CHAPTER 5

The Peripatetic Hippocrates and Other Monists in the Anonymus Londiniensis

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Near the beginning of his commentary on Hippocrates’ Nature of Man, Galen refers the reader who might wish to know more about the various opinions of ancient doctors to the Iatrike Sunagoge or Medical Collection composed in Aristotle’s school. By way of identifying the text fully, and perhaps emphasizing its merit and correspondence with the other Peripatetic scholarship he has cited in the context, he notes that it is attributed to Aristotle: but he then adds that everyone knows it was really written by Aristotle’s pupil Menon, an attribution which will lead to a certain qualification of its value.

This passage is of course the basis for the original identification of the ‘Aristotle’ authority cited in the papyrus text of so-called Anonymus Londiniensis, preserved in P.Br.Libr. Inv. 137, as Menon. However we might care to name the papyrus writer’s Peripatetic authority, it is interesting that the text Galen

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2 Kenyon 1892, 238, endorsed by Diels 1893, 407.
3 Manetti (e.g., in 1999, 98–99) has cautioned against the careless assumption of earlier days, that a text by Menon was compiled thoughtlessly by Anonymus, or his intermediate source, into the text preserved on the papyrus. She also suggests that the title ‘Menonian books’ could refer to an editor rather than the author; Diels 1893, 407 n. 2 had suggested a dedicatee.
has in mind seems to square up closely with Anonymus’ Aristotelian source. For, when Galen goes on to describe the work of this ‘Menon’ more fully, and indeed to mark out its deficiency as a history of pre-Hippocratic medicine, he dwells on its failure to represent any pre-Hippocratic version of a pluralist view of the constitution of the human body.

And it is clear that this Menon carefully investigated the books of the ancient doctors still preserved in his time and excerpted their views from these. But from the books that had already completely perished, and from those that had been preserved but that he did not see, he was not able to record the opinions. According to these books (as represented by Menon), then, you cannot find bile, yellow or black, or phlegm said by even a single writer to be an element of human nature; yet as for blood, many of those after Hippocrates, too, seem to think that this is our only constituent, so that both our original genesis comes about from this, and our subsequent growth in the womb and our completion of growth after birth. But Hippocrates a bit later (in Nature of Man) wrote as though there were some thinkers who believed the human is phlegm and bile, and he would not have written in this way if there were not some either in his time or before him who believed this.4

This Menon, we learn, was a diligent in his research, and he consulted many books carefully. But some books escaped his account, and among these are

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