

natural sciences. Wiesing places Andreas Röschlaub in a fourth category of his own who, in discussing the nature of physiology, followed Schelling, but restricted the utility of the natural sciences for medical practice to a propaedeutic role. The practice of medicine, he believed, needed a theoretical foundation of its own, not one derived from the sciences. An interesting sub-theme in Wiesing's study is the reaction of his four groups to Brunonianism, which Röschlaub introduced and Schelling adopted, but which Kant and his followers liked, too.

Wiesing's detailed and systematic survey provides a salutary reminder that Romantic medicine was anything but monolithic and embraced a variety of fundamental positions, of which *Naturphilosophie* was only one. This book is Wiesing's *Habilitationschrift* (thesis for the higher doctorate); it is a worthy example of its kind, and an appropriate first volume in a new series on 'Medizin und Philosophie'. Yet by not having gone further than a conventional discussion and classification of major publications, the author leaves some relevant issues largely untouched, such as to what extent the four groups he recognizes represented actual social networks and schools of medicine, and why it was that philosophers could have exerted such a major influence on German medicine.

Nicolaas Rupke, Göttingen

Michaela Trieb, *Die Medizinische Fakultät der Universität Helmstedt (1576–1810). Eine Studie zu ihrer Geschichte unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Promotions- und Übungsdisputationen, Repertorien zur Erforschung der frühen Neuzeit, Band 14, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1995, pp. 354, DM 138.00 (3-447-03699-0).*

Helmstedt is one of the lost universities of Europe. Founded in 1576 by the Lutheran Duke Julius of Brunswick, it was suppressed in 1810 in the reorganization of the universities of the Napoleonic Kingdom of Westphalia. It was

never a great success. Plague and the Thirty Years War put an end in 1625 to its most promising years, the Dukes of Brunswick were never the richest of princes, and growth was constantly stifled by the arrival of new competitors in the region such as Halle and Göttingen. Rarely more than ten medical students entered a year, and although some teachers enjoyed a more than local fame (notably Herman Conring, Lorenz Heister, the Scot Duncan Liddell, who returned to Aberdeen, and various members of the Meibom family), few had ambition or sought to act on a wider stage. With the ending of the university the town itself sank into a torpor, to gain even more transitory celebrity as the major crossing point on the motorway to Communist Berlin.

Why then should one wish to study the medical life of this most provincial of German universities? Firstly, because it is typical of most European universities in its aims of providing a steady but small flow of state employees, and in its largely local faculty. Secondly, because the marvellous row of medical dissertations from 1585 to 1810 provides a nice indication of the interests and priorities of the average medical man. And thirdly, because of the interaction between the various parts of a "confessional" (here Lutheran) university. Michaela Trieb provides a sound overview of the medical faculty's history, based almost entirely on its archives. She tabulates the numbers of students and professors, publishes the statutes, and provides brief biographies of the professors. Her interest lies in the 495 MD dissertations and the 311 "pro gradu" or preliminary disputations, most of which are now in the Herzog August Library at Wolfenbüttel. Her cataloguing of the theses is excellent, when checked against the more than 50 theses that exist in the Wellcome Library. These formed part of the Medical Society of London's Library, and are all duplicates of theses recorded. Similarly, her exposition of what the theses meant to a student and how they were produced is thorough and convincing.

However, her reliance on archives and theses, and the strict limits she puts to her task,

means that the wider context of medicine at Helmstedt is lost. Conring's defence of Harvey's theory of the circulation of the blood, and the theses that he directed in furtherance of his ideas from 1640 to 1645, needed much more than passing mention, not least since the theses were neglected by Edwin Rosner, Michael Stolleis and, very recently, Roger French in their accounts of Conring's reception of Harvey. One finds little on the relationship between medicine and other parts of the university.

Bökel's anatomy lectures in 1585 were given to more than medical students, following the example of Wittenberg, and Caselius, Helmstedt's own Melanchthon, was using Galen's *Quod animi mores* in his lectures on Greek and on ethics in the 1590s. Much later, Lorenz Heister, professor of medicine, was involved in the initial stages of a theological dissertation by Heinrich von Allwoerden, *Historia Michaelis Serveti*, 1728. The wider concerns of the Meibom family are only hinted at in their short biographies, and even their medical importance is discussed but briefly.

A proper history of medicine at Helmstedt still remains to be written. What we have here is extremely valuable within its own limits, accurate, detailed, and accessible. But it is, as the title of its series proclaims, a *Repertory* of information, and medical historians of early modern Germany should be grateful for all the hard work that has gone into the collection and organization of this material.

Vivian Nutton, Wellcome Institute

F M G Willson, *Our Minerva: the men and politics of the University of London, 1836–1858*, London and Atlantic Highlands, NJ, Athlone Press, 1995, pp. xvii, 363, illus., £45 (0-485-11479-8).

Those academics vexed by the impenetrable fuzziness, interminable delays, and petty politics of today's universities can take some solace in this sobering account of the critical years in the making of London's "metropolitan

university". For more than twenty years, from 1836 to 1858, the well-meaning efforts to define a clear and broad mandate for the University of London were met with exasperating inertia and shifting political support. At stake were such issues as the place of Biblical Studies in the curriculum, the appointment of examiners for degrees, and the admission of its graduates to the privileges enjoyed by Oxbridge contemporaries. Fiercely fought were such matters as the graduates' demand for a role in electing senators as well as a presence in Parliament, and the explosive effort to allow those who had not matriculated from "approved" colleges to take university degrees.

In his Foreword, Negley Harte rightly describes the University of London as "a very strange institution, barely understood by insiders, incomprehensible to outsiders [that] . . . cannot be likened to any other institution" (p. xiv). As an outsider who has waded through many of the same records, I can only confirm the strangeness of an institution that did not teach but granted degrees; whose examiners were drawn from everywhere, it often seemed, except the local faculty; that owned no buildings; and whose authority did not extend over the two affiliated schools that did teach, University College London and King's College. It was, as a recent historian wrote in another connection, "a wonderful piece of British ad-hocery".

The struggle of these years was closely linked to the demands of Dissenters for full equality in higher education, and to the long campaign by general medical practitioners to bring reform to the medical profession. The Whig government's original decision in 1836 to ignore the privately funded "University of London" and King's College and to create an entirely new University of London owed much to the need to found an institution with power to grant degrees, without extending that power to all the hospital medical schools in the city. Against the strong opposition of the royal colleges of medicine and surgery, the University was given the right to confer degrees but, unlike Oxford and Cambridge, the degrees were not to be accepted as licences to practice.