

GEORGE KAZANTZIDIS : **Callimachus and Hippocratic Gynecology Absent desire and the female body in 'Acontius and Cydippe' (*Aetia* FR.75.10-19 Harder)**

This article invites a reading of Cydippe's medical case in the third book of Callimachus' *Aetia* (fr.75.10-19) in light of Hippocratic gynecology. In the first part, I discuss in detail Cydippe's three illnesses, focusing on their rich medical allusions and illustrating how they all create a coherent medical record. While on the face of it Cydippe's clinical symptoms resemble descriptions of lovesickness in Hellenistic poetry, it is precisely her absence of expressed desire, as I argue, that makes her sick in Callimachus, and thus differentiates her from other suffering female figures such as Medea in Apollonius Rhodius or Simaetha in Theocritus. In the second part, I move on to examine Callimachus' problematisation of desire as an exclusively male prerogative in the narrative (that of Acontius) and I attempt to explain Cydippe's dissociation from it by looking closely at the sexual politics of Hippocratic medicine: Cydippe's silent transition from virgin to wife, and the illnesses that affect her so long as this transition is suspended evoke, as I illustrate, medical discussions on when and how virginity should be surrendered for a young girl to remain healthy ([Hipp.] *De virginum morbis*) as well as the Hippocratic notion that absence of desire defines both an adult woman's sexual life but also the critical moment of her first sexual experience.

Mots-clés :

Callimachus – *Aetia* – sexuality – desire – Hippocratic gynecology