

Book Reviews

The translation is preceded by a short historical note on Maimonides, a brief description of the background to *Mishnah Torah* and a glossary of technical terms for those not acquainted with Jewish terminology. Although the terseness of the Hebrew language and the difficulties of rendering it into English are referred to, the translation is readable and lucid. There is, however, no indication of the original from which the translation has been made. It is unfortunate that the text has minimal notes – further annotation would have enhanced what is a useful and scholarly piece of work. We hope that Dr. Russell and Rabbi Weinberg are still sufficiently enthusiastic to give us translations to some of the remaining parts of Maimonides' great work, which aroused so much controversy and interest when it first appeared.

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K. GANZINGER, M. SKOPEC, and H. WYKLICKY (editors), *Festschrift für Erna Lesky zum 70. Geburtstag*, Vienna, Brüder Hollinek, 1981, 8vo, pp. [iv], 212, front., [no price stated].

The *Festschrift*, a device that seems to be more common in Continental than in Anglo-American realms, provides a means whereby the world of learning can commemorate those whom it admires and can at the same time form new estimates of their accomplishment or influence. The newly issued tribute to Professor Erna Lesky exemplifies these characteristics.

The brief introductory biography mentions Professor Lesky's early inclination toward paediatrics, which was to provide the foundation of one of her subsequent historical interests. It goes on to cite her important work on occupational medicine, on Austrian public health, and on the Vienna schools of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as her celebrated reconstruction of the institute over which she presided for almost two decades. The terminal listing (pp. 193–203) allows the reader to learn in full detail the directions of her astounding productivity.

The text proper is composed of eighteen essays, arranged tactfully in alphabetical order. As might be expected, these papers are linked in many ways to Professor Lesky's interests. An opening salvo by Ackerknecht interprets sympathetically the psychiatric antics of Wilhelm Reich, and demonstrates Reich's resemblance to Mesmer. Antall describes the contrasts in the life of Semmelweis and the contrasts between Vienna and Budapest. An essay by Roth, based on graduation oaths taken by central and eastern European physicians, shows surprising persistence of pre-communist wording in the U.S.S.R. until recent decades, and long duration of Austrian influence in Balkan countries. Belloni, in describing the discovery of iron in living creatures, leads the reader from Malpighi and the Bolognese virtuosi Galeazzi and Menghini to the modern work by Buchner. Schadewaldt's paper on representation of infectious disease in works of art contains some interesting observations about syphilis and plague. A contribution by Schweppe and Probst examines Störck's researches in experimental pharmacology. Stevenson compares the therapeutic nihilism of Dietl with that of Osler. Temkin, in presenting some moral implications of the concept of disease, asserts that "a natural history of disease" in the strict sense of complete independence from culture, is a fiction. Rothschild's paper on the problem of relevance considers changed values, especially in the eighteenth and subsequent centuries. There are contributions by Buess on occupational medicine, by Ganzinger on Frank, by Koelbing on rectors' addresses, by Simmer on endocrinology, and by Wondrak on early surgical and obstetrical teaching in Moravia.

The interest and appropriateness of the collection has done justice to Professor Lesky.

Saul Jarcho
New York

R. B. OUTHWAITE (editor), *Marriage and society. Studies in the social history of marriage*, London, Europa, 1981, 8vo, pp. viii, 284, £19.50.

The eleven essays brought together in this scholarly if somewhat disconnected volume bring to light, or bring into focus, much about the modulation of marriage, and its relations to

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sexuality, the law, religion, and economic change, that was little known or little regarded before. Lloyd Bonfield, for example, shows that strict settlement came to predominate amongst larger landowners considerably earlier than previously thought – immediately after the Restoration. Roger Lee Brown reveals the surprising popularity of Fleet weddings in Hanoverian London – in excess of 6,000 a year. Vivien Brodsky Elliott shows what a large proportion of migrant women in late Tudor and early Stuart London had a free hand in choice of marriage partner, precisely because of the decease of their fathers. T. C. Smout demonstrates the steeply rising percentage of marriages in Victorian Scotland that were irregular (i.e., not conducted by clergy), strictly speaking illegal, yet never considered invalid.

And yet, almost with one voice, the contributors also bewail their ignorance and puzzlement. After beautifully demonstrating that the rising population of Georgian England was largely due to the parallel and related phenomena of earlier marriage, marriage amongst a higher proportion of the population, and rising bastardy, E. A. Wrigley confesses that all this amounts not to an explanation but an *explicandum*. Similarly, L. A. Clarkson raises but does not solve the conundrum that post-Famine Ireland combined an exceptionally high proportion of unmarried adults, yet an unusually high fertility amongst the married. Likewise, Martin Ingram neatly charts the decline of “spousals” between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, but fights shy of any secular social explanation.

Why this diffidence and humility? It is partly because contributors rightly recognize the shortcomings of their statistics. Partly also, “explaining” individual marital and sexual behaviour can be so question-begging. Kathleen M. Davies, in an excellent revisionist essay, shows there was nothing very novel, or very Puritan, about “Puritan” marriage advice literature in early modern England. And, in any case, she asks, did such books change the way people behaved? Did they not rather confirm what people did anyway, or confirm the *stereotypes* of proper behaviour, what you thought your neighbour ought to be doing? Similarly, Christopher Brooke uses largely literary evidence to show the growing importance of “consent” in medieval bonding. But, he asks, did life follow art, or art life, or did literature portray a golden world all of its own? In all this there is an element of once bitten, twice shy. For, as the editor, Brian Outhwaite notes, the last synthetic explanatory overview to have been offered, Lawrence Stone’s *The family, sex and marriage*, has proved such a leaky vessel that historians are now rather chary about launching themselves on to the seas of speculation.

Yet this is not to say the volume contains no broad insights. Two press through again and again. One is a vindication of Malthus’s idea of the power of “moral restraint”: many of these studies show communities successfully regulating the age of marriage to harmonize with economic opportunities and other social arrangements. The other is the enduring vitality and validity of plebeian and popular concepts of what constituted a binding union (still in nineteenth-century Scotland the evidence of the freely given consent of both parties was, *de facto*, witness enough to wedlock). The very conflicting claims of superior powers – state, church, parents, and families – gave true lovers, and the unscrupulous, a lasting breathing-space.

Two small grumbles about what is otherwise a stimulating collection of essays, commendable for its coverage of Wales, Scotland, France, and the U.S.A. as well as England (though direct comparison remains a rarity). First, in discussions of demographic change, few of these authors take biological and medical evidence very seriously. Second, there is a rather sad division here between “numerate” historians, backed with their computers, and “literate” ones, using individual testimony and literary evidence. It is very desirable that this gap be bridged.

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EVAN M. MELHADO, *Jacob Berzelius, the emergence of his chemical system*, Stockholm, Almqvist & Wiksell; Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1981, 8vo, pp. 357, front., Sw. Kr. 225.00.

Although J. J. Berzelius (1779–1848) was a Swedish physician, his importance for medical