

P O L S K O -
N I E M I E C K I E
T O W A R Z Y S T W O
H I S T O R I I
M E D Y C Y N Y



D E U T S C H -
P O L N I S C H E
G E S E L L S C H A F T
F Ü R G E S C H I C H T E
D E R M E D I Z I N

**15th International Conference
of the German-Polish Society for the History of Medicine**

Poznan University of Medical Sciences

In co-operation with:

Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg German Historical Institute, Warsaw

Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw

9-11 September 2015, Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, Poland

Jewish–German–Polish: histories and traditions in medical culture(s)

Jewish culture is an integral part of European culture as present in the history of both Eastern and Western Europe. For a vast number of contingent, historical reasons, it has had special connections to Polish and German culture. This is true with respect to tolerance, assimilation, and acculturation, as well as regarding the history of segregation and persecution, which culminated in the mass-murder and genocide in the 20th century, and continued after the World War II leading to new waves of Jewish migration, having great impact on science.

Jewish culture is as much a common link in the history of Poland and Germany respectively, as it is a link connecting both national cultures. When in medieval times Jews migrated from Germany (Ashkenaz) to Poland, their German dialect evolved into Yiddish as a fusion language of German, Hebrew, and Slavic components. Jewish communities developed in different regional neighborhoods of Austrian, Belarusian, Prussian, Lithuanian, Polish, Ukrainian, etc. origin. Jews thus had been cross-border mediators right since medieval times. On the other hand, Jewish culture and communities also differed in German and Polish historical contexts. While in German territories the Jewish part of the population had been comparatively small, in Warsaw until the German invasion in 1939 it spanned about one third of the population. The East European “Shtetl” is a Jewish community of its own, one not paralleled by a comparable phenomenon in German history.

Even though there is no isolated history of Jewish medical culture(s), the context of medicine and health provides a starting focal point to re-consider the impact of Jews and Jewish culture on Polish, German and Central European history, and vice versa. Learned Jews played an eminent role within the vast process of transformation from the ancient Mediterranean to the medieval medicine of transalpine Europe. Since the Middle Ages disintegration of Jews had been leading to the formation of special Jewish communities that had to develop their own institutional framework of health care services, complying to their religious beliefs and practices. Therefore, there have been strong relations between religion, medicine and

health care, while welfare was very much contingent on the social structure of communities practicing it as a common challenge. Since the 19th century academic training promising professional career as a physician or medical scientist had been a major factor of Jewish acculturation.

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At the same time, since the medieval discourse on the “limpieza de sangre” up to the 20th century discourses on racial hygiene and eugenics, medicine had been engaged in defining and deprecating the Jewish body as the foreign and dangerous object, thus fuelling anti-Judaic and racist social practices. The latter had a multifaceted impact on medical history, among others legally, through bioethical considerations influencing science, and socially, through emigration of Jewish medical scientists from the German Reich.

Jewish history as a part of Polish and German history and vice versa is thus to be considered as a matter of “longue durée” – including the problem of essential change regarding intra- cultural coherence as well as the inter-cultural relatedness of German, Polish, Jewish, and medical history.

The conference aims at addressing a long period of shared history without ignoring its felonious turns. In particular, we would encourage papers that explore:

- 1) **Jewish medical traditions** in either German or Polish historical contexts, including the influence of religion on healthcare and prevention, preferably in a comparative perspective
- 2) **Medical education and research** as means of acculturation and transfer of knowledge across national, cultural and language-related borders; academic career and professional specialization of Jews in Germany and Poland; the impact of physicians and medical scientists of Jewish origin on medical research
- 3) **Doctor-patient relationships** within medical practice in Jewish and non-Jewish communities and institutions (hospitals and other healthcare centers)
- 4) **Constructing the Jewish Other:** medical perceptions of the Jewish body and the Jewish mind; leitmotif of a Jew in anti-Semitic and hygiene-related stereotypes in visual and literary arts
- 5) **Physicians and the debate on Jewish identity:** hybrid identities and multiple loyalties in Jewish–German–Polish histories; medical aspects of segregation, integration and assimilation of Jews within non-Jewish societies
- 6) **Medical aspects of the Holocaust**

The submissions should be either in German, Polish or English (during the conference there will be simultaneous translation of Polish and German papers into English). It is also possible to present a poster. **Please send a 200-500 words abstract to**

[<jewishculturemedicine2015@gmail.com>](mailto:jewishculturemedicine2015@gmail.com) **by the 15th of March 2015.** Participants will be notified by the end of March. Conference fee is 50 Euros/200 PLN and includes lunch and drinks.

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Organization Committee (in alphabetical order)

Dr. Ute Caumanns (Treasurer of the German-Polish Society for the History of Medicine, Heinrich Heine Universität Düsseldorf)

PD Dr. Fritz Dross (Vice-President of the German-Polish Society for the History of Medicine, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg)

PD Dr. Ruth Leiserowitz (Vice-Director of the German Historical Institute, Warsaw)

Dr. Joanna Lusek (Upper Silesia Museum, Bytom)

Prof. dr. hab. Anita Magowska (Head of the Chair of the History of Medical Sciences, Poznan University of Medical Sciences)

Dr. Marcin Moskalewicz (President of the German-Polish Society for the History of Medicine, Poznan University of Medical Sciences)

Prof. dr. hab. Paweł Śpiewak (Director of Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw)

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