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0521560705 - Institutions of Confinement: Hospitals, Asylums, and Prisons in Western Europe and North America, 1500-1950

Edited by Norbert Finzsch and Robert Jutte

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A major interdisciplinary study of the development of hospitals, insane asylums, and prisons in North America and Western Europe, this book resulted from discussions between its two editors about their work on the history of hospitals, poor relief, deviance, and crime, and a subsequent conference held in June 1992 at the German Historical Institute, Washington, D.C, that attempted to assess the impact of Foucault and Elias. Eighteen contributors from six different countries with backgrounds in history, sociology, criminology, and public health utilize various methodological approaches and reflect the various viewpoints in the theoretical debate over Foucault's contribution to historical research.

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PUBLICATIONS OF THE GERMAN HISTORICAL INSTITUTE
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Edited by Detlef Junker
with the assistance of Daniel S. Mattern

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Preface

This book is the result of discussions between its two editors immediately following completion of work on the history of hospitals, poor relief, deviance, and crime. Both of us had also contributed to the current reassessment of Michel Foucault's and Norbert Elias's work, which continues to dominate cultural and medical history as well as the social sciences more generally. While assessing the impact of these two intellectuals in the early 1990s, it became evident that much more work remained to be done. David J. Rothman's book *The Discovery of the Asylum* (1971) and Pieter Spierenburg's monograph *The Spectacle of Suffering* (1984) pioneered the subject and began to ask the right questions. These in turn provoked further research. It was this need for an even broader interdisciplinary approach, more than any other aspect, that was our main concern as we developed the concept for the conference on "The Prerogatives of Confinement: Social, Cultural, Political, and Administrative Aspects of the History of Hospitals, Carceral and Penal Institutions in Western Europe and North America" held at the German Historical Institute in Washington, D.C., June 6–9, 1992.

The chapters in this book are, with one exception, substantially revised versions of papers delivered at this conference. The editors are grateful to the German Historical Institute (GHI) and the Robert Bosch Foundation in Stuttgart for their generous financial support of the conference. The editors also would like to acknowledge the continued support of Hartmut Lehmann, the former director of the GHI. His wide-ranging scholarly interests and his open-mindedness made projects of this kind feasible. The staff of the GHI contributed its time and energy to the preparation of the manuscript. Particular thanks go to Daniel S. Mattern, who rendered the often difficult texts into readable English, and Pamela B. Abraham, who assisted along the way. Finally, we wish to thank the present director of the GHI, Detlef Junker, for his cooperation in the publication of this book.

The editors also wish to thank those who gave papers at the conference and who, for various reason, are not represented here. Finally, we owe a considerable debt to all those who commented on the papers, contributed to the discussions at the various sessions, and have generously allowed us to draw on their remarks in the revised versions of the essays.

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The essays published in this book reflect the vast range of interests, both chronological and topical, represented at the meeting, where social and medical historians together with social scientists and criminologists embarked on a quest to furnish fresh perspectives for examining sources and for reexamining historical assumptions about the relations between hospitals and prisons, thus contributing to the development of the field of interdisciplinary and comparative history. The present book, furthermore, allows comparisons to be made among different methodological approaches to this theme, which in turn will not fail to generate future research.

Stuttgart and Hamburg,
May 1996

Robert Jütte
Norbert Finzsch

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