditional connotation of a term and others that seem to reflect more the Aristotelian consideration. In discussing the ἄλγ-cluster, I highlighted a particular use of them in his practical philosophy, namely referring to emotional unpleasantness. Differently from the Stoics, Aristotle does not employ λύπη and its cognates as the representative terms for emotional pain in the first place, but distinguishes, at least in some places, between the different ways that ἄλγ- and λύπη are related with emotions, not least in his account of emotional life among friends. As far as the cluster of πόνοϛ is concerned, I focused on a particular semantic aspect of them, namely pain from toil, labour and action, which I termed ‘voluntary pain’. This link gives rise to a semantic expansion of the cluster of πόνοϛ, making the sense of those words fluctuate between an activity and its corresponding pain. Due to this ambiguity we need to demarcate them on the one hand from the ‘non-voluntary pain’ caused by wounds, death, and torture, and on the other hand from the ideal type of activity as ἐνέργεια. This double distinction enables us not only to pin down the particularity of how Aristotle treats πόνοϛ-pain, but also to distance him from the ancient ascetic and moralist traditions that appreciate πόνοϛ as responsible for and constitutive of human virtues and happiness.

At the end of her discussion of Aristotle’s conceptions of pleasure and pain, Frede tells us:

We cannot be sure whether Aristotle was fully aware that in the case of pleasure and pain the use of their “generic” names is a dangerous thing because it suggests a unity that simply is not there.¹¹⁶

Although Aristotle might disagree that there is no unity among all of the unpleasant experiences at all, the result of our study nevertheless shows that his attempt to achieve a unified understanding of pains does not preclude him from acknowledging and respecting the diversity of such experiences. Very probably he is well aware of the danger in using the generic pain term of λύπη, so that he maintains the force and subtlety of the other terms for pain by using them in different circumstances.

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¹¹⁶ Frede (2006) 273.

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