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Hippocratic writers and ancient readers: authorship and individuation

The early medical writer who marked his compositions with cross-references that span *Nature of the Child (in Childbirth)*, *Diseases [IV]*, *Diseases of Women [I]*, and perhaps even *Diseases of Young Girls*, neglected to imbed his name within the narratives, as did the historians Herodotus and Thucydides in their first sentences. Galen was fond of *Nature of the Child*, writing a commentary to it, now presumably lost in Greek; he usually named Hippocrates as the author of *Nature of the Child*, although in *Formation of the Fetus* he says, “whether the author is Hippocrates himself, or his pupil Polybos” (54.21-22 Nickel). Of the early medical writer’s works only *Nature of the Child* was included for certain among the at least 18 treatise Bacchius of Tanagra glossed at the middle of the III-century BCE. By the mid-I century CE Erotian listed 31 treatises in his preface, and in his glossary the early medical writer’s *Diseases of Women* was juxtaposed to a similarly-named treatise to form a two-book *Diseases of Women α' - β'* , set among therapeutic treatises curing through dietetics. He placed *Nature of the Child* among the etiologic treatises and never mentioned *Diseases [IV]*. The first editions of the Corpus, according to Galen, were brought out in the reign of Hadrian by Artemidorus Capito and Dioscurides (Anastassiou-Irmer, *Testamonien* I (2006) xxvi, and II 1, 483-84). Galen criticized Artemidorus for willfully changing old readings, but did admit that these editions were widely sought after. The lectures John of Alexandria gave in the VII century cover only chapters 12-19 of *Nature of the Child* and are clearly fragmentary, although they do highlight the role that the treatise continued to play in medical education (CMG XI 1.4). The two large manuscripts of the *Corpus*, M (MS Marcianus Graecus 269, X saec.) and Va (MS Vaticanus Graecus 276, XII saec.) present the text of *Generation/Nature of the Child* as separate entities; *Generation* directly precedes *Nature of the Child* in M, while in V it follows (in error). In both manuscripts *Nature of Man* is directly antecedent to *Nature of the Child*, and the *V-pinax* reports the title of *Generation* as *Nature of the Generating Seed*, thereby conferring a specious unity in title, if not in subject matter.

Littré, aware of the medical writer’s cross-references, printed *Generation/Nature of the Child* and *Diseases [IV]* together and numbered their chapters consecutively, with the implication that the grouping represented a continuous work. Joly followed Littré, and so did Lonie in his translation and commentary, arguing, however, that while *Generation* was indeed the introductory section to *Nature of the Child*, the early medical writer considered his *Diseases [IV]* an independent treatise. Grensemann named the early medical writer “Autor C” and printed his contributions to the gynecologies of the *Coprus* apart from the milieu in which they had been traveling at least since Erotian. Whether the early medical writer would be pleased with the current state of the works he joined through cross-references is unclear. In any case, papyrus fragments from Egypt during the

millennium when the country was Greek-speaking further confirm that gynecological treatises, including his own, continued to circulate together: a VI-century codex from Antinoe displays in its fragment 3 the end of *Superfetation* on the front and the beginning of *Diseases of Women I* on the back; fragments from *Diseases of Women II* in the same hand follow (*P.Ant.* III 184).

Medical texts pulled from dessert sands and rubbish heaps are able to inform about which treatises of the Corpus were being read by a provincial population in the later Ptolemaic and Roman periods and these copies also offer details about the state of snippets of the Greek texts. To date, the most popular was *Aphorisms*, and copies account for five items out of a total of 21 or 22 texts of the Corpus in the on-line Mertens-Pack³. I want to conclude with some observations about the papyrus evidence for *Aphorisms* and briefly to pursue the suggestion of Anastassiou-Irmer, I (2006) 87, that another III-century papyrus codex needs to be added to the other five examples of *Aphorisms* (*P.Ryl.* III 530, currently MP³ 2338).

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