ECRONICON OPEN ACCESS

EC OPHTHALMOLOGY
Guest Editorial

A Trip to the Sea: The XXXVIII Congress of the JULIUS HIRSCHBERG SOCIETY in Rostock

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Received: December 02, 2024; **Published:** January 02, 2025

The city of Rostock, located on the Baltic Sea, is the largest city in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. With around 200.000 inhabitants, Rostock is known for its port, which has played a major role in ferry trade and traffic for centuries. The University of Rostock, founded in 1419, is one of the oldest universities in Northern Europe and characterizes the cityscape as much as the historic old twn with Gothic buildings.

Prof. Rudolf Guthoff and his team organized the 38th meeting of ophthalmo-historians, which took place from 25-27 October 2024. The scientific portion took place, in a tried and tested form, as a hybrid congress in order to allow international as well as older participants and speakers to participate.

The participants met early on Friday afternoon to visit the university's treasury, take a city tour and visit the cultural history museum. The first day of the conference ended as usual with a cozy dinner.

The scientific program was awarded 8 CME points and attracted 46 participants to Rostock. In order to do justice to the large number of contributions submitted, the program started early on Saturday with the submission of the lectures and the hanging of the posters. At 8:30 a.m. the congress was opened by Prof. Rudolf Guthoff (Rostock, Germany) organizer; Frank Krogmann (Thüngersheim, Germany) managing director; Dr. Sibylle Scholtz (Ettlingen, Germany) chairwoman and Prof. Bernd Krause, Dean of the University of Rostock (Germany). The hybrid set-up was again, implemented by the company COG (Congress Organisation Gerling, https://www.congresse.de/de/).

Prof. Achim Langenbucher (Homburg/Saar, Germany) opened the scientific program with his keynote lecture ("Hirschberg Lecture") on "Intraocular lens calculation 2.0: from the empirical formulas to artificial intelligence (AI)". Traditional IOL calculation methods often reach their limits when it comes to predicting postoperative vision and selecting the optimal IOL power. By using AI-supported algorithms, patient data can be analyzed more precisely, and individual adjustments can be made, leading to improved results. Langenbucher highlighted the underlying technologies, current developments and the future potential of AI in the field of IOL calculation.

Langenbucher's lecture was also the introduction to the content of the first session: On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the ULIB database and the fifth anniversary of the death of its inventor, Prof. Wolfgang Haigis (Würzburg), the JULIUS-HIRSCHBERG-GESELLSCHAFT (JHG) commemorated one of the most important representatives of biometry with a special biometry symposium. This memorial session was chaired by Dr. Frank Goes (Brasschaat, Belgium) and Prof. Rudolf Guthoff.

The first to speak online was Prof. Dr. Ahmed Assaf (Cairo, Egypt) on "Calculating the Human Eye - The Evolution of Biometry for Cataract Surgery." Optical biometry is now considered a standard diagnostic tool and represents the essential basis for IOL calculation before cataract surgery. Assaf's lecture gave a brief overview of the historical development of biometry of the human eye and the formulae used to calculate the intraocular lens (IOL). Ultrasound was used invasively for the first measurements of the eye. Today, ultrasound is mostly limited to cases in which optical biometry cannot be used due to very cloudy optical media. Most modern biometers work with the help of optical coherence tomography (OCT). In addition to this technical development, numerous formulas have been developed to calculate the optical effect of the respective IOL. Today, a growing number of eyes, that have previously undergone refractive surgery, must undergo cataract surgery. Even more important than contemporary appropriate biometry is the use of suitable calculation schemes that help to improve the predictability of the refractive result after cataract surgery.

The working group led by Dr. Sibylle Scholtz (Lee MacMorris (Laguna Woods, USA), Prof. Rudolf Guthoff, Prof. Oliver Stachs (Rostock, Germany), Dr. Frank Goes and Prof. Achim Langenbucher) introduced the central theme of the biometry symposium with their lecture "2024: 25 years of ULIB (User Group for Laser Interference Biometry)". By launching the first optical biometer in 1999, IOL constants used for IOL power calculation after ultrasound biometry, needed to be adjusted to be suitable for IOL power calculation using data derived from optical biometers. Prof. Wolfgang Haigis realized this need and took care to optimize such constants, which he shared in the internet via his database "ULIB". In the same year, he published these optimized constants in his online database, which was originally called "EULIB" (European User Group for Laser Interference Biometry). During the 2001 meeting of the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery (ASCRS), the name was changed from "EULIB" to "ULIB" to reflect the global availability and relevance of the database for ophthalmologists worldwide. ULIB was the first database of its time and set a milestone in providing optimized IOL constants for cataract surgery. In line with current cataract surgery procedures and modern IOLs, Prof. Langenbucher further developed Haigis' ideas for an internet database for optimized IOL constants. In 2017, he launched the most up-to-date database for IOL constants: IOLCon (https://iolcon.org).

Dr. Frank Goes spoke about the "Life and Scientific Achievements of Prof. Wolfgang Haigis". The speaker presented an in-depth study of Prof. Wolfgang Haigis' contributions to the field of ophthalmology. Haigis is well known for developing the Haigis formula, a key advancement in the calculation of the optical power of intraocular lenses (IOLs). Haigis' achievements have had a powerful impact on the results of cataract surgery. Goes' presentation described Haigis' academic career, important milestones in his research, the comprehensive impact of his work on improving postoperative visual acuity, his legacy and his ongoing influence on modern ophthalmology.

The session concluded on a warm note with Prof. Dr. Mario de la Torre´s (Peru) presentation on "The Haigis Formula - How a Fellow Witnessed a Dream Realized". The formula developed by Wolfgang Haigis for calculating the IOL power remains an important reference in cataract surgery. Much has been written, spoken and published about the clinical effect of this formula. However, little is known about what lies behind this contribution to ophthalmology. De la Torre gave testimony from the perspective of a former fellow on how a scientist's dream became an essential tool in ophthalmology. In addition to Haigis' scientific achievement, he was a source of inspiration for de la Torre in his professional life and that of many other ophthalmologists.

The online broadcast of this biometry symposium honoring Prof. Haigis, was made possible by earmarked donations: Since JHG currently does not have its own support association, the "Association for the Promotion of Research in the Field of Intraocular Lens Calculation e.V." (VFFIOL e.V., https://www.vffiol.org/) stepped in to handle the processing of donations. The aim of the VFFIOL e.V. is to promote scientific research and exchange in the field of biometry and intraocular lens calculation. This event was financially supported by the following companies/organizations: Théa Pharma GmbH (www.theapharma.de), i.com medical GmbH (www.icom-medical.de), Wortflut UG (limited liability) (https://www.wortflut.com) and the Ukrainian Alliance of Ophthalmologists (www.ophthalmolog.kiev.ua).

Through this initiative, VFFIOL e.V. has demonstrated its role as a promoter of scientific exchange. VFFIOL e.V. includes Dr. Sibylle Scholtz as 1st chairwoman, Prof. Dr. Oksana Vitovska as 2nd chairwoman Munich, Germany/Kyiv, Ukraine), Dr. Frank Goes as secretary and Prof. Dr. Achim Langenbucher as scientific advisor.

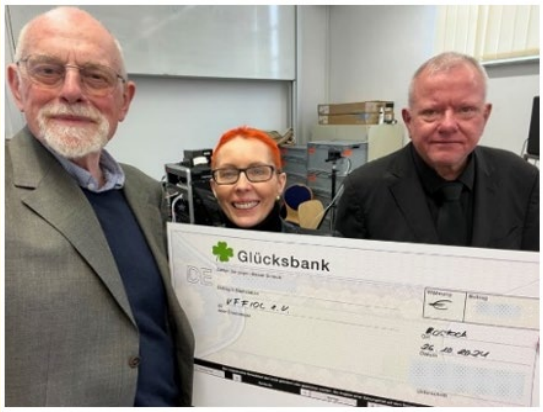

Figure 1: *Official presentation of the donations in Rostock (from left to right: Prof. Rudolf Guthoff (congress organizer), Dr. Sibylle Scholtz (1st chairwoman VFFIOL e.V.), Frank Krogmann, managing director of the JULIUS-HIRSCHBERG-GESELLSCHAFT.*

The second session, led by Dr. Norbert Bomholt (Recklinghausen, Germany) and Prof. Wolfgang Bernard (Rostock, Germany), dealt with the topic of "Ophthalmology and Humanities".

It opened with Dr. Norbert Bomholt's lecture on "Dr. Ludwik Lejzer - the ophthalmologist who hoped to unite the world through one language". Dr. Ludwik Lejzer Zamenhof (1859-1917) was a Polish-Jewish ophthalmologist who in 1887 developed Esperanto, one of the most widely used artificial languages of the 20th century. He initiated a social movement for peace and dedicated his life to the ideals of ethnic tolerance. Zamenhof was nominated 14 times for the Nobel Peace Prize. He received the highest French order of merit, the Legion of Honor (Légion d'Honneur), as well as the Royal Order of Isabelle of Spain (Real Orden de Isabel la Católica). Zamenhof began his training as an ophthalmologist at the Jewish Hospital in Warsaw, later spent several months in the Vienna Eye Clinics and finally opened a private ophthalmological practice in Warsaw. In the meantime, he worked in various places; first in Cherson in Ukraine, then in Grodno in Belarus and finally in Plock in Poland, where he could barely earn a living. In 1897, with the help of his father-in-law, he founded a private ophthalmological practice in Warsaw. Zamenhof never published an original medical work. His only contribution to the ophthalmological literature was the Esperanto translation of Ernst Fuchs' article on "Chronic Catarrhal Conjunctivitis" from 1903. A good friend of Ludwik Zamenhof was the famous French ophthalmologist, Louis Émile Javal, who invented a keratometer. Javal was one of the most prominent figures in the Esperanto movement and contributed significantly to its popularity. In 1905, Zamenhof and Javal met at the 1st Esperanto World Congress in Boulogne-sur-mer.

Connected online from Schneeberg (Germany), Dr. Manfred Jähne spoke about "Ludwig Friedrich von Froriep: "Surgical Copper Plates", Weimar, 1821, pioneering the field of ophthalmology?" This atlas-like booklet represents a select collection of the most necessary illustrations of externally visible forms of disease, anatomical preparations and instruments relating to eye surgery. These were used by practicing surgeons. It was published in 1821 by Bertuch's publishing house of the Grand Duke of Saxony's Private State Industrial Company in Weimar. Surgeons could purchase it inexpensively. Many of them already called themselves ophthalmologists. The "Surgical Copper Plates" show color illustrations of external eye diseases and 3 plates in black and white on 7 pages (size 25 x 20 cm). The

illustrations come from books by Demours, Sanders and Beer. The color plates include: Staphyloma (from 1869 keratoconus) with 11 individual illustrations, cataracta, iritis, pterygium, fungus medullaris oculi (two illustrations, from 1927 referred to as retinoblastoma) and ophthalmo-blennorrhoea (so-called Egyptian eye inflammation). The following plates show eye diseases with the corresponding surgical procedure: entropion and trichiasis, fistula lacrimalis and hyalonyxis according to Bowen, i.e. cataract through the sclera. Froriep gives detailed descriptions of the individual "figures". Although not mentioned in Münchow's "History of Ophthalmology", the "Surgical Copper Plates" on diseases of the external eye may have paved the way for ophthalmology as an independent discipline at an early stage.

"The third eye. Thoughts on the history of neuroendocrinology" was the topic of Dr. Christoph Schindler's (Haßfurt) lecture. Since René Descartes (1596-1650), morphologists have established a connection between the pineal gland and the optical system. Comparative anatomical studies by Karl Studnicka (1870-1955) and Karl Ritter von Frisch (1886-1982) showed at the beginning of the 20th century that the pineal gland of mammals is phylogenetically derived from the parietal organ of fish and reptiles and also functions as a light-sensing organ. One of Ritter von Frisch's students, Ernst Scharrer (1905-1965), demonstrated in 1928 that special nerve cells in the diencephalon have the ability to secrete a neurosecretion that influences the function of the pineal and pituitary glands. Andreas Oksche (1926-2017) finally succeeded in using an electron microscope to depict photoreceptors in the neuroendocrine cells, thus finally confirming the role of the pineal gland as the "third eye".

The second session concluded with a thought-provoking lecture by the classical philologist and professor of Greek studies Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Bernard (Rostock): "Completely outdated? How quickly does medical knowledge actually becomes outdated?" We are convinced that we live in an age of great scientific and technical innovation. The "half-life" of knowledge is therefore decreasing more and more. Bernard gave a moving talk on the key questions: Does this actually apply to all forms of knowledge? And to what extent are doctors exposed to economic and social influences when weighing up innovation and tradition with regard to patient well-being.

This year, the poster discussion by Dr. Frank Goes was once again a tried-and-true option: The Rostock group around Prof. Dr. Rudolf Guthoff, Prof. Dr. Dr. Thomas Fuchsluger, Priv. Doz. Dr. Thomas Stahnke and Dr. Daniel Schubert presented "The artificial eye collections of the Rostock University Eye Clinic", both, as a poster and using three-dimensional exhibits. The Rostock Eye Clinic owns two unusual artificial eye collections: Firstly, 134 half-shells made of glass with a focus on corneal pathology (produced in Lauscha around 1860). Secondly, 60 spherical exhibits made of acrylic glass (produced in Tashkent around 2012). The exhibits were on display as well as the newly created collection catalogue.

Prof. Dr. Oliver Stachs' poster drew a wide arc from the past to the possible future: "Light meets tissue - corneal imaging: past, present, future". In 1887, Carl Ludwig von Zehender, the first professor of ophthalmology in Rostock, and the instrument maker Westin developed the binocular corneal loupe, which enabled three-dimensional observation of the cornea. This device, with its considerable magnification and external illumination, proved useful for corneal diagnostics as well as for the removal of superficial foreign bodies. The Zehender-Westin corneal loupe is considered the forerunner of both, the slit lamp and the surgical microscope. In 1911, the slit lamp microscopy developed by Gullstrand, revolutionized corneal diagnostics by enabling precise depth localization of corneal changes. This method began precise *in vivo* morphology and pathology capture of the entire anterior segment of the eye. The importance of this technology is well documented in Alfred Vogt's 1933 work "Slit Lamp Microscopy", which contains illustrations that in some aspects surpass modern photo documentation capabilities. In 2002, modern confocal laser scanning microscopy (CLSM) further improved corneal imaging. The integration of Heidelberg Engineering's HRT (Heidelberg Retina Tomograph) with RCM (Rostock Cornea Module) enabled detailed images of the corneal subbasal nerve plexus and other ocular structures with cellular resolution. More recent advances focus on large-scale mosaicing and multiwavelength CLSM, improving the ability to perform longitudinal studies and track cellular changes over time. The best current resolution is achieved with the Rostock Cornea Module developed in Rostock and produced by Heidelberg Engineering.

In recent years, the Rostock working group has further developed this technology using computer-aided techniques that are currently available as prototypes and offer promising improvements for clinical diagnostics and research. Stach's poster highlights the various promising innovations and technologies for improved clinical diagnostics and research.

Not only as a lecture in German (see above), but also as a poster in English, the topic "2024: 25 years ULIB (User Group for Laser Interference Biometry)" was also presented to the international participants by Scholtz, Guthoff, Stachs, Goes, MacMorris and Langenbucher (see details above).

Another poster, the content of which was also physically presented to the participants, was the contribution by Dr. Carsten Tautorat (Rostock): "The Purkinje vessel figure yesterday and today, poster, screen with device". In 1819, Johann Purkinje published his contributions to the knowledge of seeing in subjective view. Purkinje described various entoptic phenomena that he was able to perceive in self-experimentation. The perception of the shadows of his own retinal vessels were triggered with the light of a candle flame, Purkinje called it the vein pattern of the eye. He perceived the macula as a circular dark spot in the middle of the vein pattern. The medical significance of entoptic vessel perception lies in the non-invasive functional testing of the retina in the event of media opacification, provided that fundus examination is not possible. It thus allows an assessment of retinal visual acuity before cataract surgery. Other applications include, for example, visual field examination in glaucoma and the early detection and monitoring of diabetic retinopathy. Various setups are described in the literature that enable stable perception of the vein pattern, but these used on the open eye are technically complex and require the head to be fixed. Dinkulu *et al*. (2021) carried out greatly simplified experiments with a flashlight that was manually moved over the closed eye of cataract patients. The disadvantage here, however, was the necessary interaction between the patient and the medical staff in order to be able to trigger the perception at all. A simple self-diagnosis has so far been largely impossible with the known technical solutions. With the handy diagnostic device, the PRIS tool, patients can examine their vein structure quickly, easily and independently. The screening tool is placed on the closed eyelid and creates a stable image perception. The movement of the bright light spot is generated by several light sources (LEDs) arranged in a circle, which are individually controlled electronically. This greatly simplifies the application and offers opportunities for a broad medical use of entoptic perception. An assisting app will help the patient to carry out the examination correctly and to recognize and document disease-related changes.

After the lunch break, Prof. Dr. Heinrich Stolz (Rostock) and Prof. Hans-Reinhard Koch (Bonn) moderated the third session "Ophthalmology and Natural Science".

Under the guidance of his doctoral father, Prof. Dr. Hans-Reinhard Koch, an ophthalmic-historical doctoral thesis was written last year, which was honored with the JHG 2024 doctoral award. The award winner, Dr. François Valenne (Luxembourg) presented his work on "The anatomy script of Johann Conrad Stoll (1786/87) with a view to ophthalmology". As part of the dissertation, Valenne facsimiled the script, transcribed it, commented on it and finally published it as a book.

Dr. Andreas Götz (Rostock) gave a touching memorial to the late long-time JHG member Dr. Jörg Dräger with "Jörg Draeger and applanation tonometry in space: the sky is not the limit". Jörg Draeger's scientific biography is very closely linked to glaucoma research, in particular the development of new methods for measuring intraocular pressure. Dräger's interest was sparked by an early collaboration with Hans Goldmann (Bern), with whom he had a lifelong, close friendship. His scientific biography was characterized by his unusual ability to bring together engineering, optics and medicine to address an important clinical question. The development and successful market launch of a position- and gravity-independent applanation tonometer based on the Goldmann principle was an essential prerequisite for raising significant funds for participation in the space missions D1, MIR 92, and D2 organized by DARA (German Agency for Space Affairs), DLR (German Aerospace Center), ESA (European Space Agency) and NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration). Combined with his personal passion for aviation, one of his biggest research projects was born: the further development and implementation of

space-suitable applanation tonometry in weightlessness and thus the possibility of using the eye in space as a "sensor" for fluid shifts in the entire organism. In preparation for the space experiments, many so-called parabolic flights with converted commercial aircraft were necessary, which also involved employees who were enthusiastic about technology and space. The first self-tonometer (Ocuton-S) can be seen as a spin-off product.

The topic of "Ophthalmic optical history from Rathenow: The Optic Industry Museum Rathenow (OIMR)" was the title of Dr. Anke Messerschmidt-Roth's (Amöneburg) informative lecture, with which she motivated people to visit the museum. Rathenow is often referred to as the "city of optics"; here visitors experience that optics is much more than just cut glass. Over 200 years ago, Johann Heinrich August Duncker invented the multi-grinding machine here and in 1801 received the "royal" privilege to establish an optical industrial institute. This laid the foundation for the optical industry in Rathenow, which still provides jobs today. The museum presents over 1000 historically valuable optical instruments. With her lecture, Messerschmidt-Roth introduced this fascinating museum and invited people to visit, on site or online (https://www.oimr.de/virtueller-rundgang/).

Dr. Heinrich Stolz gave an insight into "The connection between the Rostock Institute of Physics and the Eye Clinic of the University of Rostock in the 19th century: an interdisciplinary success story". The history of physics at the University of Rostock began in 1874 with the appointment of Ludwig Matthiesen to the newly created chair of physics. One of Matthiesen's many research areas was the physics of the human eye, in which he did groundbreaking work and for which he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Zürich in 1883. The lecture gave an overview of Ludwig Matthiesen's work, particularly with regard to the collaboration with the Rostock Eye Clinic.

A veteran of the Rostock contact lens scene, Ulrich Maxam, gave his personal overview of "150 years of contact lenses, personal experiences since 1983 and a look into the future". Starting 150 years ago with the first attempts at vision correction using contact lenses, the speaker described the development of contact lens fitting from his own practical experience in Rostock. His experience was underlined by his international activities as a professional journalist attending many international contact lens conferences. Maxam reported on the measurement and testing methods for contact lens fitting, the importance of the parameters for tolerable contact lens wear, the development of professional training for contact lens fitting and the improvement of cooperation between ophthalmologists and opticians who fit contact lenses. This was followed by an outlook on future developments: contact lenses as medication carriers and for monitoring body functions; contact lens production using 3D printing and, ultimately, the replacement of human specialist expertise by artificial intelligence.

Next year's chairwoman of the JHG, Dr. Frances Meier-Gibbons (Rapperswil, Switzerland), introduced the participants to "The ophthalmological legacy of Hjalmar August Schiøtz (1850-1927)". Schiøtz was a Norwegian ophthalmologist and inventor. He was born in Stavanger (Norway), studied medicine in Kristiania (former name for Oslo) and ophthalmology in Vienna. After professional stays in Paris and Kristiania, he became chief physician of the medical faculty at the University of Oslo (1914-1916), he retired from medicine in 1921. One of his innovations was the keratometer, which he developed together with Louis Emile Javal, and which is known as the "Javal-Schiøtz ophthalmometer" (1881). In 1905 he presented the Schiøtz tonometer and was one of the first inventors of an indentation tonometer.

Dr. Edward De Sutter (Knokke-Heist, Belgium) spoke about "Gilbert Sourdille and Jules Gonin and their dispute over the solution to cure retinal detachment". Gilbert Sourdille and Jules Gonin argued about the most suitable solution to the cause and cure of retinal detachment. Since the beginning of the 20th century there has been little interest in this problem from ophthalmologists. Derrick Vail and others declared it insoluble. The dispute took place at the 1929 World Congress in Amsterdam. Jules Gonin later continued his argument in his book "Le Décollement de la Rétine" and in his publications. Gilbert Sourdille presented his views in his own publications. He was supported by his son Gabriel-Pierre Sourdille as part of his doctoral thesis to show which method was most suitable.

The Hirschberg Prize winner in 2014, Dr. Stephan Töpel (Köthen), dealt with "Once to the South Seas and back: ophthalmologist Dr. med. Otto Glantz". The fact that German doctors go abroad to find a livelihood and personal happiness is nothing unusual today. There were also characters in the past who found their homeland too small, but their number was significantly lower than it is today. When Germany was still an empire and had protectorates, it was a good idea not only to leave home but to immerse yourself in the wider world. The speaker reported on one such ophthalmologist, Dr. Otto Glantz, who first travelled the world as a ship's doctor and later, after training as an ophthalmologist, settled in the South Seas. Glantz, born in Mecklenburg in 1877, grew up on his father's manor and died in Schönebeck (Elbe) in 1948. How does that fit in with his work in the South Seas? His career took him to Waren (Müritz), Jena, Munich, Würzburg, Berlin, Apia (on Samoa, now West Samoa), New Zealand and Schönebeck. Before the latter, there was a fairly long period without any medical activity, which Glantz spent on the estate of his deceased father. New Zealand comes into play due to internment at the beginning of the First World War. It was not until autumn 1932 that Glantz resumed his work as an ophthalmologist in Schönebeck, near Magdeburg (Germany). At the end, the speaker presented the current status of his research on Glantz, giving details of the stages and highlighting the obvious breaks in Glantz's life.

The fourth and last session, on "Ophthalmology in an international context", was chaired by Prof. Dr. Antonia Joussen (Berlin) and Prof. Dr. Achim Langenbucher.

"Theodor Leber's journey to Bohemia" was this year's lecture topic by Prof. Dr. Guido Kluxen (Wermelskirchen), who came across an extensive, highly interesting manuscript in which Theodor Leber (1840-1917) was initially given the opportunity to speak alone. This document of Theodor Leber's journey to the battlefields of Königgrätz in 1866, which took place fourteen days after the event, was reproduced in full by Kluxen - from his departure from Paris to his return to Paris.

Prof. Dr. Antonia Joussen, who travelled from Berlin, gave an engaging talk on "170 years of Graefe's Archive of Ophthalmology". In 2024 we will celebrate a special anniversary: the 170th year of the publication of Graefe's Archive of Clinical and Experimental Ophthalmology. This journal was named after its namesake. It was founded by Dr. Albrecht von Graefe, considered by many to be the founder of modern ophthalmology. This was a remarkable achievement, as Graefe's Archive is the oldest existing global ophthalmology journal. Graefe was a true visionary who made groundbreaking contributions to the field, including the first recognition of central retinal artery occlusion, optic nerve cupping in glaucoma, optic neuritis as a manifestation of neurological disorders, papilledema in intracranial hypertension, and the use of iridectomy to treat glaucoma. By creating a journal with worldwide circulation, Graefe recognized the importance of global scientific exchange to advance the field of ophthalmology. Today we are faced with the challenge of maintaining the innovative power that Graefe had 170 years ago.

Another lecture dealing with von Graefe was the "Manuscript of a series of Graefe's lectures in Berlin" by Dr. Sebastian Möbus' (Rostock). The new lecture manuscript from the Graefe school, handed down by the descendants of the French ophthalmologist Henri Dor, allowed insights into the early days of the Graefe school. Created in 1852, it is the oldest known manuscript of its kind and records lecture content by Graefe that was previously unknown. The text was recorded in shorthand and subsequently written down so that Albrecht von Graefe's speech could be followed verbatim. The text offers an exposition by Graefe of his scientific methods and also his comments on Romantic medicine.

Dr. Essam Eldin Abdel-Azim (Cairo, Egypt) offered the participants a short excursion into the "Introduction to Ancient Egyptian Pharmacy". The ancient Egyptians were interested in chemistry and medicines, which were mostly derived from medicinal plants. It is not surprising that the ancient Greeks and Romans derived the word chemistry from "Kemi" or "Kemit", the name of ancient Egypt. The ancient Egyptians used their medicines derived from medicinal plants very rationally. They used many units to describe the dosage

precisely. Among many others, they used, for example, the units TENAT (equivalent to 1/16 liter) and JEDAT (equivalent to 7.734 grams). In addition, medicinal plants were considered sacred to the ancient Egyptians, and were named after the powers of God. For example, they called ivy the "plant of Oziris", saffron the "blood of Tut", onions the "eyes of Tifon", and verbena the "tears of Izis". It is worth mentioning that many old Egyptian medicinal recipes are still used in today's Egyptian culture and are quite effective.

Prof. Dr. Artur Klett travelled from Tallinn (Estonia) to speak about the history of ophthalmology in Estonia. The history of ophthalmology in Estonia began in January 1868, when Professor Georg von Oettingen opened the first eye clinic in Tartu (Dorpat). On September 10, 1871, the Chair of Ophthalmology at the University of Tartu was founded under his leadership. Prof. Dr. von Oettingen headed the chair from 1867 to 1879. For over 50 years, Estonian ophthalmology was predominantly associated with doctors of German origin. Since the first independence in 1918, most doctors were of Estonian origin. Everything changed after the Second World War. Modern ophthalmology became heavily dependent on centers in Moscow and Leningrad (now St. Petersburg). The most complex diseases of Baltic patients were also treated there. Everything changed again after the second independence in 1991, when young and committed Estonian ophthalmologists, with great support from colleagues and friends from western countries have begun to build up ophthalmology in Estonia and the Baltic States.

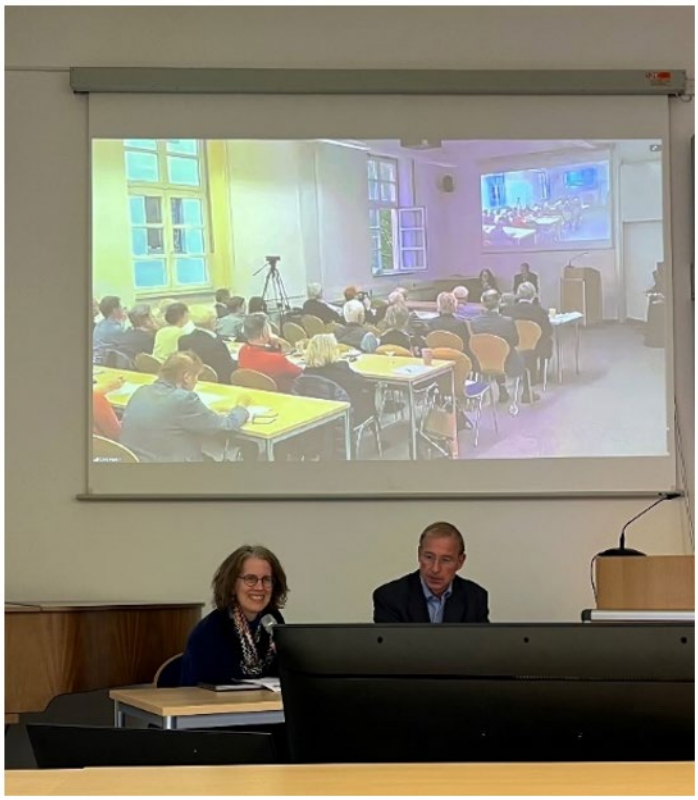

Figure 2: *The packed conference room with Prof. Antonia Joussen and Prof. Achim Langenbucher in the virtual infinite loop.*

The scientific part of this year's congress concluded with this lecture and with words of thanks from the organizers, Prof. Rudolf Guthoff, Frank Krogmann and Dr. Sibylle Scholtz. As in previous years, the recordings of the lectures will again be available on the JHG website. The last word was reserved for the future congress organizers, Dr. Frances Meier-Gibbons and Prof. Dr. Heinrich Gerding, who warmly invited everyone to next year's congress in Olten, Switzerland.

General assembly of JULIUS HIRSCHBERG SOCIETY

Following the scientific part of the congress, the annual general meeting with board elections followed. The members of the society unanimously elected six board members: Dr. Frances Meier- Gibbons, who also took on the role of chairwoman 2024/2025. Frank Krogmann, who has been working for the society as managing director, deputy chairman and treasurer for around 25 years, was confirmed. Krogmann has also been organizing the JHG's ophthalmic-historical symposia at the DOG's annual congresses for nearly a quarter of a century. This is an event that the DOG has kindly made possible. It brings the history of ophthalmology closer to a wider audience. Dr. Stephan Töpel will act as secretary in the future. Other board members are Dr. Edward De Sutter, Prof. Dr. Oksana Vitovska and Dr. Frank Goes. The outgoing chairwoman, Dr. Sibylle Scholtz, proudly emphasized the positive development of the JHG during the last five years that Scholtz worked on the board. During this time, the JHG has increasingly developed into the leading international association for the history of ophthalmology. This is reflected in the participation of international speakers and participants in the hybrid congresses, also in the international composition of the new board. Scholtz wished the new board and the society all the best and continued success in the dissemination of ophthalmo-historical topics.

The congress ended in style with a gala dinner in the Borwin harbor restaurant. During the scientific congress program, this year's JULIUS-HIRSCHBERG doctoral award winner, Dr. François Valenne, who had already presented the contents of his doctoral thesis. The doctoral supervisor, Prof. Hans-Reinhard Koch, gave the laudation during the gala evening.

Figure 3: *JULIUS-HIRSCHBERG-SOCIETY, group photo at the gala evening.*

The conference concluded on Sunday morning with a harbor tour and a walk through Warnemünde. The grave of Wilhelm von Zehender in the old Warnemünde cemetery and his house, in which he and his wife spent the last years of his life (1906 - 1916), were visited. There, on the initiative of the Prof. Guthoff couple, a memorial plaque was installed in memory of this great ophthalmologist. The funding was provided by the Warnemünde Lighthouse Association.

The 39th meeting takes the JULIUS HIRSCHBERG SOCIETY to Switzerland from October 10-12, 2025, this time to Olten. Olten is a small town in the Swiss canton of Solothurn with around 18.000 inhabitants and is centrally located between the major cities of Zürich, Bern and Basel. Due to its location, Olten is an important transport hub. The historic old town lies on the river Aare and is characterized by the picturesque wooden bridge, which is considered the city's landmark. Olten is also known for its lively cultural scene. We eagerly anticipate an interesting program from the congress organizers Dr. Frances Meier-Gibbons and Prof. Dr. Heinrich Gerding!

More information about the JULIUS-HIRSCHBERG-SOCIETY at http://www.jhg-online.org/ and from the association´s managing director:

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Volume 16 Issue 1 January 2025