

**11th EADV (3rd ESHDV) Meeting around the 15th Anniversary of the Foundation of the European Academy (Luxembourg, October 3, 1987, Bâtiment Jean-Monnet)**

'Zlata Praha – das goldene Prag',  
early October 2002, or  
Dermatology in the Heart of Europe

The excursion of the ESHDV on October 1 took us onto the observatory tower of the 'Klementinum', the old Jesuite monastery and university. The morning was sunny, and we stood within the glory of the countless spikes and monuments around. Prague is called 'die Hunderttürmige', the 'hundred-towered' and the 'golden city'. It sure is that praiseworthy.

This is the eleventh meeting of the European Academy: Florence, Athens, Copenhagen, Brussels, Lisbon, Dublin, Nice, Amsterdam, Geneva, Munich and now Prague. Jean-Hilaire Saurat assumed his office as President of the EADV, receiving the gavel from Martin M. Black. If we drew a line from the North Cape to Malta and from the shores of Ireland to the Ural Mountains, we would end up somewhere here, between Prague, Dresden and Cracow. Here we are in the heart of the Continent. For the first time, we convene in what was the 'Old East' but what is in fact Central Europe, 'Mitteleuropa', and Prague is its historical center with the oldest university founded in 1348, 16 years before Cracow, 17 years before Vienna, 19 years before Pécs/Fünfkirchen/Quinqueecclesiae, before Heidelberg (1386), Cologne (1388) and Erfurt (1392).

For the first time, we have from the outset a lady as president of the meeting – a remarkable fact. (Diane Roseeuw formally sat in in Brussels for Michel Delune).

History is not a love affair, unfortunately it is a bloody matter all too often, but anyway it is a sequence of events, and in medicine sometimes it becomes almost a family matter. I come from the Alma mater 'Rudolphina', and here we are under the wings of the Alma mater 'Carolina', our venerable older sister: father-in-law in Prague and son-in-law in Vienna, at the time in the 'Trecento', competed. Charles the Fourth was on the throne of the empire, a Luxemburger whose mother was a Přemyslids princess, and he resided here. He was the emperor addressed by Francesco Petrarca, he was the man who started to make Prague the 'Zlata Praha', the

Golden City of the Czechs, Germans, Jews, the city of Libussa and Saint Venceslav of legendary fame, of Saint Ioannes Nepomucenus, Jan Hus and Jan Žižka, emperor Rudolph II, Tycho Brahe, Johannes Kepler, Giuseppe Arcimboldo, Rabbi Löw and down the centuries to Antonín Dvořák, Leoš Janáček, Franz Kafka etc. Magic symbol is the historical dome of St. Vitus on the Hradštin hill, and, above all, the holy crown of St. Venceslav, locked away with seven keys, a fancy 'fleur-de-lis' crown as depicted in the fairy tales. *Sorry for everyone who never saw it.*

The Carolina and the Rudolphina became competitors in the field of the sciences and especially in medicine. And if I, coming from the latter, pay tribute to the former, it is with respect and admiration.

Due to the political circumstances in consequence of the battle of Mohács, on August 29, 1526, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic became linked to Vienna, and the Rudolphina automatically assumed the rank of the metropolitan university notwithstanding the fact that both fame and age of the Carolina have had the primate for much of the time since. In the 18th and 19th centuries however, the political, economical and academic disequilibrium between Vienna and Prague had become so explicit that the stream of talents was diverted to the banks of the Danube and not to the Moldava. This included people of all social strata, and Vienna had, after Prague, the second biggest ethnically Czech population. Let me give you some examples.

The so-called 2nd Vienna School is traditionally linked to a triumvirate of founding fathers: Carl Rokitsansky, Joseph Škoda and Ferdinand Karl Franz Hebra. The first came from Königgrätz/Hradec Králové, the second from Pilsen/Plzen, the third from Fulnek, all three places within the Czech Republic of today. Filipp Josef Pick, Heinrich Auspitz, Isidor Neumann, Karl Kreibich, in dermatology, Carl Koller, Sigmund Freud in other disciplines, came from this area or were graduates of the Carolina. And Franjo Kogoj, later head in Zagreb, and Felix Sagher, second professor in Jerusalem and my predecessor at the Hebrew University, studied in Prague.

When I add that the oldest dermatovenereological journal of the German language was edited first in Prague and that the German 'national' dermatological society, the DDG, was founded under Austrian law in

this Czech city, then the importance of Prague for the development and growth of medicine within the erstwhile Austrian Empire and Central Europe becomes evident.

I started off by saying that here we are right in the center of the continent. We all are also looking forward to having the rift closed which separated us from our natural neighbors for more than half a century, and we expect to be all within the European fold, within the EADV as much as politically; however good or bad the Union may be, it is the only reasonable and also the only promising perspective.

By today, this society, the EADV, has grown into a body which is coming close in size to the AAD. Around 6,000 participants illustrate that. And we will grow further, with the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, the Baltic States and Slovenia, Croatia, eventually Serbia, Romania – and finally, we will outnumber the AAD. Prerequisite will be common EU law and sufficient command of the English language. But this may be achieved 25 years hence, i.e. when the EADV will have its semi-centennial; by then, we will have developed into a formidable body able to compete with any other organization in the world in size and constitute a power, hopefully also in scientific activity, educational standard and promotional role in the medical world.

The long list of so-called sister societies in our program demonstrates the central position which the EADV is already occupying in Europe, also that all these sisters convene at the same time and place as the mother society does. An immense advantage because everybody can meet everybody even from the other end of the discipline – or the world.

I have only few minutes for this quasi-historical perspective, but in closing I want to draw your attention to a point of exemplary importance, readily serving as an example of how the interrelation e.g. in this society and our field is present – and this can and will grow and mul-

tiply our prowess. For the first time a lady is presiding as I said above. She, from the Czech Republic and head of one of the chairs of dermatology in Prague, bears a German name, and I, from Vienna and the 'German' side, bear a Czech name. What could better depict my point and make you all aware of how much history we have in common?

In this sense of our growing together, I want to convey my good wishes to all the participants and stimulate all colleagues between the Baltic and the Aegean to join in.

*Děkuji, Thank you, Danke schön!*

(The above text is an abbreviated version of a speech delivered at the opening of the EADV Meeting.)

PS: The ESHDV had its regular meeting with the 3rd Alibert Oration delivered by Prof. Mauricio Goihman Yahr from Caracas, Venezuela. A splendid oration! A new team, to take office at the Spring Meeting in Malta 2003, was elected: Daniel Wallach, Paris, will be the new president of the ESHDV, and Richard Staughton, London, and Nikolai Tsankov, Sofia, vice-presidents, Xavier Sierra Valentí, Barcelona, secretary-treasurer. Myself will become honorary president. Dues remain 15 EUR or USD per annum, payable in cash. Members are welcome from anywhere in the world. Please apply to [dwallach@noos.fr](mailto:dwallach@noos.fr) and visit our websites at [www.bi-um.univ-paris5.fr/sfhd/infos\\_c.htm](http://www.bi-um.univ-paris5.fr/sfhd/infos_c.htm) and [www.oegdv.at](http://www.oegdv.at).

At the meeting of the Editorial Board of the *Journal of the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology*, Jean-Paul Ortonne, Nice, took over as stalwart of the journal from Torello Lotti, Florence. It was decided that henceforth there will be a new section in the journal, 'History of Medicine', myself and Stella Fatović-Ferenčić, Zagreb, being section editors.

So far the business of the EADV and the dermatohistorical society ESHDV.

*à bientôt,*

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