

from Norbert Elias's concept of the "civilizing process", Spode argues that the perception of drunkenness as a social problem came with the growing interdependences in modern western society and the demand for controlled, rational behaviour, especially after the industrial revolution. Accordingly, his book focuses on the two German temperance movements of the nineteenth century. The first one, dominated by the clergy and supported by King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia, succeeded in raising hundreds of thousands of people against the "plague of spirits", but quickly collapsed after the revolution of 1848. The second movement, gaining force in the 1880s as part of social reform, was led by civil servants and academics. It had success among the working class, which formed its own temperance organizations, but radicalization towards complete abstinence soon alienated this second movement from the more permissive majority in the German population.

National traditions of esteem for drinking as a symbol of physical strength and means of sociability may have played a role here, as Spode suggests. On the other hand he rightly highlights the disastrous links that were forged around 1900 between medical research into alcoholism and theories of degeneration and racial hygiene. As for the present, Spode observes that the paradigm of addiction, formulated in the early nineteenth century by Carl von Brühl-Cramer and others, has pervaded modern interpretations of society. The notion of addictive behaviour or loss of control is now being applied not only to the consumption of drugs, but to food, work, sex, and leisure activities. The ultimate picture of a "modern society of addictions" is being created.

This well-written book will appeal to a broad readership. For the medical historian, the analysis of German developments makes it a useful addition to the French and Anglo-American perspectives provided in Jean-Charles Sournia's *A history of alcoholism* (1990).

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**Véronique Dasen,** *Dwarfs in ancient Egypt and Greece*, Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993, pp. xxix, 354, illus., £60.00 (0-19-814699-X).

Dwarfs have long been, and remain, items of curiosity and entertainment, and deemed to have a childish intellect. In this study Véronique Dasen has attempted to penetrate such prejudices by investigating attitudes to dwarfism in ancient Egypt and Greece. Dasen's conclusions confirm the ambivalence of ancient societies towards physical disability, as reflected in mythology and practised in everyday life. While not fearing them as monstrosities and reviling them as scapegoats, Egyptians privileged dwarf deities as protective and healing spirits. While Egyptian and Athenian artists represented dwarfs as occupying positions of authority, they also marginalized dwarfs and depicted them as socially inferior.

Dasen's focus on Egypt and Greece was determined by the lack of material from Mesopotamian societies, the strong background of cultural transmissions from Egypt to Greece, and the attraction of tracing attitudes across these societies. The monograph's structure reflects this parallel approach. A brief introduction setting out the physical variations and palaeopathology of dwarfism is followed by two larger sections devoted to Egypt and Greece that investigate terminology, iconographic convention, dwarfs in religio-mythological and historical contexts, and disability in general. A final section catalogues the extensive pottery and skeletal material. Underlying this structure is the broader question of how societies that valued the ideal body represented the physically deformed, analysing depictions and caricatures of dwarfs by their physical size, social status, and relationship to abled and disabled humans and animals.

Dasen's broad aims are central to any discussion of physical disability, but her execution is not wholly successful. Her treatment of the extensive iconographic

evidence is factual and descriptive and thorough, but her conclusions are sometimes circumspect. Compelling questions that are raised in conclusions are not pursued. How did Egyptians explain physical deformity, and why did they have deformed gods? Her comparison of attitudes towards dwarfism with attitudes to other forms of physical disability loses potency by the brevity of the discussion.

The paucity of literary evidence that has compelled Dasen to concentrate on iconographic material is one reason for this. But the unstated and unrepresented are as noteworthy as the depicted. That Egyptians only represented members of the working class and not the upper class with physical disabilities is arresting. The Athenian artists who replaced ethnic characteristics of pygmies with physical abnormalities as symbols of otherness were also making a comment. So too the stereotyping of dwarfs as childish, as actors, as caricatures, and as marginalized identities. In other words, those attitudes that were unrepresented, misrepresented and altered in iconography also need interpretation.

These observations aside, Dasen has tackled a large subject, and has done an admirable job at ordering an immense amount of evidence. With the currently expanding interest in medicine, health, body and disability in the ancient world (at least two books on disability and two studies of dwarfism in the Roman world are in the pipelines), Dasen's book is a timely and valuable contribution.

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**M Stol,** *Epilepsy in Babylonia*, Cuneiform Monographs 2, Groningen, Styx Publications, 1993, pp. viii, 157, Hfl. 65.00 (90-72371-63-1).

The history of epilepsy in antiquity has been pursued in a number of valuable studies, most notably Temkin's classic *The falling sickness* (second edition, 1971); but while epilepsy in Babylonia has not been overlooked in this

research, the Akkadian materials have hitherto been examined in only piecemeal fashion. Stol's work marks the first comprehensive effort to collect and study this especially rich corpus. Much of his discussion rests upon the *Diagnostic handbook*, a collection of traditions edited by Esagil-kin-apli in the eleventh century BC, and an older text (of which only fragments survive) to which the *Diagnostic handbook* may be a reaction. But other Akkadian and Sumerian texts are fully exploited, and the author also draws parallels and contrasts founded on the Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic sources pertaining to epilepsy. Some of the tablets are previously unpublished, and the relevant chapters in the diagnostic texts are translated and analysed in detail.

Stol argues that the Akkadian word *bennu* was a specific term for epilepsy, and orients it within a context of Babylonian terminology for symptoms, heavenly afflictions, and gods and demons associated with *bennu*. Epilepsy was closely linked to melancholy, madness, and possession, and its supernatural aspects emerge in the elaborate demonology revolving around *bennu* and in crucial influences attributed to the moon. Not surprisingly, prophylactic and therapeutic measures were heavily magical. Most prominent were leather bags containing a wide range of *materia medica (et magica)*, and other amulets, charms, magic stones, and fumigants were also used. Particular days were identified as times when *bennu* was most easily contracted or cured, and in the lore on such lucky and unlucky days Stol sees the origins of iatromathematics. The extant evidence does not allow for a social history of epilepsy in Babylonia, but diagnostic and legal texts provide vignettes on epilepsy in children, legal issues in marriage and slavery, tests for epilepsy in other cultures, and the public attitude toward epileptics.

This study will undoubtedly serve as a valuable point of departure for further research on epilepsy in the ancient Near East; and in view of its heavily comparative and cross-cultural perspective, it must be stressed that