



Patients and Healers in the High Roman Empire

Ido Israelowich

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Patients and Healers in the High Roman Empire offers a fascinating holistic look at the practice of ancient Roman medicine. Ido Israelowich presents three richly detailed case studies—one focusing on the home and reproduction; another on the army; the last on medical tourism—from the point of view of those on both sides of the patient-healer divide. He explains in depth how people in the classical world became aware of their ailments, what they believed caused particular illnesses, and why they turned to certain healers—root cutters, gymnastic trainers, dream interpreters, pharmacologists, and priests—or sought medical care in specific places such as temples, bath houses, and city centers.

The book brings to life the complex behavior and social status of all the actors involved in the medical marketplace. It also sheds new light on classical theories about sickness, the measures Romans undertook to tackle disease and improve public health, and personal expectations for and evaluations of various treatments.

Ultimately, Israelowich concludes that this clamoring multitude of coexisting forms of health care actually shared a common language. Drawing on a diverse range of sources—including patient testimonies; the writings of physicians, historians, and poets; and official publications of the Roman state—*Patients and Healers in the High Roman Empire* is a groundbreaking history of the culture of classical medicine.

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