

the chapter entitled 'The scientific method', in which a remarkable range of thinkers and themes are introduced (his book also has the fuller index of the two).

The greatest contrast between the two books is the way in which they engage with the existing literature. As already noted, each has a lengthy bibliography which is worth consulting in its own right. However, Henry makes repeated reference to specific items in his by citing them by number in his text. The result is that, though compact, his book is very effective in referring to a wide range of material, thus enabling the reader to know exactly what secondary literature is being referred to and enabling him or her to follow it up. With Shapin's book, the link between the text and the bibliographic essay is less clear, and matters are not helped in this regard by the fact that the essay has a different organization from the book, so that it is not possible to look to one for a direct commentary on the other. Though modern authors are occasionally referred to by name in the text, elsewhere allusions to the secondary literature are generalized and sometimes rather arch—Shapin speaks vaguely of 'Marxist historians', for instance, or of 'some recent historical work', in the latter case evidently alluding to his own *A social history of truth* (Chicago, 1994). Hence, a degree of surmise is required to work out exactly what literature is being referred to at any point, apart from the clues provided by Shapin's practice of marking with asterisks the items in his bibliographic essay on which he acknowledges that he has chiefly relied. On balance, though a stimulating essay, Shapin's is a less satisfactory work than Henry's, in which the well-tried pedagogic model deployed proves highly successful, quite apart from the merits of its exposition in its own right. The verdict therefore is that Henry's book is to be recommended as the best brief introduction to the Scientific Revolution currently available.

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Galen, *On the elements according to Hippocrates*, Corpus medicorum Graecorum, V. 1,2, ed. and transl. and commentary by Phillip De Lacy, Berlin Akademie Verlag, 1996, pp. 236, DM 220 (3-05-002877-7).

John of Alexandria, *Commentary on Hippocrates' Epidemics VI fragments; Commentary of an anonymous author on Hippocrates' Epidemics VI fragments*, ed., transl., and notes by John M Duffy. **John of Alexandria, *Commentary on Hippocrates' On the nature of the child*, ed. and transl. by T A Bell, D P Carpenter, D W Schmidt, M N Sham, G I Vardon, L G Westerink, Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1997, pp. 201, DM 220 (3-05-003190-5).**

The volumes of the Corpus Medicorum Graecorum are now appearing at a faster rate than heretofore without losing any of their quality. Texts and translations are produced and edited to a very high standard, and the accompanying commentaries combine brevity with substantial information. Of the works here discussed, Professor De Lacy's edition of Galen's *On the elements according to Hippocrates* maintains its author's pre-eminence as a textual critic of Galen. For this edition of a basic text in physiology, he uses new and better manuscripts, as well as the evidence of later translations, most notably that of the ninth-century Arabic version. Improvements to both text and meaning are considerable, and English readers will benefit from the accurate and fluent version that accompanies the Greek.

The second volume, the outcome of a Buffalo seminar organized by the late Leendert Westerink, breaks new ground by publishing for the first time fragments of two commentaries on Hippocrates, Epidemics VI, one anonymous, the other by John of Alexandria, the author of the third commentary here, part of his lectures on Hippocrates' *On the nature of the child*. All the texts inform us about late-Alexandrian medical teaching on the Hippocratic syllabus. They show not only how the Galenic tradition of exegesis persisted but

also how the teachers were far from being mere theorists but were concerned also with the consequences of their interpretations for medical practice. When these lectures were delivered is difficult to decide, for there are hints both for and against a date around 550. While the commentary on *On the nature of the child* is edited from the single surviving manuscript, the other two have a much more complicated textual history. All derive from fragments preserved in manuscripts of a Greek translation of an Arabic book, the *Zad al-Musāfir* of Ibn al-Jazzār. Eighty years ago, Mercati argued that Vatican gr. 300 was the single source of all other manuscripts. It was the property of a medieval Italian Greek doctor from Reggio, who copied into its margins the opinions of much earlier Alexandrian lecturers. But while Dr Xeros certainly had some involvement with the *Zad al-Musāfir* in Greek, Vatican gr. 300 cannot be his personal copy or the source of all the other manuscripts, for they preserve good readings that it has lost. Hence the need to collate a further twenty-three manuscripts scattered across Europe, of which eight have been selected as adequate witnesses. The result is a complex textual history that allows the editors to produce a much more accurate text than that presupposed by Mercati. Like De Lacy's edition of Galen, this volume shows the remarkable resurgence of studies of ancient medicine over the last few years, and, not least, the important role in this played by the Corpus Medicorum series.

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Gilbert Geis and Ivan Bunn, *A trial of witches: a seventeenth-century witchcraft prosecution*, London and New York, Routledge, 1997, pp. xix, 284, illus., £45.00 (hardback 0-415-17108-3), £14.99 (paperback 0-415-17109-1).

An unexceptional court case at the Suffolk assizes in March 1662 has permanently tarnished the reputations of two exceptional

participants. Both the judge, Matthew Hale, and a medical witness, Thomas Browne, were highly regarded in their own day and have been venerated by their respective professions ever since. The execution of two Lowestoft witches has been the only stumbling block for their many admirers.

Geis and Bunn have studied this notorious case for many years. The former is a criminologist, now retired, and the latter a local historian. As might be expected, legal procedure and local detail are their strongest suits. It was they who finally determined the correct date of the case, often mistaken, and they have uncovered a great deal of information about the local politics and religious affiliations of the people involved. Unfortunately, important findings, such as the connection of this case with the bewitchment of two nonconformist clergymen, tend to disappear under the welter of biographical and topographical data.

Their view of Hale is fairly harsh, echoing his Tory critics rather than his Whig admirers. Regarding his "religiosity" as the source of credulity, they perhaps do not give sufficiently sympathetic attention to Hale's Calvinist beliefs or his natural philosophy, which they dismiss as "fearsome theological inflexibility" and "puerile scientific writing". More might have been made of his opposition to Thomas Hobbes and the perils of atheism, even though the connection with this case can only be inferred. Such concerns were voiced by many of his contemporaries, who denounced the fashionable disbelief in witchcraft, represented in this case by Hale's rival, Serjeant Keeling. Reading Ian Bostridge's 1991 thesis, now published as *Witchcraft and its transformations*, would have strengthened their comments about the relevance of Restoration religious politics.

Historians of medicine will wish to know how Thomas Browne fares in this account. According to the trial report, Browne testified that the afflicted girls were suffering from fits of the mother, but that this natural disease was exacerbated by the involvement of the Devil, at the instigation of witches. Geis and Bunn