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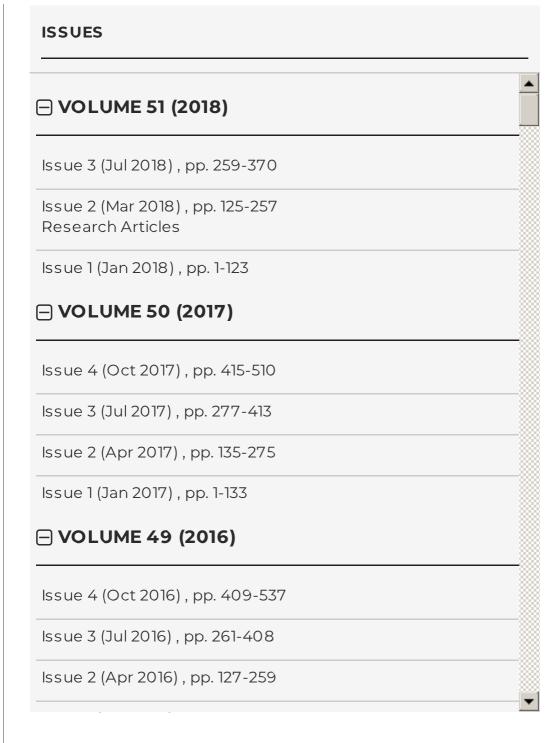
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Soul, Seed and Palingenesis in the Hippocratic de Victu

Hynek Bartoš,

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Soul, Seed and Palingenesis in the Hippocratic de Victu

Hynek Bartoš

The Hippocratic treatise de Victu is one of the most interesting but also one of the most obscure texts included in the Corpus Hippocraticum. It presents a unique combination of medical, philosophical and religious ideas that are integrated within an explicitly articulated theory of human nature. On the one hand, the treatise is one of the best examples of Greek 'rational' medicine, and it has even been suggested that it might be an authentic work of Hippocrates, on the other hand, it is the only treatise in the Hippocratic Corpus that recommends prayers to gods as part of dietetic treatment, and that attributes the arrangement of the phusis of all things to gods. Supposing that the treatise was written at the end of the fifth or in the first half of the fourth century BC, we may regard it as probably the oldest surviving ancient work to offer not

¹ Smith (1979), 44-60, rejected by Lloyd (1991) and Mansfeld (1980), reiterated in Smith (1999). In spite of strong skepticism, Lloyd acknowledges that the description of the method of Hippocrates in Plato's Patedrus (270a ff.) shows some similarities to de Victu, at least more than to Galen's candidate de Natura Howinis (196).

² Per i diaitës (hereafter Vict) IV 87, IV 89, IV 91

³ Vict 111 (136.2). Throughout, the pagination in brackets refers to the critical edition published in Corpus Medicarum Graecarum (Joly-Byl (1984)).

⁴ Most scholars are more or less in agreement with this dating (Teichmüller (1876), Fredrich (1899), Diels (1901), Jones (1931), Miller (1959), Joly-Byl (1984), Jouanna (1999), Hankinson (1991), van der Eijk (2005)). Jaeger (1938 and 1989) has argued for the fourth century BC, and Kirk (1954) circa 350 BC.

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