

# 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 text 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.

## Schedule

**\*\*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:***

[Nunn, J.F. 1996. "Chapter 5: Magic and Religion in Medicine". \*Ancient Egyptian Medicine\*. British Museum Press: London, pp. 96-112.](#)

[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>



## Meeting 2 (June 29): Early Understandings of Human Anatomy and Disease

### Readings:

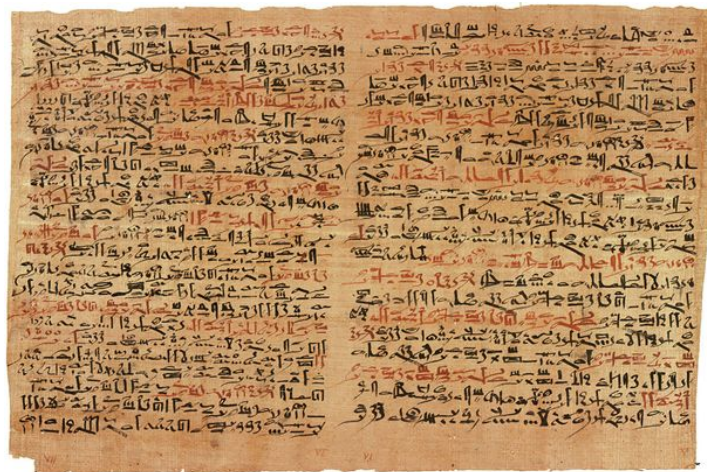
[Nunn, J.F. 1996. "Chapter 3: Concepts of anatomy, physiology and pathology". \*Ancient Egyptian Medicine\*. British Museum Press: London, pp. 42-63.](#)

*Optional (alternative views on perceived causes of disease):*

[Ghaloungui, P. 1973. \*The House of Life \(Per Ankh\): Magic and Medical Science in Ancient Egypt\*. B.M. Israel: Amsterdam, pp. 52-62.](#)

### 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:

[Reeves, C. 1992. "Chapter 2: Health and Hygiene". In, \*Egyptian Medicine\*. Shire: London, pp. 11-20.](#)

[Strudwick, H. 2013. "Hygiene and Body Care". In, \*The Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt\*. Amber Books: London, pp. 384-387.](#)

Optional: [Metcalf, R. 2016. "Bread and beer in ancient Egyptian medicine". In Price et al. \(eds.\). \*Mummies, Magic and Medicine in Ancient Egypt\*. Manchester University Press: Manchester, pp. 157-167.](#)

Optional: [Strouhal, E. 1996. "Dress, Adornment, and Body Care". In, \*Life of the Ancient Egyptians\*. University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, pp. 81-82, 86-89.](#)

### 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

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/a-day-in-the-life-of-an-ancient-egyptian-doctor-elizabeth-cox>

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](https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/griffith1897bd1?sid=17336a4b11c270b71e5dcc6c519851a3&ui_lang=eng)

<https://papyrus-stories.com/2020/05/27/caring-for-cows-in-ancient-egypt/>

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

[https://www.amazon.com/Hygienic-Modernity-Meanings-Disease-Treaty-Port/dp/0520240014/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&keywords=hygiene+treaty+port+in+China&qid=1594058584&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.com/Hygienic-Modernity-Meanings-Disease-Treaty-Port/dp/0520240014/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=hygiene+treaty+port+in+China&qid=1594058584&sr=8-1)

Perfume cones

[https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2019/12/these-mysterious-egyptian-head-cones-actually-existed-grave-find-reveals?utm\\_campaign=news\\_daily\\_2019-12-10&et rid=379323288&et\\_cid=3118261](https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2019/12/these-mysterious-egyptian-head-cones-actually-existed-grave-find-reveals?utm_campaign=news_daily_2019-12-10&et rid=379323288&et_cid=3118261)

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](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:

[Nunn, J.F. 1996. "Chapter 6: The Healers". \*Ancient Egyptian Medicine\*. British Museum Press: London, pp. 113-135.](#)

### Optional:

[Forshaw, R.J., 2009. The practice of dentistry in ancient Egypt. \*British Dental Journal\*, 206\(9\), pp.481-486.](#)

[Viso, L. and Uriach, J., 1995. The "Guardians of the anus" and their practice. \*International Journal of Colorectal Disease\*, 10\(4\), pp.229-231.](#)

[Lord, C., 2016. One and the same?: An investigation into the connection between veterinary and medical practice in ancient Egypt. In \*Mummies, magic and medicine in ancient Egypt\*. Manchester University Press.](#)

### Extra links from Paula:

Nunn, the doctor in ancient Egypt

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1o0cle5Pg0DWzW7Q4\\_WxTflh\\_7rxHpmOs/view?usp=sharing](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/17oS5acq5CII2TQsvJOJmBzstqKUHrQYZ/view?usp=sharing>

Loukas, clinical anatomy

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c4e4o08cdOpydLrnrSJ\\_IraYsb9AdJqa/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c4e4o08cdOpydLrnrSJ_IraYsb9AdJqa/view?usp=sharing)

About varia in ancient Egyptian medical practices

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EDD1YlqSNgzcmDgeiiUFz8\\_cvEE-IUp-/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EDD1YlqSNgzcmDgeiiUFz8_cvEE-IUp-/view?usp=sharing)



## Meeting 5 (July 20): The World's Earliest Medical Text and Women's Health

### **Readings:**

**The Kahun (Lahun) Gynecological Papyrus** - A Simple translation with images and audio readings of the original text: Quirke, S. 2002. *Manuscript for the health of mother and child*. London: UCL. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/med/birthpapyrus.html>

[Grier, B. 2017. \*Ancient Egyptian Treatment Practices in Women's Health\*. University of Toronto Undergraduate Journal of Near and Middle Eastern Studies 9: 49-53.](#)

### **Optional:**

[Haimov-Kochman, et al. 2005. Reproduction concepts and practices in ancient Egypt mirrored by modern medicine. \*European Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Reproductive Biology\* 123: 3–8.](#)

[Abdellaah et al. 2019. Veterinary surgery and gynecology in ancient Egypt. \*Assiut Veterinary Medical Journal\* 65\(162\): 1-6](#)

Translation of the Kahun Gynecological Papyrus with notes on past translations. *Science in Ancient Egypt*. Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Saxon Academy of Sciences, Leipzig. <http://sae.saw-leipzig.de/detail/dokument/gynaekologischer-papyrus-kahun/>

### **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:**

<http://sae.saw-leipzig.de/en/detail/dokument/papyrus-chester-beatty-x/>

<http://sae.saw-leipzig.de/en/detail/dokument/papyrus-chester-beatty-xiii/>



## 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:**

[Allen, J.P. 2005. \*The Art of Medicine in Ancient Egypt\*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.](#) (reader-friendly translation with interesting footnotes on the prescriptions)

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:**

[Meltzer, E. and Sanchez, G. 2012. \*Edwin Smith Speaks, and His Papyrus Lives \(Part 1 - Meltzer's presentation notes\)\*. Annual Meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt. Providence, RI.](#)

[Meltzer, E. and Sanchez, G. 2012. \*Edwin Smith Speaks, and His Papyrus Lives \(Part 2 - Sanchez's ppt Slides\)\*. Annual Meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt. Providence, RI. - Very little text](#)

[Meltzer, E. 2014. "Philological Introduction". In, Sanchez, G. and Meltzer, E. \*The Edwin Smith Papyrus: Updated Translation of the Trauma Treatise and Modern Medical Commentaries\*. Atlanta: Lockwood Press, pp. 9-18.](#)



## Resources discussed in meeting: Ancient Egyptian Language

### Grundriss

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

2 -

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2dpx83aLqN3enhBWW9SUDBRSGM/view?usp=sharing>

4 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2dpx83aLqN3UW5TOWhfRE03ZjQ/view?usp=sharing>

5 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2dpx83aLqN3bzhwcG9YT0hJVms/view?usp=sharing>

6 -

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wLEnDmtavHg-Dpd2P8Sgky8NgBlvsghb/view?usp=sharing>

7.1 -

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2dpx83aLqN3VjAtQ0dFUXdqMkE/view?usp=sharing>

7.2 -

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2dpx83aLqN3T2VVRzE2VllnNWM/view?usp=sharing>

### Westendorf

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/13r2HngRnZXUNblzl4w6gAVaa4KKEpVik/view?usp=sharing>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GtSaqqn9o83QV0F20NVOgnverwlxnKNb/view?usp=sharing>

### Hannig - dictionary

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Oh1pq5vk4rL6tDSr7p0MsJSRYMUnQg3k/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](#)

- [Meltzer, E.S. and Sanchez, G.M., 2014. \*The Edwin Smith Papyrus: Updated translation of the trauma treatise and modern medical commentaries\*. ISD LLC.](#)

- [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:

[Jeffreys, D. and Tait, J., 2000. Disability, madness, and social exclusion in dynastic Egypt. In: Hubert, J. \(ed.\), \*Madness, Disability, and Social Exclusion: The Archaeology and Anthropology of "Difference"\*. New York: Routledge, pp.87-95.](#)

[Mahran, H. and Kamal, S.M., 2001. Physical disability in Old Kingdom tomb scenes. \*Proceedings of the Royal College of Physicians Edinburgh\*, 31\(3\), pp.262-3.](#)

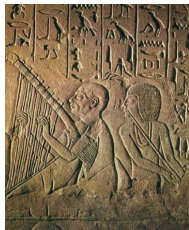
[Draycott, J., 2015. Reconstructing the lived experience of disability in antiquity: a case study from Roman Egypt. \*Greece and Rome\*, 62\(2\), pp.189-205.](#)

### Optional:

[Zakrzewski, S.R., 2014. "Palaeopathology, disability and bodily impairments". In: Metcalfe et al. \(eds\), \*Paleopathology in Ancient Egypt and Nubia: A Century in Review\*. Oxford: Archaeopress, pp. 57-68.](#)

[Molto, J.E. and Kirkpatrick, C.L., 2018. How short is short, and why? A probable case of proportionate dwarfism from Egypt's third intermediate period in the Dakhleh Oasis, Egypt. \*International Journal of Osteoarchaeology\*, 28\(1\), pp.3-17.](#)

[Manniche, L., 1978. Symbolic blindness. \*Chronique d'Egypte\*, 53\(105\), pp.13-21.](#)



### Additional Resources:

#### Old age

[http://dlib.nyu.edu/ancientworld/books/brill\\_awdl000027/1](http://dlib.nyu.edu/ancientworld/books/brill_awdl000027/1)

#### Polio

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wuSxpfmfVJhZwJUNffAHGSsNOGafAM7P/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!

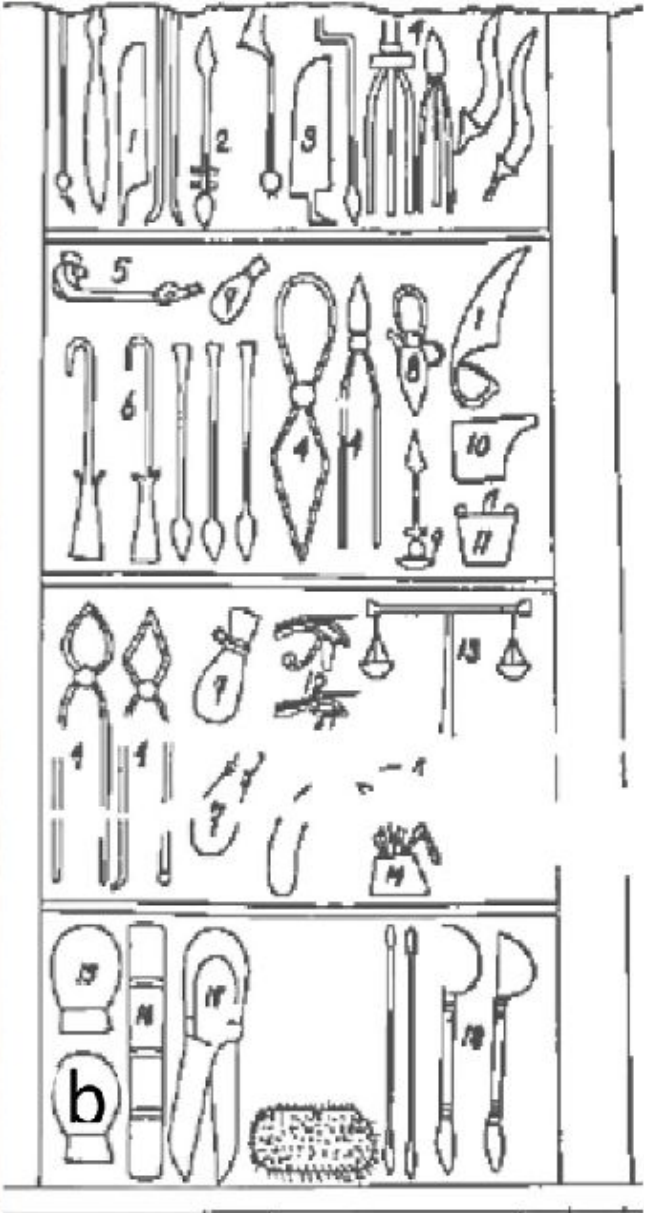
If you would like to try to avoid doing the same prescriptions, please also feel free to list your chosen prescription in the table below.

### *Readings:*

[The Ebers Papyrus](#)

[Allen, J. 2005. The Art of Medicine in Ancient Egypt. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art. pp. 15-69.](#)

Name	Ebers Case Name/Number
example: Casey K	Eb 878: Cure for the Made-up Ebers Rx
Paula Veiga	Cypriote Base-Ring Jars for Opium-Ebers
Edmund Meltzer	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.
Laura Howell	EB 40: Get rid of disease inside of abdomen
Ling-Fei Lin	Eb 167, Another (remedy) for eliminating magic in the stomach of a man or a woman. Allen #40, Honey jar label (p.42)
Bianca Grier	Eb 797: Make a Woman fall forth to the ground. Abydos Birth Brick.



**Meeting 9 (August 17): Medicinal Ingredients with Paula Veiga; Final Questions with Casey**

**Readings:**

[Updated Excerpts from: Veiga, Paula Alexandra Da Silva. 2009. Health and Medicine in Ancient Egypt: Magic and Science. BAR International Series 1967. Oxford, Archaeopress.](#)

**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.

[Filer, Joyce. 1995. Disease. Egyptian Bookshelf. College Station: Texas A&M University Press.](#)