into signing a chit to the effect that he had borrowed money from her (p. 164); Herodes Atticus' attempt to teach his idiot son to read by embodying the letters of the Greek alphabet in twenty-four attendant slaves (p. 165); the cheating in an alphabet exercise that may well have escaped the teacher's notice, but which can be detected by the skills of the papyrologist (p. 166); the illiterate kings who have to sign their names through wooden templates (p. 169); the artificial words invented for a pronunciation exercise that end up being used as *voces magicae* in Miletus (p. 179); the Cyreanean graffito parodying the grammarian's teaching-method, 'Who was the father of Priam's children?' (p. 209); and the witty homoerotic letter sent between schoolboys (p. 219).

C. shows that there was a striking contrast in the organization of ancient education. On the one hand, the career of the schoolteacher, particularly for those at the lower levels, was always precarious. Most of them operated as impecunious sole traders; schools tended not to exist separately from the teachers themselves, and seldom enjoyed any established physical dimension (on occasion pupils could even be met in tombs!). Nor, of course, was there anything akin to a national curriculum imposed by any state, against which the performance of individual teachers, let alone their pupils, could be measured (p. 105). On the other hand, and despite this, the papyri demonstrate the enormous systematic uniformity and conservatism of the curricula pursued in practice by the children of antiquity.

C. is a little apologetic about what she sees as the limited evidence for women in education in Graeco-Roman Egypt. None are found being taught or teaching at tertiary level, but there is significant evidence for their involvement in the first two levels and indeed eight women are found among the eighty-seven known teachers in all (p. 46). Classicists more familiar with the dismal evidence for the literacy of women in classical Athens might rather rejoice to find such a high proportion not merely of educated but actually of educating women here. It is intriguing too to find that Origen used female copyists (p. 182).

C. also successfully establishes a hitherto under-recognized element in ancient education, namely training in the writing of (epistolary) letters (pp. 114, 247). This was a self-evidently valuable skill, but one to be particularly encouraged in the case of pupils staying away from home. The letters they wrote back to their parents provided tangible evidence of good lessons learned well, and could promote their teacher's chances of being re-hired.

This book will speak to anyone with a general interest in antiquity, and will be particularly valued by historians of education.

University of Wales, Swansea DANIEL OGDEN

EGYPTIAN MEDICINE

K. S. Kolta, D. Schwarzmann-Schafhauser: *Die Heilkunde im alte Ägypten. Magie und Ratio in der Krankheitsvorstellung und therapeutischen Praxis*. (Sudhoffs Archiv Beiheft 42.) Pp. 223, ills. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000. Cased, DM 88. ISBN: 3-515-07482-1.

To Herodotus the Egyptians were the healthiest of all peoples, save for the Libyans. So impressed was Diodorus Siculus with the diet he imagined had been legally prescribed for the pharaoh that he fancied it more the creation of skillful physicians

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than of a legislator. In proposing an ideal, stable law-code for the Magnesians, Plato exhorted them to comport themselves like (Egyptian) doctors, and internalize and follow fixed and binding written sacred texts.

These representations of Egyptian medicine, allegedly, are mostly stereotypes filtered through Greek sensibilities. They reveal less about Egyptian realities and more about classical absorptions and anxieties, e.g. Plato's inquietude about Athenian political instability. Part of a rhetoric of alterity, they constitute an early form of what Edward Said has labeled 'Orientalizing'. And yet, appearing as early as Homer, they are recurrent and so lead one to suspect some truth value.

To confirm or refute this suspicion, this collaborative effort by a physician–historian and classical philologist–Coptic scholar adopts an interdisciplinary approach. Building on philological research on the medical papyri of scholars like Hermann Grapow, it seeks to incorporate newer insights from Anglo-American paleopathology. Its closest counterpart in English is John F. Nunn's *Ancient Egyptian Medicine* (Oklahoma, 1996). In a superficial comparison, Nunn's book achieves a remarkable integrations of texts and pictures that approximates an ideal of ancient Egyptian aesthetics. Here, however, the plates are relegated to the back and vary in quality depending on the age of their sources. All the usual suspects, or better patients, are present, some with their afflictions still unresolved: the pharaoh Siptah with shortened right leg (poliomyelitis?), Ramses V with pock-marked face (smallpox?), the achondroplastic dwarfs Seneb and Khnumhotep. A short commentary and useful translation of hieroglyphic texts accompany some plates. For certain topics, such as childhood diseases, the authors provide details not found in Nunn.

The first chapter contains a schematic presentation of Egyptian history and textual and paleopathological sources. There remain unpublished many late hieratic and demotic texts which, as in Nunn, are only briefly noted. What has appeared, however, is contradicting the prevailing notion that Egyptian medicine devolved from the Old Kingdom to the late period. For historians of classical medicine, the significance of these published materials from the fifth and fourth centuries needs to be emphasized.

Missing is a systematic attempt to reconstruct a matrix—physical, biological, socio-cultural—within which patents lived, suffered, and died, and physicians practiced. Political history is no substitute. Even Herodotus thought a stable climate had something to do with Egyptian health. Without this matrix the treatment of disease, viewed from a modern and indeed ancient Hygieian perspective as ecological disequilibrium, lacks sufficient content. On p. 52, for example, they furnish an academic history of schistosomiasis from Ruffer's discoveries (1910) to the development of new antigen tests without highlighting the environmental factors that continue to perpetuate this disease—irrigation basins in which lurk the snail hosts of *Schistosoma haematobia*. The bibliographical reference on smallpox in the case of Ramses V is quite dated (1924). Electron microscopy and radioimmunoassay results of the 1980s were inconclusive, and the reader will want to know why (possibly poor sampling or the vesicular eruptions are post-mortem artifact). To a layperson, a brief reference to hydrocephaly will suggest a neonate with an enlarged skull, but the condition could arise in an adult by neoplasm, infection, injury, or anoxia. Again, without content, the term is too vague. The earliest cases of leprosy are not Coptic (p. 52) but Ptolemaic, specifically the four skulls from the Dakleh Oasis, each one of which shows characteristic marks of *facies leprosa*.

Despite such slips, the authors' broader observations evince much common sense. Egyptian medicine should be viewed in neither an evolutionary nor devolutionary mode. Magic and a sort of scientific naturalism and empiricism occur side by side

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throughout its history, a corrective notion for those classicists who tend to heighten triumphantly the contrasts between Hellenic rationalism and Egyptian superstition. Attempts to somatize too locally Egyptian anatomical concepts, they contend, are misguided. Here traditional Chinese medicine might have offered a parallel. Its historians have long recognized that anatomic terms like liver, stomach, and triple heater are connotative as well as denotative, and often refer not to somatic structures, as in western biomedicine, but to functions. Again, a bibliographical slip—no mention of James H. Walker's controversial but fundamental *Studies in Ancient Egyptian Anatomical Terminology* (Warminster, 1996).

The section on Greek medicine's debt to Egyptian assembles the usual ambiguous evidence. The argument that the Cnidian notion of *perittoma*, putrefactive intestinal residue as a morbid principle, derives from the Egyptian concept of *whdw* is frankly tired. Ideas of intestinal stasis and autointoxication appear in other cultures and times (e.g. late nineteenth-century American) and raise doubts about diffusionism. That the Egyptians adopted a fluvial physiology with its *metu* 'channels' by analogy with the Nile is a plausible suggestion. The authors' focus on 'blockage', however, suppresses the rest of the metaphor, obvious to an Egyptian, namely, 'overflow'.

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WINTER IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

R. RATHMAYR: *Der antike Mensch in der Jahreszeit des Winters*. Pp. 302. Hamburg: Dr Kovač, 2000. Paper, €75.67. ISBN: 3-8300-0393-5.

The study of the seasons in antiquity offers an untapped opportunity for students of environmental and ecological history or historical geography. Rathmayr's treatment of winter provides only a partial view of the subject by focusing upon a single season and by limiting the discussion to literary evidence. The approach is predominantly descriptive rather than analytical and subject to the usual constraints of employing only the surviving sources (p. 218). The chronological scope of the study extends from Homer to the Church fathers. Geographically, the discussion reaches such remote locales as India and Scandinavia, for which in the majority of cases the ancient authors had to rely upon indirect evidence. Detailed source criticism and contextualization remain rare throughout the work, but the incidental nature of many references assures that literary affectation was the exception rather than the rule (p. 241).

The first section examines ancient philosophical theories for the causation of the seasons. R. describes the development from several competing explanations toward the consensus view that the proximity of the sun determined the cycle of the seasons. After the fourth century B.C., only the alternative theory attributed to Posidonius survives in several sources, hypothesizing that the seasons were caused by the changing angle of incidence of sunlight. The movement of the sun between the tropics also fostered a common belief among ancient geographers that the Earth had two habitable temperate regions, separated by a band of intense heat around the equator and bordered by extremely cold zones. For most people in antiquity, the beginning and end of winter were marked by observable natural phenomena rather than precise calendrical boundaries. In his listing of significant signs, R. includes the setting of the Pleiades, the appearance of Arcturus, the blowing of the west wind, and seasonal shifts in flora and fauna (p. 58). The remaining portion of this section describes the regional

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