

Amber Jacob

Magical instances in Demotic medical texts

Although the interconnectedness of medicine and magic in ancient Egypt has been increasingly acknowledged in scholarship, the question of their connection in Demotic textual traditions has remained ambiguous. While Demotic magical compendia have been shown to contain incantations for medical concerns, the Demotic medical compendia that have been fully or partially published to date have revealed no instances of magical practice. This has led to the question of whether Demotic medical texts came to exclude magical formulae entirely or whether the seeming omission is simply an accident of preservation. However, recent work on the unpublished corpus of Demotic medical receptaria from Tebtunis has unambiguously revealed that medical and magical content continued to be closely intertwined in Egyptian medical compositions of the Graeco-Roman Period. This paper will present the evidence for magical instances in the Demotic medical papyri from Tebtunis, including a section on incantations for the belly (P.Carlsberg 170 + P.Berkeley 57) and a section on the health of mother and child (P.Carlsberg 172).