This is a very important work which casts new light on traditional medical systems and beliefs, and makes vital contributions to the understanding of gender in the construction of medicine in rural Egypt. Though Morsy's research relates to the modern period, it is also relevant to the understanding of popular medicine in medieval times and in other parts of the Middle East. As there is so much of value to be pursued, it is especially unfortunate that the book has no index.

Lawrence I. Conrad, Wellcome Institute

R. GRAHAM LILLY, *An account of rural medical practice from the 18th century onwards in Long Buckby, Northamptonshire*, Dunton Bassett, Volcano Publishing, 1993, pp. 95, illus., £3.25 (1–870127–99–4).

Dr R. G. Lilly has traced the roots of Long Buckby's present medical practice to 1730 in the person of Thomas West, possibly followed by Hubert Floyer in about 1753, and Edward Swinfen who seems to have arrived in 1770. There were two independent practices running in parallel which did not amalgamate until 1954 in the time of Dr Lilly. If the author had widened his sources he would have found that West had received a bishop's licence to practise physic and surgery in 1719, and that Swinfen had been the apprentice of Richard Swinfen, apothecary of Hinckley, Leicestershire, and a member of a well known medical and pharmaceutical family in the Midlands.

The book gives an unfortunate impression that the writer's knowledge of medical history is ill digested. The Act of 1815 gave the Society of Apothecaries the right and the obligation to examine all those who intended to practise as general practitioners, not just its own members who, in any case, they had always examined if they hoped to obtain the Society's Freedom. The records of the Apothecaries show that many provincial practitioners in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were apprenticed to members of the Society, which disposes of his question as to where apprentices "learnt the work of the apothecary" (pp. 3, 4). It is certain the hospital physicians did not give instruction in dispensing as he suggests (p. 5). It is true that a five-year apprenticeship was a requisite for the Licentiateship of the Society of Apothecaries, but the student also had to attend two courses of lectures on anatomy and physiology, two courses on the theory and practice of medicine, one course on chemistry and another on materia medica; he also had to produce a certificate to show he had had medical practice for at least six months in a public hospital, infirmary or dispensary. The Royal College of Surgeons' Diploma (MRCS) was not instituted in "about 1815" (p. 7), although it was somewhat stiffened; all members of the old Company of Surgeons were offered membership of the new College on its formation in 1800.

Nevertheless there are two particularly interesting sections in the book. Firstly, Dr Franklin Churchouse's eighteen year-long fight (1887–1905) to obtain a pure water supply for the village in which he took parish, district and county councils to task; and secondly, the re-organization and amalgamation of the two practices. It is obvious that all was not well in rural practice in the immediate post-war years. Surgeries were relegated from the doctor's own house to wooden huts in the garden and doctor dispensing was scarcely of a high order. Dr Lilly writes that there was a "reasonable range of tablets for 1949" but the mixtures had been whittled down to Nos 3, 4, and 7 plus Mist. Alba. He increased the range but nevertheless one wonders how he can describe the late 1940s as an "era of therapeutic barrenness". Surely this was the very period when a wide range of sulpha drugs was introduced and the penicillins were increasingly obtainable?

We may well feel that the National Health Service is not all that it might be but looking back over the years one can see that progress has been made. Medical history, like other forms of history, helps us to get things into perspective.

J. Burnby, British Society for the History of Pharmacy

JAMES LONGRIGG, *Greek rational medicine: philosophy and medicine from Alcmaeon to the Alexandrians*, London and New York, Routledge, 1993, pp. ix, 296, £35.00 (0–415–02594–X).

The book's stated aim is to help in "disentangling the highly complex relationship between philosophy and medicine in the classical period". It is perhaps not made clear enough for the general reader that the word "philosophy", here and throughout, means, in the first instance, the scientific

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(cosmological and biological) theorizing of ancient Greek thinkers—who were however also (and sometimes primarily) "philosophers" in the more restricted sense current nowadays. The subject is really the *scientific* aspect of classical Greek medicine. The influence of medical theorizing in philosophy proper (in philosophy of mind and action, ethics, political philosophy) in this period is a fascinating but tricky topic, which Longrigg avoids.

Within the sphere of scientific medicine, Longrigg says little about the practical side. In the Hippocratic writings there are (quite copious) materials for a study of how the theory and the practice of medicine interacted in the fifth and fourth centuries BC. Such a study has not yet been written, and Longrigg does not attempt it. It is therefore surprising (though very welcome) that he does give full and judicious reviews of the scrappy and obscure evidence for controlled experimentation, and for dissection and vivisection of animal and human subjects during this period.

Longrigg confines himself mostly to the theorists who tried to produce all-inclusive theories of health and disease. In this area he provides a much-needed overall treatment, fully referenced, supported by apt quotations of primary sources, reliable in details, and careful and sensible in the assessment of controversial questions.

Chapter 1 ('Pre-rational and irrational medicine in Greece and neighbouring cultures') provides an initial framework. A distinction between rationality of beliefs and rationality of practical methods might have made some things clearer. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 cover the sixth and fifth centuries BC. There is extended coverage of Alcmaeon of Croton, who is convincingly represented as a figure of strategic importance for the period. The treatment of the Hippocratic writers, by contrast, seems rather superficial and perfunctory. Much more of interest could have been said, without unbalancing the book, on the connections and tensions between Hippocratic and pre-Socratic theorizing. Chapter 5 is centred on the medicine in Plato's *Timaeus* and the Sicilian doctors who presumably supplied the materials. (Here and earlier more could have been made of the way the Greek medical writers extended their interests and theories to cover *mental* illness: a striking feature of "rational" medicine.) Chapter 6 covers Aristotle, Diocles of Carystus and the beginnings of the Hellenistic period. Explanations of "Lyceum" and "Peripatetic" would have helped the general reader. Finally, chapter 7 gives a clear and reliable account of the work of Herophilus and Erasistratus in Ptolemaic Alexandria.

Edward Hussey, All Souls College, Oxford

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