

Hippocratic Connections between Material Powers and Higher Level Dispositions

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This paper explores the connections between different orders of dispositional qualities in a number of Hippocratic treatises. It examines chiefly the causal links between material powers (including powers of elementary stuffs and 'stuffy' dispositions that can themselves be deemed constitutive of bodies) and higher level dispositions: sickliness, resistance to disease, general temperament, intelligence etc. To take an example from *Regimen*, a blend of the finest fire and the thickest water generates a nature dominated by cold and moist, which, in virtue of its specific set of powers, is responsible for a tendency to fall ill during winter. Besides attempting to elucidate the explanatory mechanisms that underlie such connections and the robust or precarious ontological condition that is implicitly attributed to those *dunamis*, I will consider several Hippocratic passages in a larger historical context by comparing them with other texts that mark causal connections between elementary powers and more complex dispositions (e.g., in Diogenes of Apollonia as well as in later thinkers, including Aristotle).