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A new Hippocratic commentary from Oxyrhynchus

[Hippocrates], *Epidemics I 13.2* (ii 684.10-688.8 L.)

Σιληνὸς ᾧκει ἐπὶ τοῦ πλαταμῶνος πλησίον τῶν Εὐαλκίδεω. ἐκ κόπων καὶ πότων καὶ γυμνασίων ἀκαίρων πῦρ ἔλαβεν. ἤρξατο δὲ πονεῖν καὶ ὀσφῦν· καὶ κεφαλῆς βάρους καὶ τραχήλου σύντασις. [1st day] ἀπὸ δὲ κοιλίης τῇ πρώτῃ χολώδεα, ἄκρητα, ἔπαφρα, κατακορέα πολλά διήλθεν· οὔρα μέλανα, μέλαιναν ὑπόστασιν ἔχοντα, διψώδης, γλῶσσα ἐπίξηρος, νυκτὸς οὐδὲν ἐκοιμήθη. [2nd day] δευτέρῃ πυρετὸς ὀξύς, διαχωρήματα πλείω, λεπτότερα, ἔπαφρα, οὔρα μέλανα, νύκτα δυσφόρως, σμικρὰ παρέκρουσε. [3rd day] τρίτῃ πάντα παρωξύνθη· ὑποχονδρίου σύντασις ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων παραμήκης πρὸς ὀμφαλόν, ὑπολάπαρος· διαχωρήματα λεπτά, ὑπομέλανα, οὔρα θολερά, ὑπομέλανα, νυκτὸς οὐδὲν ἐκοιμήθη, λόγοι πολλοί, γέλως, ᾠδή, κατέχειν οὐκ ἠδύνατο. [4th day] τετάρτῃ διὰ τῶν αὐτῶν. [5th day] πέμπτῃ διαχωρήματα ἄκρητα, χολώδεα, λεία, λιπαρά, οὔρα λεπτά, διαφανέα· σμικρὰ κατενόει. [6th day] ἕκτῃ περὶ κεφαλῆν σμικρὰ ἐφίδρωσεν, ἄκρεα ψυχρά, πελιδνά, πολὺς βληστρισμός, ἀπὸ κοιλίης οὐδὲν διήλθεν, οὔρα ἐπέστη, πυρετὸς ὀξύς. [7th day] ἑβδόμη ἄφωνος, ἄκρεα οὐκέτι ἀνεθερμαίνετο, οὔρησεν οὐδέν. [8th day] ὀγδόῃ ἴδρωσεν δι' ὅλου ψυχρῶ· ἐξανθήματα μετὰ ἰδρῶτος ἐρυθρά, στρογγύλα, σμικρὰ οἶον ἴουθοι, παρέμενεν, οὐ καθίστατο· ἀπὸ δὲ κοιλίης ἐρεθισμῶ σμικρῶ κόπρανα λεπτά, οἷα ἄπεπτα, πολλὰ διῆει μετὰ πόνου· οὔρει μετ' ὀδύνης δακνώδεα· ἄκρεα σμικρὰ ἀνεθερμαίνετο, ὕπνοι λεπτοί, κωματώδης, ἄφωνος, οὔρα λεπτά διαφανέα. [9th day] ἐνάτῃ διὰ τῶν αὐτῶν. [10th day] δεκάτῃ ποτὰ οὐκ ἐδέχετο, κωματώδης, ὕπνοι λεπτοί· ἀπὸ δὲ κοιλίης ὁμοία, οὔρησεν ἀθρόον ὑπόπαχυν· κειμένω ὑπόστασις κριμνώδης λευκή, ἄκρεα πάλιν ψυχρά. [11th day] ἑνδεκάτῃ ἀπέθανεν. ἐξ ἀρχῆς τούτῳ καὶ διὰ τέλος πνεῦμα ἀραιόν, μέγα. ὑποχονδρίου παλμὸς συνεχῆς, ἠλικίῃ ὡς περὶ ἕτεα εἴκοσιν.

Silenus lived on the flat area near Eualcidas' place. After fatigue, drinking and ill-timed exercise, fever took hold of him. He began to feel pain also in the loins, and there was heaviness of the head and tension of the neck. From his bowels on the **first day** there passed bilious, unmixed, frothy, dark-coloured and copious stools. Urine with dark sediment. Thirsty, tongue dry. At night no sleep. On the **second day** acute fever, stools more copious, thinner, frothy, dark urine, uncomfortable night, slightly out of his mind. On the **third day** everything intensified. Tightness of the hypochondrium stretching on both sides towards the navel, without distention. On the **fourth day** the same. On the **fifth day** stools unmixed, bilious, smooth, greasy, urine thin and clear. Lucid intervals. On the **sixth day** a little sweat on the head, extremities cold and livid, much tossing about, no bowel movements, urine stopped, acute fever. On the **seventh day** refusal to speak, extremities could no longer be warmed, no urine. On the **eighth day** cold sweat all over. Red, round, small spots, like acne, with sweat, which persisted and did not stop. From the bowels, with a little stimulation, thin, as if unconcocted, copious stools came accompanied by pain. Acrid urine with irritation. Extremities warmed up a little, light sleep, comatose, refusal to speak, urine thin and clear. On the **ninth day** the same. On the **tenth day** would not accept drink, comatose, light sleep. From the bowels similar stools, urine plentiful and thick. When it settled its sediment was like coarse meal and white. Extremities again cold. On the **eleventh day** he died. From the beginning and right to the end his breathing had been rare and deep. Continual throbbing of the hypochondrium. Age about twenty.



P. Oxy. inedit. (draft translation)

column 1

[lemma 1] *'... , light sleep. From the bowels similar stools. Urine plentiful, sediment like coarse meal, white, and again extremities cold. On the eleventh day he died. From the beginning and right to the end his breathing had been rare and deep. Continual throbbing of the hypochondrium. Age about twenty.*

[commentary: criticism 1] Asclepiades, as I said, described the condition of the disease and the cause in each part, [... the] accompanying (symptoms). But to us, who prefer to [find out?] only the treatment by itself, the practice is naturally irritating. For based on what is self-evident it was always possible [for anyone] to get some [account] of the disease, even if not a clear one. **[criticism 2]** However, he concentrated [too much] on paroxysms and intervals and on those things <by which> we shall be able to measure out each of the things that are prescribed. But in these words spoken by Hippocrates, he once again did not easily find anything so extensive, but (sc. Hippocrates was) like someone wishing to run through or describe the most serious (symptoms) and those which killed the man (i.e. Silenus), just as the events of the disease seemed to [have occurred?]. **[criticism 3]** And what is more, the practice of [setting out?] what happened to Silenus, but telling us his treatment as if he were going to visit him every day, pretending to know nothing of the outcome, [imparts?] ugliness and shame to the account ...

column 2

... necessity ... are interested in medicine ... be connected to

[lemma 2] *Silenus lived on the flat area near Eualcidas' place. After fatigue, drinking and ill-timed exercise, fever took hold of him. He began to feel pain also in the loins, and there was heaviness of the head and tension of the neck. From his bowels on the first day there passed bilious, unmixed, frothy, dark-coloured and copious stools. Urine with black sediment. Thirsty, tongue dry. At night no sleep.*

[commentary] ... strong ... people ... offered ... causes ... in moist ... flux of the bowels ... alleviation ... and evacuation Therefore it happened that (?) ... mistaken ... was mistaken ... compensation ... people ... exercise ... sweat from the ... head ... much ...



P. Oxy. ined. i 24-42

... ἐν τούτοις δὲ τοῖς παρὰ
 25 Ἴπ]ποκράτους εἰρημένοι[ς] οὐ-
 δ]ὲν ῥαδίως τοσοῦτον εὖρ[ε]ν
 πά]λιν, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἐπιδρα[μ]εῖν
 τι]νος βουλομένου τὰ χαλε-
 πώ]τατα καὶ ἀνελόντα τὸν ἄν-
 30 θρω]πον ἢ διηγῆσασθα[ι] καθά-
 περ] τὰ κατὰ τὴν νόσον ἔοικεν
]ηθῆναι. καὶ μὴν καὶ τὸ
]έναι μὲν τὰ ζυμβάντα ἐκτιθ]έναι?
 τῷ Σιλ]ηνῶ, λέγειν δὲ τὴν ἐ-
 35 πιμ]έλειαν ὥσανεὶ καθ' ἡμέ-
 ραν] εἰσιόντα πρὸς αὐτὸν ποι-
 ούμε]νον μηδὲν γεινώσκειν
 τῶν ἀ]ποβάντων, δυσωπίαν
 . . . κ]αὶ δυσχέρειαν τῷ λόγῳ τι
 40]αλλομ[. . .] κ[. . .]
]αρ[ιως .[] .[
] .[]μα[

Galen, *On Medical Experience* 28.3 (ed. & trans. R. Walzer)

Asclepiades' account of phrenitis:

'Burning fever inflames the membranes of the brain, and it results from this that the corpuscles make their way to the finely divided part (*to leptomeres*), or those of them which do so become extremely fast and violent in motion all at once; this is followed by an obstruction of the corpuscles in the pores, which causes the disease known as phrenitis. Thereupon what lies beneath the cartilages spreads upwards, being attracted by the finely divided part. Now, when the very numerous corpuscles rise and rub against the resisting parts, they are repelled. After this they return to the roomy parts which are capable of receiving them, and for this reason the bowels are loosened. Since this is the case, it is therefore necessary for the origin of the burning fever and its accompanying symptoms to come first, after which phrenitis follows, then comes the upward attraction of the regions of the cartilages and the phrenitis is followed by the loosening of the bowels.'



Celsus, *De Medicina* 3.4.12, 15

Hippocrates, when the fever ended on any other than an odd day, was accustomed to fear that it would come back. Asclepiades has justly attacked this as false, and he said that no day is more or less dangerous to patients for being even or odd. For sometimes even days are the worse, and it is more suitable to give food after paroxysms on these days. ... But in these matters indeed the Pythagorean numbers, then quite famous, deceived the ancient physicians, since here also the doctor ought not to count days, but observe the actual paroxysms, and from these infer when food should be given.

Galen, *Commentary on Hippocrates' In the Surgery* 1.pref. [xviii/B.631-632 K.]

τέτταρες δέ εἰσιν αὐτῶν, δύο μὲν εἰς ἅπαντα βιβλία Ἱπποκράτους γράφοντες ὑπομνήματα Ζεῦξις τε καὶ Ἡρακλείδης, οὐκ εἰς πάντα δὲ Βακχεῖος καὶ Ἀσκληπιάδης <ἀλλὰ τὰ> δυσ|λόγιστα

ἀλλὰ τὰ *add. H. von Staden*

There are four of them [i.e. previous commentators on the Hippocratic *In the Surgery*]: two, Zeuxis and Heraclides, who wrote commentaries on all of Hippocrates' books, and Bacchius and Asclepiades, (who wrote commentaries) not on all, <but only on the> obscure ones.