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Pathology and Politics in Alcmaeon of Croton (5th Century B.C.)

ABSTRACT: In Alcmaeon of Croton's lemma, dating back to the 5th century, we encounter the use of two terms that, in other sources, are associated with the field of politics: *ἰσονομία* and *μοναρχία*. The interpretation of these terms poses the following question: Is there a 'medical use' of political terms, or conversely, is there a 'political use' of medical terms? Some scholars have debated these possibilities. In this paper, I argue that there is no 'medical use' of these terms before Alcmaeon, prompting an exploration of the intended significance behind the utilisation of these terms.

SOMMARIO: Nel lemma di Alcmeone di Crotone, risalente al V secolo, incontriamo l'uso di due termini che, in altre fonti, sono associati al campo della politica: *ἰσονομία* e *μοναρχία*. L'interpretazione di questi termini pone la seguente domanda: esiste un 'uso medico' dei termini politici o, al contrario, esiste un 'uso politico' dei termini medici? Alcuni studiosi hanno dibattuto queste possibilità. In questo articolo, sostengo che non vi sia alcun 'uso medico' di questi termini prima di Alcmeone, il che spinge a esplorare il significato intenzionale che si cela dietro l'utilizzo di questi termini.

KEYWORDS: Alcmaeon of Croton; Pathology; Politics; Medical Use; Political Use

1. INTRODUCTION

Within an Alcmaeon of Croton's lemma, which has been transmitted through Aëtius, we encounter a rather enigmatic terminology. This terminology, while posing a challenge in terms of interpretation, sheds light on the intellectual interests of its era. What makes this observation particularly intriguing is that it involves the application of the terms *ἰσονομία* and *μοναρχία* within a medical context. The majority of subsequent sources predominantly associate these terms with the domain of politics.

In our pursuit of understanding the profound impact of this terminology within Alcmaeon's lemma,¹ we draw upon the theoretical framework of *Begriffsgeschichte*, or the history of concepts. This historiographical strand, notable for its substantial impact on continental European scholarship, equips us with a set of invaluable theoretical and methodological tools to systematically explore the historical usage of concepts and their implications.

Our central hypothesis posits that Alcmaeon's lemma presents a case of what we might term "the medical utilisation of political concepts". In essence, we propose that

1. Aëtius 5.30.1 [= 24B4 (DK); 23D30 (LM); 8B4 (TC); Fp6 (A)].



this text, within a medical context, utilises concepts typically related to politics. In other words, Alcmaeon's lemma serves as an indicator of the 'politicisation' process that permeated the fifth century. We also argue that this process of politicisation unfolds through the use of a 'conceptual metaphor'. This metaphor enables the mapping of a specific domain associated with the body onto a broader and more abstract domain associated with the *polis*.

In the following sections of this note, we will embark on a two-fold journey. First, we will provide a succinct overview of the foundational contributions of *Begriffsgeschichte* to our research. Following this, we will undertake an analysis of the instances in which the terms *ἰσονομία* and *μοναρχία* manifest themselves within Alcmaeon's lemma. Through this dual approach, we aim to unravel the complexities of this intellectual juxtaposition and contribute to a deeper understanding of the historical interplay between medicine and politics.

2. THE METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE HISTORY OF CONCEPTS

The field of conceptual history aims to examine the nature, genesis, and role of change in the historical shaping of concepts. History of concepts seeks to objectively investigate the nature, development, and dynamic characteristics inherent in the historical evolution of concepts. Particular attention is given to the examination of social and political concepts, acknowledging their asserted universality and the plurality of their meanings.² According to Reinhart Koselleck, concepts can be viewed as useful indicators of political or social actions, given their ability to assimilate a wide range of meanings from the constantly changing social landscape.³

Koselleck's perspective posits that a word transforms into a concept when it serves as a repository for diverse interpretations originating from the specific historical context in which it is used. This transformation occurs because, in Koselleck's view, social and political concepts derive their substance from the contextual environment, allowing their significance to continuously evolve within that specific framework. As historical circumstances are introduced into words, and words accumulate diverse and sometimes overlapping interpretations, it becomes clear that they have transited to become fully developed concepts.

From a methodological perspective, this approach focuses on studying the relational structures of concepts, asserting that concepts are subject to interpretation and explanation within reciprocal relationships.⁴ Unlike structuralism, proponents of the history of concepts do not seek to reduce all aspects of the 'real' to the realm of discourse. Instead, they argue that each concept derives its meaning from its historical context.⁵ Elias Palti contends that this perspective leads to the postulation of an

2. Cf. Koselleck 1972b: 123-124; 2003: 61-62.

3. Koselleck 1967: 81.

4. Cf. Abellán 2007: 220.

5. Cf. Koselleck 1967.

“ineradicable residue of factuality”, preventing it from being confined to linguistic solipsism and instead, allowing it to remain open to the influence of temporality.⁶ Consequently, language is conceptualised in a dual capacity: as a receiver and recorder of external events, and as an assimilator and shaper of extra-linguistic content.⁷

In his seminal work on *Begriffsgeschichte*, Koselleck proposes a working hypothesis that a fundamental shift in the realm of political and social concepts occurred between 1750 and 1850. This period is deemed a *Sattelzeit* because it marks the initiation of a process of ‘politicisation’ of concepts.⁸

Christian Meier extends this hypothesis to the ancient world, asserting that the fifth century Athenians witnessed a comparable transformation in the entire spectrum of concepts.⁹ To support his argument, Meier draws upon the ideas of Carl Schmitt,¹⁰ who defines ‘the political’ as contingent upon “the degree of intensity of an association or dissociation of people”.¹¹ Schmitt utilises the friend-enemy distinction as a ‘criterion’ (*Kriterium*)¹² to delineate ‘political units’ (*politische Einheiten*), which he further defines as entities capable of making this distinction.¹³ Schmitt considers such ‘political units’ to be ‘decisive units’ (*maßgebende Einheiten*),¹⁴ given that the act of taking a position, and thus defining who is on one side and who is on the other, ultimately results from a decision.

According to Meier, in modernity, this decision-making authority is monopolised by the state as a political entity.¹⁵ However, this does not imply that it is the exclusive means of establishing ‘political units’. This concept could be applicable to various historical communities, as ‘the political’ pertains to decisions regarding friend-enemy distinctions. In pre-modern societies, these ‘political units’ form around autocephalous entities vested with power, which can take the shape of family alliances, clans, πόλις/*civitas*, or other similar structures. This alignment allows the Schmittian criterion of ‘the political’ to be applied to historical societies beyond the modern era.¹⁶

Therefore, ‘the political’ does not have its own domain but rather operates as a field that intersects with various issues. Its ‘politicisation’ depends on the degree of association or dissociation to which it is subjected.¹⁷ In Christian Meier’s perspective, the

6. Cf. Palti 2011: 232.

7. Cf. Koselleck 2004: 30.

8. Koselleck 1972a: 304.

9. Meier 1984: 34.

10. Meier 1983: 30-31.

11. Schmitt 2015: 36: “den Intensitätsgrad einer Assoziation oder Dissoziation von Menschen” (The translation is my own).

12. *Ibid.*: 25.

13. *Ibid.*: 35.

14. *Ibid.*: 36.

15. Meier 1983: 31.

16. *Ibid.*: 31-32.

17. *Ibid.*: 32.

Schmittian concept of ‘the political’ is theoretically defined as a criterion, and therein lies its “analytical potential, making it exceedingly valuable in diverse contexts”.¹⁸

The process of ‘politicisation’ deeply influenced the Athenian conceptual framework during the 5th century. However, the conceptualization of political phenomena does not occur through direct references; instead, most political concepts are crafted through abstract mechanisms. Consequently, the illusion of constructing a language solely from pure concepts proves inadequate. Recognizing this limitation, Blumenberg introduces metaphorology as an auxiliary discipline within conceptual history. It allows us to delve into the nuanced thoughts and actions subtly implied in metaphorical expressions.¹⁹

In a later iteration of his theory, Blumenberg expands the scope of metaphorology. It is not merely about comprehending metaphor’s role in concept formation; rather, it offers a window into the lifeworld in which metaphors are embedded.²⁰ According to Blumenberg, metaphorology becomes part of a broader theory of inconceptuality, delving into the aspects of human experience that language cannot neatly encapsulate within closed semantic concepts but can still comprehend and engage with.

Conceptual history, with metaphorology as an auxiliary discipline, offers a fruitful theoretical framework for studying Alcmaeon’s lemma. It reveals the use of a political metaphor within the context of the conceptual politicisation process in 5th-century Greece.

3. PATHOLOGY AND POLITICS IN ALCMAEON OF CROTON

A passage in the last chapter of the *Placita* attributed to Aëtius includes a set of *lemmata* on health, disease and old age.²¹ The first lemma reports Alcmaeon’s medical theory. This testimony does not constitute a verbatim quotation because it contains doxographical adaptations.²² However, it is considered that some terms that are well attested

18. *Ibid.*, on the other hand, rebuts the normative criticism put forth by Strauss 2015: 226. That is, the perspective that implies politics (*sic!*) is reduced to polarisation and conflict. Meier’s perspective is that, for Schmitt, ‘the political’ serves as a criterion that establishes conflict and confrontation as an extreme possibility, not as a rule of political action.

19. Blumenberg 1960: 11, 19-21.

20. Blumenberg 2020: 104.

21. *Placita* is the epitome of a lost treatise of Theophrastus on pre-Aristotelian thought. It can be dated to the middle of the second century AD and is attributed to Aëtius. This text, reconstructed by Diels in 1879, is considered a singular source for parallel passages found in the works of Ps.-Plutarchus (*Placit.*) and Stobaeus (*Ec. Phys.*). Significantly, it predates both of these authors and was also used in 177 A.D. by Athenagoras (*Leg.* 23 [21], 22 [18], 16 [13]). Subsequently, it found application in the works of Eusebius (*PE* XIV 13.9, 14.1-6, 16.1-10, XV 22.69, 23-61), Cyril of Alexandria (*Iul.* II 46b-47b), and Pseudo-Galenus (*HPh apud* Diels 1879: 4-14). Theodore (Affect. IV 31.2-3: Αετίου τὴν Περὶ ἀρεσκόντων ξυναγωγὴν) ascribed authorship to Aëtius. For a comprehensive reconstruction of the doxographical tradition, see Mansfeld and Runia 1997: 121-290, as well as Runia 1999: 191-196. For a summary of the sources, see n. 45 below.

22. Diels 1879: 223-224; cf. Hankinson 1998: 238-252; Zhmud 2012: 357-358; Mansfeld 2013: 79.

in the *Corpus Hippocraticum* may derive from Alcmaeon or reflect its original words. Alcmaeon's lemma points to the opposition between *ισονομία* and *μοναρχία*. This would be one of the first instances where these terms are being contrasted with each other.²³ We have evidence of the use of these terms in political contexts dated between the 6th and 5th centuries B.C.,²⁴ but they are not attested in medical contexts. For this reason, many scholars consider these terms to belong to Alcmaeon himself.²⁵

Prior to Alcmaeon, there is no recorded occurrence of these terms being employed in contrast. Consequently, the use of the terms *ισονομία* and *μοναρχία* in Alcmaeon allows us to pose the following problem: does Alcmaeon make a 'medical use' of political terms or, on the contrary, does he make a 'political use' of medical terms?

The explanation of health and disease based on the ideas of equality or equilibrium and predominance or disturbance can be found in other ancient authors. In the *Corpus Hippocraticum*, we encounter passages where explanations are formulated based on the contrast of concepts like equality and dominance, as exemplified in Alcmaeon's lemma. In the early treatise *Airs Waters Places*, there is a passage in which the terms *ισομοιρίη* ('equal portion') and *ἐπικρατής* ('predominant') are employed to provide an explanation for the temperate climate of Asia, but it does not occur within the immediate context of health and disease.²⁶ In the treatise *On Regimen*, the author employs the contrast between the verbs *κρατέω* ('overpowering') and *ισάζω* ('being equal to each other') to elucidate the relationship between exercise and diet in the context of explaining health and disease.²⁷ The explanation of health and disease as forms of equilibrium and disturbance, respectively, became widespread in medical discourse.²⁸ However, the

23. One of the early texts where *ισονομία* and *μοναρχία*, as well as Alcmaeon's lemma, were contrasted with each other is the discussion of political regimes in Herodotus 3.80-83.

24. *Μόναρχος*: Solon fr. 9.3 (W); Alcaeus S271a5 (SLG) [= 306C e fr. 12 Campbell 1982], A6 (LP); *ισονομία*: Symptotic song that praise the tyrannicides Harmodios and Aristogeiton (PMG 893, 896), Constitutional Debate (Hdt. 3.80-82, cf. 3.142, VI.43); (Thuc. 3.62.3, 4.78.3).

25. Ostwald 1969: 99-100; Jouanna 1992: 460; Sassi 2007: 198-199; Kouloumentas 2014: 871; Laks and Most 2016: V 765 n. 1; Année 2019: 40. On the contrary, Mansfeld 2013: 93-95, contends that the use of these terms should not be attributed to Alcmaeon. Instead, he suggests that a later doxographer introduced these terms, replacing Alcmaeon's terminology with its Herodotean equivalent. For a counter-argument against Mansfeld's position, see: Kouloumentas 2014: 871 n. 9; Lebedev 2017: 247-254.

26. In Hippocr. *Aër.* 12.4 (L. II 52-56), the term *ισομοιρίη* also pertains to the political sphere, and this is the only instance of its occurrence within the *Corpus Hippocraticum*. In Thucydides 6.39 and 7.75, for instance, the term denotes having equal political participation or the same rights as others. Medical authors also employ other terms to convey the proportionate blending of opposites, such as *σύμμετρος κράσις* (*Aph.* V.62 [= L. IV 554-556]) or *μετρίως ἔχειν* (*Anon. Lond.* XIX 27-8). Mansfeld 2013: 81, contends that the employment of the phrase *ισομοιρίη δυναστεύη* serves to elucidate that the doctors' audience was well-acquainted with the political analogy.

27. Hippocr. *Reg.* 3.69 (L. VI 604-606).

28. This concept can be observed in the testimonies of various thinkers, including Chrysippus, Menecrates, Petron of Aegina, and Philistron, cf. Gal. *PHP* 3.2.31-33 (CMG V 4.1.2 ed. De Lacy = SVF III 471); *An. Lond.* XIX 22-9 (M). Plato and Aristotle were also acquainted

terms *ισονομία* and *μοναρχία*, employed to conceptualise the ideas of equality or equilibrium and predominance or disturbance in a medical context, are exclusively found in Alcmaeon's lemma. Thus, this single testimony is not evidence to affirm a 'medical use' of this term.

Triebel-Schubert rejects that there was such a thing as a 'medical use' of the term *ισονομία* in the fifth century, which would have been transitional and then lead to the post-Cleisthenic 'political use' of the term.²⁹ For this she argues that one cannot distinguish a 'medical' and a 'political' use, because in comparison with later conceptions of health and diseases, for example, these are opposed to Alcmaeon's use of *ισονομία*. Therefore, she concludes that the political sense must be at the basis of the interpretation of Alcmaeon's lemma.

The first part of the lemma transmitted by Aëtius states:

Ἀλκμαίων· τῆς μὲν ὑγείας εἶναι συνεκτικὴν ἰσονομίαν τῶν δυνάμεων, ὕγροῦ θερμοῦ ξηροῦ ψυχροῦ πικροῦ γλυκέος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν· τὴν δ' ἐν αὐτοῖς μοναρχίαν νόσου ποιητικὴν· φθοροποιὸν γὰρ ἐκατέρου μοναρχία.

Alcmaeon: that what maintains health is the equality [*isonomia*] of the powers [*dynameis*]: wet, hot, dry, cold, bitter, sweet and the others <powers>. The rule of only one among them [*monarchy*] produces disease, because the rule of one of the two is destructive.³⁰

In accordance with this testimony, the bodily organism is conceptualised as a complex interplay of elemental 'powers' (*δυνάμεις*).³¹ These *δυνάμεις*, in turn, are organised into pairs of opposites, such as 'wet' and 'dry', 'cold' and 'hot', 'bitter' and 'sweet', in addition to other opposites (*τὰ λοιπά*). This implies that Alcmaeon did not specify the precise number of these *δυνάμεις*. Alcmaeon's concept of health (*ὑγίεια*) pertains to the relationship between opposing powers. In this context, the body remains healthy as

with such definitions, cf. Pl. *Symp.* 186d5-e2, *Resp.* 444d3-6, *Phlb.* 25e7-8, *Tim.* 81e5-82a3; Arist. *Phys.* VII 3.246b4-6, *Tóp.* VI 2.139b20-1, 6.145b8.

29. Cf. Triebel-Schubert 1984: 41. *Ἰσονομία* is a concept that assesses various forms of government rather than representing a specific form itself (Ostwald 1969: 108; Meier 1983: 283-284; Vlastos 1953: 353-354). Its primary association lies with democracies, as noted by Herodotus (3.80). It is also extended to moderate oligarchies with democratic elements, as seen in Thucydides (3.62.3-4). While some argue for an aristocratic interpretation, emphasising equality among aristocratic peers against tyranny (Raaflaub 2004: 95; Zhmud 2012: 358), this viewpoint has limited support. The term's likely origin is within the radical democracy of late sixth-century Athens, later applied secondarily to moderate oligarchies (Vlastos 1964: 10-13; Ostwald 1969: 99-106).

30. Aëtius 5.30.1 (D. 442) [= 24B4 (DK), 8B4 (TC), 23D30 (LM), Fp6 (A)]. Edition An-née (2019), the translation is my own. In this translation, I have endeavoured to preserve the political nuances as suggested by Triebel-Schubert. Consequently, I have chosen to translate *δυνάμεις* as 'powers' instead of opting for a more neutral term such as 'capacities', and I have rendered *μοναρχία* as 'rule of one among them' rather than 'primacy of one' or 'pre-eminence'.

31. On the signification of term *δύναμις* in early Greek medical writing, see Souilhé 1919: 31-57; Jones 1946: 93-96, 1947: 9-10.

long as these powers are in a state of *equality* (ἰσονομία).³² Conversely, disease (νόσος) occurs when one of the powers disrupts equilibrium, leading to a state of “the rule of only one” (ἐν αὐτοῖς μοναρχία). The function of this μοναρχία is elucidated with a negative attribute: φθοροποιόν (‘that which causes destruction’). According to Alcmaeon, the μοναρχία pertains to ‘one of the two’ (ἐκατέρου). In summary, within this first part of the lemma, we can identify the following key elements: (a) a definition of ‘health’; (b) the characterization of the δυνάμεις; (c) an exploration of the causes of disease.

In this passage, ἰσονομία appears as a concept representing equality as an equilibrium or balance between opposing forces, while μοναρχία refers to imbalance or disequilibrium. Similarly, the terms ἰσονομία and μοναρχία are employed to clarify the relationship between the constituent parts of a body. If we accept, based on later testimony, that these terms refer to the political realm, we can recognize that their usage aligns with the framework of the ‘conceptual metaphor’ that asserts “the *polis* is a body”.³³ This metaphor enables us to comprehend and relate to one concept by drawing upon the associations of another, facilitating a mapping between two domains within the conceptual system of the fifth century. Through this process, individuals can conceptualise the world by attributing metaphorical meanings to their social experiences. In this case, metaphor serves to identify experiences as an entity, thereby enabling reasoned analysis. Hence, it functions as an *ontological metaphor*, with the body serving as the *source domain*, referring to concrete social aspects.³⁴ These aspects are then drawn upon to conceptualise the *polis*, which is a more abstract *meta-domain*.³⁵ The bodily terms ὑγίεια and νόσος, as well as the abstract terms ἰσονομία and μοναρχία, form part of the conceptual system encompassing both the body and the *polis*.

In Alcmaeon’s lemma, the terms ἰσονομία and μοναρχία are employed to elucidate the causes of health and disease. This clarifies that the metaphor “the *polis* is a body” was not an innovation introduced by Alcmaeon but rather constituted a part of the fifth-century conceptual landscape. Consequently, the correspondence between the bodily terms ὑγίεια and νόσος and the political terms ἰσονομία and μοναρχία is meaningful within the linguistic context of the fifth century because it was an integral component of “the metaphors they lived by” during that era. We can surmise that Alcmaeon’s innovation lay in employing two political terms that were already opera-

32. On the term ἰσονομία in the Greek medicine, see: MacKinney 1971: 79-88; Vlastos 1947: 156-161.

33. A ‘conceptual metaphor’ is defined as a cross-domain mapping within the conceptual system. This phenomenon involves understanding one idea or conceptual domain in terms of another. Cf. Lakoff and Johnson 2003; Ritchie 2013: 68-87; Mácha 2016: 98-101; Kövecses 2020: 1-21.

34. Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 25-32.

35. “In a *metaphor*, there are two domains: the target domain, which is constituted by the immediate subject matter, and the source domain, in which important metaphorical reasoning takes place and that provides the source concepts used in that reasoning”. (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 265).

tional within the Greek political framework but had not been utilised in poetry.³⁶ In this sense, Alcmaeon would not have been the originator of this political language but rather the individual who incorporated them into the framework of the conceptual metaphor that posited “the *polis* is a body”.

Conceptual systems play a central role in shaping our everyday realities. In this context, metaphor assumes a “pervasive role in everyday life, not limited to language but extending to thought and action”.³⁷ It allows us to comprehend and experience one thing by drawing on concepts related to another, enabling us to establish connections between various domains within our conceptual system. Through this process, individuals can conceptualise the world by attributing metaphorical meanings to their social experiences.³⁸

As a result, the metaphor “the *polis* is a body” not only aids us in understanding abstract concepts but also defines how individuals behave and relate to the reality they seek to understand. In this sense, medical discourse offers tools for contemplating the attributes of the *polis* in relation to those of the human body. The way in which health and disease are regarded as attributes of the body can be applied to ‘equality’ and ‘rule of one’ as attributes of the *polis*. This means that health and disease are dispositional states of the body, subject to reversal through treatment, implying their dynamic and non-permanent nature. When this mode of thinking is applied to the *polis*, it suggests that *ισονομία* and *μοναρχία* are also subject to change. Furthermore, the attribution of a negative value (*φθοροποιόν*) to *μοναρχία* in relation to the body allows us to infer that the author rejects this form of government.

Much of the causal language in this testimony employs terms that are associated with later concepts.³⁹ Nevertheless, the usage of the term *ισονομία* holds particular significance, given that it represents one of the earliest recorded instances. The definition of health as *ισονομίαν τῶν δυνάμεων* poses an issue in terms of interpretation. According to Stavros Kouloumentas, the interpretation of health as *ισονομία* can be construed as encompassing three distinct systems of equality: (1) Universal Equality: In this system, all powers are regarded as equal to each other; (2) Localised Equality:

36. In Pindar *Pyth.* 2.86-87, we can discern an early development of the tripartite classification of forms of government. This observation suggests a conceptualization of these forms dating back to the 6th century. However, it is important to note that this conceptualization is not explicitly articulated in poetic works but rather finds its expression in Greek prose from the 5th century. Cf. Vassallo 2014: 208-217.

37. Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 3.

38. Cf. *ibid.*: 3-6; Lakoff 1993.

39. The term *συνεκτικήν*, used to refer to the ‘containing-sustaining cause’, finds its origin in Stoicism (Gal. *CC* 1.1-2.4 [CMG Suppl. Or. II pp. 133-134 ed. Kalbfleisch = 55f (LS)], Clem. *Strom.* 8.9.1-4 [= *SVF* II 346]). The term *ποιητικόν* (or *ποιούν*), which refers to the ‘efficient cause’, can be traced back to Aristotle and Theophrastus but is more commonly used in this sense among the Stoics (Arist. *Gen. corr.* I 7.324b13-4, *De an.* III 5.430a11-3; Theophr. fr. 230 FHS&G *apud* Simpl. in *Arist. Phys.* 26.11-13, fr. 320A FHS&G *apud* Them. in *Arist. De an.* 108.19-21). Cf. Frede 1987: 125-150; Sorabji 1980: 250-282; Bobzien 1999: 196-242; Mansfeld 2002: 19-68; Mansfeld 2013: 79; Leith 2014: 605.

This system posits that each power is equal to its antagonist, emphasising localised balance between opposing forces; (3) Complex Equality: In this interpretation, each power is not only equal to its antagonist but also entails a broader equilibrium between pairs of opposites. Kouloumentas advocates for the validity of interpretation (3) as it aligns most comprehensively with Alcmaeon's definition of health.⁴⁰

In the opening section of the passage, it is assumed that the audience is already familiar with the concept of 'equality' associated with the term *ισονομία*. Alcmaeon's approach involves using this concept to illustrate the relationship among the *δυνάμεις* ('forces'). Thus, we can discern different levels within the conceptual domains at play here.

The 'body', serving as the source domain of the conceptual metaphor, operates as a zeroth-order domain, referring to a tangible or fundamental social experience. Conversely, the '*polis*', in this case, serving as the meta-domain, operates as a first-order domain, as it is formed through the mapping between these two domains. However, within the conceptual dynamics that emerge from employing this metaphor in language, we can identify a second-order domain. This type of domain evolves as an extension of the preceding one, relying on the way the conceptual metaphor allows us to establish the target domain as a reality and property that can be applied to other domains. In this regard, defining health as *ισονομίαν τῶν δυνάμεων* enables us to perceive the *δυνάμεις* through the lens of the abstract concept *ισονομία*. Yet, it also plays a crucial role in comprehending and engaging with a concrete social experience, specifically life within the polis, thereby facilitating the construction of more intricate conceptual frameworks.

Towards the end of the first part of the lemma, the author refers to *μοναρχία* using two phrases: *ἐν αὐτοῖς μοναρχίαν* and *ἐκατέρου μοναρχία*. The first phrase signifies "the rule of only one among them" as the cause of the disease (*νόσος*), while the second phrase asserts that "the rule of one of the two" is destructive (*φθοροποιόν*). Consequently, the first sentence does not enable us to disambiguate which of Kouloumentas' three possible interpretations of *ισονομία* is unbalanced by *μοναρχία*, as it does not necessarily refer to a specific pair. However, the second sentence, by specifying that it relates to "one of the two" (*ἐκατέρου*),⁴¹ allows us to exclude Kouloumentas' interpretation (1) since it associates monarchy with one of the elements within the pair of opposites.

As Alcmaeon established at the beginning, the body consists of elemental 'powers' (*δυνάμεις*) arranged in contradictory pairs, with each pair occupying a specific *locus* in the body. This first part of the lemma also defines the properties of this *locus* as either isonomic or monarchical. The remaining question is whether the 'imbalance' or 'disequilibrium' introduced by the *μοναρχία* applies to the pair of elements comprising the *locus* or to all pairs of opposites. This distinction corresponds to what Kouloumentas labels 'localised equality' or 'complex equality', respectively. In Kouloumentas' account, these interpretations are presented as mutually exclusive, assuming that *ισονομία* refers to a single meaning.

40. Kouloumentas 2014: 876-878.

41. In their work Diels and Kranz 1958: I 215-216 translate the phrase *ἐκατέρου μοναρχία* as "the autocracy of the one opposite" (*Alleinherrschaft des einen Gegensatzes*). This interpretation is widely adopted by most translations, including Ostwald 1969: 101, Runia 1999: 249, Laks and Most 2016: V 765, and Année 2021: 141.

However, when *μοναρχία* is defined as a relational property, it appears to encompass two distinct processes. Consequently, the imbalance it generates manifests at two levels within the context of *ισονομία*. The first level suggests that by not specifying the number of elements subject to *μοναρχία*, the passage alludes to an imbalance or discord among the various *loci* of *δυνάμεις* constituting the body. This could be identified as the primary cause of disease. In other words, if the *δύναμις* deviates from the *ισονομία* that stabilises them, the body exhibits sign of disease. On the second level, the text asserts that when *μοναρχία* is imposed upon one of the elements within a pair (*ἐκατέρου*), this imbalance leads to the destruction (*φθοροποιός*) of one of the elements in that pair.

In this sense, Giuseppe Cambiano suggests that Alcmeon viewed *ισονομία* as establishing a negative condition. According to him, good health does not arise from or correspond to a state in which opposing elements are quantitatively balanced, but rather from a state where none of them dominates. For Cambiano, opposition and equality are interrelated. Health, when linked to *ισονομία*, emerges as a dynamic property of the body, resulting from the equality of its elements. Conversely, disease represents a static state, involving the elimination of opposites and, consequently, the absence of any possible equality.⁴²

The second part of Aetius' testimony, in which the causes of the disease are explained, provides us with additional insights:

καὶ νόσον συμπίπτειν ὥς μὲν ὑφ' οὗ ὑπερβολῇ θερμότητος ἢ ψυχρότητος· ὥς δ' ἐξ ἧς διὰ πλῆθος τροφῆς ἢ ἔνδειαν· ὥς δ' ἐν οἷς ἢ αἷμα ἢ μυελὸν ἢ ἐγκέφαλον. τὴν δὲ υἱεῖαν τὴν σύμμετρον τῶν ποιῶν κρᾶσιν.

The disease occurs, according to the 'what', from excess of heat or cold; according to the 'why', from abundance or lack of food; according to the 'where', it may occur in the blood, the marrow or the brain. Health, on the other hand, depends on the mixture of qualities in equal measures.⁴³

As per this excerpt from the lemma, disease is influenced by three categories of causes: 'what' (*ὕφ' οὗ*) pertains to the agent responsible for the disease, 'why' (*ἐξ ἧς*) relates to the manner in which the disease is induced, and 'where' (*ἐν οἷς*) signifies the location of the disease. The causal language employed in this section underscores a subsequent doxographical intervention. From this causal categorization, the definition of health is also reformulated, employing terminology from a later period (*κρᾶσις* and *σύμμετρία* *in lieu* of *ισονομία*). In summary, this second part of the lemma encompasses: (a) a classification of the causes of disease, and (b) a redefinition of 'health'.

In accordance with this section of the testimony, the disease does not necessarily manifest in opposing pairs. Concerning the causes of disease, namely the 'what' (agent cause) and the 'why' (material cause), they are systematically presented as contradictory pairs. In the former instance, this contradiction arises due to the qualitative nature of

42. Cf. Cambiano 1983.

43. Aëtius 5.30.1 (D. 442) [= 24B4 (DK), 8B4 (TC), 23D30 (LM), Fp6 (A)]. The Greek text is from the Année 2019 edition, and the translation is my own.

the elements, involving factors such as heat or cold. Conversely, in the latter case, the contradiction arises from the quantitative aspect of the same element, encompassing abundance or deficiency.

In this second part, the discussion on the aetiology of diseases and the definition of health becomes more philosophically precise in analysing causes. Additionally, the medical content becomes clearer. The use of prepositions such as ὑφ' οὗ, ἐξ ἧς, ἐν οἷς adds conceptual precision to the passage. This practice, referred to as the “metaphysics of prepositions” by Theiler,⁴⁴ was prevalent during the first century, harking back to Aristotle and the Peripatetics.⁴⁵ There is no doubt that these phrases do not belong to Alcmaeon's language. Furthermore, the physiological determinants for disease occurrence (αἷμα, μυελός, ἐγκέφαλος) demonstrate a mastery of medical terminology.⁴⁶

However, when considering the ‘where’ – signifying the physiological site of the contradiction leading to the onset of disease – no such contradictory pairs emerge. On one hand, by identifying three potential sites (blood, marrow, or brain), they cannot be neatly paired off. On the other hand, since the contradiction can potentially manifest in two or all three of these locations concurrently, inherent contradictions among them dissipate.⁴⁷ Therefore, as per the initial part of the lemma, contradiction is deemed a necessary condition for the occurrence of the disease. However, the second passage asserts that contradiction alone is insufficient; it requires an additional element: localization. Hence, the explanation of the disease's causes in this section of the lemma contradicts the aetiology established in the first part.

Finally, in the last part of the testimony, Alcmaeon defines health as follows: τὴν σύμμετρον τῶν ποιῶν κρᾶσιν (“the mixture of qualities in equal measures”). This definition of health appears to be a reformulation of the definition proposed in the first part, which was ἰσονομίαν τῶν δυνάμεων (“the equality of powers”). In this reformulation, distinct terms are employed to describe the identical conceptual domain outlined in the initial definition. Specifically, συμμετρία is associated with the realm of ἰσονομία, while ποιός pertains to that of δύναμις. In this reformulation, the terms συμμετρία and κρᾶσις hold significant importance. We have testimonies from Aristotle,⁴⁸ as well as some accounts about Chrysippus, that refer to definitions of health in terms of συμμετρία,⁴⁹ which can be considered parallel passages to this lemma. Additionally,

44. Theiler 1930: 19ff. Cf. Runia 1986: 171-174.

45. Arist. *Metaph.* Z 7.1032a16-20.

46. αἷμα: Hippocr. *Aër.* 10 (L. II 42-50), *Mochl.* 36 (L. IV 378-380), Arist. *Part. anim.* 666b29, cf. Gal. *PHP* 5.573 (CMG V 4.1.2 ed. De Lacy); μυελός: Gal. *UP* 8.4, Hippocr. *Coac.* 499 (L. V 698), Diocl. fr. 141; ἐγκέφαλος: Hippocr. *VC* 2 (L. III 188-192), Erasistr. fr. 289 (Garofalo), Arist. *Part. anim.* 652a24, *Anon. Lond.* 21.34, Hippocr. *Morb. Sacr.* 13-14 (L. VI 384-388).

47. Aristotle defines contradiction as a form of opposition where two elements always have differing truth values. Cf. Arist. *Cat.* 13a38-b2, 13b33-35, *Metaph.* 1052a-1059a.

48. Arist. *Phys.* VII 3.246b4-6: τὰς μὲν γὰρ τοῦ σώματος, οἷον ὑγίειαν καὶ εὐεξίαν, ἐν κρᾶσει καὶ συμμετρῷ θερμῶν καὶ ψυχρῶν τίθεμεν; *Top.* VI 6.145b8: τοιοῦτος δὲ καὶ ὁ τῆς ὑγείας ὁρισμός, εἴπερ συμμετρία θερμῶν καὶ ψυχρῶν ἐστίν; VI 2.139b20-21: ἡ ὑγία συμμετρία θερμῶν καὶ ψυχρῶν.

49. Chrys. *apud* Gal. *PHP* 5.2.31 (CMG V 4.1.2 ed. De Lacy = *SVF* III 471): [...] λέγεται δὲ εἶναι σώματος νόσος ἢ ἀσυμμετρία τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ, θερμοῦ καὶ ψυχροῦ, ξηροῦ καὶ ὑγροῦ. καὶ

the term κρᾶσις is crucial, as it plays a key role in pre-Socratic cosmologies and theories of the soul,⁵⁰ Hippocratic humoral theory,⁵¹ and the theory of the mixture of primary elements in Stoics,⁵² Peripatetics⁵³ and Galen.⁵⁴

However, these two formulations are distinct, each presenting unique perspectives on health. The first conceptualises it as a phenomenon of binary equivalence among bodily constituents, while the second portrays it as a harmonious blend of qualities. Nonetheless, Magali Année argues that the lemma embodies an elusive and polymorphous conception of ἰσονομία, conveying the notion of ‘civic equality’ resulting from a process of ‘mediation’. So, this concept of ἰσονομία allows for both definitions to coexist without contradiction. This is because any attempt to achieve ‘equality’ inherently involves mixing and proportion, which in itself represents a form of ‘mediation’.⁵⁵

Triebel-Schubert argues that there exists a kind of terminological parallel between the first and second parts of the lemma, where ὑπερβολή (‘excess’) corresponds to μοναρχία, while κρᾶσις and συμμετρία correspond to ἰσονομία. She also suggests that Alcmaeon introduced this association between συμμετρία and κρᾶσις as a novelty. In the rest of the Presocratic testimonies, the term συμμετρία appears to be applied only to pairs of opposites. Additionally, the notion of κρᾶσις as a balanced and symmetrical mixture of forces, apart from Alcmaeon, emerges only in the works of Aristotle and his successors.⁵⁶

The term κρᾶσις poses certain lexicographical challenges that need to be addressed. Stephanus lists several meanings for the term κρᾶσις: originally, it referred to

μετ’ ὀλίγα, ἢ δ’ ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑγίεια εὐκрасία τις καὶ συμμετρία τῶν διειρημένων; 5.3.14 (= SVF III 472) ἐπὶ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ σώματος ἀκριβῶς αὐτὰ διωρίσατο (*scil.* Chrysippus) τὴν μὲν ὑγίειαν ἐν τῇ τῶν στοιχείων συμμετρίᾳ θέμενος.

50. Parm. fr. 8.55-61, 9, 12, 16 (DK); Emp. fr. 8, 17, 21, 26 (DK); Anaxag. fr. 4, 12, 16, 17 (DK). Cf. Sassi 2015.

51. Hippocr. *De nat. hom.* 4.3-7 (L. VI 40) Ὑγιαίνει μὲν οὖν μάλιστα, ὁκόταν μετρίως ἔχη ταῦτα τῆς πρὸς ἄλληλα κρήσιος καὶ δυνάμιος καὶ τοῦ πλήθεος, καὶ μάλιστα μεμιγμένα ἢ ἀλγέει δὲ ὁκόταν τι τουτέων ἔλασσον ἢ πλεόν ἢ ἢ χωρισθῇ ἐν τῷ σώματι καὶ μὴ κεκρημένον ἢ τοῖσι ξύμπασιν.

52. Zeno *apud* Stob. *Ecl.* I 17.3 152.19 Wachsmuth (= SVF I 102); Cleanth. *apud* Stob. *Ecl.* I 17.3 p. 153.7 Wachsmuth (= SVF I 497); Chrys. *apud* Stob. *Ecl.* I 17.4 153.24 Wachsmuth (= SVF II 471); Diog. Laert. VII 151 (= SVF II 479); Gal. *In Hipp. Nat. Hom. comm.* 19.4 (CMG V 9.1 ed. Mewaldt = SVF II 463); *De elem. sec. Hipp.* 136.15 (CMG V 1.2 ed. De Lacy = SVF II 465); Plut. *De comm. not.* 1077e, 1078b (= SVF II 465) and 1078e (= SVF II 480); Alex. Aphr. *Mixt.* 219.16 Bruns (= SVF II 466), 216.1 Bruns (= SVF II 470), 221.16 Bruns (= SVF II 474), 226.34 Bruns (= SVF II 475), 213.2 Bruns (= SVF II 481); *Quaest.* II 12 57.9 Bruns (= SVF II 476); *Mant.* 139.30 Bruns (= SVF II 477); Simpl. *In Phys.* 530.9 Diels (= SVF II 467); Them. *In Phys.* IV 1 p. 256 Spengel (= SVF II 468); Plot. *Enn.* II 7.1 p. 127 Müller (= SVF II 478).

53. Alex. Aphr. *Mixt.* chaps. XIII-XV.

54. Gal. *De temp.* 13.23, 14.26, 17.19, 17.20-21, 32.17-19, 34.5-12, 52.5-21, 60.9 ff., 64.14-18, 83.1-24, 104.1-3 (ed. Helmreich); *In Hipp. Nat. Hom. comm.* 13.5-9, 16.15-16, 21.15-18, 46.31-32 (CMG V 1.9 ed. Mewaldt); *De elem. sec. Hipp.* 138.1114 (CMG V 1.2 ed. De Lacy); *De usu part.* pp. I 18.25ff. (ed. Helmreich). Cf. Boudon-Millot 2011.

55. Année 2019: 44.

56. Cf. Triebel-Schubert 1984: 44.

the mixture of wine and water and later specifically denoted the ratio of water to be added to wine. It was also used to describe the mixture employed for preparing drugs and coloured pigments. This evolution in meaning led to the term representing a kind of ‘chemical mixture’, where the constituent elements are fused to create a unified whole.⁵⁷ In this sense, Passow emphasises that the term signifies the intimate combination of different substances, causing them to lose their individual nature and form a new substance together.⁵⁸ Chantraine, on the other hand, interprets the term as “to mix in a certain balance”, highlighting the balanced aspect as its central characteristic.⁵⁹ In this lexicographical context, Triebel-Schubert argues that κρᾶσις is better translated as ‘composition’ (*Verbindung*) rather than ‘mixture’ (*Mischung*). This term holds paramount significance in ancient medicine, and its precise lexicographical definition is crucial in understanding the underlying process. The concept of κρᾶσις, denoting a “balanced chemical mixture”, enables its application to various substances that blend together to create a new compound. In this context, health can be perceived, under this reformulation, as the compound arising from a harmonious mixture of *dynameis*.⁶⁰

The process of reconstructing Aëtius’ *Placita* text poses certain challenges that may explain the difficulty in establishing coherence between both parts of the lemma. Année’s edition follows the *Lesetext* established by Runia, who relies primarily on Pseudo-Plutarch’s testimony for reconstructing *Placita*.⁶¹ The Arabic translation of Pseudo-Plutarch’s *Placita*, made by Qustā Ibn Lūqā around the ninth century,⁶² diverges from the Greek version’s manuscript tradition.⁶³ According to Mansfeld and Runia, this text introduces new textual evidence that has not been fully incorporated into the research on the doxographical tradition.⁶⁴ The Arabic text assigns the additional name-label “Herophilus” to the second part of this lemma. Daiber supposes that the name-label

57. Stephanus 1822: *s.v.* κρᾶσις.

58. Passow 1831: *s.v.* κρᾶσις, “bey der κρᾶσις verschiedene Stoffe so innig verbinden, dass sie ihre eigne Natur verlieren, und zusammen einen neuen Stoff bilden”.

59. Chantraine 2002: *s.v.* κρᾶσις, “mélanger dans un certain équilibre”. Schwabe 1980: 31 concurs with Chantraine’s interpretation.

60. For an in-depth exploration of the concept of κρᾶσις within the context of the medical-philosophical discourse, refer to the works of Mirrone 2017, 2021, and 2023.

61. Runia 1999: 248. The sources used for the reconstruction of Aëtius’ *Placita* include Ps.-Plutarchus, Stobaeus, and Theodoret. Ps.-Plutarchus’s version is likely an Epitome derived from Aëtius. It possesses a manuscript tradition of a Greek archetype, an Arabic version derived from a Greek source that is more comprehensive than the manuscript archetype, and an indirect tradition. Stobaeus’ version, on the other hand, appears to have not been excerpted from Ps.-Plutarchus, but much of its material aligns precisely with it and provides more extensive content than what we find in Ps.-Plutarchus. Theodoret’s version is an excerpt from Aëtius, and it is the sole source that attributes the work to him, although he does not cite materials from Book 5. Runia 1999 excludes the statement ἐγγίνεσθαι δὲ τούτοις ποτὲ κακ τῶν ἐξωθεν αἰτιῶν, ὑδάτων ποιῶν ἢ χώρας ἢ κόπων ἢ ἀνάγκης ἢ τούτοις παραπλησίον, which was included by Diels-Kranz and Laks-Most based on Stobaeus’ testimony.

62. Badawī 1954.

63. Daiber 1980: 166ff.

64. Mansfeld and Runia 1997: 153-154.

may have resulted from the intrusion of a marginal note (*Randnotiz*) or some other form of confusion into the text.⁶⁵ Given the significant number of variations in the text of Ps.-Plutarchus and the other testimonies at this point, Runia finds it highly probable that the concluding portion of the manuscript was nearly illegible. For this reason, in his reading of the text, he does not include the name-label “Herophilus”, even though he acknowledges that there may be valid reasons to accept it.⁶⁶ However, Leith supports the attribution to Herophilus for several reasons.⁶⁷ Firstly, he notes parallels between this passage and references to Herophilus in Galen. He believes that the parallel between both sources, each independent of the other, supports their authenticity. Secondly, there is a discrepancy in the views on causality presented in both parts of the lemma. Lastly, the passage contains content that aligns more closely with the Peripatetic school, making it more likely to be connected to Herophilus rather than Alcmaeon.⁶⁸ Runia and Mansfeld find these arguments persuasive. Therefore, in the new edition of *Placita*, Mansfeld and Runia adopt Qustā Ibn Lūqā’s *lectio* and affirm the authenticity of the name-label “Herophilus”.⁶⁹

While Runia does not include the name “Herophilus” in his reading of text, he believes that accepting the inclusion of this name-label in this part of the lemma helps resolve the issue of the dual explanation of the causes of health and disease, as they would pertain to two distinct *doxai*.⁷⁰ This viewpoint aligns with Leith’s second argument. In their analysis of the sources used to reconstruct Aëtius’ text, Mansfeld and Runia argue that if we accept the text of Ps.-Plutarchus as provided by the Greek manuscript tradition, there would be grounds to reject the reading of the Arabic translation. This is because Herophilus is known to have rejected the concept of causality.⁷¹ However, they also note that, according to Galen’s testimonies, while Herophilus expressed doubts about any causal explanation, he would have admitted the provisional nature of causal explanations.⁷² In line with this perspective, Leith suggests that attributing this section of the lemma to Herophilus is consistent.⁷³ This is because the

65. Daiber 1980: 518. Conversely Mansfeld and Runia 1997: 157 considers “this is surely somewhat precipitate”.

66. Runia 1999: 249-250. However, it is noteworthy that in his critical apparatus to this fragment, Année 2020: 140 does not list the Arabic translation by Qustā Ibn Lūqā among the manuscripts.

67. Leith 2014: 603-606.

68. Cf. Runia 1986: 171-174.

69. Mansfeld and Runia 2020: 2050-2051.

70. Runia 1999: 250.

71. Gal. *CP* 16.200 [= T59a (von Staden)]: [...] *manifestum est quoniam omnino non est causa*.

72. Mansfeld and Runia 1997: 157. Sources: Gal. *CP* 16.197-205 [= T59a (von Staden)]; *De comp. med.* 3.1 (12.619 K) [T59b (von Staden)]. Cf. von Staden 1989: 136-137.

73. Leith 2014: 602-607.

provisional causes that Galen quoted from Herophilus⁷⁴ align with the causes presented in this part of the lemma.⁷⁵

Despite Leith's arguments and their acceptance by Runia and Mansfeld, we do not consider them conclusive in proving the attribution of this second part to Herophilus. The parallelism between Herophilus' quote in Galenus and the lemma passage does not necessarily imply authorship or originality on the part of Herophilus. This parallel could be an echo of these doctrines in Herophilus; in fact, there are parallel testimonies to this conception attributed to Chrysippus and other ancient authors.⁷⁶ Similar testimonies exist in other members of the Alexandrian medical school, such as Erasistratus, who also views overeating as a cause of disease.⁷⁷

Although the two sides present different terminology and notions of health and causation, this does not necessarily imply a contradiction between them, as Runia and Mansfeld suggest. Conceiving health as both a binary equivalence and an equal mixture is not contradictory; rather, these notions complement each other. Similarly, the difference between the notion of causation established in the first part for health and that established for disease in the second part, while different, is not contradictory either. In both cases, health and disease are conceived in terms of a 'just proportion' between the components.

Furthermore, the entire lemma is permeated with terminology coined later, except for the use of the terms *ισονομία* and *μοναρχία*. However, this does not necessarily mean that the entire passage, despite being attributed to Alcmaeon, actually belongs to him. The incorporation of later terminology only indicates doxographical mediation in the testimony. Therefore, inferring a closer connection to Herophilus than to Alcmaeon is, at best, relative.

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the realm of medical discourse, Alcmaeon adeptly employs geometrical-political terminology to elucidate various pathological phenomena. Delving into the theoretical-methodological framework of *Begriffsgeschichte*, it becomes evident that this utilisation of political terminology serves as a significant indicator of what Meier, following Ko-

74. Gal. *CP* 16.198 [= T59a (von Staden)]: *causa vero, utrum sit vel non, natura quidem non est invenibile, existimatione autem puto infrigidari, estuari, cibo et potibus repleti*.

75. Aëtius 5.30.1 [= 24B4 (DK), 8B4 (TC), 23D30 (LM), Fp6 (A)]: [...] θερμότητος ἢ ψυχρότητος [...]

76. Chrys. *apud* Gal. *PHP* 5.2.31 (*CMG* V 4.1.2 ed. De Lacy = *SVF* III 471): [...] λέγεται δὲ εἶναι σώματος νόσος ἢ ἀσυμμετρία τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ, θερμοῦ καὶ ψυχροῦ, ξηροῦ καὶ ὑγροῦ. καὶ μετ' ὀλίγα, ἡ δ' ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑγεία εὐκράσια τις καὶ συμμετρία τῶν διειρημένων; *PHP* 5.3.14 (*CMG* V 4.1.2 ed. De Lacy = *SVF* III 472): ἐπὶ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ σώματος ἀκριβῶς αὐτὰ διωρίσατο [*scil.* Chrysippus] τὴν μὲν ὑγίαν ἐν τῇ τῶν στοιχείων συμμετρίας θέμενος. Cf. Arist. *Phys.* VII 3.246b4-6 τὰς μὲν γὰρ τοῦ σώματος, οἷον ὑγίαν καὶ εὐεξίαν, ἐν κράσει καὶ συμμετρίας θερμῶν καὶ ψυχρῶν τίθεμεν; *Top.* VI 6.145b8 τοιοῦτος δὲ καὶ ὁ τῆς ὑγείας ὁρισμός, εἴπερ συμμετρία θερμῶν καὶ ψυχρῶν ἐστίν; VI 2.139b20-21: ἡ ὑγεία συμμετρία θερμῶν καὶ ψυχρῶν.

77. Erasistr. fr. 168 (Garofalo): Ἐρασίστρατος τὰς νόσους διὰ πλῆθος τροφῆς καὶ ἀπεψίας καὶ φθοράν. Cf. Erasistr. fr. 60 and 162 (Garofalo).

selleck, terms the ‘politicisation of concepts’ (*Politisierung der Begriffe*), a phenomenon that gained momentum around the 5th century B.C. The infusion of geometrical terms with political connotations and their subsequent application in the field of medicine offer crucial insights into the transformative processes that reshaped the organisational and conceptual landscape of the polis during the transitional period between the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. During this pivotal era, the *polis* underwent profound changes, although not exclusively defined as ‘democratic’ at the time. Instead, these changes delineated a complex network of political concepts, which later became integral components of the broader conceptual framework that allowed for contemplation of the δημοκρατία, or democracy. Alcmaeon’s innovative use of these geometrical-political terms within the medical domain reflects the permeation of political discourse into diverse spheres of ancient society. It underscores the interconnectedness of political and intellectual developments, showcasing how the evolving political landscape significantly influenced the language and thought processes of scholars and intellectuals like Alcmaeon.

In essence, Alcmaeon’s employment of these politicised terms in the medical context serves as a testament to the intricate interplay between politics and intellectual pursuits in ancient Greece. It illuminates the subtle ways in which the evolving political vocabulary contributed to shaping not only the discourse surrounding medicine but also the broader understanding of democracy, paving the way for the conceptual universe of political thought that would characterise subsequent centuries.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- A = Année, M., 2019. *Alcméon de Crotoné. Fragments. Traité scientifique en prose ou poème médical?*, Paris, Vrin.
- BS = Boeri, M. and Salles, R. 2014. *Los filósofos estoicos, Ontología, lógica, física y ontología*, Santiago de Chile, Ediciones Universidad Alberto Hurtado.
- DK = Diels, H. and Kranz, W. 1958. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 3 vols., Berlin, Weidmannsche Buchhandlung.
- FHS&G = Fortenbaugh, W. W., Huby, P. M., Sharples, R. W. and Gutas, D. 1993. *Theophrastus of Eresus. Sources for His Life, Writings, Thought and Influence*, 2 vols., Leiden & Boston, Brill.
- Garofalo = Garofalo, I. 1988. *Erasistrati Fragmenta*, Pisa, Giardini.
- L. = Littré, E. 1839-1861. *Œuvres complètes d’Hippocrate*, 10 vols., Paris, J.-B. Bailliére.
- LM = Laks, A. and Most, G. 2016. *Early Greek Philosophy*, 9 vols., Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press.
- LP = Lobel, E. and Page, D. L. 1963. *Poetarum lesbiorum fragmenta*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- LS = Long, A. A. and Sedley, D. N. 1987-1989. *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

- M = Manetti, D. 2022. *Anonymus Londiniensis: De Medicina*, Berlin, Teubner.
 PMG = Page, D. L. 1962. *Poetae Melici Graeci*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.
 SLG = Page, D. L. 1974. *Supplementum Lyricis Graecis*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.
 SVF = Armin, H. von 1903-1905. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, Stuttgart, Teubner.
 TC = Timpanaro Cardini, M. 2010. *Pitagorici antichi. Testimonianze e frammenti*, Milano, Bompiani.
 von Staden = Staden, H. von 1989. *Herophilus: The Art of Medicine in Early Alexandria*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
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