Secret Knowledge of the Doctor: Health and Medicine in the Ancient World

Led by:

Dr. Casey L. Kirkpatrick
Dates

Mondays at 1pm, June 22, 2020 to August 10, 2020

Location

Meeting Room (August 17th):  https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87664897182

Overview

Have you ever wondered how the ancient people viewed and treated illness? The history of medicine can be traced back to ancient Egypt, where the world’s earliest known medical test was recovered. Through the study of ancient artifacts and texts, we can now reconstruct ancient Egyptian perspectives on emergency medicine (Edwin Smith Papyrus), women’s health (Kahun Papyrus), general medical practices (Ebers Papyrus), and more. These studies contribute to the early history of medicine, and some of these ancient treatments are still being used by medical professionals today! In this reading group, we will read translations of all of the aforementioned papyri, as well as selected secondary texts that will help us to better understand healthcare in ancient Egypt. By reading and discussing these texts, together we will gain a new appreciation for the health challenges faced by ancient Egyptians as well as the medical perspectives and healing methods of their physicians.

Structure

Each week will be based on a theme relating to health and medicine in ancient Egypt. Prior to each meeting, attendees are expected to do the assigned readings so that you can actively contribute to (and understand) the group discussion. Of course, I do realize that things come up and some people find it challenging to contribute, so just do your best. I also encourage readers to add comments and/or questions into the online reading documents as you go through the texts (even if it’s just to remind yourself of something you want to discuss in the meeting). I aim to provide a laid back and inclusive atmosphere where reading group participants can feel comfortable asking questions and relaying their own knowledge relating to the topics at hand. SASA reading group discussions are regularly enhanced by the contributions of people from diverse cultures, professions, educations, and life experiences. I look forward to meeting you and learning from you all while I guide you through the basics of health and medicine in ancient Egypt.
**This syllabus will be updated regularly and new readings will be posted following each meeting**

Meeting 1 (June 22): Healing through Magic, Religion and Ritual

**Readings:**


The above chapter with my notes (may open easier because of the smaller file size)

**Discussion Questions:**

- How does the ancient Egyptian mixture of spiritual and physical medicine relate to your understandings of modern medicine?
- Do you think that there is validity in the performance of spiritual medicine?
- In what ways could religious and magical rites contribute to the health of ancient Egyptians?
- Can you think of parallels to this type of medicine elsewhere in the ancient world? How about the modern world?

**Supplementary readings (not assigned):**

Anne Austin’s dissertation: "Contending with illness in ancient Egypt: A textual and osteological study of health care at Deir el-Medina"

Andrew H. Gordon and Calvin W. Schwabe: "THE QUICK AND THE DEAD: Biomedical Theory in Ancient Egypt" (the one about cattle culture)

Medieval Medicine in Copper Pot - [https://mbio.asm.org/content/6/4/e01129-15](https://mbio.asm.org/content/6/4/e01129-15)
Meeting 2 (June 29): Early Understandings of Human Anatomy and Disease

Readings:


Optional (alternative views on perceived causes of disease):

Discussion Questions:

- How did ancient Egyptian understandings of anatomy, physiology, and pathology affect the development of medicine?
- Can you think of any anatomical or pathological elements that have yet to be explained by modern physicians?
- Were you surprised in any way by ancient Egyptian understandings of human anatomy and pathology?
Meeting 3 (July 6): Hygiene and Preventive Medicine

Readings:


Readings discussed in meeting:

Science in Ancient Egypt - Leipzig's website of scientific papyri - Medical page
http://sae.saw-leipzig.de/liste/wissensbereich/heilkunde-medizin-und-heilende-magie/
TED-Ed video: A day in the life of an ancient Egyptian doctor
Lahun Veterinary Papyrus
http://sae.saw-leipzig.de/detail/dokument/veterinaer-papyrus/
https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/griffith1897bd1?sid=17336a4b11c270b71e5dcc6c519851a3&ui_lang=eng
Researchers doing veterinary
https://sydney.academia.edu/ConniLord
https://manchester.academia.edu/StephanieWoolham
https://manchester.academia.edu/LidijaMcKnight

Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China (Volume 9) First Edition
Perfume cones
Merit-Ptah
https://hopkinshistoryofmedicine.org/content/online-program-student-jakub-kwiescinski-published-journal-history-medicine-and-allied
https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/12/191216142152.htm
Paula Veiga academia.edu page:
https://lmu-munich.academia.edu/PaulaVeiga
Projects on medical texts:
http://www.medizinische-papyri.de/Start/index.html
http://sae.saw-leipzig.de/startseite/
Cones from Amarna
https://drive.google.com/file/d/14ZIFeUguzhC5Zdux9CLFN23GhbTJzngh/view?usp=sharing
Gebel el-Silsila depiction of what seems like a doctor’s appointment
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Vqd3bx-VABGzX3Zc9ps3ivCs1jJnWW2O/view?usp=sharing

Meritptah: The world's first female doctor?, Ancient Egypt Magazine 111, December 2018, January 2019, 24-31
https://www.academia.edu/40820180/Meritptah_The_worlds_first_female_doctor_Ancient_Egypt_Magazine_111_December_2018_January_2019_24-31
Saqqara Saite Tomb Project intro video
https://www.nationalgeographic.fr/video/tv/tadihor-etait-elle-un-personnage-important-de-lantiquite-egyptienne
Meeting 4 (July 13): Ancient Egyptian Healthcare Systems

Readings:


Optional:


Extra links from Paula:

Nunn, the doctor in ancient Egypt
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1o0cle5Pg0DWzW7Q4_WxTflh_7rxHpmOs/view?usp=sharing
Weiss, practice at Deir el-medina
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZyBkefCHxM3b57tXxeaGo3yZ7OmzYC-g/view?usp=sharing
Andorlini, From prescription to practice
https://drive.google.com/file/d/17oS5acq5Cll2TQSvJOJmBzstqKUHRQYZ/view?usp=sharing
Loukas, clinical anatomy
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c4e4o08cdQpydLrmrSJ_lraYsb9AdJqa/view?usp=sharing
About varia in ancient Egyptian medical practices
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EDD1YlqSNgzcmDgeijiUFz8_cvEE-IUp-/view?usp=sharing
Meeting 5 (July 20): The World’s Earliest Medical Text and Women’s Health

Readings:


Optional:


Additional Resources:

In Egypt and other cultures in antiquity / Gynecology and obstetrics in ancient Egypt

Ancient Egyptian obstetrics and gynecology / Figure-Vases in Ancient Egypt and Hebrew Midwives / Birth in Ancient Egypt: Timing, Trauma, and Triumph? Evidence from the Dakhleh Oasis / La Gynécologie en Egypte ancienne / L’ancienne école de médecine d’Alexandrie

Papyri on the health of the penis:

Meeting 6 (July 27): Emergency and Trauma Medicine

**Prof. Edmund Meltzer will be joining us for this meeting!! He is very approachable and friendly, and he has a wealth of knowledge. If possible, please come prepared with some questions in mind.**

**Readings:**


OR

http://sae.saw-leipzig.de/en/detail/dokument/papyrus-edwin-smith/ (philology-focused translation with notes on the history of translations and sometimes on certain prescriptions - might be easier to skim and pick out cases that interest you from the list of cases on the left side of the screen)

**Optional:**


Resources discussed in meeting: Ancient Egyptian Language

Grundriss
Missing volumes 1, 3, 8 (working on it)

4 - https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2dp8x3aLqN3UW5TOWhRE03ZjQ/view?usp=sharing
5 - https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2dp8x3aN3bzhwcG9YT0hJVm/view?usp=sharing
6 - https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wLEnDmtavHg-Dpd2P8Sgky8NgBlvsgbh/view?usp=sharing
7.1 - https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2dp8x3aLqN3VjAtQ0dFUXdqMkE/view?usp=sharing
7.2 - https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2dp8x3aLqN3T2VRzE2VlInNWM/view?usp=sharing
Westendorf
https://drive.google.com/file/d/13r2HngRnZXUNblzI4w6qAVaa4KKEpVlk/view?usp=sharing
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GtSaqqn9o83QV0F20NOgnverwlxNKnb/view?usp=sharing

Hannig - dictionary
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Oh1pq5vk4rL6tDSr7p0MsJSRYMUng3k/view?usp=sharing

Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache
http://ancientworldonline.blogspot.com/2014/02/digitized-worterbuch-der-agytschen.html
Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae
http://aaew.bbaw.de/tla/servlet/S05?d=d007&h=h018

Hoch's Grammar
https://archive.org/details/HOCH1997MiddleEgyptianGrammarOCR

Resources discussed in meeting: Ancient Egyptian Medicine

- Snake Papyrus
- Leipzig collection of medical papyri
- Greco-Roman Egyptian Medicine
- Veiga, P., 2009. ONCOLOGY AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN ANCIENT EGYPT. The Ebers Papyrus’ Treatise on Tumours 857-877 and the cases found in ancient Egyptian human material (Master in Arts dissertation).
Meeting 7 (August 3): Dis/ability in Ancient Egypt

Readings:


Optional:


Additional Resources:

Old age

http://dlib.nyu.edu/ancientworld/books/brill_awdl000027/1

Polio

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wuSxpmfVJhZWJUNffAHGSsNOGafAM7P/view?usp=sharing
Meeting 8 (August 10): Individual Mini-presentations on Medical Artifacts and Prescriptions from the Ebers Papyrus

Since the Ebers Papyrus is too long to realistically expect everyone to read, we will all learn from each other this week. I am asking readers to please choose one prescription from the Ebers Papyrus and one artifact that links to your chosen prescription in some way. I am providing Allen's catalogue of artifacts in "The Art of Medicine in Ancient Egypt". You can choose your artifact from there or from elsewhere. If you choose an artifact from outside of the Allen catalogue, please come prepared with a photograph or sketch to share. During the meeting each person will briefly summarize their chosen prescription and artifact and explain their idea on the link between the two. Feel free to be as creative as you like!

If you would like to try to avoid doing the same prescriptions, please also feel free to list your chosen prescription in the table below.

Readings:

The Ebers Papyrus


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ebers Case Name/Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>example: Casey K</td>
<td>Eb 878: Cure for the Made-up Ebers Rx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula Veiga</td>
<td>Cypriote Base-Ring Jars for Opium-Ebers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmund Meltzer</td>
<td>Eb 650 (81, 10-14) (Grundriss IV/1 p. 84) Relief of the muscles (mtw) of the shoulder. Allen #56, ointment jar of chief physician Harkhebi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Howell</td>
<td>EB 40: Get rid of disease inside of abdomen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ling-Fei Lin</td>
<td>Eb 167, Another (remedy) for eliminating magic in the stomach of a man or a woman. Allen #40, Honey jar label (p.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bianca Grier</td>
<td>Eb 797: Make a Woman fall forth to the ground. Abydos Birth Brick.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meeting 9 (August 17): Medicinal Ingredients with Paula Veiga; Final Questions with Casey

Readings:


Optional:

If you feel inclined, just browse through this book looking at the titles and the images to get an idea of some of the types of diseases that could be found in ancient Egypt. I will answer any questions you have about paleopathology at the end of the session.