



Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt.

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This book is at once a thorough study of the educational system for the Greeks of Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, and a window to the vast panorama of educational practices in the Greco-Roman world. It describes how people learned, taught, and practiced literate skills, how schools functioned, and what the curriculum comprised. Raffaella Cribiore draws on over 400 papyri, ostraca (sherds of pottery or slices of limestone), and tablets that feature everything from exercises involving letters of the alphabet through rhetorical compositions that represented the work of advanced students. The exceptional wealth of surviving source material renders Egypt an ideal space of reference. The book makes excursions beyond Egypt as well, particularly in the Greek East, by examining the letters of the Antiochene Libanius that are concerned with education.

The first part explores the conditions for teaching and learning, and the roles of teachers, parents, and students in education; the second vividly describes the progression from elementary to advanced education. Cribiore examines not only school exercises but also books and commentaries employed in education--an uncharted area of research. This allows the most comprehensive evaluation thus far of the three main stages of a liberal education, from the elementary teacher to the grammarian to the rhetorician. Also addressed, in unprecedented detail, are female education and the role of families in education. *Gymnastics of the Mind* will be an indispensable resource to students and scholars of the ancient world and of the history of education.

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