REVIEWS

Napoleon und die Naturwissenschaften. By Joachim Fischer. Boethius—Texte
   und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der exakten Wissenschaften, Band 16.
   Stuttgart (Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH). 1988. xiv + 390 pp. DM
   96.

Reviewed by Christoph J. Scriba

*Universität Hamburg, Institut für Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften, Mathematik und Technik,
2 Hamburg 13, West Germany*

   Although mainly a very detailed study of Napoleon's relations to the sciences,
this *Habilitationsschrift* comprises mathematics, too, in two different aspects. On
the one hand, mathematical sciences (from artillery to astronomy) form a substan-
tial part of the sciences with which Napoleon came into contact as pupil, as
military officer, as consul, and as emperor. On the other, his name is connected
with a few mathematical problems, and most probably every little detail that can
be established in this respect has been collected in Chapter 6 (*Anhang*) of this
meticulously documented book. This "Anhang" consists of four subsections: 6.1
on young Napoleon's "Mémoire sur la manière de disposer les pièces des canons
pour le jet des bombes"; 6.2 on a puzzling manuscript in which by means of
Cavalieri's principle the area of a cycloid is determined; 6.3 on the so-called
problem of Napoleon–Mascheroni; and 6.4 on the "Satz von Napoleon"—still as
mysterious as in 1981 when *Historia Mathematica* published my query "Wie
kommt 'Napoleons Satz' zu seinem Namen?" (*HM* **8,** 458–459). Such terms and
theorems tend to be perpetuated in handbooks and dictionaries, unfounded as
they may be. Perhaps, after looking at this book, some readers can provide a clue
to these puzzling questions.
   Concentrating on the mathematics, however, does grave injustice to this com-
prehensive and eminently readable account of Napoleon's many-sided and chang-
ing relations to the sciences. Documented by nearly 1300 notes, the book follows
Napoleon's life and career. It exhibits in detail how the genuine interest young
Buonaparte had in science more and more gave way to his political ambitions:
Napoleon as member of the Institut National, as reformer of the leading scientific
institutions, as the emperor who longed to be venerated as protector of the arts
and the sciences.

Teubner-Archiv zur Mathematik. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, Leipzig. *Vol. 1:*
   C. F. Gauß, B. Riemann, H. Minkowski. Gaußsche Flächentheorie, Rie-
   mannsche Räume und Minkowski-Welt. 1984. 155 pp. DM 28. *Vol. 2:* G.
   Cantor. Über unendliche, lineare Punktmannigfaltigkeiten. Arbeiten zur
   Mengenlehre aus den Jahren 1872–1884. 1984. 180 pp. DM 32. *Vol. 3:* G.
   Herglotz, Vorlesungen über die Mechanik der Kontinua. 1985. 251 pp. DM
   48. *Vol. 4:* H. Reichardt. Gauß und die Anfänge der nicht-euklidischen Geome-
   trie. Mit Originalarbeiten von J. Bolyai, N. I. Lobatschewski und F. Klein.