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BOOK REVIEW

GIMMLER, H. (ed.): JULIUS SACHS UND DIE PFLANZENPHYSIOLOGIE HEUTE. (Special Issue of the Berichte der Physiologisch-Medizinischen Gesellschaft zu Würzburg.) Verlag der Phys. Med. Gesellschaft, Würzburg 1984. 216 pp., 50 figs. Paperbound DM 15,—.

Two colloquia were held in 1982 on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the birth of Julius Sachs. The contributions to the colloquium at Würzburg University and two from Leipzig University, as well as several other commemorative articles are incorporated in this booklet. It is the second monograph devoted to Sachs' work and scientific personality since Pringsheim's book of 1932. The central point of the book is the evaluation of Sachs' contribution to plant physiology viewed from its contemporary state (Pirson). The problem is tackled not only from the viewpoint of the results achieved and the tools used, but is discussed within a broader framework of the historical and philosophical background. Another article is devoted to Sachs' impact on the development of the concept of phytohormones (Hartung). His scientific biography is illustrated in four chapters dealing with Sachs' stay at places important for his education and career: at Wrocław, Praha, Tharandt, Bonn and Würzburg. The final chapter contains a full bibliography and a list of its sources (Gimmler). The reader should also bear in mind that Sachs' work became a yardstick of the progress achieved in various branches of plant physiology over the past hundred and twenty years. The proportions of progress seem to be unequal — a lot in photosynthesis, a negligible step in organogenesis.

The book is attractively produced, with a number of Sachs' illustrations, facsimiles of some of his letters, historical photographs and drawings. The diversity found in the approaches of different authors is not amiss and makes the reading even more attractive. It is a recommended reading for all botanists wishing to get acquainted with history which has become a part of the present.

J. KREKULE (*Praha*)