extensive scholarship. Studying medical history, according to Burnham, is useful in that it leads one to a more general inquiry into the past and the history of society, and prompts the consideration of a broader range of ideas, such as the quality of the information we examine. Moreover, it is the ubiquity of disease, its cures and its healers that ensures a receptive audience for the study of the history of health.

Burnham's work is structured around his theory that the history of medicine is analogous to five intertwining dramas, each of which is represented by a separate chapter. The first three dramas are the Hippocratic triad of doctor, patient, and disease, with the remaining two chapters of the book describing the discovery and communication of knowledge, and medicine and society. The metaphor of drama is used to explain another aspect of the appeal of medical history: "one simply gets drawn into the continuing story" (p. 80).

Burnham's other focus amounts essentially to a history of the history of medicine. In other words, this book does not detail the specific events and ideas of the past, though these are used as examples, but rather why and how the history was written. For example, the reader learns how medical history changed from being written by and for physicians to becoming the domain of social historians. The outlook and ideas of the historians, as influenced by their socio-political context, are described far more than the history itself.

This is a densely written book, covering a wide chronology and introducing an abundance of topics in a fairly slim volume. As such it can be difficult to follow in places and the style is often confusing. However, this is an enjoyable read and although the drama metaphor becomes a little overstretched by the end, it does give the work a lively and original tone.

Although the author intends his book for the history of medicine novice, I would recommend it more as a supplement to the study of the subject, rather than as an introduction. A number of important concepts are introduced, such as the idea of framing disease and the question of when discoveries become real, but these are notions perhaps best understood alongside a study of the history itself. In other words, Burnham's work does not particularly add anything new to the historiography, but it does provide an excellent summary of information.

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**Joachim Ritter, Karlfried Fründer** and **Gottfried Gabriel** (eds), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, band 12: W–Z, Basel, Schwabe, 2005, pp. 1555, SFr 368.00, €257.50 (hardback 3-7965-0703-4).

After more than forty years, the *Historisches Wörterbuch* reaches its end with *Zynismus*. Some might consider this appropriate, for cynics might view the whole enterprise as outdated, old-fashioned, and, in the age of the internet, irrelevant to historians and philosophers alike. They would be wrong, for this is a monument of scholarship that provides far more than a summary of past results. Not only do the authors survey the development of philosophy over the centuries, but they frequently provide starting points for further reflection about future directions of research. For those with German, there are inexhaustible riches here, and even those without German may benefit from the considerable bibliographies that accompany each article.

For the historian of medicine, this is perhaps the most valuable volume of all, for it surveys growth (*Wachstum*) and development (*Wirkungsgeschichte* and cognate words), time (*Zeit*), change (*Wechsel*) and interaction (*Wechselwirkung*), in man and woman (*Weiblich*). The world (*Welt*), from its (non-)generation to its future (*Zukunft*/*Weltende*), is here for the contemplation of the cosmopolite (*Weltgesellschaft*), who might be interested in the ways in which the West has defined itself and been defined. One can follow philosophers as they have attempted to define essence (*Wesen*) according to their various understandings of truth (*Wahrheit*). A desire for pleasure (*Wollust*) outstripping well-being



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(*Wohlwollen*) might bring down the wrath of God (*Zorn Gottes*), the object of trust (*Zuversicht*) as well as an actor in a universe (*Wirken Gottes*) filled with objects of wonderment (*Wunderbare*). One can find here information on theories of the welfare state (*Wohlfahrt*) and on the civil polity (*Zivilgesellschaft*), both valuable for pointing to differences between British, American and Continental attitudes. A substantial section is devoted to knowledge (*Wissenschaft*) and its cognates, and reminds us that an abundance of learning or science does not necessarily equate with wisdom (*Weisheit*), let alone with worldly wisdom (*Weltweisheit*). Logicians may deny this (*Widerspruchsfreiheit*).

The whole encylopaedia is a resource for historians as well as philosophers, and should be on the shelves of every major library. Although aimed at a German-speaking audience, its entries range much wider, and show the insular just how varied many of the terms and concepts that we use today have been and are. The editors and the publishers deserve heartfelt thanks.

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**Jeffery Burley** and **Kristina Plenderleith** (eds), *A history of the Radcliffe Observatory, Oxford: a biography of a building*, Oxford, Green College at the Radcliffe Observatory, 2005, pp. viii, 186, illus, £14.50, US$28.00 (hardback 0-9509394). Orders to: The Development Office, Green College at the Radcliffe Observatory, Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6HG; e-mail: development.office@green.ox.ac.uk

The Radcliffe Observatory has been described by some as the finest eighteenth-century building in Oxford, and by Nikolaus Pevsner as architecturally the "finest observatory in Europe". However, there is so much more to the Radcliffe Observatory than the architecture, and this book uses multiple authors and a biographical approach to reveal a fascinating story.

There are three quite different occupations in the 225 years of the Observatory: firstly astronomy and meteorology, secondly medical research, and finally as the centrepiece of an Oxford college. In 1681 Christopher Wren, previously Savilian Professor of Astronomy, advised that an observatory need only be a "little house of boards 12 foot square and 7 foot high with a detachable roof". Edmund Halley built such a structure in 1705.

When Thomas Hornsby became Professor of Astronomy he petitioned the Radcliffe Trustees for money to build an observatory, requesting that there should be a single storey building aligned on an east-west axis. In addition he asked for a large room for experimental philosophy above his residence and a third storey for refractory telescopes, which general plan of the Observatory we see today. Henry Keene produced plans and the foundation stone was laid in June 1772. But, after the ground floor had been built, Keene was replaced by James Wyatt. Wyatt's design for the tower is magnificent. The top floor is based on the Tower of The Winds in Athens but with large windows. Beautiful sculptures of the eight winds encircle its top with Heracles and Atlas supporting a copper globe on the roof. These and the Coade stone signs of the zodiac greatly enhance the neo-classical appearance of the building. The allegorical figures are explained and beautifully illustrated before a chapter on the gardens and grounds leads naturally to a history of the Observers.

Thomas Hornsby started meteorological observations in 1774 and these are part of the longest continuous series of temperature and rainfall records from any one site in the British Isles. As a result, the chapter on meteorological observations makes interesting reading in view of recent controversy about climate change.

By 1928, light and atmospheric pollution was so bad that the Observatory moved to South Africa using funds from the sale of the building to Lord Nuffield, who then donated it to the hospital authorities.

There had been a little teaching of clinical medicine in Oxford before the 1930s but the



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