

IAIN MALCOLM LONIE (1932–1988)

Iain Malcolm Lonie, classicist, historian of Greek medicine, and poet, died suddenly in tragic circumstances on Saturday 18 June 1988, aged 55.

He was born in March, Cambridgeshire, where his father was the District Medical Officer for Health. He left war-time England with his parents in 1941, when his father took up an appointment in New Zealand. After schooling in Palmerston North, he read Classics at the University of Otago and graduated in 1954. He subsequently went up to King's College, Cambridge to read Part II of the Classical Tripos, graduating in 1956 with First Class Honours and a distinction in Ancient Philosophy. He was then appointed a lecturer in classics at the University of New England, Armidale, New South Wales, moving in 1959 to a lectureship in Latin at the University of Sydney. He remained there until 1965 when he returned to New Zealand as Senior Lecturer in Classics at his old university. In 1970 he was promoted to Associate Professor and spent a year's research leave in 1972 working at the Institut für Geschichte der Medizin in West Berlin and at the Wellcome Institute in London.

In order to devote himself to full-time research, he resigned his teaching post at Otago in 1974, and after a brief visit to Europe to give a paper at the Colloque Hippocratique at Mons in 1975, he returned to London the following year to take up a Wellcome Trust Fellowship in the History of Medicine. There he extended his researches in Greek medicine to include the later Hippocratic tradition. After a brief spell in New Zealand, he again returned to England; this time to enable his wife Judith to gain a professional qualification in speech therapy at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, where it chanced that negotiations had just been concluded with the Wellcome Trust to finance a Research Fellowship in the History of Medicine. Iain was appointed to this Fellowship and was able to draw upon the resources of the University's Pybus Collection to further his researches in the Hippocratic tradition. Upon the expiry of this fellowship he was awarded another by the Wellcome Trust to continue his work at the Wellcome Unit in Cambridge. From this four-year period stems much of his best work upon Greek medicine. His research interests lay primarily in the relationship between medicine and other aspects of the intellectual life of various periods. In particular, he believed that medicine in Western science from the fifth century BC onwards regularly acted as a model of method both for other sciences and for philosophy, and was, at the same time, quick to exploit changes in intellectual fashions. He adopted this approach in his book *A commentary on the Hippocratic treatises 'On generation', 'On the nature of the child' and 'Diseases IV'* (1981), which he was able to revise and complete during his Newcastle Fellowship. The work, it is generally conceded, will remain the standard discussion of these embryological treatises for many years to come. At Cambridge he applied the same approach to Renaissance and post-Renaissance medicine and was engaged, in collaboration with Dr Andrew Cunningham, in gathering material for a chronological census of sixteenth-century printed editions and translations of Hippocrates.

Unfortunately, this work, as well as future plans for a book dealing with Hippocratism from Sydenham to the early nineteenth century, failed to come to

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fruition. Towards the end of his Cambridge Fellowship he suffered a severe blow from which he never fully recovered and which, in effect, brought an end to his academic work. His charming wife, newly qualified as a speech therapist, collapsed suddenly and died as a result of an aneurysm. After her death Iain's first thoughts were for his young son and, despite advice to the contrary, he decided to return to New Zealand, where he still had relatives. In New Zealand, however, he was unable to find employment commensurate with his talents. Loneliness and academic frustration eventually combined, this time fatally, to bring to the fore a capacity for self-destruction evidenced, on occasion, earlier in his career. Despite his deep love for his young son and his great pride in his progress, he took his own life.

Iain Lonie was a diffident and highly sensitive man; a talented scholar; a good friend, generous with his help; an acute yet kindly critic, and a poet of some distinction. He was both admired by and popular with his contemporaries in his chosen field of Greek medicine, which by his death has lost one of its most original and gifted interpreters.

JAMES LONGRIGG