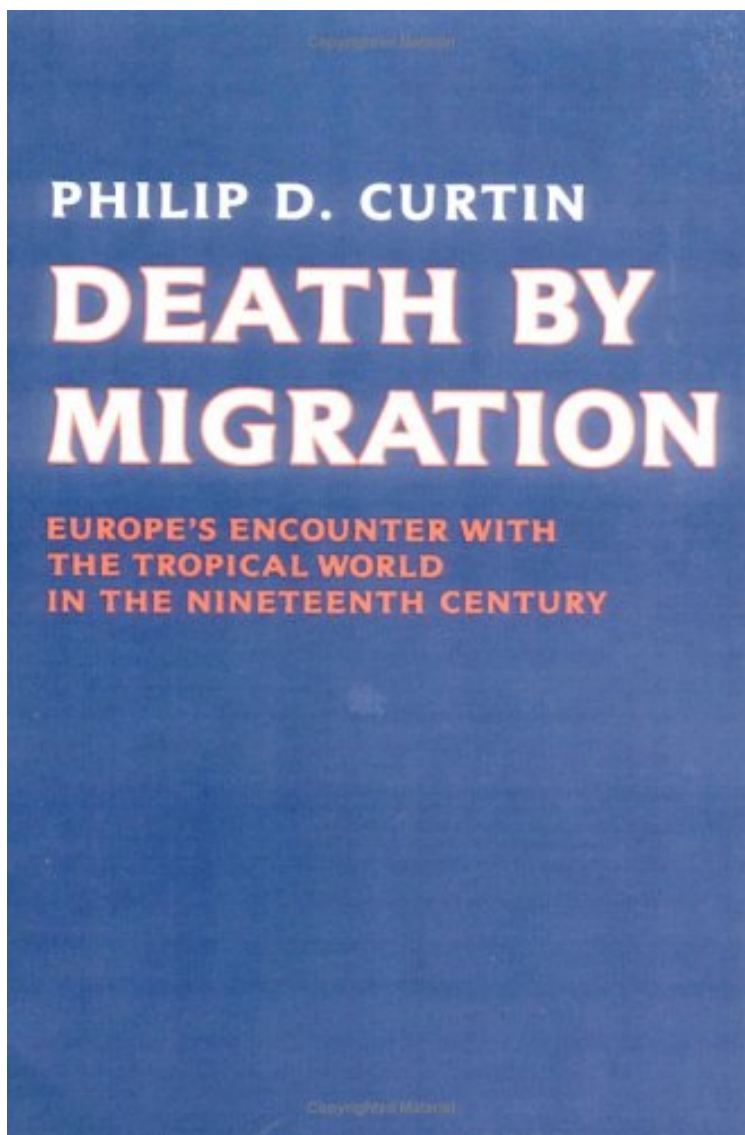


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# Death by Migration: Europe's Encounter with the Tropical World in the Nineteenth Century

*Philip D. Curtin*

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From the beginning of European trade and conquest overseas, Europeans have known they died from the effect of the strange "climate." Later, they came to understand that it was disease, not climate, that killed, but the fact remained that every trading voyage, every military expedition beyond Europe, had its price in European lives lost. For European soldiers in the tropics at the beginning of the nineteenth century, this added cost in deaths from disease--the "relocation cost"--meant a death rate at least twice that of soldiers who stayed home. This book is partly a statistical exposition of the changing death rates of European Algeria, the British West Indies, and southern India--by cause of death from disease--set against the comparable figures for those who stayed at home in France or Great Britain. About two-thirds of the book is devoted to a discussion of what Europeans at the time thought about the possible causes of relocation costs and what they did to remedy them in actual medical practice in the colonies.

"Curtin has opened an important line of inquiry into the interpretation of imperial and military history. His work is at its most valuable where it touches precisely on these intersecting domains...Economic and imperial historians will value Curtin's comparisons between French and British colonies where sickness made mockery of the 'white man's burden,' and sanitary engineering and pure water became, in Daniel Headrick's phrase, the principal 'tools of empire.' World historians of the caliber of McNeill and Crosby will welcome Curtin's exposition of a turning point in the history of humanity's relationship with disease...Few reading his book, and entering the tropics, will want to leave home without it." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*"In *Death by Migration*, Philip D. Curtin provides yet another major contribution to historical knowledge. By analyzing the mortality rates and causes of death of British and French troops moving into tropical areas over the course of the nineteenth century, he has convincingly demonstrated the contribution of improvements in hygiene and tropical medicine to the mortality revolution. This is a most fascinating study of medical and demographic history, with the broadest implications for the understanding of European imperial expansion." Stanley L. Engerman, University of Rochester"This book is a carefully reasoned, meticulously researched exercise in quantitative history. Its generalizations are buttressed with ample tables and graphs." *The International History* "There is a lot to appreciate in this brief volume. Like Bates's other work, it is written in clear crisp and efficient prose, and it is theoretically rigorous." *International Journal of African Historical Studies*"Curtin has written a seminal work that will stimulate scholars to undertake further studies of military mortality in other European colonies and empires. In scope, the work should have an impact comparable to that of his *Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*." James L. A. Webb, Jr., *African Studies* "Philip Curtin's methodology, arguments, and compassion...are ripe for contextual review. For data-impooverished historians in search of an understanding of nineteenth-century public health reform, they provide some key institutional chronologies and some somber food for thought." Jo Gladstone, *ISIS*"Philip D. Curtin's book makes important contributions to at least three fields: the history of medicine and public health, historical demography, and the history of European colonialism." *American Historical*