Josef N. Neumann: Behinderte Menschen in Antike und Christentum. Zur Geschichte und Ethik der Inklusion. Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann Verlag 2017 (Standorte in Antike und Christentum 8). XI, 258 p., 16 ill. € 49.00. ISBN: 987-3-7772-1713-0.[1]

This is a book of wide ranging ambition, both in terms of the time span studied and in terms of the political aspirations presented. Beyond what the title suggests, the book provides an overview of the topic of disability from the Mesopotamian Near East – even briefly touching upon prehistory – up to the present day. Besides being an accomplished scholar of Antiquity[2] the author also is a campaigner for inclusion of and rights of the disabled.[3] To him, disability is an integral part of the multiplicity of human existence. His discussion partners were, among others, disabled people whom he met in seminars and in various communities (X–XI).

There can be no doubt about the correctness of the basic assumption of this monograph that disability (*Behinderung*) is a social construct (11).[4] Diversity is, in fact, the norm – inclusion should therefore replace any forms of exclusion and do justice to the fundamental unity of human society (17–19). The consequences for an historian studying disabilities are clear (19–24): s/he should study disability as a social category and not as an ontological entity; the approach should be cultural and focused on the study of discourses of the 'abled' majority with the power to 'disable others'. Scapegoat

1 I owe many thanks to Hagith Sivan (Kansas University) for language review and for exchanging many thoughts on a topic of common interest.

2 For Antiquity, Josef N. Neumann is best known for two thorough studies: Die Mißgestalt des Menschen – ihre Deutung im Weltbild von Antike und Frühmittelalter. In: Sudhoffs Archiv 76, 1992, 214–331; s.v. Missbildung. In: Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum 24, 2012, 926–963.

3 For similar activist concerns with scholars of the history of disabilities, see e.g. C. F. Goodey: A History of Intelligence and "Intellectual Disability". The Shaping of Psychology in Early Modern Europe. Farnham 2011.

4 Neumann does not go into the 'solution' that draws a distinction between disability – essentially a social and cultural construct – and impairment, which points to physiological and biological characteristics. While one can be born impaired, it is the society in which he/she lives that makes him disabled. Though also this distinction has been criticised, it is the red thread in fundamental studies as I. Metzler: Disability in Medieval Europe. Thinking about Physical Impairment during the High Middle Ages, c. 1100–1400. London/New York 2006.

mechanisms are part and parcel of any study of disability as should be the consciousness of one's own standpoints and prejudices, since one is inevitably a participant in the society in which s/he lives.

Readers will of course recognise strong influence of the thinking of Michel Foucault, as well as of advocates of the deconstruction of the term disability who have argued that any study of the terminology of 'dis/ability history' is really a broad 'new history' of the concepts of health and normative bodies with the potential to fundamentally change our general approach to the human past.[5]

While the author is of course perfectly entitled to opt for such approach, he fails to notice the obvious consequence that such a dis/ability history inevitably evolves into a very broad history of exclusion, dealing with most diverse issues as e.g. racism, homosexuality, and the participation of women in society. Such a broad range of diversity seems hardly manageable in one volume, and it is not quite what a reader expects from a title containing the term *Behinderte Menschen*.[6] The lack of focus is therefore one of the flaws of this work drawing on examples that range from dwarfism, mental or intellectual disabilities, monsters and teratology, hermaphroditism, mobility impairment, blindness, deafness and muteness to gender and racist biases. Sexual discrimination on the other hand, is hardly mentioned while more 'traditional' themes, such as speech impairment, are strikingly left out.[7]

5 A. Waldschmidt/E. Bösl: Nacheinander/Miteinander: Disability Studies und Dis/ability History. In: C. Nolte/B. Frohne/U. Halle/S. Kerth (eds.): Dis/ability History der Vormoderne. Ein Handbuch. Premodern Dis/ability History. A Companion. Affalterbach 2017, 40–49 for a recent plea in the same direction.

6 C. Laes: Disabilities and the Disabled in the Roman World. A Social and Cultural History. Cambridge 2018, 2–5 on this paradox and the practical solution of an anthropological classification: physical handicaps, sensory impairments, speech disorders, learning disorders and intellectual handicaps, mental disorders, and multiple impairments.

7 J. Wollock: The Noblest Animate Motion. Speech, Physiology and Medicine in pre-Cartesian Linguistic Thought. Amsterdam/Philadelphia 1997 (Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science 3,83) is a history of the *longue durée* of the physiology of speech, with important implications for disability history. See also C. Laes: Silent History? Speech Impairment in Roman Antiquity. In: C. Laes/C. Goodey/M. L. Rose (eds.): Disabilities in Roman Antiquity. Disparate Bodies *A Capite ad Calcem*. Leiden/Boston 2013 (Mnemosyne Supplements 356), 145–180.

Chapter I deals with the Ancient Near East, Egypt and Israel (25–40). We encounter the well-known case stories of people in the prehistory who carried on with their lives despite severe impairments (25–27). As comparative anthropology has shown, this is not necessarily a proof of 'compassion' or 'empathy' in such communities. Bio-archaeologists now turn to a multi-layered model: after studying the pathology and the possible clinical and functional impact, they develop a basic model of the care likely to have been received, and what such care suggests about contemporary social practice and relations.[8] Greater stress is put on Ancient Egypt, specifically on the (im)possibility of integrating people into the labour process, Egyptian medical science and books, dwarfs and pygmees. The brief section on ancient Israel is mainly on disability as a metaphor of the anger of God and the problem of deformity in the case of sacrifice. A discussion of the problem of 'disabled rulers', an issue well attested for both Egypt and the Ancient Near East, is absent. Though physical and mental integrity was a requirement *par excellence* for kings, with the dynastic succession constituting an extra impediment, practical ad-hoc solutions seem to have been preferred more than once.[9]

Chapter II deals with Graeco-Roman mythology and everyday life (41–59). The disabled god Hephaestus and the Homeric anti-hero Thersites are treated in a nuanced way, though for the latter ancient physiognomics are strangely overlooked. Then follows a section on malformation as a token of guilt, often in religious contexts of sacrifice and oracles. Given the ample scholarly literature on child exposure and disabilities in daily life, the sections on these items are regrettably short and somewhat superficial (53–57). The space devoted to the scapegoat mechanism draws attention to the little known phenomenon of an Athenian ceremony on the sixth and seventh day

8 K. Dettwyler: Can Paleopathology Provide Evidence for 'Compassion'? In: American Journal of Physical Anthropology 84, 1991, 375–384; L. Tilley: Theory and Practice in the Bioarchaeology of Care. Heidelberg 2015.

9 O. Coloru: Ancient Persia and Silent Disability. In: C. Laes (ed.): Disability in Antiquity. London/New York 2017, 61–74, spec. 67–71 on disability at court. For the Neo-Assyrian kingsdoms, there is the famous case of King Esarhaddon (680–668), who was not a healthy man. See recently B. J. Parker: The Neo-Assyrian Kings in Nineveh. In: L. P. Petit/D. Morandi Bonacossi (eds.): Nineveh the Great City. Symbol of Beauty and Power. Leiden 2017 (Papers on Archaeology of the Leiden Museum of Antiquities 13), 142–146. For Greek Antiquity, see D. Ogden: The Crooked Kings of Ancient Greece. London 1997.

of the month Thargelion (April/May) in honour of Apollo involving the removal of two men out of the city as an apotropaic gesture to turn away evil and disaster from the town. These men were called φαρμακοί ("Sacrificed/Scapegoats"). One wore a necklace of black figs, the other one made out of white figs – hence their nickname σύβακχοι ("Bacchants of the Figs").[10] One would definitely like to know more about a remark by the Byzantine scholar Johannes Tzetzes (ca. 1110–1185), who claimed that these scapegoats were disabled people who were killed after their expulsion from the town.[11]

Neumann is no doubt at his best when dealing with history of ideas and medical thought. Chapter III on ancient philosophy and medicine is among the strongest parts of the book (61–84). In the presocratic theory of procreation malformation of limbs and bodily parts was often explained as a numeric deviation of supranumerous bodily parts and/or atoms. Hippocratic medicine and its attention to procreation, the holy disease, and teleological thinking attributing minor value to the female sex gets due attention. Neumann offers particularly good observation on the Aristotelean concept of 'monsters' (τέρατα), which seems to come close to disabilities. In Aristotle's teleological mindset, empiric observations on less frequent occurrences and genetic deviations causing offspring not to resemble their parents (in most cases their father) were norms to decide what was considered malformation. After these thorough and well-thought observations, the reader is struck by the very minimalistic way in which Galen is treated (80–81). Not only is the *Corpus Galenicum* a goldmine for all sorts of disabilities – a mere mention of the problem of incurability and its implications for ancient concepts of disability would already have been welcomed.[12] The same goes for

10 The meaning is somewhat uncertain though. Liddell/Scott/Jones only mentions it in the Supplement, and rather describes it as "a name for the φαρμακοί in Athens".

11 Neumann cites the still valuable study by V. Gebhard: Die Pharmakoi in Ionien und die Sybakchoi in Athen. Amberg 1926, but the intriguing subject has been dealt with in later studies too. See e.g. D. T. Steiner: Diverting Demons: Ritual, Poetic Mockery and the Odysseus-Iros Encounter. In: ClAnt 28, 2009, 71–100; D. S. Rosenbloom: From "poneros" to "pharmakos": Theater, Social Drama, and Revolution in Athens, 428–404 BCE. In: ClAnt 21, 2002, 283–346. These studies mention fertility rites, rather than disabled scapegoats.

12 P. J. van der Eijk: Cure and the (In)curability of Mental Disorders in Ancient Medical and Philosophical Thought. In: W. V. Harris (ed.): Mental Disorders in the Classical

the complete silence on popular medicine, a field of interaction between ancient medicine and society *par excellence*.[13]

Quite surprisingly, both Hellenistic art and literary writers – in practice only Pliny the Elder – are dealt with in a chapter entitled *Infragestellung in Kunst und Literatur der Spätantike* (sic!) (85–105). The discussion on the function of ancient artefacts representing malformations is generally good. Neumann appropriately discusses the apotropaic function of such images, the way they forced people to think about their own condition, and their stressing of social difference and of superiority versus inferiority. The Hunchback from Villa Albani (Rome) is rightly interpreted as a confirmation that a free mind and spirit can live in a body which has its limitations. The many observations on monsters and monstrous races by Pliny the Elder in his Natural History time and again point to the human status of such exotic creatures, while they at the same time reinforce one's own 'normality', as set out against the deviances of nature. Despite the good observations in this chapter, one is again struck by the absence of references to secondary literature that is generally considered as essential. The author for instance does not even bother to mention the problem of retrospective diagnosis which has played an important role in the interpretation of ancient artefacts of 'monsters'.[14]

Given the title of the book one would expect considerable emphasis on the role of Christianity for the subject of disabilities. Chapter V only partly fulfils the promise (107–132). One finds interesting observations on Jesus Christ and his breaching of the scapegoat mechanism and concepts of guilt, about

World. Leiden/Boston 2013 (Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 38), 307–338.

13 W. V. Harris: Popular Medicine in the Classical World. In: W. V. Harris (ed.): Popular Medicine in Graeco-Roman Antiquity: Explorations. Leiden/Boston 2016 (Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 42), 1–64.

14 M. D. Grmek/D. Gourevitch: Les maladies dans l'art antique. Paris 1998; B. Cuny-Le Callet: Rome et ses monstres. Vol. 1: Naissance d'un concept philosophique et rhétorique. Grenoble 2005; L. Trentin: What's in a Hump? Re-examining the Hunchback in the Villa Albani-Torlonia. In: PCPhS 55, 2009, 130–156; A. Mitchell: Disparate Bodies in Ancient Artefacts: The Function of Caricature and Pathological Grotesque among Roman Terracotta Figurines. In: C. Laes/C. Goodey/M. L. Rose (eds.): Disabilities in Roman Antiquity. Disparate Bodies *A Capite ad Calcem*. Leiden/Boston 2013 (Mnemosyne Supplements 356), 275–297. I should emphasise that this is only a very succinct list – many more references could be added.

eschatology and the resurrection of perfect bodies[15], about early Christian social welfare work, and the (im)possibility of holding ecclesiastical offices for the impaired. The section on Saint Augustine struggles with the sheer diversity of human bodies and the fundamental unity of the Creation as desired by God, providing interesting remarks on Ethiopians as offspring of Ham, the cursed son of Noah (131. Cf. also 114 about the adulterous woman who was about to be stoned – both subjects fit in the broad definition of disabilty as exclusion from society). As I will further point out in my conclusion, too many crucial points regarding Christianity remain unmentioned. There is little on exorcism and possession, nothing on the categories of patients who received healing from Christ, and no discussion on the problem of intellectual disability that strongly vexed Saint Augustine.[16]

Chapter VI on the Middle Ages is disappointing (133–149). Despite useful observations on early Christian iconography, in which the disabled only appear with specific typology and symbolised by attributes[17], on monsters and fabulous creatures, on monstrosity as a metaphor, on leprosy, and on Paracelsus (1493–1541) and his synthesis of popular-magic thinking and natural sciences, there is a regrettable lack of any senseful discussion of miracle stories in canonisation processes and of the hagiographical genre. Such texts are goldmines for the history of disabilities in the Middle Ages, and have been used many times to sketch *inter alia* popular mentality towards the impaired and their conditions of everyday life.[18]

15 C. Moss: Heavenly Healing: Eschatological Cleansing and the Resurrection of the Dead in the Early Church. In: Journal of the American Academy of Religion 79, 2011, 991–1017.

16 E. Kellenberger: Augustin und die Menschen mit einer geistigen Behinderung. Der Theologe als Beobachter und Herausgeforderter. In: ThZ 67, 2011, 56–66 is quintessential.

17 M. Studer-Karlen: Illness and Disability in Late Antique Christian Art (Third to Sixth Century). In: C. Laes/K. Mustakallio/V. Vuolanto (eds.): Children and Family in Late Antiquity. Life, Death and Interaction. Leuven 2015 (Interdisciplinary Studies in Ancient Culture and Religion 15), 53–76.

18 J. Kuuliala: Childhood Disability and Social Integration in the Middle Ages. Constructions of Impairments in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Canonization Processes. Turnhout 2016 (Studies in the History of Daily Life 4); S. Katajala-Peltomaa: Gender, Miracles and Daily Life. The Evidence of Fourteenth-Century Canonization Processes. Turnhout 2009 (History of Daily Life 1). These books are of particular importance to the history of medieval disabilities.

Chapter VII on paintings representing a supposedly disabled child Jesus Christ and on the representation of dwarfish people is considerably better (151–175). In general, Neumann is opposed to retrospective diagnosis that claims to discover symptoms of Down Syndrome in representations of the child Jesus in the arms of Mary painted by Andrea Mantegna (1431–1506) at the court of Mantova. It is more appropriate to see such images as *Andachtsbilder* that need to be understood in the cultural context of their own time which was obviously not a medical one. Instead, we need to consider these representations as references to the daily sorrows of the Mother of God and to the nature of Jesus, who next to divine was deeply human too. The same goes for the paintings of people of small stature with Mantegna and Diego Velásquez (1605–1665). While most of these refer to dwarfs who acted as court jesters, there is no reason to diagnose them as mentally impaired fools.

The substantial chapter VIII brings the readers to the Early Modern Era up to the Age of Enlightment (177–202). In this period, teratology developed into an empirical science. Medical doctors turned away from the medieval tradition of fabulous creatures and focused on observation of 'abnormalities' which were interpreted in an causal-anatomic way. Mostly, anomalies were not regarded anymore in a moral way, though a writer as Ambroise Paré (1510–1590) still adopted an ambivalent position, paying attention to both moralistic-theological interpretation and the approach of empirical sciences. A clear instance of this ambivalence is the so-called theory of the *imprégnation par le regard*, which held a woman's 'wrong' gaze of crippled or deformed people responsible for the fact that a disabled baby was born (185–186).[19] From the second half of the 18th century onward, the natural sciences, with their focus on laws of nature and *Lebenskraft*, became normative for constituting which form of life should be considered 'normal'. Throughout this chapter, the discovery of the New World and consequent theories on the physiognomics of races is strikingly absent.[20] One also wonders about its

19 Laes (note 6) 30. Such theories were expressed up to the twentieth century. Neumann fails to notice their origin in Antiquity. See B. Maire: L'imprégnation par le regard ou l'influence des "simulacres" sur l'embryon. In: O. Bianchi/O. Thévenaz (eds.): Mirabilia – Conceptions et représentations de l'extraordinaire dans le monde antique. Actes du colloque international, Lausanne, 20–22 mars 2003. Bern 2004 (Echo. Collection de l'Institut d'Archéologie et des Sciences de l'Antiquité de l'Université de Lausanne 4), 279–294.

20 T. Van Houdt: Nieuwe tijden, nieuwe monsters: de genese van de rassenfysiognomiek. In: Geschiedenis der Geneeskunde 15, 2, 2011, 118–127.

abrupt ending. For a history of disabilities of the *longue durée*, a good deal could and should have been said about Darwinian biology and its applications in Nazism that offered a strange and highly detrimental mix of contemporary biological science and 'utopian' conceptions of ideal states in Antiquity, not the least Sparta.[21]

The book ends with a conclusion, which is a thought-provoking synthesis of the author's reflections and visions of disability rights and of inclusion of the disabled. Four contemporary ethical issues are dealt with. The 'technical imperative' has strongly imposed norms that constitute the borderline between 'normal' and 'abnormal': in cases of sexual bipolarity, parents are forced to choose between their baby being a boy or a girl, while the existence of a third gender seems unacceptable (204–206). Perinatal medicine and embryo-screening make an incriminating appeal to the parents' responsibility from the early stage of pregnancy on. This also has increased a new sort of animosity against the disabled and their parents, as 'they cost a lot, and costs could have been prevented if the parents would have decided on abortion' (206–214). Utilitarian ethics as developed by Peter Singer have impacted on the way the human embryo is viewed, which is denied the status of person or a human being (the same goes for the severely intellectual impaired) (214–217). Finally, the number of four to five percent of the population of Germany living with a disability reminds us of a 'spontaneous impulse of solidarity', which makes it obvious that one simply has to live together.[22] It seems useful to quote a few sentences which reflect the author's major viewpoints: *Auf Grund seiner Imperfektheit ist der Mensch zum Tätigsein bestimmt, ohne die Unfertigkeit als Wesenszug der* Conditio humana *handelnd aufheben zu können* (222); *Mit Einschränkungen zu leben ist keine Ausnahmesituation, sondern Normalität* (225); *Die Trennung zwischen Nichtbehinderten und Behinderten bildet aber den Haupthinderungsgrund für ein Verständnis von der Einheit der Menschheit* (226); *Die Trennlinie zwischen Nichtbehinderten und Behinderten muss zuallererst im Denken und in den Gefühlen überwunden werden. Dazu bleibt aber kein anderer Weg als der Kommunikation* (226).

21 T. Van Houdt: The Imperfect Body in Nazi Germany: Ancient Concepts, Modern Technologies. In: C. Laes (ed.): Disability in Antiquity. London/New York 2017, 468–479.

22 Laes (note 6) 1–6 on the elasticity of such numbers and percentages, highly dependent on definitions of disability which are fluid by their very nature.

Though there is much to be appreciated in this volume (the wide range of subjects treated, the flawless and beautiful editing including illustrations, the most useful *Index Locorum* of biblical passages as well as a glossar with Greek and Latin terms, an index of persons and of subjects) I have three major reservations.

First, Neumann's ignorance concerning essential bibliography. I assume that this was not due to the limited number of relevant studies in the author's native tongue. Edgar Kellenberger has published fundamental work on intellectual impairment in the Ancient Near East, the Bible and early Christianity. A project in Bremen has been the leading centre for disabilities in the Middle Ages and the early Modern period. A fundamental lexicon on ancient medicine, with entries on all possible sorts of disabilities and impairments, was published in German. None of these works are mentioned.[23] For decades, French ancient historian Danielle Gourevitch has been a leading scholar in ancient medicine. Although her work in many ways deals with ancient disabilities, she completely goes unnoticed in the present volume.[24] Only two monographs exist on disabilities in Greek Antiquity, yet both seem to be unknown to Neumann.[25] Readers of this review might be suspicious about a reviewer who complains that he is not referred to – I present them the following footnote in order to judge whether a mention would have been worth it.[26] In any case, the running bibliography which is online from 2014

23 E. Kellenberger: Der Schutz der Einfältigen. Menschen mit einer geistigen Behinderung in der Bibel und in weiteren Quellen. Zürich 2011 (see also note 16); C. Nolte/ B. Frohne/U. Halle/S. Kerth (eds.): Dis/ability History der Vormoderne. Ein Handbuch. Premodern Dis/ability History. A Companion. Affalterbach 2017 and the Homo Debilis Website (http://www.homo-debilis.de/); K.-H. Leven (ed.): Antike Medizin. Ein Lexikon. München 2005. Neumann does not know the work of Ingomar Weiler either, see e.g. I. Weiler: Negative Kalokagathie. In: I. Weiler: Die Gegenwart der Antike. Ausgewählte Schriften zu Geschichte, Kultur und Rezeption des Altertums. Darmstadt 2004, 325–348; Id.: Zur Physiognomie und Ikonographie behinderter Menschen in der Antike. In: R. Breitwieser (ed.): Behinderungen und Beeinträchtigungen / Disability and Impairment in Antiquity. Oxford 2012 (British Archaeological Reports. International Series 2359 = Studies in Early Medicine 2), 11–24.

24 Neumann migh have a look at http://www.dgourevitch.fr/.

25 R. Garland: The Eye of the Beholder. Deformity and Disability in the Graeco-Roman World. London 1995 (an updated second edition dates from 2010); M. L. Rose: The Staff of Oedipus. Transforming Disability in Ancient Greece. Ann Arbor 2003.

26 C. Laes: Learning from Silence: Disabled Children in Roman Antiquity. In: Arctos 42, 2008, 85–122; Id.: Disabled Children in Gregory of Tours. In: K. Mustakallio/

could have offered Neumann guidance for the subject of disability in Antiquity.[27]

Second, a true history of the *longue durée* of disabled people and their inclusion in Antiquity and Christianity begs for more fundamental questions to be raised. Only in discussions on office holding, personal rights, and the selling of slaves infirmity was viewed as a legal problem.[28] It became a social issue during the 17th and 18th century, with concerns about society being turned upside down, and the right and just way to deal with charity and welfare. With the progress of medical sciences in the 19th century, disability increasingly became a medical issue. All this lead to the modern system of diagnosing, labelling and remedying individuals, who are existentially approached as 'the disabled'. When the 'caring modern' state took over, the charitable in combination with the existential approach gave rise to the modern western concept of disability. Indeed, the principle of solidarity in modern states requires their citizens to be sound and healthy, in order to be able contribute to the social welfare system. Individuals who are not, are entitled to certain benefits, after careful medical consideration and categorisation. In a way, this grants them a special and protected status, though at the same time the system goes to great lenghts to integrate them into society as much as possible. Exclusion in the form of special status and inclusion thus seem to be two sides of the same medal.

C. Laes (eds.): The Dark Side of Childhood in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Unwanted, Disabled and Lost. Oxford 2011 (Childhood in the Past Monograph Series 2), 39–62; Id.: How Does one Do the History of Disability in Antiquity? One Thousand Years of Case Studies. In: MedSec 23, 2011, 915–946; Id.: Silent Witnesses. Deaf-mutes in Greco-Roman Antiquity. In: CW 104, 2011, 451–473; Id.: Raising a Disabled Child. In: J. Evans Grubbs/T. Parkin/R. Bell (eds.): The Oxford Handbook of Childhood and Education in the Classical World. Oxford 2013, 125–144; Id.: Beperkt? Gehandicapten in het Romeinse Rijk. Leuven 2014; Id.: Writing the Socio-Cultural History of Fatness and Thinness in Graeco-Roman Antiquity. In: MedSec 28, 2016, 583–660; C. Laes/C. Goodey/M. L. Rose (eds.): Disabilities in Roman Antiquity. Disparate Bodies *A Capite ad Calcem*. Leiden/Boston 2013 (Mnemosyne Supplements 356). The works mentioned in notes 6 and 9 possibly came too late to be included in this volume.

27 C. Laes: Disability History and the Ancient World (ca. 3000 BCE – ca. 700 CE). A Bibliography (2018) (http://www.disability-ancientworld.be/index.htm).

28 Garland (note 25); P. Toohey: Disability in the Roman Digest. In: C. Laes (ed.): Disability in Antiquity. London/New York 2017, 298–311.

Such existential approach did not exist in pagan thought, which never discerned a fixed category of 'the disabled'. Disability may have become an existential problem in early Christianity and beyond, when tolerance and equality were directly challenged in encounters with 'different others' as the disabled. In the monotheistic tradition[29], equality positioned disability as an existential problem: if we are all sinners, disability pales into insignificance. However, rules and exceptions which were made for the disabled often point to the opposite in the practice of everyday life. Moreover, the miracles performed by Jesus caused certain categories of disabilities to become canonised. The category of the possessed received proper attention much more than it did before (madmen were commonly held away from pagan sanctuaries, and their defects were rarely object of divine healing). Charity was greatly stressed in Christianity, and gave rise to institutions as hospitals. Finally, Christianity stressed the moral responsibility and personal belief of the healed. In fact, not being healed could be viewed as proof of lack of personal belief.[30] As such, the charitable, the instrumental and the existential approach have their origin in the ancient world and in early Christianity. There still is huge potential for a regionally diversified study of various forms of early Christianity and the way they put into practice these different approaches. While such can obviously not be the aim and purpose of a book like Neumann's, it is regrettable that he does not point to any such fundamental

29 Neumann omits the later Jewish rabbinic traditions. See J. Z. Abrams: Judaism and Disability: Portrayals in Ancient Texts from the Tanach through the Bavli. Washington, DC 1998 or most recently H. Sivan: Jewish Childhood in the Roman World. Cambridge 2018. He completely ignores the Islamic tradition, for which see M. Ghaly: Islam and Disability. Perspectives in Theology and Jurisprudence. London/ New York 2009 (Routledge Islamic Studies Series 11).

30 C. B. Horn: A Nexus of Disability in Ancient Greek Miracle Stories: A Comparison of Accounts of Blindness from the Asklepieion in Epidauros and the Shrine of Thecla in Seleucia. In: C. Laes/C. Goodey/M. L. Rose (eds.): Disabilities in Roman Antiquity. Disparate Bodies *A Capite ad Calcem*. Leiden/Boston 2013 (Mnemosyne Supplements 356), 115–143. See also N. Kelley: The Deformed Child in Ancient Christianity. In: C. B. Horn/R. R. Phenix (eds.): Children in Late Ancient Christianity. Tübingen 2009 (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 58), 199–226 for valuable insights on concepts of guilt.

swifts and changes, which altogether make up the western history of the disabled in the long term.[31]

All this brings me to my third and final objection. Both the focus on diversity as the real norm of any human society and on the idea of radical inclusion, erasing any differences between 'them' and 'us' – i.e. 'normal individuals' and 'the disabled' – are very recent turns, which emerged in the nineties of the former century (24, where Neumann appropriately cites further bibliography on this subject). They undoubtedly belong to contemporary western thinking and prosperous socio-economic conditions that make integration and inclusion possible.[32] In other words, to the very best of my knowledge there seems to be no direct link between the long term history of disabilities in Antiquity and the Christian world on the one hand and the theory and practice of inclusion and diversity on the other hand. While the author is perfectly entitled to write on the recent idea of radical inclusion (he can do so as a campaigner, an essayist, a philosopher or a social thinker and activist inspired by Christianity),[33] it is in no way clear to me how an historic overview supports this aim. In other words, the claim that "the chapters on history deepen the present-day questions regarding disability and inclusion" (backcover) is not entirely accomplished. One would indeed have liked to read a deeper historic analysis, with more stress on crucial turning points, and a more concentrated approach for matters which tend to become all too diverse.

31 Contrary to what the book title suggests, there is little on experiences of the disabled – here too, new research has gone a long way (see particularly the books mentioned in note 18).

32 For one example out of many comparative studies, see M. Miles: Disability in Africa: Religious, Ethical and Healing Responses to and by People with Disabilities, Deafness, or Mental Debility: A Bibliography through Four Millennia, with Introduction and Partial Annotation (https://www.independentliving.org/docs7/mmiles-disability-africa-bibliography-2018.html).

33 The concept of radical inclusion has also met serious practical obstacles, not the least in schools and the educational system of many countries. It would have been good to read something on such problematics too.

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Empfohlene Zitierweise

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