

361.3 Magica

Anne Grons, The Question of the Effectiveness of Coptic Pharmacological Prescriptions.

Trends in Classics 13 (2021) pp. 122-153.

Coptic pharmacological texts offer a multitude of medical prescriptions concerning various afflictions, such as eye or skin irritations, affections of the viscera, or even psychological complaints. The content of these texts is medical, and in most cases bereft of any magical or religious ideas. They usually compile prescriptions according to symptoms and / or afflictions, without any further organising principle. Only a handful of texts are grouped according to the illness or to the medicinal plants used. Almost every prescription follows a pattern, with four formal elements: 1) the medical indication (or purpose), 2) the (basic) ingredients, 3) the procedure and application, and 4) the effects and / or the effectiveness of a remedy, or further information. Gives an overview of the entire corpus of Coptic medical prescriptions, explores the four main elements, and especially the discussions of efficacy. Examines the material in light of placebo research, to see whether something like a placebo effect may have influenced how the pharmacological texts were formulated.

2021-0645