

Galen's *De indolentia*

Essays on a Newly Discovered Letter

Ed. by Clare K. Rothschild and Trevor W. Thompson

[Galens *De indolentia*. Aufsätze zu einem neu entdeckten Brief.]



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In 2005 a French doctoral student discovered the long-lost treatise, *De indolentia* (Περὶ ἀλυπησίου/ἀλυπίας) or *On the Avoidance of Distress* in a monastic library in Thessalonica. *De indolentia* is a letter from Galen to an unspecified addressee in which he describes how he responded to the fire that destroyed much of his library and medicines in 192 CE. The manuscript, catalogued in the Vlatadon monastery as codex 14, is of unspeakable value to scholars of antiquity. Vivian Nutton characterizes the discovery as »one of the most spectacular finds ever of ancient literature.« Scholarly consensus has established 192–193 CE as the most probable date of composition that, according to Galen, belonged to a group of writings he classified as moral philosophy. *De indolentia* provides important evidence for second-century literary culture covering a range of topics in this area of study, including Galen's aptitude for distinguishing genuine from false texts, his nuanced lexical debates with other physicians, and his prolific scholarly activity. The treatise also offers information about ancient library culture. Too often neglected in comparative studies of Early Christian literature, Galen's writings, particularly on moral philosophy, treat many of the same topics. Of particular interest to scholars of early Christian texts, *De indolentia* specifically addresses second-century use of parchment codices to preserve valuable texts, preserves some standard epistolary elements in the absence of others, has both private and publication aims in mind, and denotes a 'hermeneutics of self-interpretation' as crucial for understanding the text. This volume includes a brand new English translation of the text, a collation of all discrepancies among the leading critical editions of the Greek text, and essays by eminent Classicists and scholars in the field of early Christianity on different aspects of this fascinating new text.

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