

Start

CASE 1. A FLESH WOUND IN THE HEAD (1,1–12)¹

TITLE

[Practices for a man who suffers from a wound in his head, which has reached to the bone of his skull without gaping.

EXAMINATION AND PROGNOSIS

If you treat a man with a] wound in his head, whose wound's lips [are closed] and not gaping, and [...], [then you say about him: "One who has a wound in] his head: an ailment I will handle."

TREATMENT

You have to bandage him with fresh meat the first day and

treat him afterward with an oil and [honey] dressing every day until he gets well.

EXPLANATIONS

As for "you treat a man," [it is] taking account of someone [... like] taking account of things with a grain measure, treating [being like] one [takes account of] whatever things with a grain measure or takes account of something with the fingers in order to [...] them. As for measuring things with a grain measure [...], suffering is taken account of in the same way.

Measuring a man's suffering in order to [...]. [As for] the heart, there are vessels from it to [every] limb. [As for] that [on] which any lay-priest of Sekhmet and physician puts his hands or his fingers—[on the head, on the back of

the] head, on the hands, on the pulse, on the legs—[he] measures the heart. For it is the case that its vessels are in the back of the head and in the pulse, and it is the case that [it speaks] to every vessel and every limb, revealing the measurement of his [...]—on the vessels of his head, of the back of his head, of his legs. [...] his heart in order to learn the knowledge that comes from it, for [it] reveals its measurement to one who would learn what has happened there.

As for “who suffers from [...] his wound,” it is to say his wound is small, [not wide], without gaping from one side to the other.

As for “which has reached to [the bone of his skull without] gaping,” it is to say there has been gaping by the flesh, while that which [...] on the bone of his skull has no gaping from [one side to the other] and is small, not wide.

CASE 2. A GAPING HEAD WOUND (1,12–18)

TITLE

Practices for a [gaping] wound [in his head], which has penetrated to the bone.

EXAMINATION AND PROGNOSIS

If you treat a man for a [gaping wound in] his [head], which has penetrated to the bone, you have to put your hand on him [and you have to] probe his [wound]. If you find his skull [sound], there being [no] violation in it, then you say about [him]: “One who has a gaping [wound] in his head: an ailment I will handle.”

TREATMENT

[You] have to [bandage him with fresh meat the first day, and you have to put two lengths of cloth on him and treat him afterward with an oil and honey dressing] every day until he gets well.

EXPLANATIONS

As for “a [gaping] wound [in his head, which has penetrated to the bone,” it means [...] his wound.

As for “two lengths of cloth,” [it is] two strips [of cloth, which one puts on the lips of the gaping wound in order to make one side cling to] the other.

As for “without a split or violation [in it,” it means [...].

CASE 3. A HEAD WOUND WITH SKULL DAMAGE (1,18–2,2)²

TITLE

[Practices for] a gaping wound in his head, which has penetrated to the bone and violated [his skull.

EXAMINATION AND PROGNOSIS

If you treat a man for a gaping wound in] his [head], which has penetrated to the bone and violated his skull, you have to probe his wound. [Should you] find [him unable to look at his arms and] his chest, and suffering from stiffness in his neck, then you say about him: “One who [has a gaping wound in his head, which has penetrated to the bone and violated] his skull, who suffers from stiffness in his neck: an ailment I will handle.”

TREATMENT

After [you stitch him, you have to put] fresh [meat] the first day on his wound. You should not bandage him. He is to be put down [on his bed until the time of his injury passes], and you should treat him afterward with an oil and honey dressing every day until he gets well.

EXPLANATIONS

[As for “a gaping wound in his head, which has penetrated to the bone and violated] his skull, it is a small fracture because of his incurring a fracture like the cracking of a jar [...] he has [incurred].

As for “unable to look at his arms and [his] chest,” [it means that it is not easy for him when he looks at] his arms and it is not easy for him when he looks at his chest.

As for “suffers from stiffness

NOTES

1. The raw meat prescribed in the treatment contains enzymes that are useful for cleansing a wound. The discussion of the heart and pulse, which seems out of context here, is perhaps the earliest description of the circulatory system. Although the Egyptians' observations about the circulatory system are not completely accurate, the concepts of the heart as the center of the system and of the vessels transporting material from the heart to the rest of the body are essentially correct. The use of the pulse to monitor heart function and abnormalities reflects current medical practice.
2. This deep wound, penetrating to the bone, required suturing to adequately repair it. To bring the edges of wounds together, physicians used linen sutures with bone or copper needles and strips of linen much like today's butterfly bandages. The precise system of wound description and classification insured proper treatment.

bandage him. He is to be put down on his bed until the time of his injury passes. Sitting is his treatment, with two supports of brick made for him, until you learn that he arrives at a turning point. You have to put oil on his head and soften his neck and shoulders with it. You should do likewise for any man you find with his skull split.

EXPLANATIONS

As for "which has split his skull," it is the pushing away of one plate of his skull from another, while the pieces stay in the flesh of his head and do not fall down.

As for "the swelling on it is high," it means that the bloating that is on that split is great and lifted upward.

As for "you learn that he arrives at a turning point," it is to say you learn that he will die or until he has revived, since it is "an ailment I will fight with."

CASE 5. A HEAD WOUND WITH SKULL FRACTURE (2,11-17)³

TITLE

Practices for a gaping wound in his head that has fractured his skull.

EXAMINATION AND PROGNOSIS

If you treat a man for a gaping wound in his head, which has penetrated to the bone and fractured his skull, you have to probe that wound. Should you find that fracture that is in his skull deep and sunken under your fingers, and should the swelling that is on it be high, while he bleeds from his nostrils and his ears, suffers stiffness in his neck, and is unable to look at his shoulders and his chest, then you say about him: "One who has a gaping wound in his head, which has penetrated to the bone and fractured his skull, and who suffers from stiffness in his neck: an ailment for which nothing is done."

TREATMENT

You should not bandage him. He is to be put down on his bed until the time of his injury passes.

EXPLANATION

As for "which has fractured his skull," it is fracturing his skull, with the bones that happen from that fracture sunken to the inside of his skull. The treatise "The Nature of Wounds" has said about it: it is the fracturing of his skull into many pieces; sunken to the inside of his skull.

CASE 6. A HEAD WOUND WITH SKULL FRACTURE EXPOSING THE BRAIN (2,17-3,1)⁴

TITLE

Practices for a gaping wound in his head, which has penetrated to the bone, fractured his skull, and exposed the brain of his skull.

EXAMINATION AND PROGNOSIS

If you treat a man for a gaping wound in his head, which has penetrated to the bone, fractured his skull, and exposed the brain of his skull, you have to probe that wound. Should you find that fracture that is in his skull like those ripples that happen in copper through smelting, with a thing in it that throbs and flutters under your fingers like the weak spot of the crown of a boy before it becomes whole for him—that throbbing and fluttering happens under your fingers since the brain of his skull has become exposed—while he bleeds from his nostrils and suffers stiffness in his neck: an ailment for which nothing is done.

TREATMENT

You should sprinkle that wound of his with oil. You should not bandage him. You should not put dressings on him until you learn that he arrives at a turning point.

EXPLANATIONS

As for "which has fractured his skull and exposed the brain of his skull," it is a big fracture, which is open to the inside of his skull and the membrane that covers his brain; it has to fracture so that it gushes from inside his head.

As for "those ripples that happen in copper through smelting," it is copper that a coppersmith pours

NOTES

3. This case of a depressed skull fracture that obviously involves the nervous system illustrates the physician's recognition of the limits of his abilities, as he offers only supportive care rather than "heroic" measures.
4. Here the wound has penetrated all the way to the surface of the brain. The sulci (grooves on the surface of the brain) are described as being like poured molten copper. There is also a clear understanding of the fontanelle, the gap in the plates of a child's skull that closes by adulthood.

before he has shaped it into something in a mold, its surface being uneven like wrinkles—that is to say, it is like ripples of pus.

CASE 7. A HEAD WOUND DAMAGING THE SKULL'S SUTURES (3,2-4,4)

TITLE

Practices for a gaping wound in his head, which has penetrated to the bone and violated the sutures of his skull.

EXAMINATION AND PROGNOSIS

(If you treat a man for a gaping wound in his head, which has penetrated to the bone and violated the sutures of his skull), you have to probe his wound. Should he be very much in pain at it, then you make him lift his face, since it is too hard for him to open his mouth and his heart is too weary for him to talk. If you notice spittle fallen from his lip but not falling to the ground, and he bleeds from his nostrils and from his ears, and he suffers stiffness in his neck and is unable to look at his shoulders and his chest, then you say about him: "One who has a gaping wound in his head, which has penetrated to the bone and violated the sutures of his skull, the cord of his jaw having contracted, while he bleeds from his nostrils and from his ears, and suffers stiffness in his neck: an ailment I will fight with."

TREATMENT

Since you find that man with the cord of his jaw contracted, you have to have something warm made for him until he gets well. His mouth has to open, and you bandage him with an oil and honey dressing until you learn that he arrives at a turning point.

ALTERNATIVE EXAMINATION AND PROGNOSIS

But if you find that man with a fever from that wound that is in the sutures of his skull, and that man has a toothache from that wound, then you put your hand on him. Should you

find his face damp from sweat, the vessels of his neck taut, his face ruddy, and his teeth and back, the smell of the box of his head like the urine of sheep and goats, his mouth clenched, his eyebrows knit, and his face like something crying, then you say about him: "One who has a gaping wound in his head, which has penetrated to the bone and violated the sutures of his skull, who has a toothache, whose mouth is clenched, who suffers from stiffness in his neck: an ailment for which nothing is done."

ALTERNATIVE TREATMENT

But if you find that man whitened, having previously exhibited weakness, you have to have a chisel of wood covered with cloth made for him and applied to his mouth. You have to have a soup of carob beans made for him. Sitting between two supports of brick is his treatment, until you learn that he arrives at a turning point.

EXPLANATIONS

As for "violated the sutures of (his skull)," it is what is between one plate of his skull and another. The sutures will be leathery.

As for "the cords of his jaw contracted," it is stiffening because of it by the vessels of the end of his ramus, which are fastened in his temporal bone—that is the end of his mandible—without moving back and forth, while opening his mouth is not easy for him because of his injury.

As for "the cord of his jaw," it is the vessels that bind the ends of his mandible, like saying the cord of a thing, consisting of a string.

As for "his face damp from sweat," it means that his head is sweaty a little, like the dampness of something.

As for "the vessels of his neck taut," it means that the vessels of his neck are taut and stiff from his injury.

As for "his face ruddy," it means that the color of his face is red, like the color of red fruit.

As for "the smell of the box of his head like the urine of sheep and goats,"

it means that the smell of his forehead is like the urine of sheep and goats.

As for "the box of his head," it is the middle of his forehead at the area of his brain: it is similar to a box.

As for "his mouth clenched, his eyebrows knit, and his face like something crying," it means that he does not open his mouth to speak, while his eyebrows are contracted and move upward or downward like one who is blinking when his face is crying.

As for "whitened, having previously exhibited weakness," it is the whitening of one who is in danger—as one who meets a poisonous snake—because of weakness.

CASE 8. A HIDDEN SKULL FRACTURE (4,5-18)⁵

TITLE

Practices for a fracture in his skull under the skin of his head.

EXAMINATION AND PROGNOSIS

If you treat a man for a fracture of his skull under the skin of his head, there being nothing on the surface, you have to probe his wound. Should you find a swelling risen above that fracture that is in his skull, while his eye is askew from it on the side with that fracture that is in his skull, and he walks shuffling with his foot on the side with that fracture that is in his skull, you should distinguish him from one afflicted because of something that has entered from the outside, being one in whose shoulder the head of the bone is not loosened and one whose fingernail cannot touch the palm of his hand, while he bleeds from his nostrils and from his ears and suffers stiffness in his neck: an ailment for which nothing is done.

TREATMENT

His treatment is sitting until he feels better or until you learn that he arrives at a turning point. Since you find that smash that is in his skull like those ripples that happen in copper through smelting, with a thing in it that throbs and flutters under your fingers like the weak spot of the crown of a boy before it becomes whole—that throbbing and fluttering happens under your fingers once the brain of his skull becomes exposed—while he bleeds from his nostrils and from his ears and suffers stiffness in his neck, it is an ailment for which nothing is done.

EXPLANATIONS

As for "a fracture of his skull under the skin of his head, there being no wound on him," it is a fracture of the plate of his skull, while the flesh that is on his head is sound.

As for "he walks shuffling with his foot," it refers to his walking with his foot inert, and it is not easy for him to walk, it being weak and dangling, with the tips of his toes bent toward his instep and seeking the ground when they walk: it means he shuffles because of it.

As for "one afflicted because of something that has entered from the outside" in his side that has this injury, it is the penetration of something that enters from outside into his side that has this injury.

As for "something that has entered from the outside," it is the breath of a god from outside, or a dead man, making entry, not something his body has created.

As for "one in whose shoulder the head of the bone is not loosened and one whose fingernail cannot touch the palm of his hand," it refers (to) the head of the bone of his shoulder not being usable for him and his fingernail not touching the palm (of) his hand.

CASE 9. A FOREHEAD WOUND WITH SKULL FRACTURE (4,19-5,5)⁶

TITLE

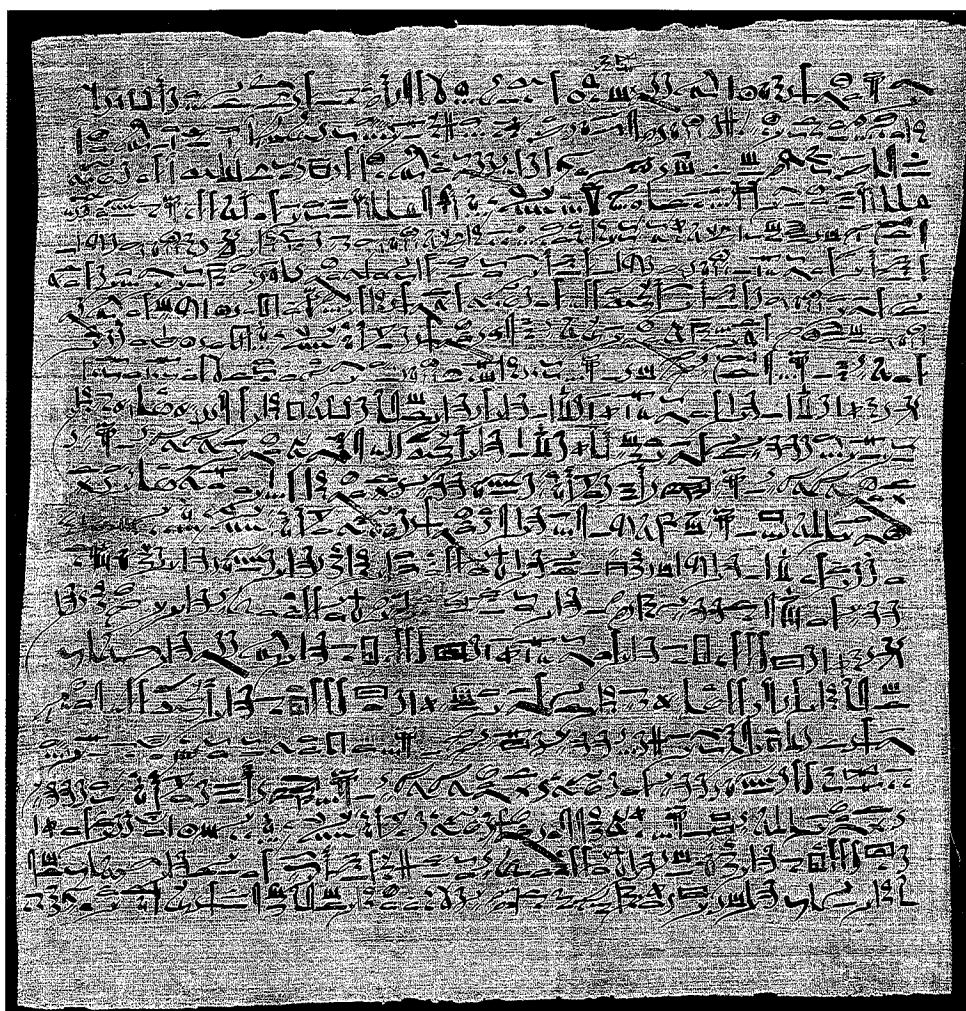
Practices for a wound in the front of his face, which has fractured the shell of his skull.

EXAMINATION AND TREATMENT

If you treat a man for a wound in the front of his face, which has fractured the shell of his skull, you have to make him the egg of an ostrich, ground with oil, and put in the mouth of his wound. Afterward, you have to make him the egg of an ostrich, ground and made into a powder: that is what dries the wound. You have to put for him a cloth of a physician's outfit on it.

NOTES

5. As the skull is fractured without a visible external wound, the physician postulates intrusion by an external (supernatural) force. The description of symptoms on the same side as the fracture suggests that the actual injury to the brain was on the other side, a result of pressure from the initial trauma (known as the contra-coup effect).
6. The explanation of this case refers to "cloth of the physician's outfit" (equipment) as linen obtained from the bandager (embalmer), suggesting that there was significant contact between these two professional groups.



You have to uncover it on the 3rd day: you will find × (it has knit) the shell, the color being like the egg of an ostrich.

What is said as magic over this prescription: "The enemy in the wound has been driven off; the conspiracy in the blood has been made to tremble; the vulture of every side has been given to the mouth of the effective goddess. This temple will not deteriorate; there is no crocodile or poison therein. For I am in the effective goddess's protection: Osiris's son is rescued."

Afterward, you have to cool for him the fruit of figs, oil, and honey, cooked, cooled, and given to him.

EXPLANATION

As for "a cloth of a physician's outfit," it is the strip of cloth that is used by the bandager: he should put it on the

prescription that is on the wound that is in the front of his face.

Stop



CASE 10. A WOUND IN THE EYEBROW (5,5-9)

TITLE

Practices for a wound in the tip of his eyebrow.

EXAMINATION AND PROGNOSIS

If you treat a man for a wound in the tip of his eyebrow, which has penetrated to the bone, you have to probe his wound and fasten its gap for him with thread. Then you say about him: "A wound in his eyebrow: an ailment I will handle."

that split that is in his upper arm, then you say about him: "One who has a split in his upper arm: an ailment I will handle."

TREATMENT

You have to bandage him with alum and treat him afterward (with) honey every day until he gets well.

CASE 39. A CHEST INFECTION (13,3-12)¹⁰

TITLE

Practices for an eruption with flattened head in his chest.

EXAMINATION AND PROGNOSIS

If you treat a man for an eruption with flattened head in his chest and you find risings having formed with pus on his chest, making a rash, while there is much warmth there and your hand finds it, then you say about him: "One who has an eruption with flattened head in his chest, ~~they~~ it having made openings of pus: an ailment I will handle."

TREATMENT

You have to sear him on his chest, on that eruption that is on his chest, and treat him with a wound treatment. You should not wait for it to open by itself there: it is not good for his wound. Every wound that occurs in his chest dries out once it opens by itself.

EXPLANATION

As for "an eruption with flattened head in his chest," it means that things are continually swollen and spread out on his chest because of his injury, having made pus and something red on his chest. That is to say, it is like things that have been scratched and create pus.

NOTE

10. This superficial abscess is treated by incision and drainage, similar to what a modern surgeon would do. The "searing" was most probably done with a heated metal rod, the heat from which would control any bleeding, analogous to modern cautery.

CASE 40. A CHEST WOUND (13,12-17)

TITLE

Practices for a wound in his chest.

EXAMINATION AND PROGNOSIS

If you treat a man for a wound in his chest, penetrating to the bone and violating his breastbone, and you touch his breastbone with your fingers and he is very much in pain at it, then you say about him: "One who has a wound in his chest, penetrating to the bone and violating his breastbone: an ailment I will handle."

TREATMENT

You have to bandage him with fresh meat the first day and treat him afterward (with) an oil and honey dressing every day until he gets well.

EXPLANATION

As for "his breastbone," (it is) the upper head of his chest, being like what comes from a hedgehog.

CASE 41. AN INFECTED CHEST WOUND (13,18-14,16)

TITLE

Practices for a wound-infection in his chest.

EXAMINATION AND PROGNOSIS

If you treat a man for a wound-infection in his chest when that wound is inflamed, with a concentration of warmth spewing from the mouth of that wound to your hand, and the lips of that wound are ruddy, and when that man is feverish from it, his flesh does not accept a bandage, and that wound does not acquire a margin of (new) skin, while the crust that is in the mouth of that wound is watery and feverish and the drops

that fall from it are clear, then you say about him: "One who has a wound-infection in his chest, which is inflamed, and he is feverish from it: an ailment I will handle."

TREATMENT

You have to make him a cool medium for drawing the warmth from the mouth of the wound: willow and sidder leaves and *qzntj* mineral, put on it; (or) date palm leaves, gall, grass, and *qzntj* mineral, put on it. You have to make him a medium for drying out the wound: powder of malachite, *wšbt* mineral, faience, and fat, ground and bandaged on it; (or) Delta salt and ibex fat, ground and bandaged on it. You (also) have to make him a powder of poppy seeds, flax seeds, cuttlebone, colocynth, and sycamore leaves, ground and bandaged on it. If the same happens to any limb, you should give it according to these practices.

EXPLANATIONS

As for "a wound-infection in his chest, which is inflamed," it means that that wound that is on his chest is continually agape, without closing over, high heat coming out of it, its lips red and its mouth open; and the treatise "The Nature of Wounds" has said about it that it means that it is continually swollen very much. The high temperature is called inflammation.

As for "a concentration of warmth" in his wound, it means that warmth is concentrated around the entire inside of his wound.

As for "its lips are ruddy," it means that its lips are red like the color of red ocher.

As for "his flesh does not accept a bandage," it means that his flesh does not accept a prescription because of the heat that is on his chest.

And as for "warmth spewing from the mouth of that

wound to your hand," warmth comes from the mouth of his wound to your hand, as something that comes out and down is said to spew.

CASE 42. A PULLED RIB (14,16-22)

TITLE

Practices for a pull in the ribs of his chest.

EXAMINATION AND PROGNOSIS

If you treat someone suffering from the ribs of his chest, and there is no dislocation or break, yet that man is suffering and in very much pain, then you say about him: "One who has a pull in the ribs of his chest: an ailment I will handle."

TREATMENT

You have to bandage him with alum and treat him afterward (with) honey every day until he gets well.

EXPLANATION

As for "the ribs of his chest," they are the bones of his chest, which are pointed like what comes from the shoot of a thorn.

CASE 43. A DISLOCATED RIB (14,22-15,6)

TITLE

Practices for a dislocation of the ribs of his chest.

EXAMINATION AND PROGNOSIS

If you treat a man for a dislocation of the ribs of his chest and you find the ribs of his chest mounded

SPELL 1. AGAINST PESTILENTIAL AIR
(V. 1,1-10)

Spell for barring the air of a disease year.

Oh, Flame-in-His-face, at the fore of the Akhet! Speak to Foremost-of-Neith-Town, who makes firm Osiris at the fore of the land. Nekhbet, who separates the land from the sky for her father, come and tie two plumes behind me, that I may live and become sound. For I am that white one atop the elder god in Heliopolis: the second is Isis, the third is Nephthys, and I am after for you. Grasper of the great (crown), Sekhmet's son; Controlling Powers' Controller, the night-demon's son; Wrathful, son of Hathor, lady of the Red Crown—who swells the rivers as you row Nu and sail in the Dayboat! You have saved me from every bitterness, etc., of this year in the wind of every bad air. Horus, Horus, the sound one of Sekhmet, be all around my flesh for life!

To be recited over 2 feathers of a vulture, spread over a man and put as his protection against any place he might walk in. It is the year's protection; it is a bitterness repeller in a year of disease.

SPELL 2. AGAINST PESTILENTIAL AIR
(V. 1,11-16)

Another for barring air of the bitterness of the night-demons, those of smallness, Sekhmet's messengers.

Retreat, night-demons! Winds shall not reach me until those who pass by for tempest pass by me. I am Horus, who passed by Sekhmet's infection. Horus, Horus, sound one of Sekhmet! I am the unique one, Bastet's son. I shall not die for you (goddess).

To be recited by a man with a stick of *dz* wood in his arm, as he goes out and goes around his house. He cannot die because of a disease year.

SPELL 3. AGAINST PESTILENCE (V. 1,17-19)

Another protection for a disease year.

I am the abomination that comes from Dep, Meskhenet that comes from Heliopolis. People, gods, spirits, and dead, be far from me! I am abomination.

SPELL 4. AGAINST FEVER (V. 1,19-V. 2,2)

Another.

I am sound in the path of those who pass by. So, shall I be hit while sound?