

to graduate in medicine from Glasgow University. Asher departed for London in 1862 to become medical practitioner to the Jewish Board of Guardians and, in 1870, was appointed the first secretary of the newly formed United Synagogue. By 1914, about twenty Scottish Jews had graduated in medicine although only four were practising in Glasgow, among whom was Noah Morris who became Regius Professor of *Materia Medica* at Glasgow University (1937). For most, however, the medical degree was the passport out of the community.

This book is a valuable resource for historians of ethnicity, social historians of medicine and anyone interested in immigrant health and problems of acculturation—as relevant today as in early twentieth-century Scotland.

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John M Efron, *Medicine and the German Jews: a history*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2001, pp. viii, 343, illus., £27.50 (hardback 0-300-08377-7).

German Jews have played a notable role in medicine since medieval times. John Efron provides a fascinating reading of a rich and varied discourse on medicine as practised in and out of the ghetto. The discussions reveal a tension between religious and secular knowledge. An important episode is the impact of the rationalist philosophy of the Enlightenment. This era saw the first glimmers of professional hostility to Jewish doctors, but also the emergence of the modern Jewish doctor, more interested in science than in ritual, while retaining allegiances to the Jewish community. Points of friction include differences between science and ritual, as in the opposition to the religious custom of

rapid burial, and debates on diet and circumcision. There is an interesting discussion on whether Jews were susceptible to particular diseases and conditions, especially to tuberculosis, syphilis and mental illness. Efron draws a contrast between general studies, by, for example, Emil Kraepelin, which were stigmatizing, and case studies by Jewish psychiatrists which denied a racial aetiology of mental breakdown. While others have dealt with the anti-Semitic distortions concerning the Jewish doctor, Efron provides a nuanced account of the self-image of the Jewish doctor and his views on the health of Jews. The text is invariably fascinating, as on the differing approaches of historians of Jewish medicine.

By the nineteenth century, Germany was distinctive for its high proportion of Jewish hospitals, and Jewish medical associations emerged. Efron gives us little on these developments, and there is little on public health, or on Social Democrat Jewish doctors and eugenicists. Medieval and 1920s Jewish women doctors are cursorily mentioned, but in no way analysed. It would be interesting to have grounded the work in prosopographical analysis, as Jewish doctors encountered considerable career difficulties. Some statistics are given in the final chapter, 'Before the Storm'. Efron makes interesting but sporadic comments on the situation in Austria (as on Billroth's anti-Semitism), but here the situation is seen as broadly following on from German developments. He also avoids the standard literature on Jewish medical scientists, and does not refer to the pioneering cytologist Robert Remak, or to the historical studies of Bruno Kisch and David Nachmansohn on Jewish medical pioneers. The Holocaust casts a shadow across the whole development, although this complex and tragic era is merely alluded to rather than fully explored. The work is based on impressively multilingual scholarship, and there are only a few slips

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(for example, in the reference to Colney Hatch). The index is cursory.

Efron's work is a notable achievement. We can be grateful to him for an illuminating and sympathetic reconstruction. He draws together an immense amount of material in an attractively written synthesis. I would like to see a second edition, which is twice the size, probing the discourse more fully, and set in a more systematically explored prosopographical, institutional and contextual framework.

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Philip D Curtin, *Migration and mortality in Africa and the Atlantic world, 1700–1900*, Variorum Collected Studies Series, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2001, pp. 360, £59.50 (hardback 0-86078-833-4).

The idea of western man in an alien and pathological environment is a uniting factor of much of Philip Curtin's work. This collection of articles centres upon the effects of human migration and mortality in the Atlantic basin between 1700 and 1900, and provides a valuable opportunity to access easily a group of articles from one of the foremost contributors to the field.

The papers, written between 1950 and 1999, are divided into four main groups: the first two deal with themes within general political and economic Caribbean and African colonial history, the third with the role of disease and mortality, and the fourth with environmentalist themes. Parts three and four are of special interest to the medical historian because of their focus variously upon the role of disease theories in history; the exercise of colonial power in the periphery; the health of African troops; the impact of new treatments; perceptions

of tropical climates and the historical importance of migratory patterns.

Some of the articles (most famously, 'The white man's grave', *Journal of British Studies*, 1961, 1, and 'The end of the "white man's grave"', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 1990, 21) have already achieved classic status, being frequently cited in medical historical writing, and to return to them reminds us of Curtin's painstaking analysis of the mortality statistics for West Africa between 1817 and 1914.

One of Curtin's strengths is the way he places policies and actions in their proper ideological contexts. Whether it is the reasons for the slave revolt in Saint-Domingue and the particular way this French colony's disparate social groups interpreted the Revolution's Declaration of the Rights of Man ('The Declaration of the Rights of Man in Saint-Domingue, 1788–1791', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 1950, 30), or an illustration of how medical explanations were deployed to justify an essentially racist, segregationist policy of city planning in Africa. ('Medical knowledge and urban planning in tropical Africa', *American Historical Review*, 1985, 90), it is useful to be reminded that things are rarely as they seem when colonial economies and sensibilities are at stake.

One small criticism, which does not challenge the intellectual content of the collection in any way, is a general grumble about the uncertain value of single-authored collections of previously published articles. On the positive side, they offer an easily accessible retrospective of an historian's empirical and ideological approaches, a unique opportunity to provide synthesis and to examine continuities and changes. On the negative side, there is the nagging concern that this is simply a means of getting an extra book out. In the case of this collection specifically, the quality of the articles' reproduction gives the impression of a rather low budget assemblage, unfortunately not reflected in the price. In many