

Book Reviews

MOSES A. SHULVASS, *The Jews in the world of the Renaissance*, Leiden, Brill, 1973, 8vo, pp. xv, 367, Dfl.58.00.

All aspects of Jewish life are dealt with: the Jewish population, the community, economic life, family and social life, religious life and morality, literature, the fine arts, the Renaissance in daily life, and the world of science. In the last of these there is a section on medical science and physicians, but it occupies only six pages.

However, this book, which appeared first in Hebrew, is an important contribution to Renaissance studies, and all those concerned with the history of medicine or science during this period must consult it. It is a scholarly work, which has already enjoyed wide appeal.

DIETLINDE GOLTZ, JOACHIM TELLE and HANS J. VERMEER, *Der alchemistische Traktat "Von der Multiplikation" von Pseudo-Thomas von Aquin*, (*Sudhoffs Archiv*, Beiheft 19), Wiesbaden, Steiner, 1977, 8vo, pp. vi, 173, DM. 48.00 (paperback).

Thomas Aquinas is not usually associated in people's minds with alchemy, but this treatise has been ascribed to him since the fourteenth century. The ascription was the more readily accepted as genuine since Aquinas had discussed alchemy in the course of his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*. Moreover, the treatise was not a tissue of mystifications like many other writings in the same genre but showed the author to be an independent thinker and experimenter with a fairly lucid style and an ambition to benefit the poor and down-trodden rather than to enrich the wealthy and powerful. The editors of the text, which appears in Latin, German, and Italian, show the ascription to be untenable and list a number of verbal parallels from similar writings to indicate the date, after Aquinas' death, when it was compiled. The preliminary studies contributed by the three collaborators are a model of sobriety and clarity and deal with authorship, sources, literary form, content, and diffusion of the work. The actual Latin text is based on fourteen manuscripts, one of them from the Wellcome Institute, whilst the sole surviving Italian version also belongs to the Wellcome. The study closes with a glossary of terms in Latin, German, and Italian, and a copious bibliography.

RONALD C. FINUCANE, *Miracles and pilgrims. Popular beliefs in medieval England*, London, Dent, 1977, 8vo, pp. 248, £6.95.

Many have written on medieval medical miracles, but few have been as thorough as the author of this book. He has investigated over three thousand miracles attributed to saints after their deaths, and bases his discussion of pilgrims, beliefs, miracles, and healing upon an analysis of them. Each saint's cult had its own history, and devotees varied in class, sex, and illness according to the shrine. Although the main purpose of the latter was therapeutic, political ends, spiritual comfort, and other subsidiary needs were also satisfied. As the author points out, the scenes at curative shrines are worthy of close examination because they tell us a lot about medieval people. As far as the history of medieval medicine and the psychology of the medieval individual are concerned, a deeper study by a medical scholar, alone or in collaboration, will add to Mr. Finucane's pioneer research. There is obviously need for further investigations