

JEAN NORDMANN (1896 – 1980)

J. François
Ghent

We have recently lost one of the great personalities of international ophthalmology, Professor Jean Nordmann of Strasbourg. He was born in Colmar on 25th August 1896. He received his secondary education in his native town and his medical training in Strasbourg. He became House Surgeon in 1921 and, after having presented a thesis on the „*Study of acquired cataract*“, Doctor in Medicine in 1926. The same year he was nominated *chef de clinique*. In 1932, he was admitted to the degree of assistant Professor of Ophthalmology. In 1934, he was appointed as policlinical Surgeon and in 1937, as Assistant Head of the Ophthalmological Laboratory. In 1939, he moved to Clermont-Ferrand when the Faculty of Medicine of Strasbourg withdrew to that town. Licenciate in Sciences in 1942, he became Doctor in Natural Sciences in 1946, after having presented two theses, one on the „*Physiology of the lens*“ and the other on the „*Origin of the pigmented cells in the higher vertebrates*“. Also in 1946, he was appointed Ophthalmologist of the Hospitals and in 1947, he succeeded Professor Redslob in the Chair of Ophthalmology at Strasbourg, which he occupied until he became Emeritus Professor in 1969. He continued, nevertheless, until his last days to frequent the Clinic and mor particularly its library, to which he devoted his special attention.

Professor Nordmann was the author or co-author of some 250 publications and was five times *Rapporteur* to French or foreign societies: in 1939, to the Ophthalmological Society of East of France, on the „*History and Technique of Glaucoma Operations*“; in 1954, to the *Société Française d’Ophtalmologie*, on the „*Biology of the lens*“ — a book which was very rapidly out of print —; in 1965, to the *American Association for Research in Ophthalmology*, on the „*Present state and perspectives in research on the lens*“; in 1968, to the *Société Française d’Ophtalmologie* on the „*Biology and Surgery of the Vitreous*“, which report he had written in collaboration with his pupils, and, also in 1968, to the *German Ophthalmological Society*, on „*Congenital and Infantile Cataracts*“.

Professor Nordmann devoted himself essentially to research on the biochemistry of the normal and pathological lens while he also took an interest in numerous other clinical and surgical problems. All his work excited truly international interest to the point that Professor Nordmann was considered as one of the best experts of his time for the physiology and the pathology of the lens.

Professor Nordmann was also actively engaged in the edition of *Documenta Ophthalmologica* from its first appearance in 1938. At the beginning, he was a member of its Scientific Committee, to become afterwards Editor-in-Chief in 1951, a function that he carried out until he retired in 1969. *Documenta Ophthalmologica* rendered homage to its eminent collaborator by dedicating two volumes to him, the first, in 1966, containing fifty-one contributions, to celebrate his seventieth birthday, and the second in 1976, containing thirty-three contributions on the progress of biochemical research on the lens, to celebrate his eightieth birthday.

The merits of Professor Nordmann have frequently been recognised. In 1934, he was awarded the *Cirincione Gold Medal* of the *Italian Ophthalmological Society*; in 1965, the *Cavara Medal* of the *Ophthalmological Society of Rome*; in 1973, the award of the *Society for Research in Ophthalmology*; and in 1975, the *Colle Prize* of the *Fondation pour la Recherche Médicale Française*.

In addition, Professor Nordmann was Doctor honoris causa of the Aristotelian University in Saloniki, a member of the *Belgian Royal Academy of Medicine*, honorary member of the *Belgian Ophthalmological Society*, President of the *International Society for Research in Ophthalmology* and a member of the *Consilium Diagnosticum* of the *German Ophthalmological Society*. He was also a *Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur* and an *Officier d’Académie*.

Professor Nordmann was a great Master on the interantional scale and leaves behind him memories of a kind man and pleasant companion, an erudite and lively scientist, liking precise and careful work, a passionate friend of art and research, whose culture was polyvalent. His judgment on men and things was always as moderate as it was just, and his efficacious advice was listened to by everyone who asked him.



Fig. 1: Jean Nordmann (1896 – 1980)

Prof. Nordmann died on the 23rd September, 1980, leaving behind him a saddened memory for all his friends, who take this opportunity of assuring Madame Nordmann and her daughter of their sincerest sympathy.

Professor
Dr. Jules François
De Smet de Naeyerplein 15
B-9000 Ghent (Belgium)