

PAUL POTTER (ed., trans.), *Hippocrates: Volume XI*. Loeb Classical Library 538, Cambridge, Mass. – London: Harvard University Press, 2018, pp. xxviii+491, ISBN 978-0-674-99657-1.

With this eleventh volume, Paul Potter's sixth contribution to the series, Loeb's invaluable edition of the Hippocratic texts reaches its completion.¹ The present offering features two treatises, *Diseases of Women I* and *Diseases of Women II*, that, as Potter points out, have been considered a pair since at least the first century CE. They were last edited in the 1850s and 1860s by Littré and by Ermerins. Like most editors and translators of these texts, Littré being a notable exception, Potter has retained the traditional division into two separate works.

The volume is prefaced by a general introduction which includes a short history of the treatises, a brief account of the manuscript tradition and a *stemma codicum*. A short section is also devoted to an explanation of two problematic technical terms.² Also provided is a list of references and bibliography to earlier editions, translations and commentaries, and to more general works. The volume concludes with a lexicon of the therapeutic agents included in the text, both in Greek to English and English to Greek format, and a comprehensive index.

The edition is based on a collation of the three independent witnesses to the text, Θ, M, and V from microfilm (though M omits chapters 92-109 of *Disease of Women I*). Volume and page references to Littré's nineteenth-century edition are made in the margins; also included in parentheses are Littré's chapter numbers for *Diseases of Women II*, which he treated as a continuation of *Diseases of Women I*. As is usual for the Loeb series, the *apparatus criticus* is not extensive, but notes all the significant variants, along with any notable readings from previous editors. Some useful explanatory

¹ The Loeb collection omits the *On Sevens*, a treatise that some consider part of the Hippocratic corpus, but survives only in Latin translations; see Elizabeth M. Craik, *The Hippocratic Corpus: Content and Context* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 126-128 for a summary of this work. Potter's previous contributions are *Hippocrates Vol. V* (1988) (*Diseases I & II*, and *Affections*), *Hippocrates Vol. VI* (1988) (*Disease III, Internal Affections*, and *Appendix to the Regimen in Acute Diseases*), *Hippocrates Vol. VIII* (1995) (*Places in Man, Glands, Fleshes, Prorrhetic I & II, Physician, Use of Liquids, Ulcers, Haemorrhoids, and Fistulas*), *Hippocrates Vol. IX* (2010) (*Anatomy, Nature of Bones, Heart, Eight Months' Child, Coan Prenotions, Crises, Critical Days, Superfetation, Girls, Excision of the Fetus, and Sight*), and *Hippocrates Vol. X* (2012) (*Generation, Nature of the Child, Diseases IV, Nature of Women, and Barrenness*).

² Potter directs the reader to two previous Loeb volumes, *Hippocrates VIII* and *X*, for the explanation of additional technical terms pertinent to the present one.

footnotes to the translation are also included. The individual treatises are each preceded by a short introduction that outlines the historic evidence for the text's connection to the Hippocratic corpus, a note on previous editions, translations and studies, and a very useful summary of the material arranged by headings and sub-headings, along with relevant chapter numbers. Since there is occasional repetition of material, or backtracking, or digression, that does sometimes detract from the overall clarity of the texts, these 'tables of contents' are of great assistance to the reader.

Potter's clear translation does not stray very far from the Greek text; expansions necessary for sense, but not present in the Greek, are enclosed in parentheses. He also notes useful cross-references to other texts in the corpus. The table of weights and measures that appeared in the volume *Hippocrates: Volume VI* would have been a useful inclusion.

Along with the treatise *Barrenness* (labelled by some as *Diseases of Women III*), these texts provide the most extensive treatment in the Hippocratic corpus of the pathological conditions that affect women's reproductive systems. Inevitably, since human dissection was not being undertaken, the understanding of physiology and internal anatomy is often rudimentary, with 'knowledge' of the female body coming from sometimes erroneous deduction, analogy and assumption. But there is also much evidence of practical knowledge and experience, though how much of this is the first-hand experience of the author is difficult to assess.

Diseases of Women Ideals systematically with the disorders encountered at each stage of female reproductive life—menstruation, conception, pregnancy, delivery—as well as disorders of the womb; it concludes with a series of detailed prescriptions, with much pharmacological information, against a diverse range of ailments, both women's conditions and non-gendered ones. Along the way, it argues that male and female differ even at the level of bodily constitution, the former having hard and solid flesh, the latter's flesh being soft and porous. Moreover, it maintains that sexual intercourse and childbearing are essential for women's health. The inclusion of a case history, that of *Phrontis*, who herself discovers that the lochia have not properly discharged and reports it, is an unusual feature in the gynaecological texts. *Phrontis* is in marked contrast to those women that the author singles out as exacerbating their illnesses through not speaking out to a physician through inexperience, ignorance, or shame.

Diseases of Women II deals primarily with just two topics; the different types of vaginal flux, based largely on the criterion of colour, and disorders of the womb that (mostly) were not covered in *Disease of Women I*. The treatise concludes with a medley of conditions unrelated to the womb and a long series of detailed prescriptions, again with much pharmacological information, against the conditions discussed previously relating to flux and womb. Most detailed is the discussion of the movements of the womb, both

within the body and toward the outside; this is notable, of course, for its depiction of *pnix*, or hysterical suffocation, but *pnix* is only one of many symptoms.

There is much in this volume for specialist and non-specialist alike. These treatises are now available in English for the first time, and both text and translation are highly commendable.

Paul Potter has made an outstanding contribution to this important series; we owe him our warmest congratulations and heartiest thanks. It is almost a century since the first volumes of Hippocrates appeared in the 1920s; if Potter should now bring his expertise to these earlier offerings, we would be much indebted to him.

LESLEY BOLTON
University of Calgary
labolton@ucalgary.ca

