prescriptions, but in 73 per cent of Ḥunayn's recipes. She suggests that Islamic physicians contributed views and experiences of their own to the Greek medical tradition (p. 179), yet she fails to specify how far opium could exemplify this development. Finally, she does not address aspects, such as trade or prices of opium, which go beyond the strictly medicinal use as it is depicted in medical treatises.

Tibi presents a rich collection of expertly analysed material which will be indispensable for future researchers when they address related questions such as the medicinal use of opium in other times and places of the Islamic world or the cultural history of opium.

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Andrew T Crislip, *From monastery to hospital: Christian monasticism and the transformation of health care in late Antiquity*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2005, pp. x, 235, £33.50, $70.00 (hardback 0-472-11474-3).

The quest for the first hospital in history has occupied the minds of many scholars, especially since Timothy S Miller published his controversial book *The birth of the hospital in the Byzantine empire* in 1985 (reprinted 1997). Crislip's present monograph, based on his doctoral dissertation, contributes to this debate. His main argument runs approximately as follows.

In Late Antiquity, Christian monasticism emerged in Egypt, having two main varieties: "lavra" and "coenobitic". In the former, monks assembled to live in the same place without subscribing to one central authority or one set of regulations. Conversely, the latter was characterized by a strong uniformity: members of the monastery would abide by the same rules and were integrated into a hierarchical structure. Both types of institutions developed sophisticated medical provisions. Especially in the coenobitic monasteries of St Pachomius (*fl*. 320) and his successors and imitators, a complex health care system was put into place. If a monk became ill, a "triage officer" would determine where the patient should go, with highly skilled physicians and nurses treating the serious cases. Moreover, the monastic authorities strove to remove the stigma which often attached to disease and disability in the contemporaneous pagan world. When St Basil of Caesarea (d. 379) visited Egypt in the 350s, he was so impressed with these monastic medical provisions that he decided to take Christian charity one step further. He founded a gigantic hospital—comparable to the seven wonders of the ancient world—in his home town of Caesarea in Cappadocia (modern east-central Turkey). It boasted a sophisticated health care system similar to that found in the Egyptian monasteries, but with the difference that free inpatient care, dispensed by professional physicians and nurses, was not mainly restricted to monks, but made available to the general public for the first time. Thus the first hospital, inspired by Egyptian monastic traditions, was born to become a template for the many other hospitals which spread throughout the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond.

This certainly is a good story, but one wonders whether it makes for good history. There are several problems with both the evidence presented here and the general theoretical approach. Crislip often resorts to sweeping generalizations, for instance when contrasting monastic medicine with its pagan counterpart. He claims that "the sick person in Greco-Roman antiquity was 'less than fully a human being' ", and that " '[a]ntiquity offers no evidence of any provision for the care of the crippled' " (p. 69), citing secondary sources. Yet the second quotation, taken from an 1956 article, is certainly incorrect (see, for instance, M L Rose's book *The staff of Oedipus: transforming disability in Ancient Greece*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2003). Likewise, the first statement hardly applies to all the variegated societies and individuals within the classical Graeco-Roman world. Furthermore, like Miller quoted above, Crislip interprets his primary sources in a tendentious manner. For example, the evidence for the presence of physicians in St Basil's hospital largely hinges on half a sentence in one of St Basil's letters where he talks about

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"*iatreuontes*", translated by Crislip as "physicians" and "doctors", although it can simply mean "those who treat". In the face of such sparse evidence, he resorts to arguments like the following (p. 116): "There is no contemporary evidence for the architecture of the hospital [founded by St Basil], nor is there any description of the types of medical procedures employed. Nevertheless, since Basil himself as a young man was trained in standard Hippocratic and Galenic medicine we may suppose that a similar standard was employed in his hospital."

Apart from these generalizations and interpretative liberties, Crislip's approach also lacks theoretical rigour. Following Miller, Crislip attaches great importance to the distinction between "hospices" and "hospitals", the latter being characterized by the presence of professional physicians. Whether this distinction between caring and curing or the quest for the first hospital thus defined are useful has rightly been questioned by scholars such as Peregrine Horden and Vivian Nutton (none of whose contributions published during the last two decades is cited). Finally, out of a desire to find the present in the past, as it would appear, Crislip frequently employs modern terminology such as the term "triage officer". The "triage" in the monasteries of Egypt has, however, little to do with that occurring in modern hospitals. In the former, an elder who often was not a physician himself would determine whether the patient was really sick or merely pretending to be so in order to gain remission from the harsh duties and access to better food (and maybe even some wine); he would then decide whether the disease was caused by a demon, therefore requiring exorcism, or by natural causes.

Despite these criticisms, Crislip's book contains some interesting material, for instance, when he quotes from hitherto unpublished Coptic sources. And, like that by Timothy S Miller, it will undoubtedly provoke fruitful scholarly debate.

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Ken Arnold, *Cabinets for the curious: looking back at early English museums*, Perspectives on Collecting series, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005, pp. xii, 297, £47.50, $94.95 (hardback 0-7546-0506-X).

For those engaged in the modern world of museum practice, where time to reflect on the importance of our collections and the enquiry that should inform how we make use of them can easily vie with so many other imperatives, Ken Arnold's new book compels us to address the need to regain our perspective on the contribution of collectors and collections as sources of meaning, creativity and knowledge.

Arnold illuminates this study by an absorbing exploration of seventeenth-century English collecting activity and the birth of what he terms "museum-science". Focusing on a number of leading scholars and collectors, and on early curators such as Lord Arundel and Robert Plot, alongside the influence of scientific and philosophical thinkers of the period, he explores the creation of formal institutions that became the repositories for their activities. His early chapters show how these collectors encompassed the tradition of narrative, functional and taxonomic approaches, but which gave way in time to a dominant concern with taxonomy, through which we can trace the accumulation of the vast "survey" collections that became the foundation of the modern museum. Growing emphasis on taxonomic order arising out of contemporary philosophical concerns with education, language, memory and even theology drove forward the museum preoccupation with classification and identification to become all pervading by the nineteenth century, and reflected still in our major national and academic collections. Underlying this process was of course the exclusion of any form of material that failed to submit to this approach or alternative strategies for collecting, or for considering the meaning of what they contain.

Later chapters attempt what he considers to be the important task of connecting contemporary debate about the role of the modern curator with the seventeenth-century origins of museum collecting. Arnold explains how innovation in the

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