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The Treatise *Affections* in the Context of the Hippocratic Collection

Galen once refers to the Hippocratic treatise *Affections*, as not being worth of Hippocrates¹, even though it clearly circulated under Hippocrates' name at that time. When and why this treatise was included to make part of the *Hippocratic Collection* remains unclear, but it was certainly among the last ones to be incorporated into it, as Erotian did not use it in his *Hippocratic Glossary*. Nevertheless, the treatise must have already appeared in the early editions of the *Corpus* produced by Dioscorides or Artemidorus Capito in the 2nd Century A.D. for it is present in two of the three oldest manuscripts transmitting the *Corpus Hippocraticum*.

Scholars have already pointed out the similarities between the aetiological theories of the treatises *Affections* and *Diseases I* and those attributed to Dexippos of Cos and Hippocrates himself in the *Anonymous Londinensis*². Even though the content of *Affections* presents some similarities with other nosological writings, its greatest peculiarity is the fact that it is intended for laymen and not for practitioners. The writing also consists of a catalogue of foods and its properties, the second longest of the *Corpus Hippocraticum* after *On Regimen*. The mixture of these two main topics has no parallel in the rest of the Collection and everything seems to indicate that its inclusion of in the *Hippocratic Collection* was even more accidental than that of other writings.

Another distinguishing feature of the treatise that has to be examined is the frequent reference to other existing or to-be-written books. In fact, instead of detailing the preparation of remedies to be use in each disease, the author refers many times to a recipe collection called *On Remedies*. He also mentions in three different passages his intention of writing separately on eye diseases, internal suppuration, and gynaecological diseases. In another fragment he justifies the absence of an extensive explanation of tertian and quartan fevers, saying that he has already dealt with this topic elsewhere. To identify these references with mentions of other extant Hippocratic writings such as *On Sight*, the gynaecological treatises, or *Diseases I*, where a thorough description of internal suppuration is made, is a tempting hypothesis that can unfortunately neither be confirmed nor refuted. Anyway, given the vast amount of medical literature that has been lost, it would be very surprising if the writings mentioned by the author of *Affections* were extant.

The aim of this paper is to shed some light into the purpose of *Affections* and the audience for which it was intended. This aim of extending medical knowledge to

¹ Gal. In Hp. Acut. comm. 2.38 (Helmreich CMG V 9,1 198, 3-5; 15.587.4 K.) ὡς σύγγραμμα οὐκ ἔστιν ἄξιον τῆς Ἱπποκράτους δυνάμεως. Passage quoted by A. Anastassiou & D. Irmer (1997: 51).

² See H. Grensemann, (1975: 213) and more recently A. Anastassiou- D. Irmer (2006: 318).

the general public is unique in the context of the writings attributed to Hippocrates and may explain to some point why *Affections* was almost ignored by commentators and medical authors.

We will also look for references to other medical treatises in the *Corpus Hippocraticum* (among others *Nat. Hom.*, *Artic.*, *Prorrh. II*) so as to give a panoramic of some of the Greek medical literature of the 5th and 4th Centuries B.C. that must have circulated together with the works later attributed to Hippocrates, but that for various reasons might have not been included in the *Hippocratic Collection*.

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