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Reading Galen's humoral treatises in Late Antiquity

This paper summarizes some conclusions emerging from a general study of the humoral system and reception in Galen's thought. In the course of preparing a new critical edition of four Galenic treatises -- *On temperaments/mixtures*, *On the best constitution of our bodies*, *On good condition*, *On uneven bad temperament* -- for the «Budé» series, our attention has been drawn to significant peripheral material in the manuscripts that had been dismissed by previous editors as not belonging to Galen's original writing, including summaries, analytical diagrams, and marginal comments. Our purpose in this paper is to assess the nature and importance of this material. We shall investigate the use, function and date of these elements, as reflecting the reception of Galen's work among late antique physicians and other readers.

That the four treatises belong together is asserted by Galen himself in *On the order of my own books*, where he recommends that they be read together. According to J. Ilberg, the whole group was composed at the beginning of Galen's second stay in Rome («Über die Schiftstellerei des Klaudios Galenos II», *Rhein. Mus.* 47 (1892), pp. 504; 508; 513). But Galen's original group was often split up subsequently, and new groups of treatises were formed. The Alexandrian canon, for instance, seems to have concentrated on the longer works. Thus the manuscript tradition of *On temperaments* is closer to that of *On the elements according to Hippocrates* than to the traditions of the other works we are publishing, while Hunain, in his letter to Ali ibn Yahya on Galen's work and translations (*Risala*), places the four treatises in different locations. This reordering of Galen's corpus is significant testimony to its late antique reception.

In this presentation, we shall also describe 1) material added to Galen's writing in the direct tradition, reflecting different layers of reading, teaching, and use; and 2) evidence for oriented readings of Galen's work through the indirect tradition, such as Oribasius' citations. The different summaries and diagrams reflect the interests and trains of thought of the readers, sometimes strikingly different from what a modern reader may choose to emphasize. Some marginal notes do not provide more information than the text itself and clearly serve the purpose of laying an emphasis on an idea or an articulation of the text. This peripheral material must have had several uses as a reminder of the main points of the text and as a help to locate one part or the other of the treatises. Obviously these helps would have provided a general idea of the content which could in some cases have replaced an actual reading of the text.

We will address the questions of the date of this material, of whether some of the material can be assigned to the Alexandrian school, and of the place of humoral theory in the Alexandrian medical curriculum.