HIPPOCRATES' *PERI PARTHENIÔN* ('DISEASES OF YOUNG GIRLS'): TEXT AND TRANSLATION¹

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I. Introduction

*DYG* exemplifies many of the intellectual and textual complexities of other treatises in the Hippocratic Corpus, the diverse collection of early medical writings associated with the name of Hippocrates from Hellenistic times onward to the present. The circumstances of its composition can be described only in a tentative, relative sense, rather than in any final or absolute way, and no individual author can be identified by name, either for the *DYG* or any other Hippocratic treatise. Further, only approximate chronological and geographical points of origin can be specified, such as a time at the end of the fifth century BCE, or the beginning of the fourth century, and a place perhaps in Ionia and certainly somewhere in the eastern Mediterranean. A set of relations with other works in the Corpus can nonetheless be mapped out, raising possibilities of common authorship of certain clusters of treatises and/or textual layers, as well as looser authorial associations of place and time, or perhaps just thought and expression. Areas of correspondence may also be found outside the confines of the Corpus, assisting further in locating works inside.

*DYG* has two main points of connection with other items in the Corpus. The first is its link to the gynecological treatises and to the

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author of the Hippocratic *Diseases of women* I (DW I), who makes a reference to what he has previously said about retained menstrual blood turning toward the rump in *The diseases of young girls* (όστερον μοι εὐφυς έν τῇ παρθενηγήσι νοῦς κοινά, DW I 2, VIII 22.1-2 Littré). If the writer means to indicate the title of his work, rather than merely a reference to the topic of ‘the diseases of young girls,’ this raises the possibility that the DYG originally formed part of a more extensive treatise by this same writer, who again refers to remarks he has made about the young girl, for whom first menstruation rises upward in her body (ὁρούειν ἄνω in DW I 41, VIII 98.9-12 Littré).

The DYG likewise stresses the fact that when the blood of menarche is retained it leaps upward (ἄναυστα, line 16). Cross-references of a similar nature do establish this writer’s authorship of *Generation/ Nature of the child* (G/NC) and *Diseases IV* (DIV), and the portentous opening sentence of G/NC, ‘Law governs all things’ (Νόμος μὲν πάντα γοργόνει), resembles the sweeping, rhetorical generalization with which the DYG opens: ‘My beginning comes out of the totality of medicine’s eternal aspects’ (Ἀρχὴ μοι τῆς ξυνθέσεως τῶν αἰειγενέων ἡπικρῆς). The identification of the author also seems strengthened by the fact that the G/NC, DW I, and DIV, like the DYG, offer a dual notion of blood, not only as one of the four humors, but also as a unique nutritive substance which is the end product of digestion and a mixture of the humors. Thus, while G/NC 11 and 17 refer to embryonic nourishment as a composite of all four humors, chapters 14-16 emphasize the nutritive role of the mother’s blood; while DIV 38 treats blood as a humor, 42.2 features its nutritive aspects in a manner similar to that in the DYG, where blood is said to arrive in the womb in greater quantity at puberty because of the nourishment the young girl has consumed and because of the growth that occurred in her body (τὸ δὲ ἄμα πλέον ἐπιφέρη διά τὸ εἴτια καὶ τὴν αὐξήσιν τοῦ σώματος, lines 14-15).

Émile Littré, the last to edit the DYG in his *Hippocrates: Opera Omnia* VIII of 1853, was certain that the author of the DW was also

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