

nearer to the race of apes" (*Ueber die körperliche Verschiedenheit des Negers vom Europäer*, 1785, pp. 77–8).

Other parts of Soemmerring's work benefited from the unique opportunities for zootomy that he had through Friedrich's menagerie. The anatomical preparation of an elephant from there put Soemmerring (in this respect) on a par with contemporary luminaries, such as Camper and John Hunter, who had had the luck to perform such a rare dissection before. As Manfred Wenzel documents, this "Kassel elephant's" skull was subsequently borrowed by Goethe, who used it for his comparative studies on the intermaxillary bone. Oehler-Klein records that it was the dissection of a half-blind squirrel that gave Soemmerring the first clues to his discovery of the crossing over of fibres in the chiasmus of the optic nerves.

Yet the limits of support for science, and its severe restriction under Friedrich's son and successor, Wilhelm IX, are apparent as well. Stimulated by the first balloon ascent by the Montgolfier brothers, Soemmerring, his friend Georg Forster (who was made professor of natural history in Kassel in 1778), and the physicist Georg Christoph Lichtenberg of nearby Göttingen experimented successfully with small balloons made from animal bladders or amnion. Yet, as Wenzel points out in an essay on these trials, Soemmerring was unable to raise enough money for a large balloon flight. The *Hessische Beiträge zur Gelehrsamkeit und Kunst*, a typical Enlightenment journal of the Kassel professors (analysed by Enke), was only half-heartedly supported by Friedrich and did not survive beyond its second volume in 1787. More importantly, failing to attract sufficient numbers of students, the whole Collegium Carolinum was eventually closed down. In 1785 most of its professors were transferred to the University of Marburg. Two years later the Accouchier- und Findelhaus was shut, the anatomical theatre dismantled and rebuilt in Marburg. In 1784 Soemmerring had already followed a call to Mainz, opening a new page of his *Stammbuch* (which is in part reproduced

and examined as a biographical source by Enke). Forster had departed for his new post in Vilna earlier the same year. The decision of the two friends to leave Kassel was facilitated by their disappointed turning away from the local Freemasons and Rosicrucians. They had been deeply involved in both fraternities, Forster as an orator among the former, Soemmerring as circle director of the latter, as Irmtraut Sahmland shows in a fine discussion of this obscure subject, based chiefly on the surviving protocols of the secret meetings.

On the whole the "Soemmerring historians", drawing largely upon correspondences and archival sources, provide a good example of studying eighteenth-century science in its political, cultural, and religious contexts, with a feel for complexity and necessary detail. Their volume should be welcomed as a solid contribution to our understanding of the late Enlightenment.

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L S Jacyna, *Philosophic Whigs: medicine, science and citizenship in Edinburgh 1789–1848*, Wellcome Series in the History of Medicine, London and New York, Routledge, 1994, pp. vii, 213, £50.00 (0-415-03614-3).

Edinburgh has often been praised as the Athens of the North for its patrician culture. Yet, even in the heyday of the Scottish Enlightenment and in its sequel, the Celtic twilight, the city was two-faced. It was notorious for sex and violence. One estimate of 1842 alleged that there were no fewer than 200 brothels in the New Town alone. Deacon Brodie, an eighteenth-century respectable cabinet-maker and town councillor by day, was a burglar at night; he was the model for Robert Louis Stevenson's Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. In the 1820s Burke and Hare, commissioned to find bodies for Robert Knox's class in human anatomy, graduated from robbing graves to committing murder. Such low life has little appeal for Jacyna, who has taken his cue from

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Henry Cockburn who claimed in 1856 that in the 1790s the Whigs in Edinburgh were few and embattled, fighting for their views and careers against the dominant Tories who exploited the fears aroused in Britain by the execution of Louis XIV and the Terror. Cockburn identified John Allen and John Thomson, of the medical profession, as active and fearless in the Whig cause. Though much has been written about the early Edinburgh Reviewers and about Dugald Stewart and John Playfair, their Whig mentors in the University, Allen and Thomson have been unjustly neglected.

Jacyna's book is mainly devoted to the careers in Edinburgh of John Thomson (1765–1846) and his family, with one chapter about John Allen, a close friend of Thomson, a physiologist, and in the early 1790s a Friend of the People. They are characterized as philosophical Whigs who believed in citizenship, freedom, liberty, reason and science. Jacyna shows that Allen, with his reputed atheism and his public materialism, found it possible to survive as a lecturer in physiology in hostile and Tory Edinburgh only from 1794 to 1802, when he joined the Holland House coterie in London and abandoned medicine. In contrast, Thomson not only survived in Edinburgh: he prospered to the tune of suggesting and occupying three medical chairs, namely, surgery at the College of Surgeons (1804–21), military surgery (1806–22) and general pathology (1831–42) at the University. Much of Jacyna's book is devoted to the ways in which Thomson acted as an entrepreneur in a political environment that was often hostile and a medical one that was acrimoniously competitive. Jacyna argues convincingly that Thomson's Whiggery crucially benefited his career: he owed both his University posts to his Whig chums in government who created Regius chairs for him. Apropos Whig science in Edinburgh, Jacyna confesses that he cannot identify any particular doctrine as characteristic; but, in the case of Thomson, he sees the Whiggery as most manifest in Thomson's debts in his teaching to Stewart's philosophy of mind.

Jacyna sells the Thomson medical dynasty a little short in two respects. His terminus date is 1848 when Allen Thomson, John's second surviving son named after John Allen, left Edinburgh University, where he was a professor of physiology, for the chair of anatomy at Glasgow. There Allen joined his elder brother William (1802–52) who was professor of the practice of medicine. Though Jacyna is illuminating on the Thomson sons before they went to Glasgow, he says little about their activities there. In Edinburgh in the 1820s John Thomson was mentor to two adopted medical sons, Robert Carswell and John William Turner. The former became the first professor of pathological anatomy at University College, London, a hot-bed of Edinburgh Whiggery. In 1831 Turner became the first occupant of the Regius chair of surgery at Edinburgh University, a post created by Thomson's influence with the Whig government. As with the two Thomson sons, Jacyna says little about the peaks of the careers of Carswell and Turner. That said, one welcomes the care and competence with which Jacyna has drawn on a wide range of unpublished and published sources (both modern and ancient) to produce a dependable and perceptive account of an important Scottish medical family.

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Arthur MacGregor (ed.), *Sir Hans Sloane: collector, scientist, antiquary*, London, British Museum Press in association with Alistair McAlpine, 1994, pp. 308, illus., £50.00 (0-7141-2085-5).

According to Horace Walpole, Hans Sloane valued his collections "at fourscore thousand; and so would anybody, [he continued,] who loves hippopotamuses, sharks with one ear, and spiders as big as geese!" Many, like Walpole, thought them highly amusing. But beyond satirical mirth, what significance did Sloane's museum have for his contemporaries, and what has been its lasting importance? This