

process.” These factors combined with a series of poor decisions by city and state officials to bring about a public health disaster of epic proportions, which included lead poisoning as well as outbreaks of *E. coli* and Legionnaires’ disease. Clark is attentive to the role that the history of deindustrialization played in Flint’s weakening economy as well as how insufficient and discriminatory public health policies made the water disaster possible. Her discussion of systematic racism and disenfranchisement would be enhanced by sociological literature on urban segregation, such as Douglas Massey’s *American Apartheid* (CH, Jun’93, 30-5888). Similarly, considering the neoliberal implications of the emergency management system she describes would strengthen her account of the multiple ways in which the government failed Flint residents. Nevertheless, the book explains the tragedy and attempts to first downplay it—and later to remedy it—well. **Summing Up: ★★** Recommended. All readers.—*J. A. Beicken, Rocky Mountain College*

56-1966 RA649 MARC
Cohn, Samuel Kline. **Epidemics: hate and compassion from the plague of Athens to AIDS.** Oxford, 2018. 643p bibl index ISBN 9780198819660 cloth, \$123.50; ISBN 9780192551580 ebook, contact publisher for price

Cohn (Univ. of Glasgow), medieval historian and author of *Cultures of Plague* (2010), explores reports of social responses to epidemics from the earliest records of Athens to the HIV/AIDS crisis. Its central argument is a refutation of the belief that epidemics always cause social scapegoating of ethnic, religious, or social groups. Cohn argues that the historical record often demonstrates that outbreaks of disease cause social cohesion, common cooperation, and social unity to combat disease. The historical breadth of this book, with its meticulous attention to varied sources and contexts, is simply breathtaking. At the same time, that breadth causes this reviewer to wonder if some details were flattened or if some sources were missed—given that Cohn finds similar responses to various outbreaks across centuries of time. This book will interest students of the history of medicine as well as anyone seeking a historical and comparative exploration of epidemics. It is dense and detailed reading, and few specialists will find all chapters of interest; this book will appeal chiefly to specialists at the graduate level and above. **Summing Up: ★★★** Highly recommended. Graduate students and above.—*A. W. Klink, Duke University*

56-1967 GN231 MARC
Gilman, Sander L. **Stand up straight!: a history of posture.** Reaktion Books, 2018. 429p index ISBN 9781780239248 cloth, \$40.00

It is probably safe to assume that concern, if any, for the posture we present in daily life is not the result of any serious reflection but of a more or less spontaneous decision. Further examination, however, reveals that posture can have powerful conscious and unconscious effects on our behavior and how we are perceived by observers. This seemingly banal aspect of behavior—how we sit, stand, and carry ourselves when we are alone or around other people—impacts our health, our social standing, our emotions, and our productivity. Gilman, a cultural historian and psychiatry professor at Emory University, intertwines insights on the various effects of posture with a fascinating history of posture and its effect on our culture in what can be described as a comprehensive academic study. One can imagine the difficulty of finding references to or descriptions of posture in the literature; nevertheless, the text includes 43 pages of references and 12 illustrations. An interesting study that makes good reading for nonscholarly and academic audiences alike. **Summing Up: ★★** Recommended. All readers.—*R. S. Kowalczyk, formerly, University of Michigan*

56-1968 RA390 CIP
Halvorson, Britt. **Conversionary sites: transforming medical aid and global Christianity from Madagascar to Minnesota.** Chicago, 2018. 291p bibl index ISBN 9780226557120 cloth, \$105.00; ISBN 9780226557267 pbk, \$35.00; ISBN 9780226557434 ebook, contact publisher for price

It sounds so simple: you have materials I need, and you want to send them to me. However, Halvorson, an anthropologist at Colby College, shows how complicated a situation this is. She focuses on a Lutheran aid group in Minnesota that sent unused or unwanted medical supplies to Lutheran medical facilities in Madagascar. Under her anthropological lens, the straightforward becomes multilayered as theories of capitalism, aid and humanitarianism, politics, culture, religious and secular history, and power and kinship relations rise to the surface. For those who create these exchanges, their meaning is not static but transformative in what Halvorson calls “conversionary” sites. In these sites, the tensions mentioned above are mediated—sometimes successfully, sometimes not—into newer meanings that both sides of the exchange can respect. Usually institutions do what they can to survive when their missions near completion. Halvorson shows how the religious themes of partnership and stewardship assist the partners to see their original vision converted to another arrangement with different goals. This long, persuasive argument is supported by years of fieldwork in Minnesota and Madagascar and an analytic reading of major secondary sources. **Summing Up: ★★** Recommended. Graduate students, researchers, faculty, and professionals.—*T. P. Garipey, Stonehill College*

56-1969 RA564 MARC
Kar, Snehen B. **Empowerment of women for promoting global health and quality of life.** Oxford, 2018. 595p bibl index ISBN 9780199384662 cloth, \$69.95; ISBN 9780199384679 ebook, contact publisher for price

The central theme of this book is how to strategically empower women to promote global public health (GPH) in rapidly growing, globalized communities. Like the #MeToo movement, Kar’s book places women’s empowerment on center stage—this time focusing on the healthcare arena. Kar (UCLA Fielding School of Public Health) chronicles how ordinary women can empower themselves and organize movements to combat destructive forces. The book’s organization includes a review of the theoretical literature, a presentation of a theoretical framework to include the “EMPOWER” model, a meta-analysis of successful case studies highlighting the empowerment process, and finally a well-presented summary of issues and implications for future research in this area. This book successfully delineates the mechanics of women’s empowerment and defines meanings of empowerment on a global scale. This text will appeal to those active in fields related women’s health and quality of life, and is a relevant read for men as well; a needed volume which reflects today’s cultural climate. **Summing Up: ★★** Recommended. All academic levels.—*B. A. D’Anna, SUNY Delhi*

56-1970 R138 CIP
Laes, Christian. **Disabilities and the disabled in the Roman world: a social and cultural history.** Cambridge, 2018. 238p bibl indexes ISBN 9781107162907 cloth, \$99.99; ISBN 9781316730096 ebook, \$80.00

The author asks: what is a handicap? More important, what defined a disability in the ancient world? There are no words in Greek or Latin comparable to conditions defined as handicaps in the modern world. This is the challenge Laes (ancient history and Latin, Univ. of Antwerp, Belgium) tackles while he writes about disability in the Roman world from 200 BC to AD 500. The author employs the mentalities school of