

Medicine of the Mind, Philosophy of the Body – Discourses of Health in the Ancient World

Research Programme

This programme is concerned with concepts of mental and physical health as developed in Graeco-Roman thought and their reception in later history. It addresses major questions about the dialogue between medicine, philosophy and science, medicine's engagement with the mind-body interface, the communication and transfer of medical ideas, and the relationship between medicine and its social and cultural environment.

Background of the programme

History of medicine as an academic discipline has long been devoted to the study of disease and human suffering in the past and of the responses of individuals and social groups to disease. Yet, more recently, there has been a shift towards the study of disease's counterpart, health, its varying understandings and definitions through time, its relationship to other values held in a given society and the ways in which health was believed to be capable of being maintained, managed and enhanced.

The present research programme testifies to this development and aims to apply its insights to the ancient world. This is entirely appropriate, since for most Greek and Roman medical writers – as well as their readers and patients – the preservation and promotion of health was just as much part of the doctor's business as the treatment of disease. Yet 'health' is not a monolithic concept, but admits of different and sometimes rival understandings and definitions, ranging from the absence of disease (however defined) to happiness and mental well-being. And in the competitive setting of Graeco-Roman society, there were differences of perspective when it came to the question of who decides, and by what authority, whether someone is healthy or ill – the patient or the doctor, the individual or the society, the philosopher or the priest, one's subjective experience or objective 'scientific' data.

This research programme focuses on a number of such rival understandings of mental and physical health in the Graeco-Roman world. The programme benefits from collaboration with colleagues in other departments of the Humboldt University, the Free University and the Technical University Berlin, the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, the Corpus Medicorum Graecorum project of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences, the Medical History Department of Berlin's Medical School 'Charité', and several other German and international partners. The proposed research activities tie in organically with existing research centres in Berlin, such as the joint HU-FU Classics Excellence Cluster Topoi, the SFB Transformationen der Antike, the new Berlin Centre for the History of Knowledge, and the 'Heil und Heilung' project in the Institute for Ancient and Early Christian Studies.

Workshop venue

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Hauptgebäude / main building
Unter den Linden 6
room 2103

The workshop is hosted by

the research programme
“Medicine of the Mind, Philosophy of the Body –
Discourses of Health in the Ancient World”
of the Alexander von Humboldt foundation

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Excellence cluster “TOPOI”
<http://www.topoi.org>



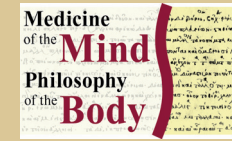
Alexander von Humboldt foundation
<http://www.humboldt-foundation.de>



Ancient Philosophy & Science Network
<http://www.gsap.hu-berlin.de/apsn>

and organised by

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Programme

Thursday, 9th January

9.30–10.00

Welcome address

Chair: Chiara Thumiger
(Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

10.00–11.00

Maria Michela Sassi

(Università degli Studi di Pisa)

The matter of mind for the Presocratics

11.00–11.30 *Coffee break*

11.30–12.30

Claire Louguet

(Université Lille 3)

Aristotle's criticism of pangenetic theories:
a fresh start?

Chair: Orly Lewis
(Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

15.00–16.00

Stavros Kouloumentas

(Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

Alcmaeon on health and disease

16.00–16.30 *Coffee break*

16.30–17.30

Daniela Manetti

(Università degli Studi di Firenze)

In defence of a “worthless” philosopher:
Hippo of Croton

Friday, 10th January

Chair: Roberto Lo Presti
(Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

10.00–11.00

Elizabeth Craik

(University of St Andrews)

[Hippocrates] *On flesh*

11.00–11.30 *Coffee break*

11.30–12.30

Hynek Bartoš

(Charles University, Prague)

The concept of *pneuma* in *On regimen*

Chair: Philip van der Eijk
(Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

15.00–16.00

David Sedley

(Christ's College, Cambridge)

Empedoclean superorganisms

16.00–16.30 *Coffee break*

16.30–17.30

Constantinos Macris

(CNRS, Paris)

The Pythagorean taboo on beans:
between religion and dietetics, cosmology
and magic-chemical experimentation

Saturday, 11th January

Chair: Colin Guthrie King
(Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

9.30–10.30

David Sider

(New York University)

Anaxagoras on nutrition

10.30–10.45 *Coffee break*

10.45–11.45

Miriam Peixoto

(Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais)

Life, birth and death in the physiology
of Democritus

11.45–12.00 *Coffee break*

12.00–13.00

Lorenzo Perilli

(Università degli Studi di Roma

Tor Vergata)

Outside the Hippocratic Corpus:
losers and winners in early Greek science