Résumé

This book examines dwarfs in myth and everyday life in ancient Egypt and Greece. In both cultures physical beauty was highly admired, even to excess. What happened to those whose appearance did not conform to the ‘ideal proportions’? The spectacular forms of dwarfism were always a focus of interest, and it is the most depicted disorder in antiquity. In this study Dr Dasen brings together for the first time a whole range of mostly unpublished or little-known iconographic, epigraphic, literary, and anthropological evidence. She covers areas such as the history of caricature and the portrait; medical history, in particular, the development of the perception of congenital disorders; social history; and history of religion, with questions on the magical and ritual efficiency of the malformed in sacred and theatrical contexts. She considers also the complex relations between mythology and ethnography, as shown, for example, in the Greek myth of the Pygmies. This is a fascinating work, with a wealth of insights for anyone interested in the history of medicine and the ancient world.