

Female Bodies and Female Practitioners

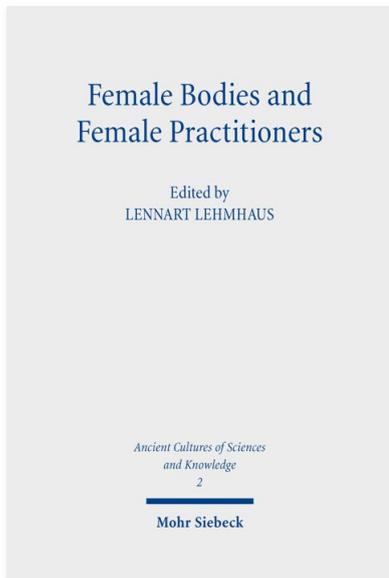
Gynaecology, Women's Bodies, and Expertise in the Ancient to Medieval Mediterranean and Middle East Edited by Lennart Lehmhaus

[Female Bodies and Female Practitioners]

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The contributions collected here discuss the emergence, transfer and transformations of theoretical and practical gynaecologic knowledge in ancient medical and other traditions. The authors investigate the cultural practices and socio-religious norms that enabled and constrained the production and application of gynaecologic knowledge and know-how - for example, concepts of the female body, ritual im/purity, or myth. Some studies focus more on the role and function of female patients and medical specialists - female doctors, healers, midwives or wet-nurses - as objects and subjects within ancient medical discourses. The interdisciplinary nature of the studies provides ample opportunity for a comparative exploration of female bodies and medical expertise on them across the geographically diverse but culturally often closely entangled Ancient Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Graeco-Roman, Persian, Byzantine, early Christian, Jewish-Talmudic, and Syriac cultures. Similarities and differences can be discerned in the various realms - ranging from the adoption of medical terminology or development of loanwords/calques, and the transfer and appropriation of certain gynaecologic theories, metaphors and concepts to more structural questions about the discursive representation of such knowledge and its (con)textual incorporation. The volume aims to help stimulate a fruitful interdisciplinary and trans-generational exchange about the topic, drawing on a wide range of methodological and theoretical tools, including philology, linguistics, narratology/close reading, literary and discursive analysis, material culture, socio-historical perspectives, gender studies, or cultural and religious history.

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