
Behinderungen und Beeinträchtigungen is an English-German book composed of sixteen papers presented on a conference in Salzburg. The conference was organized by the Universities of Salzburg and Birmingham in 2008. Moreover it is the second volume of the series Studies in Early Medicine, edited by S. Crawford and C. Lee. As the editors state, the series wants to give opportunities to scholars that envisage an exploration of new and challenging themes within the field of disease, disability, health, medicine and society. Contrary to the first volume, which scrutinized Medieval Europe, this volume takes a look at Antiquity.

The most positive aspect of this edition is indeed the enormous variety of issues studied. Chronologically as well as geographically the subjects are very diverse. The first article by M. Horstmanshoff gives a brief introduction into disability and medicine within the Graeco-Roman world. Then the book goes to Pharaonic Egypt where evidence was found of prostheses on mummies and a case of cerebral paralysis in a XIIIth dynasty tomb. Both articles show a clear and thorough approach to the matter. For the Greek world mostly literary research, e.g. regarding the work of Lysias and Epictetus, are admitted in the edition. The Roman period is well represented too, including an investigation about the attitude towards disabled persons in the Julian-Claudian dynasty, and more specifically towards the disabled Emperor Claudius. Also the evidence of malformed creatures in the epigrams of Martial and the Book of Prodigies by Julius Obsequens demonstrates that deformities were neither uncommon nor unseen in daily Roman life, as discussed in the articles of L.A. Graumann and B. Gevaert, respectively. Yet one needs to be careful when applying retrospective diagnosis to antiquity, as applied in the article of Graumann.

Another section of the book zooms in on the relationship between religion and disability. This section does not explore pagan religion, as would be expected, but treats early Christianity by means of the bible and Theravada Buddhism. Especially the article about hagiography in Buddhism puts notions about disability in a new and fresh perspective. Also up to date in the year of the Paralympic Games is the article about disability and sports by M. Frass. She studies the participation of disabled persons in sports and employs for this the case of the disabled wrestler Mys.

However, not all articles discuss new subjects. Themes such as physiognomy and the literature of Lysias have been investigated many times before. The article by T. E. Jones at the contrary is challenging as he investigated the involvement of deformed persons in Early Medieval warfare. The author himself personally experienced
the handling of ancient weapons within the framework of a deformity. Nevertheless the author makes a connection with many cultures and therefore the original objective to study the medieval period is a bit lost. Moreover the spirit of the age towards deformities is often neglected.

Furthermore, a large and varied amount of source material is employed. R. Selinger did for example research on Egyptian sepulchral steles for people with reduced growth. Also Greek papyri were scanned for containing disability or disabled persons by P. Artz-Grabner. Yet regarding early Christianity, it would have been interesting if T. Hentrich had used Christian sources outside the biblical canon. That domain stays mostly unexplored until today.

In his introduction the editor stresses the search for definitions of disability. All authors give in their own way an explication of this phenomenon. Also disabilities that are not seen as such in the modern world are discussed. E. Humer for example explores the fact of being left-handed in antiquity. Was it a bad thing, did they try to change it and was it seen as a disability?

The edition thus offers a multifaceted and cross-cultural view on disability in the ancient world. It is certainly worth reading for those who look for a broad and recent introduction in the world of disability in ancient times. Yet the nature of the book, i.e., sixteen articles, does not permit an in-depth investigation of all the issues studied. Some articles reveal a detailed study, like the articles on cerebral paralysis and the epigrams of Martial, others stay superficial. J. Wintjes for example makes a valuable attempt to link the occurrence of epilepsy with orators. Yet the author should have brought forward more examples to make a definite conclusion.

Recently disability studies within an historical framework, have become a favoured topic. Several scholars have studied all historical periods already for a long time, except for Antiquity. The investigation with regard to ancient times is still in its infancy. Studies as these can thus offer a surplus value.

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Ainsi que le révèle Dave Lüthi dans l’introduction de son ouvrage en faisant référence à l’œuvre de Foucault, l’histoire de l’architecture hospitalière «demeure largement inexplorée, bloquée peut-être par des ouvrages tellement fondamentaux qu’ils paraissent indépassables» (p. 2). Ce livre, issu d’une thèse de doctorat soutenue en 2008 à l’Université de Lausanne, est cependant la preuve que tout n’a pas été écrit sur la question et que l’histoire de l’architecture, a beaucoup à apporter à une bonne compréhension des systèmes hospitaliers contemporains. L’approche proposée par Lüthi est multidisciplinaire – entre histoire sociale de la médecine et histoire des monuments – et encyclopédique, son intérêt portant sur l’ensemble des institutions médicales (hôpitaux, cliniques privées, sanatoriums, bains) du milieu du XVIIIe siècle au milieu du XXe siècle. L’ouvrage est divisé en trois parties. La première partie est consacrée à l’émergence et la diffusion des modèles architecturaux de la médecine vaudoise. L’analyse approfondie de la littérature architecturale