JUSTUS-LIEBIG-
UNIVERSITÄT
GIESSEN

FAMOUS ALUMNI OF JUSTUS LIEBIG UNIVERSITY GIESSEN

FROM 1607 TO 2011

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FAMOUS ALUMNI OF JUSTUS LIEBIG UNIVERSITY GIESSEN

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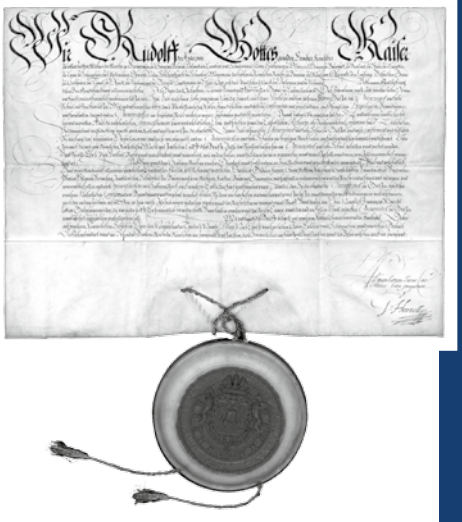
Introduction

Those who have taught, conducted research and studied at Justus Liebig University Giessen (JLU) have made a decisive mark on its history, which goes back more than four hundred years. This booklet pays tribute to some outstanding deceased personae among them.

The combined contribution of all these and other people has given JLU an inimitable profile. This is immediately apparent from the history of its foundation. The typical federal state university in Giessen owed its existence to the initiative of the territorial ruler, Louis IV, Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt. In 1607 he endowed his "Hohe Schule" (literally "high school"), which had been in existence since 1605, with the imperial charter granting it university status.

In past eras, the attraction of a university depended on the reputation of its teaching staff, a situation that has not changed fundamentally over the centuries. The history of JLU has been shaped by a series of outstanding subject specialists, whose renown often extended far beyond Giessen.

At the time of its founding, in its early years, as it became the modern educational institution that it is today or during the student protests in the 1960s – the teaching staff have invariably played a key role in the University's development. They are presented in the first part of this booklet. The second part is devoted to deceased famous people who studied at the University of Giessen.



Imperial Charter of "Ludwigs-Universität" dated 19 May 1607, by virtue of which the "Giessener Hohe Schule" was granted university status.

Balthasar Mentzer I (1565 – 1627)
Protestant theologian

In 1605 Balthasar Mentzer I was teaching theology at Giessen's "illustrious grammar school", the forerunner of the University. A report that he produced that same year dealt with the organisation, the facilities and the teaching staff at the planned new University.

Mentzer can consequently be considered a "Father of the University of Giessen". From 1607 onwards, he was a full professor at the newly established University, playing a highly influential role in shaping the personnel policy, in particular, and hence the attractiveness of the University as a place of study.

Mentzer was a strict defender of Lutheran orthodoxy and even in his early years he was considered an extremely distinguished scholar. As a result of his resolute support for Lutheranism, even after leaving Marburg University, which had become increasingly Calvinistic, he went on to become one of the most influential theologians of his time. He enjoyed the confidence of the Landgrave, who valued his services to the University both as a professor and in its administrative duties.

Mentzer supported the view presented in the Formula of Concord, the Lutheran Church's final piece of symbolic writing. His belief in Christ matched the dogma formulated in that document, which culminates in the Lutheran teachings on the omnipresence of God and the Last Supper. This was the perspective adopted by Mentzer in his numerous, mostly polemic writings; those written in Latin were published by his son in 1669 under the title "Opera theologica latina".

Gregor Horst (Gregor Horstius, 1578–1636)
Physician and anatomist

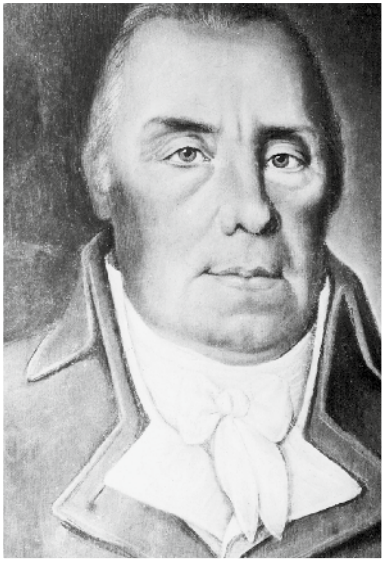
In 1608 Gregor Horst was appointed as a full professor of medicine at the University of Giessen and in 1609 became the personal physician to the Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt. In 1622 he was also appointed as the municipal physician for Ulm. Together with Andreas Vesalius, he is considered to have pioneered modern developments in anatomy.

As a result of his outstanding work as a physician and what was, at the time, a very early rationalisation of empirical medicine, he was dubbed by his contemporaries "Practicus prudens" (Wise Practitioner) and the "German Aesculapius" (Aesculapius = God of Healing).

In keeping with contemporary anatomical practice, Horst conducted Giessen's first public autopsies. In 1608 he established the medical teaching garden (Hortus medicus), which still exists today; it is said to be the oldest university botanical garden that is still in its original location. His textbook of anatomy, the University of Giessen's work "De Natura Humana", was published in Wittenberg in 1612.

His work was clearly inspired by the Basel School represented by Vesalius but was also written with the intention of its being used to teach anatomy at universities. In addition to the teaching of anatomy, Horst concerned himself with the causes of scurvy, a vitamin-deficiency disease, and important infectious diseases, such as measles, German measles, smallpox and the plague.

Johann August Schlettwein (1731–1802)
Political economist



Johann August Schlettwein was a full professor of economic sciences and permanent dean of the Faculty of Economics in Giessen from 1777 to 1785. He is considered to be one of the most important German advocates of physiocracy, a school of economics which views agriculture as the only source of wealth.

During his time at Giessen he produced his two main works "Grundfeste der Staaten oder die politische Ökonomie" (The foundation of states or political economy) (1779) and "Die Rechte der Menschheit oder der einzig wahre Grund aller Gesetze, Ordnungen und Verfassungen" (The rights of mankind or the only true reason for all laws, regulations and constitutions) (1784).

Schlettwein worked very hard to achieve practical improvements in agriculture. As a result, the world's only known attempt at introducing a physiocratic system was made in three villages in Baden. Within the scope of this experiment – which failed – Schlettwein wrote "Die wichtigste Angelegenheit für das ganze Publikum: oder die natürliche Ordnung der Politik überhaupt" (The most important matter for the general public or the natural order of politics in general) (1772).

Schlettwein not only viewed nature and earth as the main sources of all wealth, but also supported free competition based on free trade and commerce. However, the failure of his experiments and the continuation of cameralism meant, among other things, that Schlettwein's role in the history of economics went unrecognised for a long time.

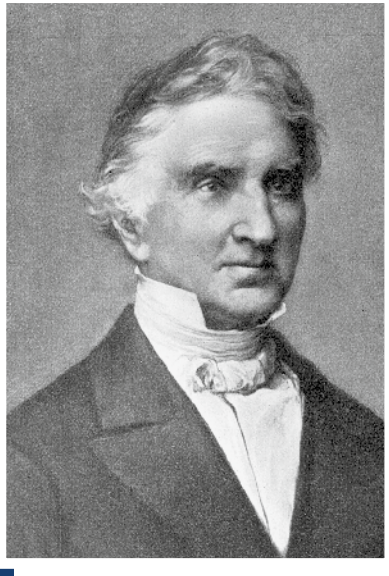
Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker (1784–1868)
Classical philologist and archaeologist

Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker is considered one of the leading German scholars of ancient history. He began his studies in classical philology at the University of Giessen in 1801. In 1803 he was given a teaching position at the Pädagogium, a preparatory school for university entrance, and wrote his doctoral thesis on the portrayal of Odysseus in the Iliad. One year later he took up a post as a private lecturer in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Giessen.

In 1806 Welcker travelled to Italy, where he made the acquaintance of Wilhelm von Humboldt. He spent one year as private tutor to the Humboldt children and soon became a family friend. On the recommendation of Wilhelm von Humboldt, Welcker was appointed professor of Greek literature and archaeology at Giessen in 1809. Archaeology was thus established as a university subject in Germany for the first time. In 1812 Welcker founded the (classical) philology seminar in Giessen, which became the core element in courses for teachers training to work at German grammar schools.

In 1814 he and more than 100 students of the University of Giessen volunteered to serve in a fusilier battalion during the Napoleonic Wars. As a result of his liberal views, Welcker was temporarily arrested during the pursuit of demagogues following the Carlsbad Decrees in 1819. To this day, Welckerstrasse in Giessen offers a reminder of his outstanding achievements.

Justus von Liebig (1803–1873)
Chemist



On the recommendation of Alexander von Humboldt, Justus von Liebig was appointed as a professor at the University of Giessen, where he taught from 1824 to 1852. In 1845 he was elevated to the status of baron. He accepted a professorship in Munich in 1852 and was appointed as President of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences in 1859.

Liebig made groundbreaking discoveries in the field of organic chemistry. Two methodological innovations enabled him to make a decisive improvement in elementary analysis. From the late 1830s Liebig shifted the focus of his research to the field of physiological chemistry, investigating metabolism in plants and animals.

In addition, he reorganised the style of teaching in the University of Giessen chemistry laboratory and very quickly met with great interest and popularity among students. His new teaching method ultimately became a model used throughout the world. As a result of his efforts to enhance the popularity of his subject, Liebig played a key role in ensuring the general recognition of chemistry and modern research in natural sciences as well as their establishment at universities.

Liebig's scientific achievements and his skilful publication strategies earned him considerable recognition and a high level of renown at an early age, both in Germany and elsewhere. To this day, his name stands for enthusiasm for one's work, a thirst for knowledge and an enquiring mind.

Hugo von Ritgen (1811 – 1889)
Architect

Hugo von Ritgen enrolled at the University of Giessen in 1828 to study medicine. However, after four semesters he moved to Darmstadt and turned his attention to mathematics, representative geometry and architectural design. After passing his state examination in architecture, Ritgen was awarded a doctoral degree in Giessen in 1833; two years later he obtained his postdoctoral degree ("Habilitation") in the Faculty of Arts. After an initial period as an associate professor of architecture at the University of Giessen, he was awarded a full professorship in architecture and engineering in 1843. He was later given a professorship in art, which he retained until his death in 1889.

Alongside his work at the University, Ritgen was involved in several associations and became particularly involved in the Giessen trade association and in the Upper Hesse historical association. He was one of the initiators behind the founders of a craftsman school in Giessen, the forerunner of the State School of Engineering and the present-day Technische Hochschule Mittelhessen (University of Applied Sciences).

Ritgen became known far beyond his immediate areas of influence as a result of the restoration of the Wartburg, of which he assumed charge in 1847, making it his life's work. Closer to Giessen, Ritgen also carried out a series of smaller restoration projects, for example at the medieval castle of Gleiberg.

Rudolf von Jhering (1818–1892)
Jurist

Rudolf von Jhering taught law at the University of Giessen from 1852 to 1868 before transferring to Vienna and then to Göttingen. It was in Giessen that he founded modern jurisprudence. His appointment at Giessen is a significant example of the University's progress towards becoming a modern research establishment that recruits its teaching staff nationwide in order to enhance its attractiveness and renown.

Jhering is considered one of the leading German jurists of the 19th century. He exerted considerable influence on the development of modern jurisprudence, through a sociologically founded theory of constitutional law. In his view, law served to protect the individual and social interests by coordinating them and by minimising potential conflict.

Of particular importance was his "discovery" of precontractual liability (referred to as culpa in contrahendo).

Jhering gave his famous lecture "Der Kampf ums Recht" (The Struggle for Law) in Vienna in 1868. Its publication ran to 12 editions in two years and the work was translated into 26 different languages. In his day, Jhering enjoyed considerable worldwide renown and tremendous influence. In 1872 he was raised to the nobility by the Austrian Emperor.

Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen (1845–1923)
Physicist

Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen was a full professor of physics at the University of Giessen from 1879 to 1888 and later taught at the universities of Würzburg and Munich. In 1901 he was awarded the first Nobel Prize in Physics for his discovery of X-rays, the name that he himself used for the discovery that he made at the Physics Institute of the University of Würzburg on 8 November 1895.

While at Giessen, Röntgen was instrumental in obtaining the transfer of the Physics Institute from Frankfurter Strasse into the new University Main Building. During that period, he published some 20 scholarly papers, including studies in which he showed that gases absorb rays of heat and others intended to demonstrate the existence of the magnetic field generated by a displacement current ("Röntgen current").

Numerous distinctions and prizes are still awarded today in honour of Röntgen. These include the Röntgen plaque presented by the city of Remscheid, the Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen Prize awarded by the University of Würzburg and the Röntgen Prize presented by the University of Giessen in recognition of outstanding fundamental research into the physical and biological properties of rays. In addition, a number of German towns and cities, including Giessen, have erected a monument in his honour.

Karl Gustav Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930)
Protestant theologian and church historian

Karl Gustav Adolf von Harnack was a professor ordinarius of church history in Giessen from 1879 to 1886. During this time he made a major contribution to the development of the Theological Faculty. During his time in Giessen student numbers increased from 25 to 108. The university setting allowed him to put his theological and scholarly ideas into practice and to represent the subject of church history in its entire breadth.

Harnack's significance for protestant theology lies primarily in his research into ancient church history and in his concept of the history of dogma. While in Giessen, he gave his highly esteemed lecture on monasticism (1881) and the laudatory speech on the 400th anniversary of Luther's birth (1883).

Following his transfer to the University of Berlin, he made a leading contribution to Prussian scholarship as, for instance, a fellow of the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences, the first President of the Emperor Wilhelm Society (now the Max Planck Society), which was founded in response to his proposal, and the Director-General of the Prussian State Library (today the Berlin State Library).

Harnack was awarded many distinctions, including, for example, the Order Pour le Mérite for Sciences and the Arts in 1902. In 1914 he was raised to the Prussian nobility. The Max Planck Society presents the Adolf von Harnack Medal as the highest award for particular merit.

Wilhelm Maximilian Otto Behaghel (1854–1936)
Germanist

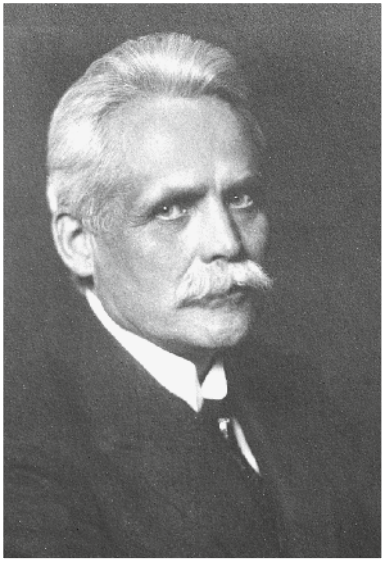
Otto Behaghel was a full professor in Giessen from 1888 until his retirement in 1925. His two main works, "Geschichte der deutschen Sprache" (History of the German language) and the four-volume "Deutsche Syntax" (German syntax), were written during his time in Giessen. The latter work establishes the principles of syntactic research.

Above all, however, Behaghel also distinguished himself as an influential member of the University and the town. He was three times the Rector of the University of Giessen and he was a member of numerous committees and scholarly associations. He was also co-founder of the University Association of Giessen (1918).

During his time in Giessen Behaghel published a number of works. From 1888 to 1892 he was the editor-in-chief of the journal "Germania" and from 1924 to 1933 the editor-in-chief of the "Giessener Beiträge", which is still published today as "Beiträge zur Deutschen Philologie" (Articles on German Philology). Behaghel thus also played a major role in making scholarly writings accessible to broad sections of the public.

In his day, Behaghel was considered a scholar of European standing. He embodied an educated middle-class form of the Ludoviciana, which was recognised as an authority on everything relating to language. Much of what he did for grammar is still relevant today. To pay tribute to Behaghel, a street in Giessen was named after him.

Wilhelm Wien (1864 – 1928)
Physicist



Following his postdoctoral degree ("Habilitation") at the University of Berlin in 1892, Wilhelm Wien worked at the University of Aachen and in 1899 was appointed professor of physics at he University of Giessen, where he inaugurated the new premises of the Physics Institute. On 1 April 1900 he succeeded Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen at the University of Würzburg. In 1919 Wien took up an appointment at the University of Munich, again as Röntgen's successor.

The German physicist's main field of research focused on the regularities of thermal radiation processes, for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1911. In 1893 and 1894 he developed Wien's displacement law and in 1896 Wien's radiation law.

Wien was a convinced devotee of an electromagnetic world view and thus delved intensively into the problems of contemporary ether theories. In 1904 he worked on "Differentialgleichungen zur Elektrodynamik bewegter Körper" (Differential equations for the electrodynamics of moving bodies) and is thus one of the precursors of the special theory of relativity. Wien was a member of the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences from 1910 to 1928.

Robert Sommer (1864–1937)
Psychiatrist

Robert Sommer was appointed professor and director of the newly founded psychiatric clinic at the University of Giessen in 1895.

He made a decisive contribution to the design of the clinic and concentrated on experimental psychiatry. Sommer remained at the University of Giessen until he retired in 1933. In 1904 he and his colleagues convened the first Congress for Experimental Psychology, which led to the founding of the German Association for Experimental Psychology.

In 1915 the Institute for Experimental Psychology and Pedagogy was founded in Giessen. In 1923 Sommer also founded the German Committee for Mental Hygiene and in 1925 the German Association for Mental Hygiene, which he headed until 1933. In 1928 he founded the General Medical Association for Psychotherapy.

Apart from his commitment to psychiatry, Sommer was also interested in other subject areas such as genealogy, philosophy and forensic science, publishing numerous writings in those fields. Furthermore, Sommer made every effort to establish a framework for inventiveness. In 1917 he founded the "Association for the establishment of the German Institute of Inventors" and convened an "Inventiveness Congress" in Giessen in 1922.

Margarete Bieber (1879–1978)
Classical archaeologist

Margarete Bieber came to the University of Giessen in 1920. She was the first female private lecturer at the University of Giessen and she was one of the first women to obtain a postdoctoral degree ("Habilitation") in what was then the German Empire.

Bieber headed the Giessen Institute of Classical Studies from 1928 onwards and was appointed as a scheduled adjunct professor in 1931.

Because of her Jewish origins, the rise of National Socialism in 1933 brought the revocation of her position and Bieber was dismissed. She finally went to the USA as a university lecturer and became a visiting professor in the Department of Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University.

In 1957, to make amends for the earlier injustice, Margarete Bieber was appointed an honorary member of the University of Giessen Senate, the first and only female honorary member to be admitted. She produced more than 350 writings in her decades of work as an archaeologist.

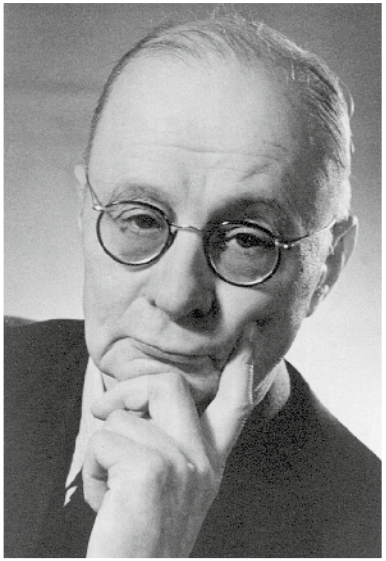
In her honour, the former Art History lecture hall at the University of Giessen was named the Margarete Bieber Hall in 1997 and has since been used for various university events. The Margarete Bieber Programme for Female Postdoctoral Students was also named after her. Margarete Bieber was not only an icon of emancipation. Her particular approach to scholarship and enthusiasm for her profession also set an example for many people.

Robert Feulgen (1884 – 1955)
Physiological chemist, biochemist

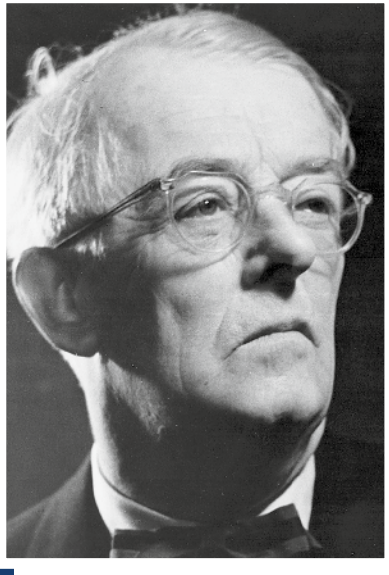
Robert Feulgen joined the Physiological Institute of the University of Giessen in 1919 and obtained his postdoctoral degree ("Habilitation") there in 1923. Four years later he was given a professorship and in 1931 he was appointed dean of the Faculty of Medicine. He remained a professor of the University of Giessen until he retired in 1953.

Feulgen enjoys worldwide fame in biomedicine. He is one of the great pioneers of histochemistry. His discovery of the nucleal reaction (also known as the Feulgen reaction) as a means of demonstrating deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) in the cell nucleus is one of the fundamental methods of cell biology and cell genetics. Together with Martin Behrens, Feulgen conducted pioneering research into the fractionation of cell components.

In addition to his specialist area, Feulgen also worked on projects that were somewhat removed from his actual field of research if special occurrences and situations so required. For instance, he constructed a device that could be used to create a pneumothorax, a means of treating pulmonary tuberculosis, developed a procedure for manufacturing gelatine reliefs for three-colour photography and, during the Second World War, enhanced the procedure for viewing stereoscopic images.



Friedrich Lenz (1885–1968)
Political economist



Friedrich Lenz was appointed to the newly established associate professorship for economics (Siegmund Heichelheim Professorship) at the University of Giessen in 1919. From 1921 onwards he taught as full professor.

The University of Giessen was the main academic sphere of activity for Lenz; he founded the "Giessen School" and spent his most successful years as an academic teacher, scholarly author and publisher, and political publicist here. His scholarly works number more than 200. The "Aufriss der Politischen Ökonomie" (Outline of Political Economy) was published in 1927 as the manifesto of the "Giessen School". In it, he followed the lines of Friedrich List and Karl Marx.

Towards the end of the Weimar Republic and with the onset of the world economic crisis, Friedrich Lenz's views on economics and foreign policy became more radical. In 1932 he founded the "Working Group to Study the Soviet Planned Economy". When the National Socialists came to power in 1933, Lenz was dismissed from the civil service in the federal state of Hesse and was forced into retirement on account of his political unreliability.

Kurt Koffka (1886 – 1941)
Psychologist

Kurt Koffka was a professor at the University of Giessen from 1911 to 1927 and he obtained his postdoctoral degree ("Habilitation") with his study "On the analysis of images and their laws". Together with Max Wertheimer and Wolfgang Köhler, he is considered one of the founders of Gestalt psychology.

In his work "Die Grundlagen der psychischen Entwicklung" (1921) – published in 1928 as "The Growth of the Mind" – he described child development on the basis of Gestalt theory. With this work, Koffka made a key contribution to enhancing the visibility of Gestalt psychology in the USA. In 1927 he ended his employment at Giessen to accept a newly founded chair at Smith College in the USA, which he held until his death. Koffka gained high academic recognition for his comprehensive presentations on Gestalt theory, the first of which – "Grundlegung der Wahrnehmungspsychologie" (Foundation of perception psychology) – was published in 1915 and the last – "Principles of Gestalt Psychology" – he wrote in 1935.

The Faculty of Psychology and Sports Science at the University of Giessen has awarded the Kurt Koffka Medal in memory of the famous German psychologist each year since 2006. The medal is awarded to internationally outstanding scholars for excellent research in the field of perception and/or development psychology.

Georg Haas (1886 – 1971)
Physician, internist

Georg Haas obtained his postdoctoral degree ("Habilitation") at the Medical Clinic in Giessen in 1916. In 1921 he was given an appointment as an adjunct associate professor and three years later as a scheduled associate professor and director of the Medical Polyclinic. From 1950 until his retirement in 1954 Haas was a full professor at the University of Giessen.

Haas pioneered haemodialysis, still the most common form of dialysis, and paved the way for modern nephrology (study of the kidneys). From 1914/15 onwards Haas conducted research into the use of blood purification on people with kidney complaints in Giessen.

External circumstances such as military service and a shortage of suitable hirudin, an anticoagulant, meant that it was not until 1924 that the first haemodialysis was carried out on human beings in Giessen, using a dialysis device with a "chamber system" that he himself had developed. The system, which comprised a series of several glass cylinders, made it possible to conduct blood purification safely. In 1927/28 he conducted further haemodialysis experiments, recording the results in his lengthy handbook article, which he wrote in 1929.

Haas was nonetheless largely denied special appreciation and recognition of his pioneering work both during his lifetime and after his death.

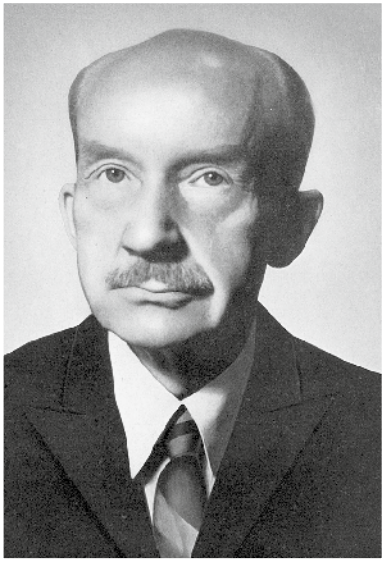
Walther Bothe (1891–1957)
Physicist

Walther Bothe came to the University of Giessen as an associate professor of physics in 1929 after having obtained his post-doctoral degree ("Habilitation") with Max Planck at the University of Berlin in 1925. In 1930 he was appointed as a professor ordinarius and as the director of the Physics Institute in Giessen. It was here that in 1930 he discovered the excited state atomic nucleus, which was instrumental in making Giessen a research centre of considerable contemporary relevance.

From 1932 to 1934 Bothe taught as a professor of physics at the University of Heidelberg and from April 1934 headed the Institute of Physics of the Emperor Wilhelm Society for Medical Research in Heidelberg (part of that institute later became the Max Planck Institute for Nuclear Physics).

In 1954 Bothe was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics for the development of the coincidence method and the associated discoveries. Coincidence measurement is now an important method of studying cosmic rays and all types of nuclear and elementary particle processes.

In recognition of his outstanding achievements at the University of Giessen, Bothe was awarded an honorary doctorate in 1956. Bothe's research made an important contribution to the founding of modern nuclear and particle physics.



Anne-Eva Brauneck (1910 – 2007)
Jurist

Anna-Eva Brauneck was appointed to the Chair of Criminal Law und Criminology at the University of Giessen in 1965, which was later renamed the Chair of Criminology and Criminal Policy. She was the first woman to become a full professor of law in West Germany.

She rendered outstanding services to the German Women Lawyers Association, the German Association for Juvenile Courts and Juvenile Court Assistants, the working group on academic reform policy of the "alternative professors", the Humanist Union and the monthly journal for criminology and penal reform.

Brauneck studied jurisprudence at the University of Heidelberg. She gained a doctorate under Rudolf Sieverts in 1936 and took the Second State Law Examination in 1937. Initially, Brauneck accepted a position in the higher intermediate service of the police force and took the criminal assistant examination. She turned her attention to studies on the family backgrounds of young offenders. Her research was shunned by the National Socialists, as her investigations did not confirm in the "politically correct" thesis of the hereditary nature of criminal tendencies.

After the Second World War, she also studied psychology and was research associate to the Hamburg professor and chairman of the German Rectors' Conference, Rudolf Sieverts. In 1961 she obtained her post-doctoral degree ("Habilitation") for a study on the development of youth offenders. In 1975 she was given emeritus status.

Hans Blumenberg (1920 – 1996)
Philosopher

Hans Blumenberg was appointed professor of philosophy in Giessen in 1960. In 1965 he moved to Bochum and in 1970 to Münster, where he was given emeritus status in 1985. In 1982 he was awarded an honorary doctorate of the University of Giessen.

Blumenberg made major contributions to the history of philosophy. His study on absolute metaphors, conducted with Joachim Ritter, was particularly influential. According to Blumenberg, the perception of reality as a whole is shaped by the distinctness and meaning of these metaphors.

One focus of his diverse explorations of the history of philosophy was the transformation between the middle ages and the modern age (The Legitimacy of the Modern Age, The Genesis of the Copernican World). In later studies (Work on Myth, Out of the Cave) Blumenberg increasingly underlined the anthropological background to his thinking. A key hypothesis of his, based on Arnold Gehlen's understanding, is that man is a frail and finite being in need of specific support in order to stand up to the "absolutism of reality".

Blumenberg was a member of the Academy of Sciences and Literature in Mainz, the Senate of the German Research Foundation (DFG), and the DFG's Senate Commission on the history of concepts.

Helge Pross (1927–1984)
Sociologist

Helge Pross spent the years from 1965 to 1976 as a full professor of sociology at the University of Giessen, where she built up the Sociological Institute. From 1954 to 1965 she had worked with Max Horkheimer as a postdoctoral assistant at the renowned Frankfurt Institute for Social Research. Following her professorship in Giessen, she spent the period from 1976 to 1984 as a full professor of sociology at the University of Siegen.

For Pross, alongside topics relating to social structure and democracy, it was only natural for sociology to include women's and gender issues. Her book "On educational opportunities for girls in the Federal Republic" (1969) had a marked influence on educational policy in the post-war period. Pross also put her findings, which were derived primarily from empirical studies, to journalistic use so as to make them available to a broader readership; this included, for example, a column in the magazine "Brigitte". She was a militant scholar, played an active role on university committees and headed the university press office for a while.

Since 1994 the Research Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Siegen has awarded the Helge Pross Prize to outstanding junior researchers working in the field of gender and family research. Since 2012 Justus Liebig University Giessen has awarded the Helge Agnes Pross Promotional Prize to provide support for outstanding qualification studies in the field of in women and gender. In Giessen a bronze bust was erected on the area in front of the Neues Schloss on Brandplatz in memory of Pross.

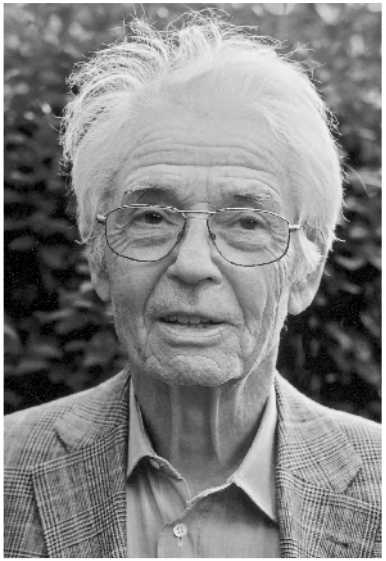
Horst-Eberhard Richter (1923 – 2011)
Psychoanalyst, psychosomatician

Horst-Eberhard Richter was appointed to the newly created Chair of Psychosomatics in Giessen in 1962. At the University he developed a tripartite interdisciplinary Centre for Psychosomatic Medicine with a Psychosomatic Clinic and the departments of Medical Psychology and Medical Sociology, whose director he became.

Richter was one of the pioneers of group and family therapy as well as of psychosomatic medicine. His influence, even after his retirement in 1991, extended far beyond the confines of his subject into society itself. For instance, he became involved in projects in socially deprived areas successfully combining his academic knowledge with social work in urban areas. Within the "Eulenkopf" initiative group, he provided psychoanalytical support, for example, for families living in a socially deprived estate.

He was a founding member of the German section of the registered non-profit organisation "International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War". In 1984 the organisation was awarded the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education and in 1985 the Nobel Peace Prize.

Richter himself was awarded numerous distinctions and awards as well as invitations to work at universities outside Germany. A bust on the area in front of the Neues Schloss on Brandplatz is Giessen's way of remembering him.



Students

Studying at the University of Giessen in the 18th century – from a student album, 1763.

University history is no less the history of the students. The history of the University of Giessen includes the names of a number of famous graduates.

Among them are the journalist Carl Ludwig Börne, the physician Charlotte Heidenreich von Siebold, the famous author and revolutionary Georg Büchner, the politician Wilhelm Liebknecht, the zoologist Ilya Ilyich Mechnikov, the jurist Erwin Stein and the veterinary surgeon Wangari Maathai.

In 2012 the federal state of Hesse under the lead management of the Hessen State Ministry of Higher Education, Research and the Arts (HMWK) celebrated the 175th anniversary of Georg Büchner's death and, in 2013, the 200th anniversary of his birth.

JLU also took part in the celebrations. The commemorative years were celebrated throughout Hesse, and the University was represented through presentations and events organized by various establishments in close cooperation with the town of Giessen.

Carl Ludwig Börne (born Juda Loeb Baruch, 1786–1837)
Journalist, literary and drama critic

Carl Ludwig Börne obtained his doctorate in 1808 at the University of Giessen under the cameralist scholar August Friedrich Wilhelm Crome, who supported him and his publications. After no more than three months Crome allowed Börne to be awarded a Dr. phil., without insisting on an examination.

Börne is occasionally compared with Jean Paul and, because of his satirically witty, descriptive style of writing, is considered a pioneer of literary criticism in Germany, particularly in the field of the journalistic review. As a publicist and journalist he undertook numerous journeys and settled in Paris in 1830.

He wrote, for example, for the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and was passionately committed as a writer to the Junges Deutschland (Young Germany) movement, whose aim was to spread democracy as the precondition for freedom. The letters that he wrote to Jeanette Wohl from Paris in the years from 1830 to 1834 saw the July Revolution in Paris as indicating the need for a revolution in Germany. Those writings, including the critical journal "Die Waage" (The Scales) were banned. Börne repeatedly advocated friendship between Germany and France.

In Börne's honour, the annual Ludwig Börne Prize has been awarded to German-speaking political publicists in Frankfurt's Paulskirche since 1993.

Charlotte Heidenreich von Siebold (1788–1859)
Physician, gynaecologist

Charlotte Heidenreich von Siebold was awarded the title of Doctor of Midwifery in Giessen in 1817 for the thesis "On pregnancy outside the womb and on abdominal pregnancy in particular". She was thus the second female physician with a doctorate in Germany and the first in the federal state of Hesse (women were not admitted to regular studies in Giessen until 1908).

Siebold's doctoral thesis gave rise to controversial discussions on whether it was appropriate for a woman to publicly defend material of that kind.

After obtaining her doctorate Siebold taught midwives in Darmstadt. In 1845 she founded an establishment to provide midwifery care for poor female citizens in Darmstadt. Moreover, Siebold was also in demand as an obstetrician at various princely courts, e.g. at the birth of the children of Duchess Victoire of Kent, the mother of the woman who later became Queen Victoria, and for the Duchess Luise of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, the mother of the man who subsequently became Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert.

Sieboldstrasse in Darmstadt is named after her. The Heidenreich von Siebold Foundation, which was founded in Darmstadt after her death to provide support for poor women in childbirth, later merged with the Darmstadt Foundation for Charitable Purposes. Since 2006 the Medical Faculty of the University of Göttingen has run the Heidenreich von Siebold Programme in support of female researchers.

Georg Büchner (1813–1837)
Writer, physician, revolutionary

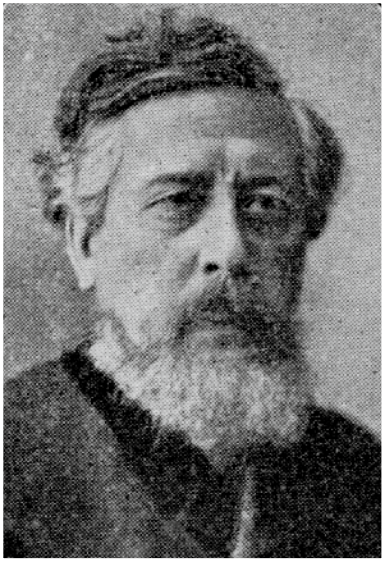
After a two-year course of study of comparative anatomy at the University of Strasbourg, Georg Büchner began his medical studies at the University of Giessen in October 1833. His short career as a natural scientist was marked by the acquisition of exceptional abilities in dissection.

One year later he founded the Giessen section of the Society for Human Rights, a revolutionary secret society based on the French workers' associations. Together with Friedrich Ludwig Weidig from Butzbach, Büchner wrote the revolutionary pamphlet "The Hessian Courier".

Sought by the police for inciting revolution, Georg Büchner fled in 1835 to Strasbourg. He later moved to Switzerland and was awarded a doctorate by the University of Zurich, where he subsequently worked as a private lecturer.

Georg Büchner's plays "Danton's Death" (1835) and "Woyzeck" (1836) made a major contribution to the development of German dramatic art. Büchner's works are now firmly established in the canon of world literature and drama. The most important literature award in Germany, the Georg Büchner Prize, is named after him.

Wilhelm Liebknecht (1826 – 1900)
Politician, publicist



Wilhelm Liebknecht was born in Giessen, where, until 1846, he completed most of his studies in theology, philology and philosophy.

Following his participation in the republican uprising in Baden in 1848 and a brief spell in prison, Liebknecht fled to Switzerland and to London. After returning to Germany in 1862, he joined the General German Workers' Association (ADAV). In 1869 he and August Bebel initiated the founding of the Social Democratic Workers' Party (SDAP), which, following the merger with the ADAV, was finally renamed the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) in 1890. Together with Wilhelm Hasenclever, Liebknecht founded "Vorwärts", which is still the SPD party newspaper today.

From 1874 until the end of his life, Liebknecht was a member of the German parliament. Because of his sharp criticism of the empire's monarchically oriented government structure, he was accused several times of political misdemeanour and indeed of high treason. In all, he spent six years of his life in prison. Apart from his commitment to working-class education, he worked in particular to spread the ideas of internationalism in the working class movement. Liebknecht's main political aims included international understanding and inter-state peace.

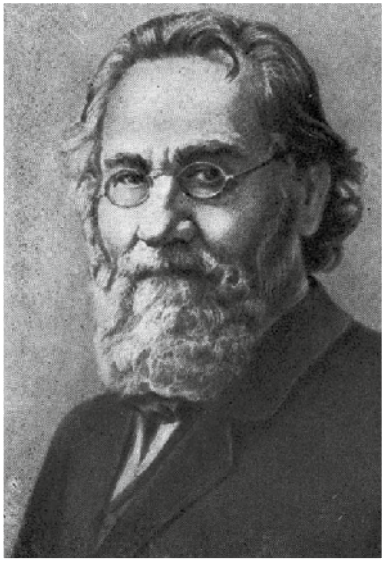
Ilya Ilyich (Elijah) Mechnikov (1845–1916)
Zoologist, anatomist and bacteriologist

Ilya Ilyich Mechnikov studied at the Zoological Institute at the University of Giessen with Rudolf Leuckar, the founder of parasitology, in 1864/65. He discovered the immune defence mechanisms that operate through the white corpuscles and conducted research into treating and preventing cholera.

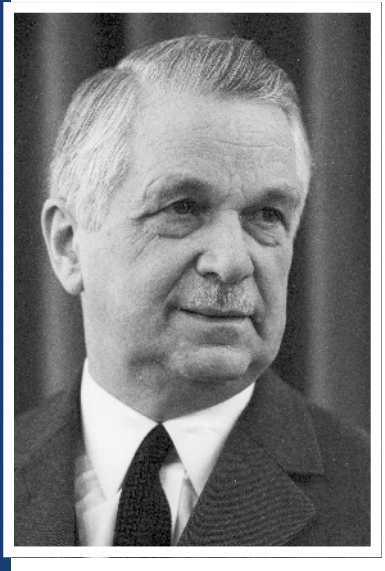
During his two semesters at Giessen, Mechnikov made the groundbreaking discovery of intracellular digestion by phagocytes ("scavenger cells"). It happened rather by chance as he was observing the European terrestrial flatworm under the microscope. This discovery was subsequently to be the basis of his "phagocyte theory", which stated that "scavenger cells" also take up living, active pathogens rather than merely disposing of the dead ones.

For that discovery, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1908 together with Paul Ehrlich. Today, the role of phagocytes in the reaction to pathogens, bacteria, viruses and cancer cells as well as in autoimmune diseases is generally accepted as fundamental to an understanding of immunology and molecular biology. It is among the current fields of research in which Mechnikov's pioneering work is acknowledged.

Mechnikov was awarded some 80 distinctions from numerous countries, including honorary doctorates from Cambridge and St. Petersburg.



Erwin Stein (1903–1992)
Jurist, politician



Erwin Stein was awarded a doctorate in 1929 under the Giessen-based legal scholar Leo Rosenberg. Stein subsequently worked as a public prosecutor and judge until 1933, when he was forced out of office by the National Socialists on account of his wife's Jewish background. He then opened a legal practice in Offenbach.

The liberal jurist played an active role in Germany's newly founded Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and became a member of the Hessian Parliament (Hessischer Landtag) in 1946. In 1947 he took up office as the Hessian Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs. One of his main concerns was to make universities more democratic. In the case of the University of Giessen, which replaced the former university in 1946, Stein saw an opportunity to implement, to some extent, his reform ideas of strengthening state influence in the "Law establishing Justus Liebig University". The legal foundation for the University was thus laid in 1950 and was built on successfully in the following years. In 1951 Stein was elected by the Bundesrat as a judge in the First Senate of the German Supreme Court, of which he remained a member until 1971.

In recognition of his services to the development of Justus Liebig University Giessen (JLU), Stein was appointed as an honorary senator of the University in 1957. In 1975 he was awarded an honorary professorship. JLU's new administrative building in Goethestrasse 58 has borne his name since 2010.

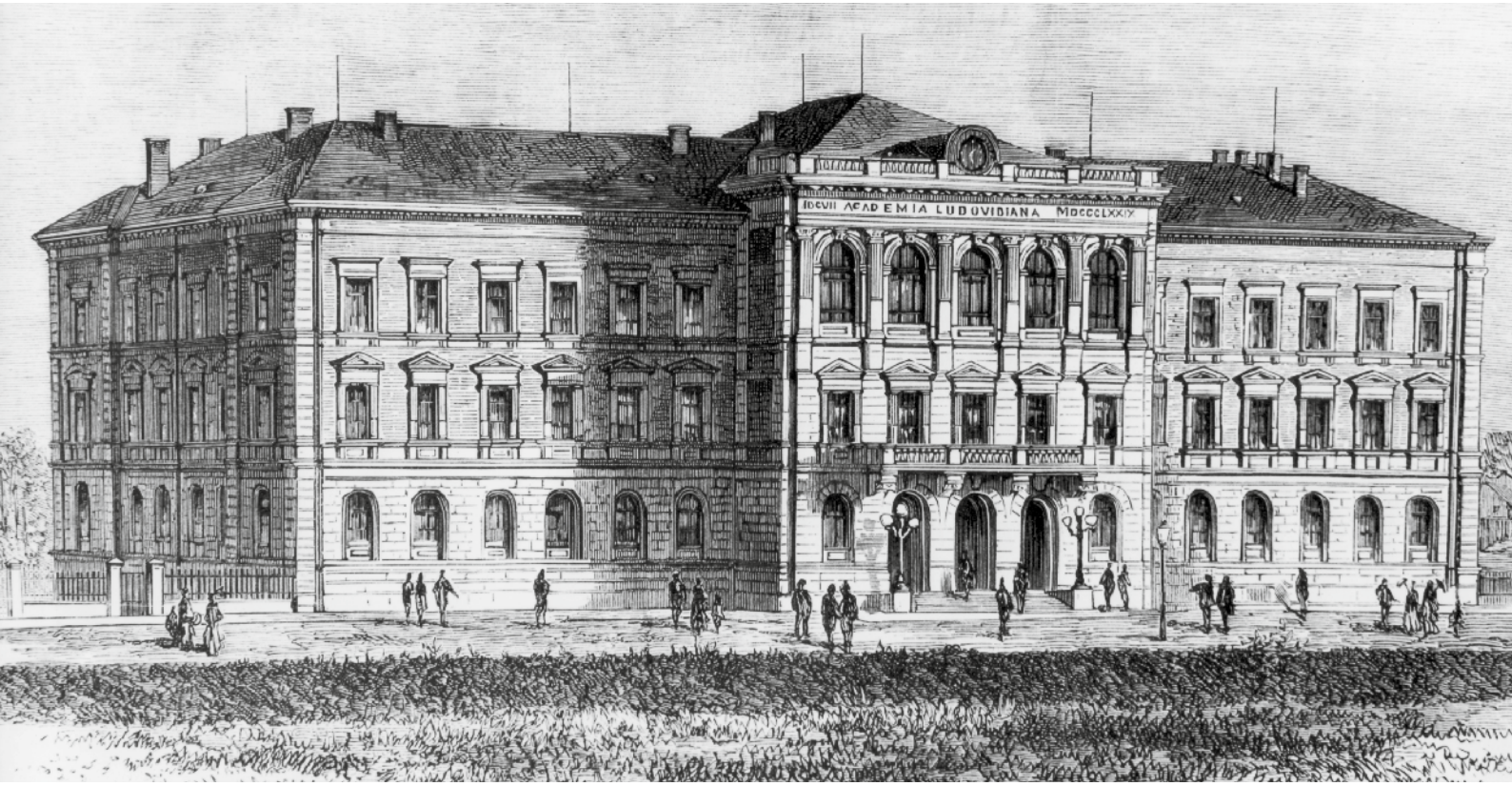
Wangari Muta Maathai (1940 – 2011)
Veterinary surgeon

On completing her studies of veterinary medicine in the USA, Wangari Muta Maathai spent most of her academic career in the context of the partnership between the universities of Giessen and Nairobi. In 1965 Maathai became an assistant to the former Giessen veterinary surgeon Reinhold Hofmann in Nairobi.

Having been granted a doctoral scholarship by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), she spent the period from 1967 to 1969 in Giessen and Munich and, in 1971, she was the first woman to be awarded a doctorate at the University of Nairobi, Kenya. Two years later she took over as head of the Institute of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Nairobi, which had been established by Reinhold Hofmann with German assistance, and remained there until 1981.

Maathai was the spokeswoman of the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy, the Kenyan human rights and democracy movement, and Deputy Minister for the Environment in Kenya. In 1992 the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Giessen awarded her an honorary doctorate.

She was given many distinctions and awards to her services in the fields of environmental protection, human rights and democracy and, in 2004, she was the first African woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Maathai had been honored with the Alternative Nobel Prize in 1985, the Petra Kelly Prize awarded by the Heinrich Böll Foundation in 2004, and the Nelson Mandela Award for Health and Human Rights in 2007.



The University Main Building in Ludwigstrasse in 1880.