

The Edwin Smith Papyrus

Updated Translation of the Trauma Treatise and Modern Medical Commentaries

by Gonzalo M. Sanchez and Edmund S. Meltzer

DESCRIPTION:

This volume contains the original hieratic text, complete transcription into hieroglyphs, transliteration, English translation, philological apparatus and copiously illustrated medical commentaries for the 48 clinical cases of the Edwin Smith Papyrus, as well as extensive bibliographical resources, and a lucid introduction exploring the importance of the document, the history of previous scholarship, and distinctive aspects of the current edition. It offers an authoritative treatment of the Egyptian text, which clarifies the meaning of many passages from the papyrus and points the way to their correct medical interpretation. The Edwin Smith Papyrus is the first comprehensive trauma treatise in the history of medicine. Not only is the ESP the source of numerous anatomical and functional concepts of the nervous system, it is the basis for the development of modern objective clinical thinking, establishing the foundations of modern medicine more than a thousand years before Hippocrates. The volume features an impressive array of medical material that reveals the precise conditions described by the ancient physician and explores the Egyptian contribution to modern diagnostics, clinical practice, and methodology. This publication sets the standard in the presentation of ancient medical documents. It also includes the previously unpublished translation of the papyrus by Edwin Smith himself.

Reviews:

"An extraordinary contribution to our medical and surgical history! There is no question that the collaboration of an Egyptologist and a neurosurgeon has clearly made this translation a better result and a clear improvement on Breasted's original brilliant accomplishment, bringing this remarkable historical document back to new life. The addition of the illustrations will help the nonmedical reader understand what the various injuries represent—as always a 'picture is worth a thousand words.' A landmark work!"

— James T. Goodrich, M.D., Ph.D., D.Sci., (Hon) Director, Division of Pediatric Neurosurgery, Children's Hospital at Montefiore. Professor of Clinical Neurosurgery, Pediatrics, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Albert Einstein College of Medicine

"Sanchez and Meltzer have performed a minor miracle, producing a new edition of Papyrus Edwin Smith that surpasses all previous efforts at translating and understanding this difficult and fascinating text. Meltzer has taken full advantage of this opportunity to test the Standard Theory of Egyptian grammar against a text that is perfect for the task. His translation remains lucid for a beginner while the grammatical notes are thought-provoking for professionals. This book is truly an important accomplishment in the history of translation and our understanding of medical history."

— Edward Bleiberg, Ph.D., Curator of Egyptian Art, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY

"This eloquent volume brings a cascade of new insights and breathes fresh vitality into the ancient Edwin Smith Papyrus. The eminent scholars, Gonzalo M. Sanchez, a distinguished neurosurgeon and strong contributor to the field of Egyptology, and Edmund S. Meltzer, a noted philologist, have teamed up to bring modern neuroscience and sophisticated advances in the interpretation of ancient Egyptian texts to bear on new case translations and commentaries. Remarkably, they have also brought to light the notes of Edwin Smith himself, which are published here for the first time. A visual index in color at the start of the volume makes the basic nature of the injuries clear to all, specialist and nonspecialist alike. Black and white photographs demonstrate the particular injuries in the cases. The authors convincingly demonstrate that the approach to treatment of trauma in ancient Egypt was very much in keeping with modern concepts of medical-surgical care. Not only will this sumptuous Lockwood Press volume fascinate clinical neuroscientists, Egyptologists, and historians

ISBN:

9781937040017 (hb)
9781937040260 (pdf)

PRICE:

\$250.00 (hb)
\$100.00 (pdf)

PUBLICATION DATE:

30 October 2012 (hb)
23 June 2014 (pdf)

BINDING:

Hardback & PDF eBook

PAGES:

400

ILLUSTRATIONS:

42 figs, 18 plates, full color

PUBLISHER:

Lockwood Press

IMPRINT:

Lockwood Press

READER INTERESTS:

Ancient Egypt
Medicine

of science, it will bring new audiences to this remarkable document."

— John Booss, MD, Professor Emeritus, Departments of Neurology and Laboratory Medicine, Yale University School of Medicine; Former National Director of Neurology, Department of Veterans Affairs

"This new edition of the Edwin Smith Papyrus should stand for a long time as the definitive study of a very important text, and—thanks to the very successful and happy collaboration of Edmund Meltzer and Gonzalo Sanchez—as a model for future studies of ancient Egypt's technical literature. This is a complete publication, which provides students and scholars with a facsimile of the original hieratic text, an accurate transcription of the hieratic, a modern translation and exhaustive philological commentary, and—particularly important for non-Egyptologists—an expert medical commentary by an experienced neurosurgeon. This is a milestone not only for Egyptology, but for the history of science and of medicine."

- Stephen Vinson, Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, Indiana University

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Edmund S. Meltzer (Ph.D. 1980, University of Toronto) was Associate Chair in the Department of Religion at The Claremont Graduate School and taught Egyptology at the Institute for the History of Ancient Civilizations in China before settling in Stevens Point, Wisconsin as an independent scholar. He has contributed to numerous Egyptological publications as well as J. H. Ellens, ed., *The Destructive Power of Religion* (Praeger 2004) and several other recent works in religious studies.