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course of Franco-German history is often clogged with textbook prose and competing topical or chronological conceptions. He displays an annoying penchant for series: two of this, three of that, four of the other, etc. The sometimes blurred relationship between matters small and large is reflected in Bonah's evident indecision about what belongs in the text and what should be relegated to the footnotes (which contain some of his most interesting observations). Thorough pruning and tighter construction would have served him well.

If such difficulties tend to prevent Bonah's study from becoming a paragon of comparative history, they do not vitiate the perspicacity and basic soundness of his work. His volume is certain to find a secure niche amid the growing historical literature dedicated to a richer understanding of the differing internal structures and common interactions among nations in the European heartland.

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Nicolaas A Rupke (ed.), *Medical geography in historical perspective, Medical History*, Supplement No. 20, London, The Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at UCL, 2000, pp. xii, 227, illus., £32.00, US\$50.00 (hardback 0-85484-072-9).

"In the course of the nineteenth century," Nicolaas Rupke and Karen Wonders observe, "medical thinking took a significant spatial turn" (p. 163). Back in June 1996, a three-day symposium on the nature of this nineteenth-century "spatial turn" in medical thinking—organized under the title 'Medical Geography in Historical Perspective'—was held at the Georg-August Universität Göttingen. The present volume, published as a supplement to *Medical History*, is a collection of papers from the

Göttingen symposium, augmented by several later contributions. The end product is a fascinating series of scholarly delvings into the nineteenth-century origins and development of medical geographic thought and practice.

Consistent with a subject that took its disciplinary lead from medical science, most of the contributors to *Medical geography in historical perspective* are historians of science and medicine; only two (Frank Barrett and Anne Buttner) claim a formal academic allegiance with geography. Adopting a thematic structure, the resulting essays—thirteen in all—are divided into five main sections: 'Introduction'; 'European national practices'; 'Colonial discourses'; 'Cartographic representations'; and the concluding 'Epilogues'. The ambitious and wide-ranging introductory chapter 'Histories of medical geography' by Conevery Valenčius provides an excellent foundation for the collection. Tracing two centuries of medical geography, from its origins at the juncture of medical science and physical geography, through to late-twentieth-century debates on health and place, Valenčius teases out the threads that bind the intellectual inheritances claimed by medical history and medical geography. In so doing, she argues cogently for dialogue between these, and allied, disciplines.

As with European geography more generally, nineteenth-century developments in medical geography were closely aligned with issues of empire, race and state power, and these issues come to the fore in 'European national practices'. Here, successive chapters explore such diverse themes as imperialism, expeditionary medicine and the evolution of French medical geography (Chapter 2), medical topography and the climatic limits to British power in India (Chapter 3), and acclimatization and immigration in the Dutch East Indies (Chapter 4). Academic tensions, too, were a prominent feature of European medical geography at the time, and these are neatly illustrated by the

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juxtapositioning of chapters concerned with the work of two prominent German contributors—Adolf Mühry (Chapter 5) and his critic, August Hirsch (Chapter 6).

The remaining thematic sections of the volume examine two very different dimensions of the history of medical geography. ‘Colonial discourses’ deals with health-related perceptions of place, variously from the popular perspective of migrants to the (post-colonial) American West (Chapter 7) and from the perspective of professional and academic élites in relation to “tropical” Australia (Chapter 8). By contrast, the three contributions to ‘Cartographic representations’ explore the field of medical cartography and its particular relationship to the scholarly genre of Humboldtian science (Chapters 9–11). Finally, in ‘Epilogues’, brief essays by a prominent geographer (Anne Buttimer, Chapter 12) and a renowned historian (Ronald Numbers, Chapter 13) serve to add further, interdisciplinary, perspectives on the main themes of the volume.

With the evident scholarship and diversity of subject matter making for stimulating reading, it may seem churlish to identify any shortcomings in the work. Indeed, the limitations are few and generally of a trivial nature. At one level, the thematic structure imposed on the essays is rather loose and, in the absence of any prefatory statement of editorial rationale, the placement of some essays could be considered arbitrary. At another level, and admittedly beyond the core concerns of the work, some contributions may give the impression that the first half of the twentieth century was a bleak time for medical geography. In its former high-profile incarnation perhaps, but not as an underpinning approach to epidemiological issues and problems. To view modern medical geography as having risen almost phoenix-like from the ashes of the Second World War marks, I suspect, a fundamental difference in disciplinary perspectives regarding the nature of, and influences on, the contemporary subject.

Such contentions aside, *Medical geography in historical perspective* is an exemplary collection. Scholarly, well written and with an eclecticism that reflects the rich intellectual heritage of the subject, the volume represents a benchmark for future researches on the history of medical geographic thought and practice. It deserves the widest readership.

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Frank A Barrett, *Disease and geography: the history of an idea*, Geographical Monographs, vol. 23, Toronto, York University—Atkinson College, 2000, pp. xv, 571, Can. \$60.00, US\$50.00 (paperback 1-55014-396-4). Orders to: Becker Associates, Box 507, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario, M4T 2M5, Canada.

Frank Barrett’s *Disease and geography: the history of an idea* is a work of remarkable industry and toil. The results of many years of diligent reading and research, it charts the history of the diverse connections between geography and medicine from ancient times to the mid-twentieth century. The work is conceived in a manner reminiscent of Arthur Lovejoy’s “history of ideas”. Barrett’s tactic is to survey the major published works on geography and disease, gathering together scattered fragments from a diverse range of sources and imposing a coherent structure on them. The result is an impressive achievement spanning more than 2,000 years of western history.

Barrett begins his story in Ancient Greece, focusing primarily on the Hippocratic tradition embodied in *Airs, waters, places*, and later reshaped under the influence of Galen in the second century AD. Thereafter our attention is successively directed to Ancient Chinese and Indian