

Insgesamt hat Laslett kein in sich geschlossenes Buch vorgelegt. Vielfach dominieren doch die Einzelinformationen, wobei er besonders auf die Verhältnisse in England und Deutschland eingeht. Das sollte aber den insgesamt sehr positiven Eindruck nicht verwischen, zumal die Forschungen zur Geschichte des Alters noch lange nicht abgeschlossen sind. Letztlich ist es schade, daß der Autor einen Teil der neueren Literatur zu diesem spannenden und wichtigen Thema nicht zur Kenntnis genommen hat.

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Jordan Goodman, *Tobacco in History. The Cultures of Dependence*, Routledge, London 1993, XII + 280 S., geb., 40 £.

Jordan Goodman has provided an ambitious history of a commodity in which he outlines the role of tobacco from its religious and social uses in Amerindian society to the global selling and manufacturing efforts of twentieth-century multinationals. The book makes fascinating reading, offering both a mass of information and a well-coordinated argument. It also provides a type of history which might prove popular in future years, as it enables grand themes to be attached to a specific subject matter over wide geographical boundaries and through lengthy chronological periods.

There are two aspects to the book. One is that various academic concerns can be attached to, and unified by, the history of tobacco so that Goodman sees the book as having major relevance for the study of colonialism, cultural contact, consumption and its meanings and the growth of big business. Secondly, as a history of tobacco in itself the unifying theme is, as indicated by the subtitle, one of dependence. Primarily this has been economic, particularly for government, farming, manufacturing and retailing revenues and profits, but at other times groups have been medically, socially and religiously dependant, and now consumers are seen as being addicted or reliant on tobacco for physical and psychological reasons.

A brief introductory chapter outlines the botanical, chemical and pharmacological dimensions of tobacco, as well as showing the immense importance of the plant for today's economies, both national and international. The next chapter describes the almost universal use of tobacco in Amerindian cultures. It operated on many levels, embracing the symbolic, medicinal, hallucinogenic, ceremonial, social, religious, mythical and supernatural. These uses could not be separated from one another as the shamanistic ritual combined the drugs many functions and enabled the spiritual world to communicate to the individual, through the shaman. For the European explorers who first appeared in both South and North America at the end of the fifteenth century, it was the medical or healing properties of tobacco that most impressed them. Although sailors were quick to start chewing and smoking to relieve hunger and restore spirits, it was the intellectual assimilation of the herb that aided its rapid diffusion across sixteenth century European culture. Tobacco fitted easily into the European medical tradition and despite the occasional opposition voiced against its use it was accepted as a popular herbal panacea by most social classes.

Precisely when tobacco's use transferred from the therapeutic to the recreational is unclear, but it does appear to have become an item of mass consumption by the mid-seventeenth century. Goodman suggests that it is unlike whether historians will ever know about the existence of gender or age prohibitions before the nineteenth century, but the patchy evidence that is available suggests that »specific social proscriptions, if they existed at all, were unimportant« (S. 63). This period, though, did see the expan-

sion of tobacco markets as Europeans spread the drug around the world through their colonial possessions and trading links. At the same time the consumption of tobacco became increasingly ritualised, particularly with the use of snuff, which was much more popular than smoking or chewing in many societies. More recently, the many forms of tobacco consumption have converged as the cigarette now accounts for around 85 per cent of all production. The developments in farming, manufacturing and marketing techniques necessary for this phenomenon are charted in the fourth and ninth chapters. Particular attention is given to James B. Duke, the founder of the American Tobacco Company, whose aggressive organisational and advertising strategies Goodman sees as being crucial to both the massive expansion in his own market share around the turn of the century and the growth of cigarette sales as a whole.

Two more chapters are devoted to the cultivation of tobacco. The plant, Goodman argues, was crucial to European colonial development, and this is a fact which has been somewhat neglected in the study of the early history of, say, the Chesapeake regions of North America or the early development of the Caribbean islands before the arrival and dominance of sugar. Tobacco farming spread to other parts of the world, notably China and India, which are now the two largest producers, but the growth across Europe was limited by a number of states who did not want to lose the revenues from import duties. The attitude of the British government to tobacco consumption and production seems to have been especially influenced by fiscal concerns. Tobacco culture in North America saw the emergence of huge plantations during the time of slavery, but since then fragmentation has occurred as few economies of scale have been available in the farming of the plant until very recently. Goodman points to the irony of the situation where multinationals manufacture on a mass scale, generating enormous profits, whereas the farming culture has consisted of small-scale enterprises with low monetary returns.

The book covers an immense amount of ground and is essentially directed by the secondary literature. Whilst this brings together many disparate studies and synthesises them in a useful way, there is a tendency to point to certain areas and topics without actually answering them. The gender aspect of tobacco history leaves many gaps and the narrative of developments in Asia, Africa and the Far East, which usually appear at the end of each chapter, does become a bit descriptive. Perhaps one would have liked a book of this size and scope to pursue these unexplored areas further but, as Goodman makes clear, much research still needs to be done. Taken as a whole, this is a highly recommendable piece of academic work. The ambitious agenda which Goodman sets himself has been fulfilled and he provides an interesting analysis to the areas which he claims his work has relevance. He successfully combines the various topics into a narrative that will appeal to not only the academic historian, but also to the general reader as he frequently relates tobacco's history to the current-day concerns over the drug.

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Gerhard Jaritz/Verena Winiwarter (Hrsg.), *Umweltbewältigung. Die historische Perspektive*, Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, Bielefeld 1994, 177 S., 5 Abb., Pb., 28 DM.

Die Umweltgeschichte ist ein noch recht neues Gebiet der historischen Forschung, dessen Konturen und Inhalte vielfach noch verschwommen wirken. Diese Schwäche wird mit der zunehmenden Zahl von Forschungen und Veröffentlichungen abgebaut werden,