

Chapter 10

Adolf Eugen Fick's "Contactbrille"

Introduction

Most people agree that *Adolf Eugen Fick*, “Privat-Dozent” (1) at the University of Zurich Eye Clinic, was the inventor of the first contact lens (2). It was in September 1887 that *Fick* submitted an article entitled “**Eine Contactbrille**” (*A Contact-spectacle, or A Pair of Contact-glasses*) to the editorial board of the *Archiv für Ophthalmologie* describing the use of such devices. The article was published six months later, in March 1888, in volume 17, pages 279 to 289, of that journal.

At the same time, an English version of the same article appeared in the *Archives of Ophthalmology*, entitled “**A Contact-lens**” in volume 17, pages 215 to 226. *Charles May*, the noted New York City ophthalmologist, had translated it into English.

There is no doubt that this article, with its translation into English, marked the most significant landmark in the history of contact lenses, because it described the very first clinical application of such devices.

I must draw attention to the dossier on the invention of contact lenses, comprised of unpublished documents originated in the *Zeiss Archives* in *Jena*. It is in regard to a memo published by *Fick* that was submitted by him in June 1887 in a sealed envelope to the *Saxon Academy of Sciences (Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaft)* in Leipzig as well as five letters published by *Fick* in the course of the four months preceding the submission of his article to the *Archiv für Augenheilkunde* and sent to *Abbe*, the technical director at *Zeiss* (3).

This chapter:

- analyzes *Fick's* article by referring to his original German language text and to *May's* English translation of it,
 - takes note of the essential differences between the original German article and the English translation by *May* as it appeared in the American publication,
 - analyzes *Fick's* memo that he sent on June 25, 1887, in a sealed envelope to the Saxon Academy of Sciences,
 - analyzes the five letters sent by *Fick* to *Abbe* between June and October 1887,
 - describes the innovative aspects of these articles because they represent a decisive step in the history of both corneal refractive neutralization and contact lenses,
- finally, reviews critically the level of understanding various historians have had of *Fick's* work and attempts to document and correct the historical errors most commonly disseminated by these authors.

1 – Source Documents

1.1 – “Eine Contactbrille” of Adolf Eugen Fick

(Appendix X – 2)

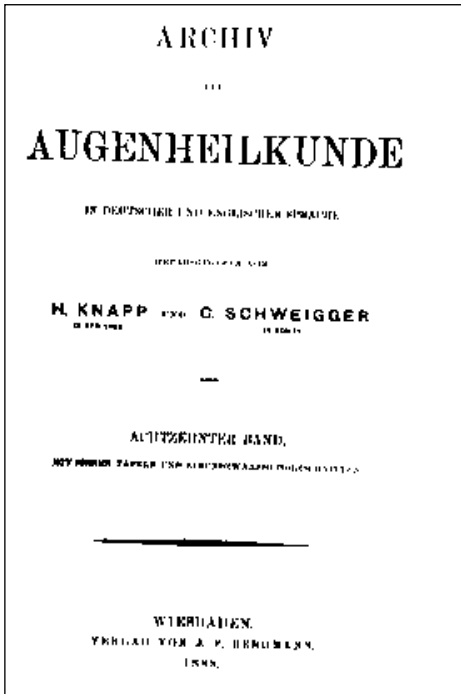


Figure 10 - 1
Front page of the Archiv für Augenheilkunde, 1888.

In his remarkable article entitled “*Eine Contactbrille*” (written in German as one word and meaning literally “*A Contact-spectacle*” or “*A Pair of Contact Glasses*”), translated by *May* into English as “*A Contact-lens*”, *Adolf Eugen Fick* describes the invention and first application of a new device for the correction of irregular astigmatism, keratoconus and corneal opacities.

This ten-page article has received recognition because it was the world’s first publication to describe not only contact lenses, but also their clinical application in the correction of corneal irregularities and keratoconus.

1.1.1 – Introduction

The Difficulties of Correcting Refractive Errors

In his historical introduction, *A. E. Fick* cites the dissatisfaction that he and others experienced at the second half of the 19th century while correcting visual defects due to significant corneal distortions. This was especially true in patients with keratoconus and irregular corneal astigmatism, both congenital and acquired:

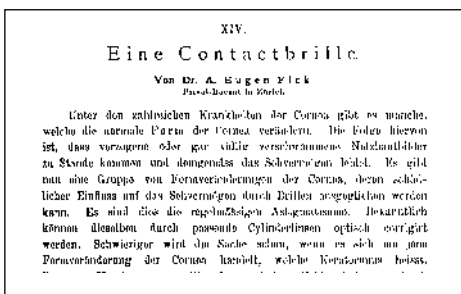


Figure 10 - 2
“*Eine Contactbrille*” of *Adolf Eugen Fick*, in the *Archiv für Augenheilkunde*, March 1888, page 279. (FICK, *Adolf Eugen*, “*Eine Contactbrille*”, *Archiv für Augenheilkunde*, 18, 1888, 279-289. - Page 279)

“*Among the numerous diseases of the cornea, there are many which change its normal form. This results in the production of distorted or even completely blurred retinal images and, accordingly vision suffers. Now there is a group of alterations of the corneal shape, the bad effects of which upon vision may be removed by the use of glasses; these are cases of regular astigmatism. As is well known, such cases can be optically corrected with appropriate cylindrical lenses. The matter begins to be more difficult, however, when we deal with the alteration in the form of the cornea known as keratoconus.*”

“*Unter den zahlreichen Krankheiten der Cornea gibt es manche, welche die normale Form der Cornea verändern. Die Folge hiervon ist, dass verzogene oder gar völlig verschwommene Netzhautbilder zu Stande kommen und demgemäss das Sehvermögen leidet. Es gibt nun eine Gruppe von Formveränderungen der Cornea, deren schädlicher Einfluss auf das Sehvermögen durch Brillen ausgeglichen werden kann. Es sind dies die regelmässigen Astigmatismen. Bekanntlich können dieselben durch passende Cylinderlinsen optisch corrigirt werden. Schwieriger wird die Sache schon, wenn es sich um jene Formveränderung der Cornea handelt, welche Keratoconus heisst.*” (4)

Fick continues:

“The results of optical correction are, however, entirely unsatisfactory in cases in which defects of vision are due to irregular corneal astigmatism.”

“Ganz ungenügend werden aber die Resultate der optischen Correction, wenn es sich um Sehstörung durch unregelmässigen Hornhautastigmatismus handelt.” (5)

The Failure of Hyperbolic, Conical and Stenopaic Spectacle Glasses

Irregular corneal astigmatism and keratoconus could not readily be optically corrected by the use of hyperbolic or conical lenses that were advocated at that time for patients affected by these types of corneal pathology. Such spectacle lenses were largely theoretical proposals and, for practical purposes, unusable. One could say the same regarding the stenopaic spectacles that also were recommended at that time. This unfavorable experience caused Fick to conclude:

“Be this as it may, there are undoubtedly many patients to whom neither hyperbolic, conical, nor stenopaic glasses are of service. Under these circumstances, searching for another means of correcting the different forms of irregular astigmatism cannot be regarded as superfluous.”

“Wie dem auch sei, zweifellos ist, dass es zahlreiche Patienten gibt, denen weder mit hyperbolischen noch conischen noch stenopäischen Brillen wesentlich genützt werden kann. Bei dieser Sachlage is es gewiss nicht überflüssig, nach einem anderen Mittel zur Correction der verschiedenen Arten von irregulärem Astigmatismus zu suchen.” (5)

The Need to Replace the Irregular Cornea

From this perceived need to research another means of correction of these irregularities came the idea of actually replacing the defective cornea by a cornea of normal curvature:

“Obviously, the most radical means would be to replace the cornea by another regular curved surface [May: of regular curvature].”

“Das radikalste Mittel wäre offenbar, die Hornhaut durch eine andere, regelmässig gekrümmte Fläche zu ersetzen.” (5)

Fick probably was aware of unsuccessful surgical efforts to graft corneas at that time, which universally resulted in the loss of the eye by graft rejection or in opacification of the graft. There was never any question of human or animal cornea being used to replace an irregular cornea, but, rather, a “small glass shell” (Glaschälchen), that he would place anterior to the eye:

“This actually can be done, and I shall demonstrate in these pages that I have succeeded in excluding the defective cornea from all dioptric influences by a small glass shell and, thus, without narrowing the field of vision or the field of regard [May: field of fixation].”

“Die kann nun wirklich geschehen, und ich werde in diesen Blättern zeigen, dass es mir gelungen ist, die fehlerhafte Hornhaut durch ein Glasschälchen vom gesamten dioptrischen Effekte auszuschließen ohne Einschränkung des Gesichtsfeldes oder des Blickfeldes.” (5)

1.1.2 – The Characteristics of Fick’s “Contactbrille”

Justification for the Publication

Fick responded to the objection that publication of his ideas would be premature since there had not yet previously been any successful clinical application of such a device:

“If, nevertheless, I publish my views before any patient is wearing the ‘Contactbrille’ [May: the contact-lens], it is because, in the first place, I am justified in stating that, as the result of my studies already engaged in, I have solved the principle of the problem of the ‘Contactbrille’ [May: the contact-lens] and, secondly, because cases suitable in every respect for the ‘Contactbrille’ [May: the contact-lens] will be found much more rapidly if other ophthalmologists give the matter their attention, than if, as heretofore, I continue to search for proper cases among a limited number of eye-patients.”

“Wenn ich gleichwohl schon jetzt, noch ehe ein Patient die Contactbrille trägt, meinen Gedanken publicire, so geschieht dies 1) weil ich mir sagen darf, dass durch meine bisherigen Untersuchungen das Problem der Contactbrille principiell gelöst ist, und 2) weil für die Contactbrille in jeder Hinsicht geeignete Fälle sehr viel schneller sich finden werden, wenn auch andere Ophthalmologen der Sache ihre Aufmerksamkeit schenken, als wenn ich, wie bisher, unter einer beschränkten Zahl von Augenkranken nach geeigneten Fällen suche.” (6)

Description of Fick’s “Contactbrille”

Fick gave a short and precise description of the “Contactbrille” and of the principle of contact correction by neutralization of corneal refractive power by a glass shell:

“The ‘Contactbrille’ (May: The contact-lens) consists of a thin glass shell, bounded by concentric and parallel spherical segments. It is placed upon the eye, and the interspace between it and the eyeball is filled with a liquid having the same refractive index as the cornea. Rays of light then undergo a certain amount of refraction upon entering the liquid, which may be considered as extending forward to the anterior surface of the glass shell; but they suffer no deviation in their course whilst passing from the liquid into the cornea; and thus the irregularities in the passage of rays of light from the air into the cornea, which were previously produced, must be lost.”

“Die Contactbrille besteht in einem dünnen, von concentrischen und parallelen Kugelsegmenten begrenzten Glasschale. Dasselbe wird auf das Auge gelegt und der Zwischenraum zwischen Gläschen und Augapfel mit einer Flüssigkeit gefüllt, welche denselben Brechungsexponenten hat wie die Cornea. Es werden dann die Lichtstrahlen beim Eintritt in die Flüssigkeit, welche man bis an die vordere Glasfläche reichend denken darf, eine bestimmte Brechung erfahren, beim Uebergang aus der Flüssigkeit und die Cornea jedoch keine Aenderung ihres Ganges erleiden, und es müssen folglich auch die Unregelmässigkeiten wegfallen, die vorher beim Uebergang der Lichtstrahlen aus der Luft in die Cornea zu Stande kamen.” (7)

1.1.3 – Experiments on Rabbits’ Eyes

Making Molds

Fick carried out a series of experiments on animals (8). He made plaster casts of the eyeballs of rabbits (9), determined their curvatures and discovered what he could have found in every treatise of his era, namely that, unlike human eyes, the eyes of lower vertebrates are practically spherical:

“Of course, I began my observations with experiments upon animals in order to

ascertain whether and how long the eyeball would suffer a 'Contactbrille' (May: a contact-lens) to be placed upon it without suffering injury. Large rabbits proved to be admirably adapted for these experiments. In one of these animals I drew the lids and the nictitating membrane from the eyeball and filled the resulting sac with plaster-of-Paris of fluid consistency. After hardening, such a cast of the eyeball showed that the radius of curvature of the cornea did not differ materially from that of the sclera and that the eyeball of the rabbit is pretty nearly a perfect sphere."

"Selbstverständlich begann ich meine Untersuchung damit, durch Thierexperimente festzustellen, ob und wie lange man eine Contactbrille auf den Bulbus legen darf, ohne dass derselbe Schaden nimmt. Als Versuchsthiere zeigten sich grosse Kaninchen vortrefflich geeignet. Einem solchen Thiere zog ich Lider und Nickhaut vom Bulbus ab und füllte die hierdurch entstehende Tasche mit Gypsbrei. Nach eingetretener Erstarrung zeigte ein solcher Abguss des Augapfels, dass der Krümmungsradius der Cornea von dem der Sclera nicht wesentlich verschieden, dass der Bulbus des Kaninchens eine ziemlich vollkommene Kugel ist." (10)

The Curvatures of the Eyes

Based on these plaster casts, *Fick* had a glassblower make shells of a single curvature (mono-curve shells). He preferred, however, random trials with glass shells of around 10.50-, 10.00- and 9.50-mm back radiuses (*Fick* describes 21.00, 20.00 and 19.00 mm diameters):

"Then I had small glass globes blown after these plaster casts, constantly simplifying the form, until finally after many trials I abandoned the use of the casts and satisfied myself with obtaining glass vesicles, 21, 20, and 19 mm in diameter, and with having a segment separated from these, the base of which was distant but a few millimeters from the center [May: "from the equator"] of the sphere. From a large number of such small glass shells I selected the best-fitting one for each individual rabbit."

"Nach derartigen Gypsformen liess ich nun Glasschüsselchen blasen, deren Form immer einfacher wurde, bis ich schliesslich nach vielfachem Probieren die Abgüsse ganz verliess, und mich damit begnügte, Glasblasen von 21, 20 und 19 Mm. Durchmesser herstellen und ein Segment absprenge zu lassen, dessen Basis vom Mittelpunkt der Kugel nur wenige Millimeter Abstand hatte. Aus einer grösseren Zahl solcher Schälchen suchte ich dann für jedes einzelne Kaninchen die am besten passenden heraus." (10)

Insertion of the Shell in the Rabbits' Eyes and Their Tolerance

The placement of the shells under the lids of rabbits' eyes seemed easy:

"The introduction of the small glasses [May: the glass shells] beneath the lids and nictitating membrane is easily accomplished, if the internal canthus be drawn forward with sufficient force by means of the thumb placed flat upon it, so that the nictitating ["nictitating" is omitted by May] membrane is lifted from the eyeball. The interspace between the cornea and glass is filled with liquid by drawing the upper margin of the glass away from the eyeball with a small hook and allowing the requisite number of drops to flow from a pipette into the space thus formed.

After a series of partially unsuccessful attempts, it was found that well-fitting small glasses [May: well-fitting glasses] need not be held in place by the lids at all, since they adhered to the globe. Hence, it follows that the glass accompanies the eyeball in all its movements beneath the lids and that not a drop of the liquid escapes. As the eye does not become injected and the natural cornea is rendered invisible, it is impossible to distinguish an eye supplied with the small glass [May: "the glass"] from the naked eye, unless a careful examination be made."

“Die Einführung der Gläschen unter Lider und Nickhaut gelingt leicht, wenn man den Canthus internus mit flach aufgesetztem Daumen so kräftig nach vorne zieht, dass die Nickhaut vom Bulbus sich abhebt. Den Zwischenraum zwischen Cornea und Glas füllt man mit Flüssigkeit, indem man mit einem Häkchen den obersten Rand des Glases vom Bulbus abzieht und in den nun klaffenden Spalt aus einer Pipette die nöthige Anzahl von Tropfen zufließen lässt. Nach einer Reihe zum Theil misslungener Versuche stellte sich nun heraus, dass gut passende Gläschen gar nicht einmal von den Lidern festgehalten werden müssen, da sie am Bulbus adhären. Hieraus folgt schon, dass die Gläschen unter den Lidern alle Bewegungen des Bulbus mitmachen und dass kein Tropfen der Füllungsflüssigkeit abfließt. Da das Auge sich auch nicht injicirt und die natürliche Cornea unsichtbar wird, so ist es ohne genaues Zusehen nicht möglich, ein mit dem Gläschen versehenes Auge von einem unbewaffneten zu unterscheiden.” (10)

Observation of Signs of Intolerance

The shells were well tolerated in the first instance and then we read that *“the conjunctiva shows moderate injection”*. However, after six to eight hours, *Fick* observed a milky cloudiness of the fluid between the cornea and the glass shell, irregularity and cloudiness of the corneal epithelium and ciliary injection of the conjunctiva:

“After six or eight hours there is quite a change in the picture, owing to milky clouding of the liquid. If the small glass [May: the glass] and the liquid be removed it also will be seen that the epithelium of the cornea appears slightly clouded and the conjunctiva shows moderate injection.”

“Nach 6 bis 8 Stunden ist nun freilich das Bild nicht unwesentlich verändert, und zwar durch milchige Trübung der Füllungsflüssigkeit. Entfernt man Gläschen und Flüssigkeit, so bemerkt man ferner, dass das Epithel der Hornhaut nicht ganz glatt ist; die Hornhaut sieht leicht getrübt aus und die Conjunctiva zeigt sich mässig injicirt.” (11)

Clouding of the Tear Film

Under microscopic examination, the clouding of the liquid that *Fick* observed between the eye and the glass shell appeared to result from the presence of fat-globules, desquamated epithelial cells and occasional bacteria. He stated that he had sterilized the glass shells by boiling them. Nevertheless, he attributed these occurrences of clouding to his poor choice of liquid:

“The microscope demonstrates that the clouding of the liquid depends upon the presence of innumerable fat-globules; these are, in part, about the size of blood corpuscles, in part, minute nuclei in rapid molecular motion. If a drop of the clouded liquid be allowed to dry upon a slide and be treated with ether and then with a staining fluid, round cells and epithelial cells, which were easily overlooked among the numerous fat-globules of the fresh preparation, come into view. The round cells are usually collected into small groups. The epithelium contains many large and small fat-globules, within the nucleus and in the cell-body. Bacteria are absent in the great majority of cases, and when present, there are only isolated groups of a few bacilli or micrococci. As a matter of course, I disinfected the small glass shells thoroughly and sterilized the liquid by boiling before use.”

“Die Trübung der Flüssigkeit rührt, wie das Mikroskop lehrt, von zahllosen Fetttröpfchen her; dieselben sind theils von etwa Blutkörperchengrösse, theils kleinste in heftiger Molecularbewegung begriffene Körnchen. Lässt man einen Tropfen jener getrühten Flüssigkeit auf dem Objectträger festrocknen und behandelt dies Präparat mit Aether, darauf mit Farblösungen, so gelingt es, Rundzellen und Epithelien zur Anschauung zu bringen, die zwischen der Unzahl von Fetttropfen des frischen Präparates leicht übersehen werden. Die Rundzellen sind meist zu kleinen Häufchen zusammengebacken. Die Epithelien enthalten vielfach im Kern sowohl, als auch im Zelleib grössere und kleinere Fetttropfen. Bakterien finden sich in

weitaus den meisten Fällen nicht und wenn sie sich finden, so sind es nur vereinzelt Gruppen von wenigen Bacillen oder Coccen. Es versteht sich von selbst, dass ich die Glasschälchen vor dem Gebrauche gründlich desinficirt und die Flüssigkeit durch kochen sterilisirt hatte.” (11)

Clouding of the Corneal Epithelium

The observed corneal clouding was superficial and epithelial only. Histopathological examination of the corneas confirmed the absence of a stromal lesion:

“The cause of the clouding of the cornea is found in its epithelium. If a little of the clouded epithelium be scraped off and the particles be examined after staining, the cells show fat-globules in greater or lesser quantity and of larger or smaller size; and after a little while, numerous free fat-globules can be seen between the epithelium. The result, which I obtained with sections of the prepared cornea, was less pronounced. But at any rate I may say that fatty degeneration was seldom or never found in the epithelium in situ, that in the cornea itself, the well-known inflammatory infiltration with round cells was wholly absent, and that a somewhat abundant presence of the fixed corneal cells was the only point wherein the cornea which I examined seemed to differ from the norm.”

“Die Trübung der Hornhaut hat ihren Sitz im Epithel. Schabt man vor dem getrühten Epithel etwas ab und untersucht die Partikelchen nach vorausgeschickter Färbung, so findet man in jeder Zelle bald mehr bald weniger, bald grössere bald kleinere Fetttropfen; nach einigem Zuwarten sind auch zahlreiche freie Fetttropfen zwischen den Epithelien zu sehen. Weniger deutlich war das Resultat, das ich durch Schneiden der conservirten Hornhäute erhielt. Jedenfalls darf ich sagen, dass an dem Epithel in situ fettiger Zerfall nur selten oder gar nicht nachzuweisen war; dass in der Hornhaut selbst die bekannte entzündliche Infiltration mit Rundzellen vollkommen fehlte und dass ein etwas reichliches Vorhandensein von fixen Hornhautzellen das einzigste gewesen ist, worin die untersuchten Hornhäute vom normalen Verhalten abzuweichen scheinen.” (11)

Conjunctival Redness

Ciliary injection was transient and disappeared rapidly. It seemed less significant in animals in which shells had previously been inserted several times. A kind of adaptation evidently had developed:

“The injection of the eyeball disappears with extraordinary rapidity after removal of the small glass [May: of the glass]. The degree of injection which manifests itself varies greatly and is apt to be absent entirely in those rabbits the eyes of which have already been utilized in a long series of experiments. Apparently, therefore, a sort of toleration is established very soon.”

“Die Injection des Bulbus verschwindet nach Entfernung des Gläschens ungemein schnell. Sie ist sehr verschieden stark ausgesprochen und pflegte bei denjenigen Kaninchen ganz zu fehlen, deren Augen schon zu einer längeren Reihe von Versuchen gedient hatten. Es tritt also offenbar sehr bald eine Art Gewöhnung ein.” (12)

1.1.4 – Interpretation of Signs of Intolerance

Fick searched for a cause-and-effect connection between the three observed signs (i.e., clouding of the intermediate liquid, clouding of the cornea and ciliary injection) and the two components brought into contact with the eye (the glass cupola and the liquid):

“There still remained the division of the responsibility for three difficulties - clouding of the liquid, clouding of the cornea, and injection of the conjunctiva - between the two

exciting factors - small glass [May: glass] and liquid."

"Es wäre nun festzustellen, wie sich die drei Störungen, Trübung der Flüssigkeit, Trübung der Hornhaut und Injection der Conjunctiva, auf die beiden schädlichen Factoren, nämlich Gläschen und Flüssigkeit, vertheilen" (12)

The Liquid caused the Corneal Clouding

The first possibility, according to *Fick*, was that the liquid was the sole cause of the corneal haze. He demonstrated that this was not the case, by inserting a glass shell without liquid:

"Concerning the clouding of the cornea, it was easily demonstrated that it was produced solely by the liquid. For if a small glass [May: a glass] be applied without filling it with liquid, the cornea will remain clear; but if the small glass [May: the glass] touch the cornea at any point, or if the formation of a drop of liquid causes connection between cornea and glass, the clouding of the cornea in such cases extends exactly as far as the area of contact."

"Bezüglich der Hornhauttrübung konnte leicht constatirt werden, dass sie lediglich durch die Flüssigkeit hervorgebracht wird. Denn wenn man ein Gläschen einlegt, ohne es mit Flüssigkeit zu füllen, so bleibt die Hornhaut klar es sei denn, dass das Gläschen die Cornea an irgend einer Stelle berührt, oder es sei, dass sich ein Tropfen Flüssigkeit gebildet und zwischen Glas und Cornea Berührung vermittelt hat ; in diesen Fällen reicht die Trübung der Hornhaut genau so weit, wie die Berührung." (12)

Contact between Glass and Conjunctiva Causing the Clouding

According to *Fick's* second explanation of clouding of the cornea, the fatty cells could have originated equally from cornea, conjunctiva or both. The area of contact of the glass shell with bulbar conjunctiva could have been at the origin of episodes of irritation and inflammatory reactions. A glass shell applied without liquid and therefore without corneal contact produced a collection of cloudy fluid at its periphery:

"That clouding of the liquid is partly due to corneal epithelium in a state of fatty degeneration is evident from what has been stated above. At the same time, processes seem to be set up at the points of contact between the small glass [May: the glass] and the conjunctiva of the eyeball, which result in the addition of epithelium, round cells, and the products of disorganization of these; for drops of clear serum soon form upon the inner surface of a small glass [May: a glass] applied empty, collect at the most dependent portion, and at the end of six or eight hours, are mixed and clouded with fat and cellular elements, although no change can be demonstrated in the corneal epithelium. Furthermore, I was able to demonstrate repeatedly that the filling-liquid at the periphery of the glass was clouded, whilst corresponding to the center, it remained perfectly clear."

"Dass die Trübung der Flüssigkeit zum Theile von dem fettig zerfallenden Hornhautepithel herrührt, ist aus dem Vorstehenden bereits klar. Indessen scheinen auch an der Berührungsstelle des Gläschens mit der Conjunctiva bulbi Prozesse vor sich zu gehen, welche der Füllungsflüssigkeit Epithelien, Rundzellen und deren Zerfallsprodukte zuführen. Denn an der Innenwand eines ungefüllt applicirten Gläschens schlagen sich zunächst klare Wassertröpfchen nieder, sammeln sich an der tiefsten Stelle und sind nach 6 bis 8 Stunden reichlich an Fett und zelligen Elementen versehen und getrübt, obgleich am Hornhautepithel durchaus keine Veränderung nachzuweisen ist. Ferner konnte ich wiederholt constatiren, dass die Füllungsflüssigkeit in der Peripherie des Glases rundum getrübt, im Centrum desselben aber völlig klar geblieben war." (12)

The Liquid and the Glass Contact Caused the Ciliary Injection

In his third explanation of corneal clouding, *Fick* claimed that the ciliary injection could primarily have been due to the liquid behind the contact-glass:

“Finally, as to the injection of the conjunctiva, it is evident that both factors, glass and liquid, must be concerned in the cause. But since the injection was always slight, and, if small glasses [May: if glasses] without filling-liquid were applied, even absent, I am inclined to charge the greater part of the responsibility to the liquid.”

“Was endlich die Injection der Conjunctiva betrifft, so ist selbstverständlich dass beide Faktoren Glas sowohl als auch die Flüssigkeit beschuldigt werden müssen. Da aber die Injection stets gering, selbst Null war, wenn Gläschen ohne Füllung eingelegt wurden, so bin ich geneigt, der Flüssigkeit den grössten Theil der Schuld zuzuschreiben.” (13)

The Quest for an Ideal Liquid

The role of the liquid thus appeared crucial to *Fick*. He attributed the observed incidents to its composition and tried successively pure physiological saline solution, then saline solution mixed with alcohol or glycerin in various concentrations.

He observed that a sterile solution of 2% grape sugar was the best tolerated of all (14) and that this solution allowed the wearing of the glass shells for up to 8 or 10 hours without the appearance of the above-noted complications:

“The problem, therefore, which presented itself to me was to find a liquid which would cause as little irritation as possible to the cornea and which has the same index of refraction. Naturally, this could be discovered only by numerous trials. Salt solutions, with various organic additions, alcohol solutions and glycerin solutions of different strengths were tried without any satisfactory result. Finally, a two-per-cent solution of grape sugar was found to answer all requirements. A well-fitting glass filled with sterilized two-percent solution of grape sugar is borne by the rabbit’s eye for eight or ten hours without the production of any apparent clouding of the liquid and with no clouding of the cornea or injection of the conjunctiva.”

“Es trat also die Aufgabe an mich heran, eine Flüssigkeit ausfindig zu machen, welche die Hornhaut möglichst wenig reizt und zugleich mit ihr den nämlichen Brechungsexponenten hat. Natürlich konnte das nur durch vielfaches Herumprobieren geschehen. Kochsalzlösungen mit verschiedenen organischen Zusätzen, Alcohol- und Glycerinlösungen in verschiedenen Concentrationen wurden ohne befriedigendes Resultat versucht. Schliesslich fand sich in einer 2%iger Traubenzuckerlösung eine Flüssigkeit, die den gestellten Anforderungen vollständig entspricht. Ein gut passendes Gläschen, mit 2%igen sterilisierter Traubenzuckerlösung gefüllt wird vom Kaninchenauge 8 bis 10 Stunden vertragen, ohne dass es zu merklicher Trübung der Flüssigkeit oder gar Trübung der Hornhaut und Injection der Conjunctiva käme.” (15)

Adaptation and Reversibility of Signs of Intolerance

Fick described his conception of adaptation and observed that the organic signs of intolerance were reversible; he noted that the ciliary injection disappeared within 30 minutes and the corneal clouding overnight:

“However, even should these disturbances take place, it is only necessary to repeat the application of the glasses for awhile daily, in order to get the eye accustomed to it, and then the desired result will surely be obtained. I would also say that any possible injection of the conjunctiva would disappear within half an hour, and any corneal clouding in the course of the night.”

“Sollten aber jene Störungen doch auftreten, so braucht man nur das Einlegen der Gläser eine Zeit lang täglich zu wiederholen, um das Auge zu gewöhnen und dann sicher das gewünschte reine Resultat zu erhalten. Ich bemerke noch, dass eine etwaige Injection der Conjunctiva binnen einer halben Stunde und Hornhauttrübungen über Nacht verschwinden.” (16)

1.1.5 – Experiments on the Eyes of Human Beings

After these preliminary experiments on animals, *Fick* switched his studies to the eyes of human beings:

“Are we then justified in assuming that the human eye will behave toward the Contactbrille [May: the contact-lens] just as we have seen that the rabbit’s eye does?”

“Darf man nun annehmen, dass das menschliche Auge der Contactbrille gegenüber sich ebenso verhalten wird, wie dies vorstehend vom Kaninchenauge geschildert ist?” (16)

Molds of Human Cadaver Eyes

In order to prove the truth of his observations based on animal studies in the eyes of human beings, *Fick* proceeded to take impressions from the eyes of a human cadaver:

“In order to obtain properly fitting ‘Contactbrille’ [May: contact-lenses] for the human eye, I resorted to taking plaster-casts again—naturally of the eye of the cadaver. The cast of a human eye shows very plainly that the cornea is the segment of a sphere of smaller radius of curvature than the rest of the globe. In addition, the cast showed, though less clearly, that the radius of curvature of the conjunctiva increases steadily from the front part [of the conjunctiva] to the back part, as we would naturally expect when we consider that only in the immediate neighborhood of the cornea does the conjunctiva lie directly upon the globe, while farther back it is separated from this by a constantly thickening layer of tendons, connective tissue, fat, and muscles.”

“Um eine auf das menschliche Auge passende Contactbrille herzustellen, nahm ich zunächst wieder Gypsabgüsse, natürlich vom Leichenaugen. Der Abguss eines menschlichen Auges zeigt sehr deutlich, dass die Hornhaut ein Kugelsegment von kleinerem Krümmungsradius ist als der Rest des Bulbus. Der Abguss zeigt ferner, wenn auch weniger deutlich, dass der Krümmungsradius der Conjunctiva von vorne nach hinten stetig zunimmt, was man selbstverständlich finden wird, wenn man sich daran erinnert, dass nur in unmittelbarer Nähe der Hornhaut die Conjunctiva direct auf dem Bulbus aufliegt, weiter hinten dagegen durch eine stetig dicker werdende Schicht von Sehnen, Bindegewebe, Fett und Muskeln von dem Bulbus getrennt ist.” (16)

The Preparation of a Glass-Blown Contact Shell

He then prepared the scleral zone of the glass shell from the plaster-cast model taken from the cadaver eye. In the central portion of the shell, he had the glass blower create a protrusion in the area intended to be anterior to the cornea:

“The next step was to have a glass vesicle made which fitted upon the periphery of the plaster cast; then a portion of this glass globe [May: of this small glass globe] was heated and a protrusion blown out, which was marked by an oval line after cooling; along this line the segment was separated, and the broken edge was made smooth by melting.”

“Ich liess nun zunächst eine Glasblase herstellen, welche auf die Peripherie des Gypsabgusses passte; dann wurde eine Stelle dieser Glasblase von Neuem erhitzt und eine Vorbauchung ausgeblasen, die Vorbauchung nach dem Erkalten mit einer ovalen Linie umzeichnet und auf dieser Linie abgesprengt,

schliesslich der abgesprengte Rand rund geschmolzen." (17)

Fick's Observations on Himself

Fick then placed this contact lens on his own left eye (18) and left it there for two hours without being conscious of any particular adverse symptoms. Examination revealed light ciliary injection, which disappeared rapidly after removal of the shell:

"Such a small glass [May: a glass], naturally still very imperfect, was placed in the conjunctival sac of my left eye by Prof. Gaule, in whose institute I conducted these investigations; I wore it for two hours without any other subjective symptoms, except some flow of tears, not, however, over the cheeks, but only into the nose. Objectively, a moderate injection, more marked at the beginning than at the end of the experiment and which disappeared with extraordinary rapidity after removal of the glass, was observed. The liquid between the cornea and the small glass [May: the glass] remained perfectly clear and contained, as the microscope showed, only very few organized elements, a few epithelial cells, round cells, and fat-globules."

"Ein solches, begreiflicherweise noch sehr unvollkommenes Gläschen legte Herr Prof. Gaule, in dessen Institut ich diese Untersuchung machte, in den Conjunctivalsack meines linken Auges ein, und ich trug es 2 Stunden lang ohne andere subjective Beschwerde als etwas Thränenfluss, wohlverstanden nicht Thränenfluss über die Wange, sondern nur in die Nase. Objectiv wurde eine mässige Injection constatirt, die zu Anfang des Versuches stärker war als zu Ende desselben und nach Herausnahme des Gläschens ausserordentlich schnell verschwand. Die Flüssigkeit zwischen Cornea und Glas war völlig klar geblieben und enthielt, wie das Mikroskop zeigte, nur sehr wenig geformte Elemente, nämlich einige Epithelien, Rundzellen und Fetttropfen." (19)

After such conclusive and apparently satisfactory first results, *Fick* had other volunteers (20) wear the glass shell and, in view of the observed irregularities and deficiencies of glass-blown shells, he took the decision to ask *Abbe*, research director of *Zeiss Optical Works* in Jena, to grind contact lenses for him in order to improve their optical quality:

"Other persons now subjected themselves to the experiment; and as subsequent trials proved still more satisfactory in relation to the subjective and objective disturbances than the first had and since it could be demonstrated that the 'Contactbrille' [May: the contact-lens] adhered to the globe and held its fluid well and followed all the movements of the eyeball, without any movement of its own, except gradually a slight rotation around the long axis of the globe, I concluded to have the 'Contactbrille' (May: the contact-lens) made in an optically applicable form; that is, to have it ground."

"Nun gaben sich auch noch andere Personen zu den Versuchen her, und da die weiteren Versuche hinsichtlich der subjectiven und objectiven Störungen noch günstiger ausfielen als der erste, da auch constatirt werden konnte, dass die Contactbrille dem Bulbus adhärirt, demgemäss die Flüssigkeit vortrefflich festhält und allen Bewegungen des Bulbus folgt, ohne selber andere Bewegungen auszuführen als gelegentlich etwas Drehung um die Längsachse des Bulbus, so beschloss ich die Contactbrille in optisch brauchbarer Form herstellen, d. h. also schleifen zu lassen" (21)

"Unfortunately, all requisites for this were lacking here in Zurich, and therefore I wrote to Prof. Abbe in Jena, requesting him to have several 'Contactbrillen' [May: several contact-lenses] made for me; he was kind enough to fulfill my request."

"Leider fehlten dazu hier in Zürich alle Voraussetzungen und ich wandte mich daher brieflich an Herrn Prof. Abbe in Jena mit der Bitte, mir einige Contactbrillen herstellen zu lassen. Derselbe war gütig genug, meine Bitte zu erfüllen." (21)

The Dimensions of the Contact Shells

<i>Back optical radius radius</i>	8.00 mm
<i>Primary optic diameter</i>	14.00 mm
<i>Back scleral radius</i>	15.00 mm
<i>Total diameter</i>	20.00 mm
<i>Weight</i>	0.50 gram

Table 10 - 1
*Dimensions of the contact shell quoted by Fick in his
September 1887 publication of Archiv für Augenheilkunde.*

From the four shells “of optical quality” delivered by *Abbe*, *Fick* selected one, which had, in his opinion, the following specification:

- a “glass cornea” having a back optic zone radius of 8.00 mm and an optic zone diameter of 14 mm,
- a “glass sclera” having a back scleral radius of 15.00 mm of 3.00-mm width,

- a total diameter of 20.00 mm,
- a weight of 0.50 gram, and having parallel sides, “ground and polished on its internal and external surfaces”.

Fick describes the parameters of his selected glass shell as follows:

“The formula which has thus far been found to be the most satisfactory in the construction of a ‘Contactbrille’ [May: a contact-lens] is the following:

A glass cornea, having a radius of curvature of 8 mm, rests with a base of 7-mm radius upon the glass sclera; the latter has a breadth of 3 mm and corresponds to a sphere whose radius of curvature is 15 mm; the glass cornea has parallel surfaces, both of which are ground and polished; in the same way, the free edge of the glass sclera is ground and polished; the weight of a ‘Contactbrille’ [May: a contact-lens] is about 0.5 gram.”

“Die bis jetzt als zweckmässigst befundene Vorschrift für Herstellung einer Contactbrille lautet folgendermassen:

Eine Glascornea von 8,0 Mm. Krümmungsradius sitzt mit einer Basis von 7 Mm. Radius auf der Glassclera; die letztere ist 3 Mm. breit und entspricht einer Kugel von 15 Mm. Krümmungsradius; die Glascornea ist parallelwandig, aussen und innen geschliffen und polirt; desgleichen ist der freie Rand der Glassclera geschliffen und polirt: Gewicht einer Contactbrille etwa 0,5 Gramm.” (21)

The Principle of the Correction of Irregular Astigmatism Associated with Corneal Opacities

The Problem of Corneal Opacities

Fick started with the concept that the essential function of the new contact lens should be to correct corneal irregularities by a liquid lens maintained by a shell with parallel surfaces. He researched the clinical indications of these contact lenses in patients affected by irregular astigmatism resulting from attacks of keratitis and its aftereffects.

He observed that the number of appropriate indications was limited, as corneal scars and nebulae also affected the majority of his patients. Such leukomas typically caused diffraction of the incident light and were managed at the time by optical iridectomies and corneal tattooing. The results obtained were rarely satisfactory, except to eliminate annoying reflections. Moreover, numerous complications and the considerable risk of infection imposed the most stringent reservations on these surgical procedures:

“If we look around among patients with irregular astigmatism, we will observe that by far the greater numbers of these are afflicted with corneal cicatrices. The corneal

cicatrix not only alters the form, the radius of curvature of different segments of the cornea, but also the density of the tissue itself; and, it may be assumed that the rays of light suffer deviation from their regular course, not only when entering the cornea, but also within its substance. On this account, as is known, we endeavor to relieve cases of dense central corneal cicatrices by means of an iridectomy. But this assistance is only too often insufficient because, in the first place, it is not possible to give the artificial pupil exactly the size and shape which would correspond best to circumstances and, secondly, because the corneal cicatrix is itself rendered luminous by the incident light and casts over the retina a diffuse and very annoying glimmer. It has been attempted to remove the latter difficulty by tattooing leucomata; occasionally this has been followed by brilliant results. Yet the numerous precautionary measures and contra-indications that are urged by even enthusiastic adherents of tattooing would indicate that tattooing sometimes results in very serious consequences and even in panophthalmitis."

"Wenn man nun unter den Patienten mit irregulärem Astigmatismus Umschau hält, so wird man die Bemerkung machen, dass die weitaus grösste Zahl derselben mit Hornhautnarben behaftet ist. Die Hornhautnarbe verändert aber nicht blos die Form, den Krümmungsradius verschiedener Hornhautstückchen, sondern auch die Dichtigkeit des Gewebes selbst und es ist also anzunehmen, dass die Lichtstrahlen nicht blos bei Ihrem Eintritt in die Cornea, sondern auch im Hornhautgewebe noch Ablenkungen vom regelmässigen Gang erleiden.

Bekanntlich versucht man daher in Fällen von centralen dichten Hornhautnarben durch eine Iridectomie Hülfe zu schaffen. Allein diese Hülfe fällt nur zu oft ungenügend aus, weil man erstens nicht im Stande ist, der künstlichen Pupille genau diejenige Grösse und Gestalt zu geben, die den Verhältnissen am besten entspricht, und weil zweitens die Hornhautnarbe durch das einfallende Licht selbst leuchtend wird und die Netzhaut mit einem diffusen, sehr störendem Lichtschimmer überfluthet.

Diesem letzteren Zustand hat man durch Tätowirung der Leucome abzuhelpen gesucht, zuweilen mit eclatantem Erfolge. Allein die zahlreichen Vorsichtsmassregeln und Containdicationen, die selbst von eifrigen Anhängern der Tätowirung hervorgehoben werden, deuten schon darauf hin, dass das Tätowiren manchmal recht fatale Folgen, sogar gänzliche Vereiterungen des Bulbus hervorbringt." (22)

Optical Tattooing by Contact Shells

Fick then tried to add "stenopaic tattooing" of the contact lens to compensate for corneal irregularities. To achieve this intended result, he blackened the contact lens with the exception of an optical area immediately anterior to and in line with the artificial pupil:

"If, however, such a patient be provided with a 'Contactbrille' [May: a contact-lens] which has been rendered opaque, except the location or area opposite [May: except opposite] the artificial pupil, the various optical defects will be corrected with the single exception of the defect due to the peripheral situation of the pupil."

"Wenn man dagegen einem solchen Patienten eine Contactbrille aufsetzt, die bis auf eine der künstlichen Pupille gegenüberliegende Stelle bezw. Zone undurchsichtig ist, so sind sämtliche optische Fehler corrigirt, mit einziger Ausnahme des Fehlers, welcher auf der peripherischen Lage des Sehloches beruht." (23)

Fick carried out a study in order to measure dispersion of light by a glass shell, which had been blackened except for a stenopaic hole. The shell was then glued onto an artificial eye that he had improvised, initially, from a hemaglobinometer. Due to this experiment, he became convinced that a stenopaic hole would allow clear vision for objects placed in the axis of the artificial pupil.

The Indications for the "Contactbrille"

Fick enumerated possible applications for contact lenses, as follows:

corneal irregularities, except when associated with opacities, keratoconus and post-operative cicatricial astigmatism, aphakia, by means of a contact lens having a steeper back optic zone radius, high myopia, requiring a contact lens with flatter curvature.

For the correction of aphakia and high myopia, *Fick* envisaged a contact lens, the corneal zone of which must have a curvature proportionate to the patient's corneal anomaly. For this reason, the contact lens would require parallel surfaces permitting the geometric correction, which would be given to the captive liquid lens between the front surface of the cornea and the back surface of the lens. However, *Fick* did not envisage, at this stage, optical correction by a dioptric refractive element ground into the front zone of the lens:

“Besides the numerous cases in which the corneal cicatrices diminish the acuteness of vision by irregular refraction and dazzling, there are, though less frequently, cases of irregular astigmatism with clear corneas. To this class, cases of keratoconus belong; also those cases in which peripherally situated cicatrices, as, for instance, cicatrices as a result of cataract operations, have caused distortion of the cornea. Assuming that there is no impediment to rays of light beyond the cornea, there is no doubt that the optical defect can be fully corrected by the ‘Contactbrille’ [May: “the contact-lens”]. At the same time the high degree of hypermetropia in aphakia could be diminished by increased curvature of the glass cornea.

Finally, we might also consider the advisability of allowing myopias of high degrees, whom we do not dare to give correcting glasses, to wear ‘Contactbrille’ [May: wear contact-lenses] whose glass corneas would naturally want to be correspondingly less curved than those heretofore used by me.”

“Ausser den zahlreichen Fällen, bei denen Hornhautnarben durch unregelmässige Strahlenbrechung und Blendung die Sehschärfe herabsetzen, gibt es, wenn auch seltener, irregulären Astigmatismus bei ungetrübter Cornea. Hierher gehören die Fälle von Keratoconus, ferner die Fälle, bei denen peripher gelegene Narben, z. B. Narben, die von Cataractoperationen herrühren, Verzerrung der Cornea bewirkt haben. Vorausgesetzt, dass nicht jenseits der Cornea noch ein Hinderniss für die Lichtstrahlen liegt, wird sich ohne Zweifel der optische Fehler durch die Contactbrille vollständig corrigiren lassen. Zugleich könnte die hochgradige Hypermetropie des Aphakischen durch stärkere Krümmung der Glascornea ausgeglichen werden.

Endlich konnte man wohl daran denken, hochgradige Myopen denen man corrigirende Brillen nicht zu geben wagt, Contactbrillen tragen zu lassen, deren Glascornea natürlich in entsprechendem Maasse schwächer gekrümmt sein müsste, als die bisher von mir verwendeten.” (24)

1.1.7 – Clinical Applications

Difficulties in Recruiting Patients

Fick's clinical trials in patients that were both willing to give consent and were suitable subjects for experiment ran into recruitment difficulties. Professor *Haab* authorized him to pursue his trials on humans by using the outpatient records from the Zurich Ophthalmology Eye Clinic. *Fick* obtained the charts of 17 patients who were affected either by keratoconus or regular or irregular astigmatism. He finally retained six patients for the trial:

“It was now important to secure patients upon whom tests based upon the preceding observations could be made. Professor Haab was kind enough to place the material of the Ophthalmological Polyclinic at my disposal. I then searched the records for those cases, which seemed suitable for trial of the ‘Contactbrille’ [May: “of the contact-lenses”].

Among these had to be excluded all out-of-town patients because the expense of having them come to Zurich would have been too great. Thus there were seventeen patients left, and this number dwindled considerably, since a few could not be found, others had died, and still others did not respond to a request to present themselves at the clinic because they had become reconciled to their condition. Thus there were altogether ten patients for examination among which there were four again who had to be sent away because they proved entirely unsuitable. The experiment applied to the remaining six gave the following results."

"Es galt jetzt Patient zu finden, an denen die Probe auf die vorstehenden Betrachtungen gemacht werden konnte. Herr Prof. Haab hatte die Güte, mir das Material der ophthalmologischen Poliklinik zur Verfügung zu stellen. Ich suchte nun in den Journalen diejenige Fälle, die zu einem Versuche mit der Contactbrille geeignet schienen. Von diesen mussten vorläufig alle Auswärtigen ausser Betracht bleiben, da es zu grosse Kosten gemacht hätte, sie nach Zürich kommen zu lassen. So blieben mir 17 Patienten. Auch diese Zahl schmolz noch bedeutend zusammen, da einige nicht zu finden, andere gestorben waren, und wieder andere der Aufforderung sich in der Klinik vorzustellen keine Folge leisteten, weil sie sich mit ihrem Zustande ausgesöhnt hatten. So kamen im Ganzen 10 Patienten zur Untersuchung, von denen wiederum 4 als ganz ungeeignet weggeschickt werden mussten. Bei den 6 Uebrigbleibenden ergab der Versuch folgendes Resultat." (25)

Clinical Observations

The first clinical trials involved six patients: five with corneal nebulæ, some of whom had irregular astigmatism associated with these, and one patient with keratoconus:

"No. 1. - J. U. Both sides, central corneal macula, anterior polar cataract, and some nystagmus. Left: counts fingers at one meter; after dilating pupil only at three-quarters of a meter; with 'Contactbrille' [May: with contact-lens], lateral aperture, fingers at two meters. Right: S almost 2/18 (26); after dilating pupil, only 1/60; with 'Contactbrille' [May: with contact-lens], no improvement.

No. 2. - Mrs. L. Maculae corneae of both sides. Right: S = 6/24; with 'Contactbrille' [May: with contact-lens] with blackened center, S = 6/18/.

No 3. - K. carpenter, keratoconus on both sides. Left: S = 6/60, with 'Contactbrille' [May: with contact-lens], S = 6/36 (also a few letters of 24).

No 4. - P. H. Left: anophthalmus. Right: central maculae corneae; S = 4/13; with 'Contactbrille' [May: with contact-lens], blackened center, S = 4/9.75.

No 5 - O. M. Right: normal. Left: leucoma adhaerens, below; pupil oval, vertically; S = 4/36; with 'Contactbrille' [May: with contact-lens], S = 4/24, some letters.

No 6. - A. G. Right: normal. Left: maculae corneae; counts fingers at two meters; after dilating pupil, S = 1/30; with 'Contactbrille' [May: with contact-lens], entirely blackened except one sector, S = 2/12."

"No. 1. J. U., beiderseits centrale Maculae corneae, vordere Polarcataract, etwas Nystagmus. Links: zählt Finger in 1 Meter, nach Erweiterung der Pupille nur in 3/4 Meter. Mit Contactbrille, seitliches Sehloch, Finger in 2 Meter. Rechts: S nahezu 2/18, nach Erweiterung der Pupille nur 1/60. Contactbrille bessert nicht.

No. 2. Frau L., beiderseits centrale Maculae corneae. Rechts: S kaum 6/24; mit Contactbrille, deren Centrum geschwärzt, S = 6/18 gut.

No. 3. Schreiner K., Keratoconus beiderseits. Links: S = 6/60, mit Contactbrille S = 6/36 gut, von der 24 noch einzelne Buchstaben.

No. 4. P. H., links Anophthalmus, rechts Maculae corneae centrales. S = 4/13; mit Contactbrille, Centrum geschwärzt, S = 4/9,75.

No. 5. O. M., rechts normal, links Leucoma adhaerens nach unten, Pupille senkrecht oval, S = 4/36, mit Contactbrille S = 4/24, einzelne Buchstaben.

No. 6. A. G., rechts normal, links Maculae corneae, zählt Finger in 2 Meter; nach Erweiterung der Pupille $S = 1/30$; mit Contactbrille, geschwärzt bis auf einen Sector, $S = 2/12$." (27)

Fick indicated that the contact lenses had been blackened according to the principle of corneal tattooing in four of the selected cases (# 1, 2, 4 and 6). Only a stenopaic hole was left clear and this was opposite that portion of the cornea remaining intact and not affected by either nebulae or leukoma.

Description of Case #6

Fick concluded that only in case #6 had he obtained satisfactory improvement of vision with a blackened contact lens provided with a stenopaic pinhole:

"It will be seen that, among the preceding cases, only one was benefited sufficiently in acuteness of vision to have made it worthwhile to continue these preliminary experiments in order to increase the acuteness of vision still more by obtaining a greater correspondence between the maculae and the blackened portions of the 'Contactbrille' [May: of the contact-lens], to have justified proceeding systematically to accustom the eye to the glass, and to have the girl's folks gradually taught how to fill and apply the 'Contactbrille' [May: apply the contact-lens]. I would naturally have been very glad to have taken this trouble, but since the other eye of the girl was almost normal, I did not consider myself justified in continuing the experiment, since I could not expect a result which would have been of practical value to the girl. Nevertheless, this case taught me that, among the exceedingly numerous patients with opacities of the cornea, there are certainly those who can be benefited by the use of the 'Contactbrille' [May: of the contact-lens], provided, naturally, the eye corrected by the 'Contactbrille' [May: by the contact-lens] is the better and not the worse one, as in Case 6."

"Von den vorstehenden sechs Fällen hat also nur einer, der letzte, eine so beträchtliche Verbesserung der Sehschärfe erfahren, dass es sich gelohnt hätte, diese vorläufigen Versuche fortzusetzen, um durch grössere Aehnlichkeit zwischen den Maculae und der geschwärzten Stelle der Contactbrille die Sehschärfe noch weiter zu bessern, das Auge an die Contactbrille systematisch zu gewöhnen, und den Angehörigen des Mädchens das Einfahren und Füllen der Contactbrille allmählig zu lehren. Ich hätte mich dieser Mühe natürlich sehr gern unterzogen, allein da das andere Auge des Mädchens ziemlich normal war, so hielt ich mich nicht für berechtigt, die Versuche weiter fortzusetzen, die ja ein für das Mädchen verwendbares Resultat doch nicht erwarten liessen. Immerhin hatte mich dieser Fall gelehrt, dass unter den so ungemein zahlreichen Kranken mit Hornhauttrübungen jedenfalls auch solche sind, denen durch die Contactbrille wesentlich genützt werden kann, vorausgesetzt natürlich, dass das durch Contactbrille corrigierte Auge das bessere, nicht wie im Falle N°6 das schlechtere ist." (27)

1.1.8 - Advice on the Use of the "Contactbrille"

Advice on How to Insert Contact Shells

Following the article, Fick gave advice on the insertion of the "Contactbrille" that was mostly derived from experience in the manipulation of ocular prostheses. He stressed the use of the liquid and how essential it was that this should fill all the space between the shell and the cornea. He also stressed problems of removal:

"Hoping that other oculists will also endeavor to employ the 'Contactbrille' (May: the contact-lens), I will communicate several matters of technique: Introduction is best accomplished by seizing the small glass between the index finger and the thumb of the right hand, at the same time lifting the upper lid of the patient's eye with the left, and requesting him to look down; now the small glass [May: the glass] is pushed

beneath the upper lid and, whilst the patient looks up and thus carries the contact-spectacle [May: the contact-lens] upward, the lower lid is drawn forward somewhat and the 'Contactbrille' [May: the contact-lens] adjusted to the eyeball."

"In der Hoffnung, dass auch andere Augenärzte versuchen werden die Contactbrille in Anwendung zu bringen, will ich noch einige Technica mittheilen:

Die Einführung geschieht am besten so, dass man das Gläschen zwischen Zeigefinger und Daumen der rechten Hand fasst, mit der linken Hand das obere Lid des Kranken hebt und denselben auffordert, nach unten zu blicken; nun schiebt man das Gläschen unter das obere Lid, und während der Kranke jetzt nach oben blickt und dabei die Contactbrille mit nach oben führt, zieht man das untere Lid etwas ab und adjustirt die Contactbrille auf dem Bulbus." (28)

Advice Given on How to Fill up the Space with Liquid

Instillation of the liquid intended to fill the space between the eye and the contact shell had the potential to worry would-be users. The technique was tricky because a strabismus hook was required as well as a drop-measurer. Moreover, it was essential to have a third person to assist:

"In order to supply the liquid: While an assistant or the patient himself lifts the upper lid, the upper portion of the margin of the 'Brille' (spectacle) [May: of the lens] is slightly drawn from the eyeball by means of a squint-hook, and with the unemployed hand the sugar solution, well warmed, is allowed to drop upon the eyeball from a pipette with bent extremity."

"Um die Flüssigkeit einzufüllen, lässt man durch einen Assistenten bezw. durch den Patienten selbst das obere Lid heben, zieht mit einem Schielhaken den oberen Rand der Brille vom Bulbus ein wenig ab und lässt aus einer mit der anderen Hand geführten, am Ende winkelig abgebogenen Pipette die wohl erwärmte Zuckerlösung auf den Bulbus tropfen." (28)

Instructions on How to Remove the Contact Shell

On the other hand, removal of the contact lens by the technique also used for ocular prostheses was relatively straightforward:

"To remove the 'Brille' (spectacle) [May: the lens] again, it is necessary only to lift the lower portion of the margin of the 'Brille' (spectacle) [May: the glass] with a squint-hook, while the patient is looking up, and then to have the patient look down; during the downward movement the small glass [May: the lens] becomes detached and is caught in the patient's handkerchief. Occasionally, removal is easier if the proceeding be reversed: Have the patient look down, separate the upper margin, and then look up."

"Um die Brille wieder zu entfernen, genügt es, während der Patient nach oben blickt, den unteren Rand der Brille mit dem Schielhaken zu lüften und hierauf nach unten blicken zu lassen; bei der Bewegung des Bulbus nach unten fliegt das Gläschen heraus und wird in einem vom Patienten gehaltenen Handtuche aufgefangen. Zuweilen geht es leichter auf dem umgekehrten Wege: Blick nach unten, Lüften des oberen Randes und darauf Blick nach oben." (28)

Advice regarding Hygiene

Fick had much advice to give regarding hygiene:

"That the hand and the small glass [May: the glass] must be aseptic and the sugar-solution sterilized is a matter of course. If the lens fits well, the patient does not complain, has no flow of tears, and either has no injection of the ocular conjunctiva or very little."

"Dass Hände und Gläschen aseptisch und die Zuckerlösung sterilisiert sein müssen, versteht sich von

selbst. Wenn die Brille gut sitzt, so fühlt der Patient keinerlei Klage, er hat keinen Thränenfluss und entweder gar keine oder nur äusserst wenig Injection der Conjunctiva bulbi." (29)

1.1.9 – Other Considerations

The Safety of the “Contactbrille” for the Patient

Fick also answered possible concerns regarding the safety of the contact lenses:

“If symptoms of irritation show themselves, the ‘Brille’ (spectacles) [May: the glass] must be removed. My experience indicates that the irritation is usually produced by some part of the margin of the glass sclera becoming somewhat separated from the eyeball, and in this way rubbing against the lid during movements of the eyeball. Strange to say, the filling-liquid does not necessarily escape in such cases. Despite clumsy manipulation on the part of the patients, injury to the corneal epithelium did not occur in a single case.”

“Stellen sich Reizerscheinungen ein, so muss man die Brille herausnehmen. Nach meinen Erfahrungen wird die Reizung gewöhnlich dadurch verursacht, dass der Rand der gläsernen Sclera an irgend einer Stelle vom Bulbus etwas absteht und hierdurch bei Bewegungen des Auges an dem Lide scheuert. Merkwürdigerweise pflegt in einem solchen Falle die Füllungsflüssigkeit keineswegs immer abzufließen. Verletzung des Hornhautepithels ist trotz ungeschickten Benehmens der Patienten kein einziges Mal vorgekommen.” (29)

The Cosmetic “Contactbrille”

Fick reported that one patient had suggested to him the possibility of painting the contact lenses to achieve a cosmetic effect:

“An inquiry from one of the patients led me to believe that possibly ‘Contactbrille’ [May: contact-lenses] will be often worn for purely cosmetic reasons. Those eyes which are terribly deformed by leucoma and yet should not be enucleated while some vision remains, since they would be quite valuable should the fellow eye be lost, can be changed so that they no longer attract the attention of other persons by the use of a ‘Contactbrille’ [May: “of a contact-lens”] upon which the iris and a black pupil is painted. So that there would be the same result, respecting movement, as from an artificial eye, with the additional advantage that the eyeball would not need to be sacrificed as in the former case.”

“Einer der Patienten brachte mich durch eine Frage auf den Gedanken, dass die Contactbrille vielleicht öfters aus lediglich kosmetischen Gründen getragen werden wird. Diejenigen Augen, welche durch Leucome auf das Abschreckendste entstellt sind und doch nicht enucleirt werden dürfen, weil noch ein Rest von Sehvermögen vorhanden ist, der nach etwaigem Verluste des anderen Auges einen hohen Werth bekommen würde, kann man durch eine mit Iris und schwarzer Pupille bemalte Contactbrille dem Anblick der übrigen Menschen entziehen. Man hat also kosmetisch denselben, bezüglich der Bewegungen sogar ungleich vollkommeneren Erfolg wie von einem « künstlichen Auge » und braucht nicht einmal, wie für das letztere, den Bulbus erst zu opfern.” (30)

Acknowledgement

Finally, Fick thanked Professors Gaule and Haab, both of Zurich, and Abbe of Jena for their help. The article ended with the date of September 1887:

“In conclusion, it gives me pleasure to express my most sincere thanks to Mr. Prof. Gaule of Zurich, Prof. Abbe of Jena, and Prof. Haab of Zurich for assistance given me. Zurich, September, 1887.”

“Zum Schlusse genüge ich gern der angenehmen Pflicht, Herrn Prof. Gaule in Zürich, Herrn Prof. Abbe in Jena und Herrn Prof. Haab in Zürich für die mir gewährte Hülfe meinen aufrichtigsten Dank auszusprechen.

« Zürich, September 1887. » (30)

1.2 – May’s Translation

The English translation of the article was published at almost the same time as the German version and with the title “*A Contact-lens*” in the *Archives of Ophthalmology* (pages 215 to 226 of Volume 17). It was *Charles H. May*, ophthalmologist in New York City, who carried out the translation. The *Archives of Ophthalmology* had been founded in 1869 (in the year 1888 it was *Edited in English and German* by *Dr. H. Knapp of New York, Dr. C. Schweigger of Berlin and Dr. F. E. D’Oench of New York*). The two editions tried more or less to align their contents. The order of the articles in the corresponding German and English issues were not, however, always identical and often appeared later, for example, in the German issue with an abridged translation of the English, or vice versa.

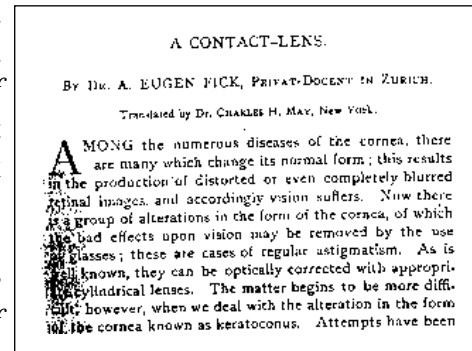


Figure 10 - 3
C.H. May's translation in the *Archives of Ophthalmology*, 1888.
Fick's original "Eine Contactbrille" is translated by Charles H. May as "A Contact-lens."
(FICK Adolf Eugen, "A Contact-lens" *Archives of Ophthalmology*, 17, 1888, 215-226. - Page 215)

May’s Terminology

May was thrown into particular difficulty with the translation of the term “Eine Contactbrille”. He preferred “a contact-lens” to “a pair of contact glasses” or “a contact spectacle”.

The role May played and his merit as translator of Fick’s article should be noted. The English translation tried to preserve the form and the spirit of the original text but

<i>Fick's Original Term</i>	<i>May's Translation</i>	<i>Pages</i>
<i>Eine Contactbrille</i>	<i>A contact-lens</i>	
<i>Glasschälchen</i>	<i>small glass shell</i>	216
	<i>glass shell</i>	217
<i>Glasschüsselschen</i>	<i>small glass globe</i>	281
<i>Glasblasen</i>	<i>glass vesicle</i>	281
	<i>glass globe</i>	281
<i>Gläschen</i>	<i>glass shell</i>	217
	<i>glass</i>	226
<i>Brille</i>	<i>lens</i>	
<i>Gut passende Gläschen</i>	<i>well-fitting glass</i>	282
<i>Gewöhnung</i>	<i>toleration</i>	
<i>eine passende Contactbrille</i>	<i>properly-fitting contact-lens</i>	284
<i>Welches ich Contactbrille nenne</i>	<i>Which I name as 'contact-lens'</i>	281, 215

Table 10 - 2
Comparison of certain terms in Fick's original publication and the English translation of May.

presents, nevertheless, several important differences.

One first, but essential, difference concerns the name given to the contact device in the title and used in the article. Whereas Fick used the expression "Contactbrille" that was translated literally as "contact-spectacle" or "a pair of contact glasses", May allowed himself the liberty of using the original expression of "Contact-lens" (note the hyphen between the two words).

This misinterpretation by *May* ultimately gave rise to the false attribution to *Fick* of the invention of the term, "contact lens" (in two words). (31)

May encountered other difficulties in translating the many diminutive forms used by *Fick*: "Schälchen" (small shells), "Gläschen" (small glasses), "Glasschälchen" (small glass shells), "Glasschüsselschen" (small glass cups), which he translates variously and without further qualification as "shell, globe, vesicle", or "glass".

1.3 – Memorandum submitted by Fick to the Saxon Academy of Sciences

A letter dated July 5, 1887, from *Fick* and addressed to *Abbe* refers to the submission on the preceding June 25 of a report to the Saxon Academy of Sciences in Leipzig, Germany:

"In order to guarantee for myself under all circumstances the priority of this concept, I prepared a brief signed memorandum on the 'Contactbrille' and forwarded this to my best friends (...). In addition, I sent a copy to Leipzig to be deposited in a sealed envelope in the Saxon Academy of Sciences."

"Ich habe, um mir die Priorität des Gedankens auf alle Fälle zu sichern, einen kurzen Aufsatz über die Contactbrille autographieren lassen und an meine bessten Freunde versendet [...]. Ausserdem habe ich ein Exemplar nach Leipzig geschickt, um es bei der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften versiegelt deponieren zu lassen."

The document that was deposited in Leipzig has been lost and was probably destroyed in the fire in the city as a consequence of the bombing attacks of World War II. *Fick* had, however, enclosed a copy of the memorandum with his letter to *Abbe* and this copy is preserved in the *Zeiss* archives (*see Appendix 10-3*).

Fick's memorandum of June 25, 1887, fundamentally is not different from the first part of the text submitted two months later to the *Archiv für Augenheilkunde* because it contains the description of the first part of the rabbit and human trials and does not refer to the trials with the contact lenses delivered by *Zeiss* nor to the clinical features of patients fitted with these lenses. The memorandum begins with an introduction, in which *Fick* recalls the frequency of the corneal irregularities and of corneal scarring in the aetiology of poor vision. Following a description of the principles of correction by the "Contactbrille", which, by covering the cornea with a layer of fluid contained in a spherical segment with a regular surface, causes the elimination of optical defects resulting from pathological conditions, *Fick* then poses three questions that appear fundamental to him: a) how to obtain contact lenses of optical quality, b) how to find a

fluid with the same refractive index as the cornea and aqueous humor, and c) how well the human eye would tolerate a "Contactbrille".

In the document, *Fick* outlines his response to the third question and describes the stages of development:

The preliminary stages on rabbit eyes demonstrated to him that the lenses were well tolerated and that they were held in position by adhesion and followed the movements of the eye. After 6 or 7 hours, however, the liquid became cloudy because of the presence of fatty droplets and epithelial cells but no bacteria.

The experiments on human eyes with glass-blown shells following a cast from a cadaver eye that *Fick* wore on his own eye for two hours' duration.

After a period of time only conjunctival hyperemia was noted and this disappeared within half an hour. When the experiment was repeated on the following day with a second shell, the same result was obtained.

Consequently, the indications for "Contactbrillen" included all cases of irregular astigmatism, particularly in those patients operated for cataract in which the sometimes very pronounced post-operative astigmatism could be corrected at the same time as the hyperopia. It remained to be seen if the improvement of the visual acuity would be sufficient to compensate for the discomfort of the "Contactbrille". According to *Fick*, this would be the situation if the visual acuity could be improved to 1/5 or 1/4 (0.20 or 0.25 on the *Monoyer* decimal scale), essential for reading and writing. These experiments had to be complemented by the replacement of the evidently imperfect glass-blown shell by a ground-glass shell with regular surfaces and by trials in a patient whose visual acuity could be improved to 1/5 (0.20) or better. This would be followed by research experiments to determine the effects of various aqueous solutions on the corneal epithelium and to find out which would be the best tolerated.

The document bears the date of June 25, 1887.

1.4 – The Letters from Fick to Abbe (June to October 1887)

(Appendix 10 - 5)

The *Zeiss Archives* in Jena contain five manuscript letters that *Fick* had sent to Professor *Abbe*, who was director of research at *Zeiss*. These letters represent significant evidence and allow one better to understand the intellectual steps of their author in the course of the months preceding the submission of his article to the *Archiv*

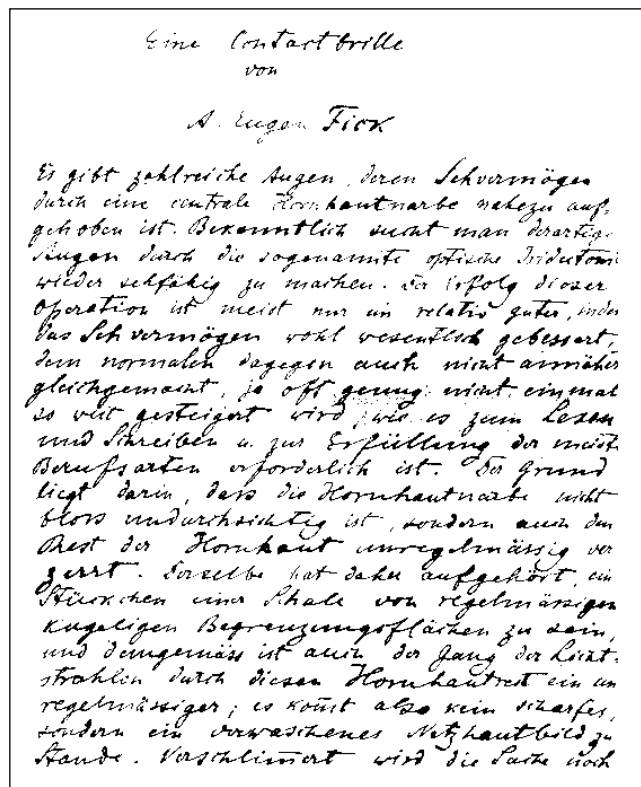


Figure 10 - 4

Memorandum drafted by Fick on June 25, 1887 for submission to the Saxon Academy of Sciences in Leipzig.

August Eugen Fick drafted this Memorandum on June 25, 1887 for submission in a sealed envelope to the Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaft (Saxon Academy of Sciences) in Leipzig (Germany). The figure shows a reproduction of the top of the copy of the first page of the memorandum delivered to Professor Abbe, which is now preserved in the Zeiss Archives in Jena (Germany).

(ZEISS Archives, Jena # 12,311 - Full text in Appendix 10 - 4)

für *Augenheilkunde* in September 1887. These letters are dated June 25, July 5, August 20, and October 30, 1887.

The Letter of June 25, 1887

In this letter, *Fick* recalls that the visual acuity of some patients is disturbed by reason of corneal irregularities that cause irregular astigmatism. By covering the front surface of the cornea with a layer of water kept in position by a glass shell with parallel surfaces, these anomalies would be eliminated: “I refer to such a glass plate as a ‘Contactbrille’.” (32)

The experiments carried out on the eyes of rabbits were so encouraging that he foresaw their transfer to humans. By following the model he obtained at the start from a mold from a cadaver eye, *Fick* had blown for him a bi-curve shell that he wore himself for a period of two hours without difficulty. The glass-blown shells were very imperfect and this was the origin of the order to the *Zeiss* glass technician to plan for the preparation of ground-glass shells, which would be more regular. *Fick* describes the specifications for the contact shells used in his first experiments and which he had forwarded to the Zurich glass blower. He suggested to *Abbe* the fabrication of a contact lens following these models:

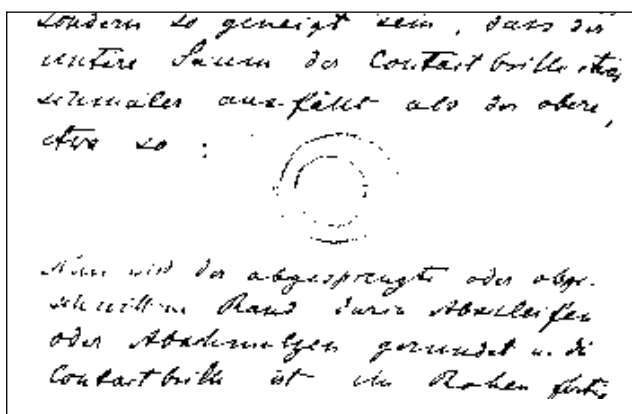


Figure 10 - 5

Excerpt from the letter of June 25, 1887, from *Fick* to *Abbe*. Diagram in *Fick*'s hand illustrating the lateral view recommended for a ground contact lens. The "corneal part" would have a diameter of 12.00 mm and a radius of curvature between 8.00 mm and 9.50 mm. It would be displaced nasally and inferiorly in its scleral zone of which the width of the border would be 3.00 mm on the nasal side, 6.00 mm on the temporal side and of which the inferior part would be narrower than the upper.

(ZEISS Archives, Jena # 12.311 - Full text in Appendix 10 - 5)

“In the same postal delivery, I enclose some glass plates and plaster casts in order to make it easier for you, or rather the glass technician that you will eventually choose, better to understand the following specifications.”

“Mit gleicher Post sende ich Ihnen einige Glasplättchen und Gypsabgüsse, um Ihnen bzw., dem von Ihnen eventuell zu wählenden Glastechniker das Verstehen der folgenden Bemerkungen zu erleichtern.”

A so-called “Contactbrille” would have:

a corneal part, designated “artificial cornea” (*künstliche Cornea*), that would be circular and would have a diameter of about 12.00 mm. *Fick*

was hesitant to give a corneal radius of curvature and proposes a radius between 8.00 and 9.00 mm (“8 to 8.50 to 9 mm”),

a scleral part that would have a breadth of 6.00 mm in the temporal portion, 3.00 mm in the nasal sector, and of which the inferior part would be narrower than the superior part and “that the lower border of the ‘Contactbrille’ be somewhat narrower than the upper”. (33)

The “corneal part” (back optic zone) would therefore be displaced nasally and inferiorly, following the model of the ocular prosthesis. A diagram illustrates this displacement of optic.

Fick draws attention to the difficulties that he encountered with the blown contact lenses,

which resulted from their evidently poor optical quality and from the irregularities of the contours between the optic and scleral zones. Blown contact lenses would be less uneven and could also be thinner and lighter than those that had been made in Zurich.

The letter refers finally to the fact that *Fick* is sending by the same courier: a plaster mold from a cadaver eye, two glass-blown shells that he himself had worn, and the shell that had been worn by the Institute servant (*Institutdiener*) of the Institute of Physiology of Zurich.

The Letter of July 5, 1887

In this short letter, *Fick* thanked *Abbe* for having agreed to have glass technicians of his company commence manufacture of some "Contactbrille". *Fick* also suggested that he should forward new casts from cadaver eyes to *Abbe*. *Fick* goes on to request discretion and maintenance of confidentiality in regard to his invention and communicates that he had forwarded a memorandum under safekeeping in a sealed envelope to the Academy of Sciences of Saxony in Leipzig and that he had sent several copies of this memorandum to his close acquaintances:

"I would greatly appreciate it if you would treat this letter as highly confidential. On the other hand, I recognize that it is not possible to keep the matter completely secret, especially here in Zurich. For this reason and to guarantee my priority regarding this intellectual property, I have had prepared a short memorandum on the 'Contactbrille' and I have forwarded this to my best friends with the express instruction not to breathe a word of it to anyone. If that were not enough, I have forwarded a copy of the memorandum to Leipzig requesting that it be held there in a sealed envelope at the Academy of the Sciences of Saxony. Furthermore, I am taking the liberty of sending you a copy of this memorandum by the same postal delivery."

"Für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit, meine Mitteilung vorläufig als ganz vertraulich behandeln zu wollen, bin ich Ihnen zu besonderem Dank verpflichtet. Allerdings kann ich die Sache, wenigstens hier in Zürich nicht geheim halten. Ich habe daher, um mir die Priorität des Gedankens auf aller Fälle zu sichern, einen kurzen Aufsatz über die Contactbrille autographiren lassen und an meine besten Freunde versendet mit der Instruktion, einstweilen von meiner Idee nichts verlauten zu lassen. Ausserdem habe ich ein Exemplar nach Leipzig geschickt, um es bei der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften versiegelt deponieren zu lassen. Ich erlaube mir, mit gleicher Post Ihnen ein Exemplar besagtes Aufsatzes zuzusenden."

He concludes the letter indicating that he had continued with his rabbit experiments and had identified a liquid that allowed him to reach 6 to 8 hours of wearing without provoking clouding to the liquid or causing opacification of the cornea.

"My repeated tests on animals have convinced me more and more that the Contactbrille will be viable; after several attempts I have found from then up until now a liquid that can be tolerated from 6 to 8 hours by the rabbit cornea, without causing clouding of the liquid or of the corneal epithelium."

"Meine fortgesetzten Thierversuche überzeugen mich mehr u. mehr, dass die Contactbrille lebensfähig sein wird; bereits habe ich nach einigem herumprobieren eine Flüssigkeit gefunden, die 6 bis 8 Stunden von der Kaninchencornea vertragen wird, ohne dass die Flüssigkeit oder das Hornhautepithel trüb würde."

The Letter of July 26, 1887

In this letter, *Fick* acknowledged receipt of items, the optical quality of the corneal portion of which he praised. By the same token, he indicated that the edge of the contact lens was not in contact with the conjunctiva and caused irritation of the eyelids:

“On the other hand, it is evident that the edge of the ‘Contactbrille’ was not in contact with the ocular globe and rubbed up against the eyelid border as a result.”

“Dagegen zeigt es sich, dass der Rand der Contactbrille zum Theil vom Bulbus abstand und infolgedessen an den Lidrand schabte.”

Fick attributed this inconvenience to the fact that the lenses that *Zeiss* delivered have a smaller diameter than those that were of glass blown in Zurich and accordingly rest on an area of sclera of smaller radius of curvature because the tendons and the bellies of the oculomotor muscles did not cover it:

“Right beside the corneal edge, the sclera has a radius of curvature of about 12 mm; in the parts following, the curvature becomes progressively flatter because in this area the tendons slip underneath the bulbar conjunctiva with the result that in the following zone the conjunctiva does not cover the globe of the eye alone, but rather the globe plus the muscles. Taking into consideration that the two ‘Contactbrillen’ from Jena are smaller than the rough glasses manufactured here, it is understandable that the edges of the new ‘Contactbrille’ are in contact with the ocular globe in an area where the radius of curvature was under 15 mm.”

“Hart am Hornhautrand hat die Sklera einen Krümmungsradius von etwa 12 mm, in der folgenden Zone wird die Krümmung allmählig flacher, weil da Muskelansätze sich unter die Conjunctiva bulbi schieben, weil also in der folgenden Zone nicht mehr der Bulbus allein, sondern Bulbus plus Muskeln von der Conjunctiva bedeckt sind. Da nun die beiden Jenaer Contactbrillen im ganzen kleiner sind, als die hier angefertigten Rohgläser; so ist es begreiflich, dass der Rand der neuen Contactbrillen den Bulbus an einer Stelle traf, wo der Krümmungsradius noch nicht 15 mm gross war.”

Fick wished to obtain a solid support for the contact lens border to allow it to bridge over the top of the conjunctival sclera, the limbus and the cornea. The resulting space for clearance created would be filled with liquid:

“It seems particularly important to me to have contact between the edge of the ‘Contactbrille’ [‘edge’ is underlined in the letter] and the globe of the eye because, from a distance of 1 or 2 mm from the glass edge, the glass no longer touches the globe at all but is separated from it by some liquid.”

“Gerade auf genaue Berührung von Rand der Contactbrille mit dem Bulbus kommt es aber an, weil schon 1 oder 2 mm vom Glasrand entfernt, das Glas den Bulbus überhaupt nicht mehr berührt sondern durch Flüssigkeit vom Bulbus getrennt wird.”

In order to obtain this result, he suggested:

1.) Increasing the diameter of the optic zone from 12.00 mm to 14.00 mm:

“Furthermore, in indicating to you 12 mm for the diameter of the base of the ‘glass-cornea’ I have given you a measurement that is just a little too small. Taking into consideration that the ‘oversized’ would hardly do any harm, it would be advisable to

select a circle with a 7-mm radius for the base of the glass-cornea.”

“Uebrigens habe ich Ihnen die Basis der ‘Glascornea’ mit 12 mm Durchmesser entschieden zu klein angegeben. Da ein ‘zu gross’ hier kaum schaden kann, so dürfte es sich empfehlen als Basis der ‘Glascornea’ einen Kreis von 7 mm Radius zu nehmen.”

2.) Discarding the asymmetry copied from the prostheses in favor of the shape of a circle:

“I would like, on the other hand, to propose to you, in the interest of a more exact union of the edge of the glass-sclera with the ocular globe, to abandon for the moment the use of variable widths for the internal and external halves of the glass sclera.”

“Ich möchte Ihnen ferner vorschlagen, im Interesse eines genaueren Anschlusses des Glasscleralrandes an den Bulbus, einstweilen auf verschiedene Breite der Aussen- und Innenhälfte der Glassclera ganz zu verzichten.”

The recommendation proposed by *Fick* in the letter of 26th July 1887 would therefore be:

“Glasscornea”: back optic zone radius = 8.00 mm, primary optic diameter = 14.00 mm,
“Glasssklera”: back scleral radius = 15.00 mm and 5.00 mm width.

“The specifications would therefore be the following: 8 mm radius of curvature for glass-cornea, a circle of 7 mm radius for the glass-cornea base; glass-sclera radius of 15 mm forming a border of 5 mm width (the same all around). The glass-cornea is ground and polished inside and outside, likewise the edge of the glass-sclera, one may omit the grinding and polishing of the glass-sclera surface.”

“Das Recipe würde demnach folgendermassen lauten: Glascornea von 8 mm Krümmungsradius, Basis der Glascornea ist ein Kreis von 7 mm Radius; Glassclera hat 15 mm Krümmungsradius u. bildet um die Glascornea einen Saum (34) von 5 mm (überall gleicher) Breite, Glascornea von innen und aussen geschliffen und poliert, desgleichen Rand der Glassclera, auf Schliiff u Politur der Glassclerafläche kann wohl verzichtet werden.”

Fick defined his order for “Contactbrille”, the edge of which would be applied in order for the contact lens to pass as a bridge above the scleral conjunctiva, the limbus and the cornea. He responded therefore to *Abbe*’s proposal to blend the junction angle between the corneal and the scleral portions. For *Fick* this additional specification would not be necessary, in consideration of the fact that the contact lens would not have any contact with the ocular globe and that the transition between the corneal and haptic parts would be separated from the globe by the liquid:

“And so I am replying also to your question asking if it is necessary to blend the boundary formed in the area where glass-cornea meets glass-sclera; in view of the fact that this angle is separated from the globe by some liquid, it cannot trigger any irritation.”

“Hiermit beantwortet sich auch Ihre Frage, ob es nöthig sei diejenige Kante abzuschleifen, in welcher ‘Glascornea’ u. ‘Glassclera’ aneinander stossen; da diese Kante vom Bulbus durch Flüssigkeit getrennt ist, so kann sie nicht reizend wirken.”

Fick reported that he had shown his “Jena trial spectacles” (Jenaer Probierbrillen) to Professor *Haab*, the director of the Ophthalmological Clinic of Zurich. Professor *Haab*

authorized him to pursue his studies on humans by using the outpatient records from the Zurich Eye Clinic.

The Letter of August 20, 1887

In this letter, *Fick* reported his trials with the "Contactbrille" on patients from the Zurich Eye Clinic. He confirmed that the improvements in vision obtained would not be as encouraging as he had foreseen. He announced his intention of publishing his discovery in order to encourage other clinics to search for some better-suited cases:

"Taking into consideration that the selection and transportation of patients becomes more and more onerous insofar as they live in districts further away or that they must be searched out from older records and considering that, in spite of all the sacrifices in time, money and effort, I have no guarantee of finding the best case at a future date, I have made the decision to publish the 'Contactbrille'. I imagine that, as a result of this, several cases suitable from all points of view will be found from amongst the numerous German clinics that are well provided with clinical material."

"Da nun das Aufsuchen u. Herbeischaffen der Patienten immer schwieriger u. kostspieliger wird, je weiter entfernt sie wohnen und je weiter ich in den Journalen zurück gehen muss, da ich ferner trotz aller Opfer an Zeit Geld u. Mühe keine Sicherheit habe dass mir nun wirklich einmal der Beste in die Hände fällt, so habe ich mich entschlossen die Contactbrille zu publiciren indem ich voraussetze, dass binnen Jahresfrist in den zahlreichen u. mit riesigem Material ausgestatteten Kliniken Deutschlands schon Fälle auftauchen werden, die in jeder Hinsicht geeignet sind."

The trials of the previous two weeks demonstrated to him that it did not matter if the scleral zone was spherical or conical but that the width of the scleral zone should be brought back to 3.00 mm and its radius reduced as a result:

"At the time of the trials of the last two weeks, I have made the following observations in addition:

- 1.) *it is of little consequence whether the glass-sclera (the band of 4 mm width) is a part of a sphere or a conical zone;*
- 2.) *the 4 mm band is too wide for the majority of eyes and the width should preferably be not more than 3 mm; in this way, the reduction of the 4 mm width band of the glass-sclera does not result in the separation of its edge from the globe, but it is in contact with the globe over a circular line. One must reduce the radius of curvature of the portion of the sphere, i.e., make the base of the cone a little smaller than the base of the previous artificial sclera."*

"Bei den Versuchen der letzten beiden Wochen habe ich nun noch folgendes bemerkt:

- 1.) *dass es gleichgütig ist, ob die gläserne Sclera (der 4 mm breite Saum) ein Stück Kugelschale oder eine Zone von einem Konus ist;*
- 2.) *dass der Rand mit 4 mm für die meisten Augen zu breit und lieber nur 3 mm breit sein sollte; damit bei Verschmälerung des 4 mm breiten Saumes der gläsernen Sclera der Rand derselben vom Bulbus nicht absteht, sondern in einer Kreislinie den Bulbus berührt, muss man den Krümmungsradius der Kugelschale verkleinern, bzw. die Basis des Conus etwas kleiner nehmen als die Basis der bisherigen künstlichen Sclera."*

The recommendations proposed by *Fick* in his letter of August 20, 1887 would therefore be:

"Glasscornea": back optic zone radius = 8.00 mm, primary optic diameter = 14.00 mm;
"Glasssklera": back scleral radius = 14.00 mm, width = 3.00 mm;

Total Diameter: 19.00 mm.

“The prescription would therefore be as follows: Cornea is unchanged, i.e., 8 mm radius of curvature; the basis of the cornea is a circle of 7 mm radius, the sclera is 3 mm wide and is part of a sphere of 14 mm radius of curvature; the base of the sclera is a circle of 19 mm diameter.”

“Die Recipe würde jetzt also lauten: Cornea wie bisher, nämlich 8 mm Krümmungsradius; Basis der Cornea ist ein Kreis von 7 mm Radius; Sclera 3 mm breit u. Stück einer Kugelschale von 14 mm Krümmungsradius, Basis der Sclera ist ein Kreis von 19 mm Durchmesser.”

Fick enclosed with his letter an annotated diagram, giving the above specifications. (35)

Fick considered the feasibility of blacking out the contact lens opposite corneal opacities or even over the whole corneal surface except for a tiny window of 3.00 mm diameter, eccentrically positioned :

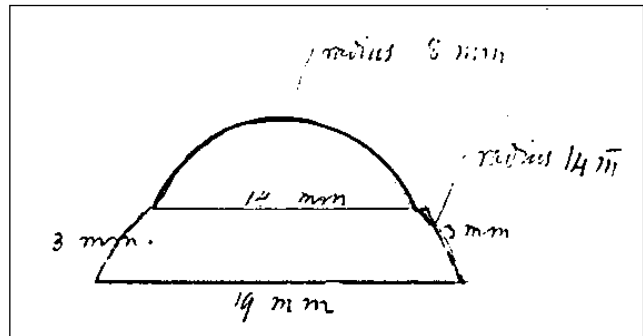


Figure 10 - 6
Excerpt from the letter from Fick to Abbe, dated August 20, 1887.
Diagram in Fick's hand, illustrating the dimensions of the contact lens requested in this mailing.
(ZEISS Archives, Jena # 12,311 - Full text in Appendix 10 - 5)

“The internal surface of the glass cornea would then be blackened, to correspond with the corneal opacity, i.e., opacified with color plus an artistic rendering of the iris. Naturally, the latter would be tailored appropriately for each individual case. Certain glasses could also be provided so that the entire inner surface of the glass cornea might be blackened with the exception of a peephole of about 3 mm in diameter that would be positioned eccentrically, decentred 2, 4 and 6 mm respectively.”

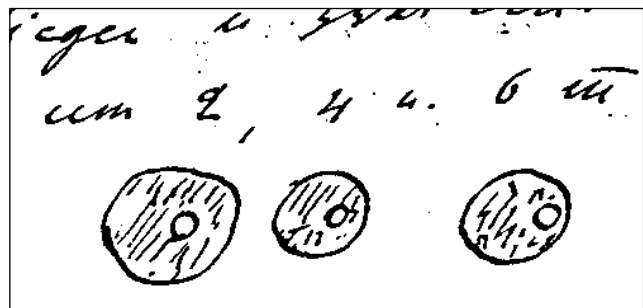


Figure 10 - 7
Excerpt from the letter from Fick to Abbe, dated August 20, 1887.
Diagram in Fick's hand illustrating the position of the peephole in the blackened contact lens requested in this mailing.
(ZEISS Archives, Jena # 12,311 - Full text in Appendix 10 - 5)

“Die innere Fläche der Glascornea wäre dann der Hornhautnarbe entsprechend zu schwärzen, bzw. in der Farbe u. Zeichnung der Iris undurchsichtig zu machen, natürlich für jeden speziellen Fall in besonderer Weise. Einige Gläschen könnte man auch so herstellen, dass die ganze innere Fläche der Glascornea zu schwärzen wäre mit Ausnahme eines Guckloches von etwa 3 mm Durchmesser; dies Guckloch hätte excentrisch zu liegen und zwar mit seiner Mitte in 2, 4 u. 6 mm beziehungsweise.”

The trials carried out in Zurich using coloration of the posterior surface of the corneal portion were, however, the cause of cases of irritation and tearing that Fick attributes to the unevenness of the paint used and that would have been improved by polishing:

“I have also observed that, after having carried out blackening, respectively painting the inner surface of the ‘Glasscornea,’ a further re-polishing must be performed. In fact, it may be that contact with the cornea occurs, perhaps at the limbus. In any case, I have

noted time and time again that those 'Contactbrille' blackened by my local glass-worker became roughened and irritated the eyes of the patients with copious flow of tears, which did not occur with the polished 'Contactbrillen.' “

“Ich bemerkte noch, dass nach ausgeführter Schwärzung bezw. Bemahlung der Innenfläche die Glascornea wieder nachpoliert werden muss. Es scheinen nämlich doch Berührungen der Cornea, vielleicht am Rande, vorzukommen, jedenfalls habe ich wiederholt beobachtet, dass die von meinem hiesigen Glaskünstler geschwärzte u. dadurch innen rau gewordenen Contactbrillen die Augen der Patienten zu heftigem Tränenfluss reizten, was die polierte Contactbrillen aber nicht thut.”

Finally, *Fick* had the hypothetical idea of using contact lenses with an esthetic aim with unsightly eyes in order to hide unesthetic corneal opacities, taking into consideration that these eyes often retain a potential for vision that could be useful should loss of the other eye occur and when the enucleation of the eye is neither accepted nor indicated:

“Following a question put to me by one of my patients, I reconsidered the possibility that the 'Contactbrille' could often be worn for esthetic reasons. There are, in fact, many eyes that are disfigured by leukomata, white in color, the enucleation of which is accepted neither by the patient nor the physician, taking into consideration that there remains a remnant of vision that could be precious should the other eye be lost. The wearing of artificial eyes on a globe that is not shrunken is not advisable up to the present time. If you now paint the 'Contactbrille' with an iris and black pupil for such patients and bring the flow of liquid between the little glass plate and the pupil, you have thus far better success with regard to glare and discomfort than you would have with an artificial eye, and you maintain the eye in reserve no less.”

“Einer der Patienten hat durch eine an mich gestellte Frage die Vermutung bei mir herbeigerufen, dass die Contactbrille wohl zugleich häufig aus kosmetischen Gründen getragen werden wird. Es gibt nämlich viele, durch weisse Hornhautnarben entstellte Augen, zu deren Herausnahme weder Patient noch Arzt sich entschliessen können, weil noch ein Rest des Sehvermögens vorhanden ist, der bei etwaigem Verlust des anderen Auges wertvoll sein würde. Das Tragen künstlicher Augen auf einem unverkleinerten Bulbus gilt aber bis jetzt für unthunlich. Wenn man nun für solche Patienten die Contactbrille mit Iris u. schwarzer Pupille bemahlt u. die Flüssigkeitsschicht zwischen Augenstern u. Glasplättchen bringt, so haben sie kosmetisch den selben u. bezüglich der Blendungen weit besseren Erfolg als durch ein künstliches Auge, und sie behalten ihr Reserveauge nicht desto weniger.”

For the continuation of his experiments, *Fick* ordered five new contact lenses, three of which were opaque and provided with the peephole that he devised:

“Finally, very dear Professor, may I request of you kindly to have me supplied with five more 'Contactbrillen' for the continuation of my experiments. I would ask that two of these be not blackened, that three have opacification plus eccentric peepholes, as I described above.”

“Darf ich Sie hochgeehrter Herr Professor, zum Schluss bitten, mir zur Fortsetzung meiner Versuche noch 5 Contactbrillen anfertigen zu lassen? Zwei möchte ich ungeschwärzt haben u. drei mit Schwärzungen u. excentrischen Gucklöchern, wie ich es oben beschrieb.”

The Letter of October 30, 1887

In this short letter, *Fick* recalled the visit that Professor *Abbe* made in September to the Zurich Eye Clinic and his promise to send other “Contactbrille” for the continuation of his studies. *Fick* was concerned that he had received neither contact lenses as promised

nor any other news from Jena:

“When you were here in Zurich in September, you very generously allowed me to anticipate the forwarding of other ‘Contactbrillen’ for the continuation of my trials. In view of the fact that I have not had any news from you, I am beginning to fear that some circumstance has interrupted the trials of size or that a letter addressed by you to me would perhaps have been lost.”

“Als Sie im September hier in Zürich waren, hatten Sie die grosse Güte mir weitere Contactbrillen zur Fortsetzung meiner Versuche in Aussicht zu stellen. Da ich nun seither eine Mitteilung von Ihnen nicht erhalten habe, so fange ich an zu fürchten, dass irgend ein Umstand die Fortsetzung der Schleifversuche verhindert haben oder dass vielleicht ein Brief von Ihnen an mich verloren gegangen sein könnte.”

1.5 – Fick’s Complementary Publications

During the next few years following his main publication in 1888, *Fick* had the opportunity to clarify certain points in his published work. In fact, two colleagues, *Sulzer* and *Lohnstein*, challenged him regarding two fundamental aspects of his work. *Sulzer* challenged him with the question of whether the glass used was blown or ground glass. Meanwhile, *Lohnstein* had concerns regarding the liquid employed. In addition, *Fick* had to defend the priority of his discovery in 1893 against claims by *Sulzer* and in 1930 against a challenge from *Heine*.

1.5.1 – Concerning whether the Contact Lenses Delivered by Abbe were of Blown or Ground Glass

A first clarification took place following a communication by *Sulzer* to the French Ophthalmological Society in May 1892, in which this author noted that the ‘Contactbrille’ delivered by *Abbe* and employed by *Fick* for his initial experiments were not of ground and polished glass, as maintained in the publication, but of blown glass (36).

Fick, in his reply dated July 25, 1892, and published in the *Klinische Monatsblätter für Augenheilkunde* with the title “**Einige Bemerkungen ueber die Contactbrille**” (*Some Remarks on the Contactbrille*), confirmed that the four contact lenses delivered by *Abbe* and used in his experiments were, in fact, not ground but blown, something that *Abbe* did not tell him.

1.5.2 – Concerning the Nature and Role of the Liquid

In a publication of December 1896, *Lohnstein*, of Berlin, Germany, made a favorable comparison of the hydrodiascope of his own invention with *Fick*’s “Contactbrille” (37). A clarification by *Fick*, in an open letter, appeared in February of the following year. He recalled that the “glasses” had been worn by rabbits from 6 to 8 hours and by the human subject up to 6 hours:

“In my experiments on the rabbit, I allowed the small glasses to stay in the eye for six to eight hours, while, in humans, up to six.”

“Bei meinen Versuchen am Kaninchen wurden die Gläschen sechs bis acht Stunden, beim Menschen bis zu sechs Stunden liegen gelassen.” (38)

He continued to attribute the contact lens intolerance by corneal tissue to incompatibility with the liquid and proposed to remedy this problem by covering the cornea with a fatty film in order to isolate the liquid:

“Therefore, it was perhaps worthwhile, after all, to proceed with the experiments on the contact glass [...] because it seemed to me not entirely unimaginable that I might find some explanation for the epithelial clouding and therefore also prevent the main cause of the irritation phenomena. One could also consider covering the cornea with a fatty layer.”

“So ist es vielleicht doch der Mühe wert, die Versuche mit dem Contactglas fortzusetzen [...]. Denn es scheint mir durchaus nicht undenkbar, dass sich etwas finden liesse, was die Epitheltrübung und damit wohl auch das Wesentliche der Reizerscheinungen verhindere. So könnte man wohl an Ueberziehen der Hornhaut mit einer Fettschicht denken.” (39)

1.5.3 – Concerning the Priority of the Invention

The controversies regarding the priority of the invention of the contact lenses, attributed by *Sulzer* and later *Heine* to themselves, brought forward several other clarifications.

During a discussion at the French Society of Ophthalmology in 1893, *Sulzer* claimed priority for the invention of contact lenses, but *Kalt* and *Panas* contradicted this claim. *Fick* became aware that there followed a violent controversy, including the interjection of a review paper, in the course of which each of the protagonists held his ground. *Sulzer* claimed priority for the invention and the use of ground-glass contact lenses for himself and conceded to *Fick* only the copying of *Herschell's* idea, namely the neutralization of astigmatism by a liquid held in position by a glass cup. (40)

In 1930, more than half a century later, *Fick* recalled his principal contribution made in 1888 in an article entitled “**Das Entstehen des Haftglases**” (*The Origin of the Adhesion-Glass*) and how he invented contact lenses in 1887, which the lay press had nonetheless attributed, in 1930, to Professor *Heine* of Kiel:

“**How the Adhesion-Lens Came into Being** – In the Summer of 1887, I asked Professor *Abbe*, who, at that time, was an executive at the *Zeiss Factory*, to have contact glasses ground for me, with 8 mm of corneal radius of curvature and 12 mm of scleral. Some time later, I obtained 4 small glasses from *Jena* as I had ordered and I started my first experiments with these. In 1888, I published these experiments in the *Archiv für Augenheilkunde*.

I made further requests to *Jena* but received no response. Then, a doctoral dissertation written by *August Müller-Gladbach* (41) on ‘Hornhautlinsen,’ came to my aid. Dr. *Müller* had, apparently independently from me, also the idea of an ‘adhesion-glass’ (*Haftglas*) and had found in *Otto Himmler* of *Berlin* a cooperative optician. It was self-evident that Dr. *Müller* had considered only ground adherent-glasses. I approached Mr. *Himmler* and, in 1889, obtained ground ‘adhesion-glasses,’ the cornea and the sclera of which were sealed together. It was only three years afterwards that one-piece ground adhesion-glasses were available from *Benvist [sic], Berthiot & Cie.* (42) and, almost simultaneously, from *Strübin* in *Basel*.

It was only in 1889 that I learned from optician Otto Himmler, to whom I had sent one of the Jena small glasses, that these were not ground but had been very well blown.”

“Das Entstehen des Haftglases - Im Sommer 1887 bat ich den Herrn Prof. Abbe, den damaligen Leiter der Zeiß-Werke, mir Kontaktgläser schleifen zu lassen, die Hornhaut mit 8, die Lederhaut mit 12 Halbmesser. Nach einiger Zeit erhielt ich von Jena 4 Gläschen, die ich für das Gewünschte hielt, und mit denen ich meine ersten Versuche anstellte. Diese Versuche habe ich 1888 im Archiv für Augenheilkunde veröffentlicht.

Auf weitere nach Jena gerichtete Bitten erhielt ich keine Antwort. Da kam mir eine Doktordissertation zu Hilfe, von August Müller-Gladbach, über « Hornhautlinsen ». Dr. Müller war, offenbar unabhängig von mir, auf den Gedanken des Haftglases verfallen und hatte in Otto Himmler in Berlin einen willigen Optiker gefunden. Selbstverständlich hat auch Dr. Müller nur an geschliffene Haftgläser gedacht. Ich wandte mich nun an Herrn Himmler und erhielt geschliffene Haftgläser (1889), die aus Hornhaut und Lederhaut zusammengesetzt waren. Erst drei Jahre später kamen aus einem Stück geschliffene Haftgläser zustande, durch Benvist, Berthiot & Cie und fast gleichzeitig durch Strübin in Basel.

Erst 1889 erfuhr ich durch den Fachmann Otto Himmler, dem ich eines der Jenaer Gläschen geschickt hatte, daß es nicht geschliffen, sondern sehr gut geblasen sei.” (43)

1.5.4 – Fick’s Regrets and the Retrospective Excuses

Fick’s letter of protest written in 1930 regarding his claim to priority in the invention of contact lenses came to the attention of von Rohr, who was then director for the Zeiss Group. A lively correspondence followed that has been preserved in the Zeiss archives. Retrospectively, Fick regretted having to slave away to correct significantly deformed cornea, rather than trying out his contact lenses on ametropic eyes with spherical corneas. Fick had preserved three contact lenses ground by Strübin in Basle that he desired to send to von Rohr:

“The small glass lenses [...] demonstrate to you how much trouble I took, instead of following my own advice (A.f.A; vol. 18, p. 286/7) and searching out persons who might benefit from them, amongst the high myopes or hypermetropes. However, in any event, the prospect of manufacturing complete series of ‘adhesion glasses,’ with the widest selection of different corneal curvatures, would probably not have received a favorable response from Mr. Strübin who was, in other respects, relatively approachable.”

“Die Gläschen [...] zeigen Ihnen, mit was ich mich abmühte, statt meinen eigenen Rat zu folgen (A.f.A; Bd. 18 S. 286/7) und über hochgradige Kurz oder Übersichtigen auf Nutznießer des Haftglases zu fahnden. Aber freilich, den Vorschlag ganze Reihen von Haftgläsern der verschiedensten Hornhautkrümmungen herzustellen, hätte wohl auch bei dem verhältnismäßig zugänglichen Herrn Strübin keine Gegenliebe gefunden.” (44)

In an earlier letter, von Rohr had tried to justify and excuse the failure of Abbe to reply to the repeated requests of Fick at the time of his experiments in 1887:

“If our esteemed Master Abbe did not send you or have someone send you any response, I ask you to accept his excuses on my part and in his name. Fabrication of optically usable surfaces with corresponding edges was impossible for us [underlined] at that time. I believe also that both Benoist Berthiot & Co. and Strübin would have found hairline cracks, for production of these was only of short duration.”

“Wenn unser verehrter Meister Abbe Ihnen weiter keine Antwort schickte oder schicken liess, so möchte ich ihn vor Ihnen entschuldigen. Eine Herstellung optische brauchbaren Fläschen mit entsprechender Kante war uns damals unmöglich. Ich glaube auch, daß Benoist Berthiot & Cie ebenso wie Strübin Haare darin gefunden haben werden, denn deren Herstellung war nur von kurzer Dauer.” (45)

2 – Discussion

The following aspects will be discussed:

the ambiguities linked to the terminology of the reference texts in German and translation of these texts into English,

the technical solutions used to produce eye impressions,

the physiological problems associated with the fitting of and adaptation to contact lenses as well as the subject of contact lens intolerance,

the correction of refractive errors by means of contact lenses and indications for the use of this modality,

and finally, the priorities attributed to *Fick*.

Document	Date
<i>Memorandum to the Scientific Academy of Saxony and the first letter to Abbe</i>	<i>June 25, 1887</i>
<i>Second letter to Abbe</i>	<i>July 5, 1887</i>
<i>Third letter to Abbe</i>	<i>July 26, 1887</i>
<i>Submission of Fick's article to the Archiv für Augenheilkunde</i>	<i>September 1887</i>
<i>Fourth letter to Abbe</i>	<i>October 30, 1887</i>

Table 10 - 3
Chronology of the time frame of Fick's trials of the "Contactbrille".'

2.1 – Terminology

“Eine Contactbrille”

The German expression “Eine Contactbrille” that was invented by *Fick* to designate his contact device is not at all easy to translate into English, not to mention that the English language also attributes a different meaning to the term “spectacle(s)”, depending on whether it is used in the singular or the plural (46). The translator is thus confronted with the following difficult choice of translating “Eine Contactbrille”:

by the singular form, namely “a contact-spectacle”. This singular form would show well what *Fick* was looking for when he used the indefinite article “eine” (one), namely that his device consisted essentially of one unique shell-like glass lens for each of the two eyes. However, in English, the singular form of the term “spectacle” does not always correspond with the sight-correcting device that *Fick* intended by using the term “Brille” (meaning spectacle[s]), by the plural form, “contact-spectacles”. In this instance, the translator would betray the spirit of the author, in rendering “a contact corrective lens” as “contact spectacles”,

or again, by the association of both singular and plural: “a contact spectacles-eyeglass” or “a pair of contact glasses”. These expressions would translate the thoughts of the author but would be not only unacceptably cumbersome but also bordering on the ridiculous.

	Frequency
<i>Contactbrille (contact-spectacle)</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Brille (spectacles), used as an abbreviation for Contactbrille</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Glas, Gläschen (glass, small glass)</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Glasschälchen, Schälchen (small glass shell, small shell)</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Glasschüsselchen (small glass bowl or small glass cup)</i>	<i>1</i>

Table 10 - 4
Frequency of German synonyms for "Contactbrille" used by Fick in his presentation.

I must emphasize that *Fick* did not dwell on possible nuances between “spectacle(s)” and “eyeglasses”, as he sometimes used the first term synonymously with the second (47). Besides, he abandoned the term “Contactbrille” in his later publications (48).

May, the translator of the English version in the *Archives of Ophthalmology*, bypassed the difficulty when he took the liberty of translating “Eine Contactbrille” as “A Contact-lens”. While it is pointless to criticize *May* retrospectively for this original initiative, the term “contact glass” that was used many years later to designate *Fick's* and *Sulzer's* contact lenses would have been more suitable. *May's* term, nevertheless, made a comeback with the introduction of contact lenses of corneal diameter.

The choice that *Fick* made of “Contactbrille” (contact-spectacles or a pair of contact glasses) rather than “Contactschale” (contact cup or contact shell) or again as “Contactlinse” (contact lens) is also explained by his idea of causing the contact device to be placed as a bridge over the ocular globe (49). In fact, according to his idea, the “Contactbrille” would function like diving goggles filled with water but placed behind the eyelids and passing with a generous clearance broadly anterior to the ocular tissues. *Fick* used other denominations synonymous with “Contactbrille” and their frequency of occurrence is summarized in table 10 – 4.

Glas, Gläschen, Glasschüsselchen (Glass, Small Glass, Small Glass Cup)

The term “Glas” (glass) and its diminutive “Gläschen” (small glass) are used most frequently. “Glasschüsselchen” (small glass bowl) is more rarely used and generally for the description of experiments on rabbits' eyes with glass shells blown in Zurich.

Schale, Schälchen, Glasschälchen (Shell, Small Shell, Small Glass Shell)

Fick defines the “Contactbrille” as a “Glasschälchen” (small glass shell), for example, “*I have succeeded in excluding the defective cornea from all dioptric influences by a small glass shell*” (50), or “*the ‘Contactbrille’ consist of a thin glass shell.*” (51) In this context, the meaning of “Schale” (shell) could equally well be expressed by “bowl” or “cup”.

Glass Cornea, Glass Sclera

The two components, the central and peripheral parts, constituting *Fick's* contact lenses are suitably designated: “Glascornea” (glass-cornea) and “Glassklera” (glass-sclera).

2.2. – Technical Aspects

2.2.1 – Animal Tests

It is reasonable to give *Fick* credit for being the first to make an impression of a rabbit's eye from which to manufacture a cast for a contact lens and to have placed such a lens in an animal's eye.

Molding from Rabbits' Eyes

The impressions are taken after excision of the eyelids. However, the casts of these impressions do not allow glass shells to be prepared from them and *Fick* does not explain why this was the case. He does indicate, however, that in the rabbit, the corneal and the scleral radii of curvature are practically the same (approximately 7.30 mm).

Contact Lenses made for Rabbits

The glass shells that *Fick* used for rabbit experiments were **monocurve shells** (52) of 9.50, 10.00 and 10.50 mm radii of curvature. They were clearly of higher convexity than the 7.30-mm radius of the ocular globe of a rabbit. In order to avoid contact between the cornea and the glass, *Fick* used shells consisting essentially of “*glass vesicles, the base of which was only a few millimeters distant from the center of the sphere*” (53). He chose from these shells “*the best-fitting one for each individual rabbit.*” There are no more details on the total diameter and the back optic zone radius of the best shell that he kept for this first test. For reasons of correspondence between the curvatures of the shell and the eye, it is likely that the glass he retained was the shell of 10.50-mm radius of curvature.

2.2.2 – Tests on Human Beings

Casts from Human Cadaver Eyes

Based on impressions taken from human cadaver eyes, *Fick* first confirmed evidence that, in the human eye, the corneal radius of curvature is steeper than the scleral, whereas, in the rabbit, the two tissues have the same radius. The “Contactbrille” stretches further onto the structure of the conjunctival part that must serve as support for the

	<i>Letter to Abbe of June 25, 1887</i>	<i>Letter to Abbe of July 26, 1887</i>	<i>Letter to Abbe of August 20, 1887</i>	<i>Submission to Archiv in September 1887</i>
"Glasscornea"				
Back optic zone radius	8.00 to 9.50 mm	8.00 mm	8.00 mm	8.00
Primary optic diameter	12.00 mm	14.00 mm	14.00 mm	14.00 mm
Shape	circular	circular	circular	circular
"Glasssklera"				
Back scleral radius		15.00 mm	14.00 mm	15.00 mm
Total diameter			19.00 mm	
Width	3.00 to 6.00 mm	5.00 mm	3.00 mm (4.00 mm)	3.00 mm
Shape	oval	circular	circular	circular

Table 10 - 5
Contact lens parameters that *Fick* ordered from *Abbe*.

contact lens in order to allow the corneal portion to form a bridge over the limbus and the cornea. It is true that *Fick* had neglected

the importance of the support for this of a “layer of tendons, connective tissue, fat, and muscles” at the time of the rabbit eye tests. It is also evident that he counted on obtaining a solid and widely based support for the lens on the sclera in order for it to pass, with a generous clearance, over the cornea without touching it. In other words, there was to be no corneal contact.

The contact lens that he tried out on his own eye was “*a glass vesicle which fitted upon the periphery of the plaster cast*” (54), in which he had blown a corneal protuberance. Thus, the ‘Contactbrille’ had both a back optic zone curvature and a scleral zone curvature, the latter being derived from the plaster cast of the cadaver eye impression.

The Contact Lenses Obtained from *Abbe*

Fick placed all his hopes on those contact lenses that he believed to have been made from ground glass and that he had ordered from *Abbe*. An analysis of *Fick's* letters to *Abbe* that were written between June and September 1887, draws our attention to a change in his reasoning.

It is apparent that:

1/ In the **letter of June 25**, *Fick* initially desired to obtain a contact lens ground according to the lines of the model of his glass-blown lenses that he used for his preliminary studies. This lens would have a circular "Glasscornea" of 12.00-mm diameter, with a radius of curvature of between 8.00 mm and 9.50 mm, a "Glasssklera" 6.00-mm wide in its temporal sector, 3.00-mm wide in its nasal sector and the inferior part of which would be less wide than the superior part. The "Glasscornea" would thus be displaced inferiorly, following the model of the ocular prosthesis. *Fick* give no value for the radius of the "Glasscornea".

2/ In his **letter of July 26**, *Fick* ordered a contact lens formed from a "Glasscornea" of 8.00-mm back optic zone radius and a 14.00-mm total diameter, with a "Glasssklera" of 15.00-mm back scleral zone radius and 5.00-mm wide. *Fick* strove to avoid contact between the lens and the ocular globe, except at the level of the external border and perhaps at the extreme periphery by passing over it like a bridge with generous clearance, above the scleral conjunctiva, limbus and cornea and filling the space thus created with liquid.

3/ In his **letter of August 20**, *Fick* ordered the manufacture of new contact lenses, of which the scleral portion would be conoid with a "Glasscornea" of 8.00-mm radius, a diameter of 14.00 mm and a "Glasssklera" of 14.00-mm radius and 3.00 mm wide, with a total diameter of 19.00 mm (55). Starting around this time, *Fick* used to color the back surface of the lenses with the intention to treat them similarly to corneal tattooing.

4/ In **September 1887**, *Abbe* came to Zurich to have discussions with *Fick* and Professor *Haab*, the director of the Ophthalmology Clinic. This was probably to confirm the experimental results announced. However, after *Abbe*'s visit, *Fick* received no further new contact lenses, in spite of his reminder in the October 30, 1887 letter.

5/ The lenses described in the publication submitted to the *Archiv für Augenheilkunde* in **September 1887**, were supposed to have a "Glasscornea" of 14.00-mm diameter and 8.00-mm radius, with a "Glasssklera" 3.00 mm wide and of 15.00-mm radius. The total diameter of the contact lens was 19.00 mm, a fact that implies important super-elevations of the contact lens and an exclusive support by its edge. These indications agree with the description of scleral zone lenses that were ordered in *Fick*'s letter of August 20, 1887. The parameters of the contact lenses described in the *Archiv für Augenheilkunde* publication presented certain discrepancies when compared with the cast of a human ocular globe:

The diameter of the "corneal part" (primary optic diameter) of 14.00 mm is wider than that of the human limbus (usually 11.00 to 12.00 mm). This proves that *Fick* wanted to take care of and give appropriate respect to the corneal limbus by putting the junction between the optic zone and the scleral zone of the lens back towards the periphery. *Fick* ordered specifically that the junction between the 15.00-mm radius corresponding with the sclera and the 8.00-mm radius corresponding with the cornea (a "transition zone" and "limbal clearance" according to today's terminology) was not blended.

The text indicates that the "scleral support area" (the scleral zone) is 3.00 mm wide and that the radius of curvature of the scleral zone (the back scleral radius) is 15 mm. *Fick* was, in any event, researching a conical scleral zone with solid peripheral support and wished the lens to pass anterior to the sclera, limbus and cornea by means of a generous and wide bridge, thus producing an adequate clearance space filled with liquid.

In fact, *Abbe* did not provide any detailed technical information for *Fick*, the latter revealing later that he had received the contact lenses without an enclosed letter: “*This situation came about in the following manner. Naturally, I never thought that I would achieve anything from the use of ‘Contactbrille’ (see page 285 of my article). I obtained four small glasses, without any written documentation, through the courtesy of Professor Abbe in Jena. It was with these that I achieved the results described by Sulzer, i.e., an improvement in the visual acuity from 1/10 to 1/6 and from 1/20 to 1/6. As I obtained no further small glasses from Jena and also no information, I turned to a series of opticians with the request that they might grind the ‘Contactbrille’ for me.*” (56)

This remains an enigma and seems to be at variance with the facts of the visit that *Abbe* made to Zurich during the month of September 1887. It is incredible that *Abbe* could deliver the contact shells to *Fick* without commenting on their manufacture and without documenting their parameters. (57)

Scleral Width and Scleral Base

In his letter of August 20, 1887, *Fick* refers to the “width” of the scleral zone as 3.00 mm and to the “base of the sclera” as 19.00 mm: “*The prescription would therefore be as follows: Cornea is unchanged, i.e., 8 mm radius of curvature; the base of the cornea is a circle of 7 mm radius, the sclera is 3 mm wide and is part of a sphere of 14 mm radius of curvature; the base of the sclera is a circle of 19 mm diameter.*” (58)

On first consideration, one might believe that *Fick* made an error in specifying a ‘diameter’ of 19.00 mm since a “corneal diameter” surrounded by a scleral zone 3.00 mm wide gives a “scleral diameter” of 20.00 mm. However, it is clear from *Fick*’s diagram that when he referred to the width of the scleral zone, he was specifying the length of a tangent to the back scleral radius. (59)

The Blackened Contact Lenses

How the patients were selected in view of the presence of corneal irregularities is not described, but there were also other individuals afflicted by corneal opacities causing dazzle due to light diffraction. *Fick* blackened the posterior surface of the contact lenses except for a circular zone opposite to the transparent portion of the cornea in order to allow that zone to serve as an “artificial pupil”. In his publication in *Archiv für Augenheilkunde*, he did not elaborate on the blackening of the surfaces or on the method that he was considering for stabilizing the contact lens in order to keep the transparent aperture opposite the uninjured portion of the cornea. This is quite the contrary to his letter of August 20 1887, in which *Fick* provides major details on the opaque painting with the intended dimension and position of the transparent areas. These details were not repeated in September, which was, after all, a month later, in the paper that he submitted to the *Archiv für Augenheilkunde*.

2.3 – Physiological Aspects

Rabbit Experiments

Fick did not indicate whether he used an anesthetic in the rabbit before placing the glass shells in the rabbit’s eyes. He described, however, his surprise and satisfaction in perceiving that the lenses retained themselves independently in the eye and that they were practically invisible. It is not surprising that the shells, large as they were, inserted

under the eyelids and reaching as far as the conjunctival fornix, did not tend to fall out nor allow the introduced liquid to run out. On the other hand, it is much more open to doubt whether the glass shells, thus introduced, could “accompany the eyeball in all its movements”. Had this been the case, that would mean that the shells were really bound to the conjunctiva and adhered to the globe like suction cups.

Fick maintained a substantial space between this glass shell and the globe, and such a space must have contained a relatively large volume of liquid, to which he attributed the neutralization of corneal refractive power and the optical correction of corneal irregularities. This shell passed, for practical purposes, like a bridge over the cornea and indented the scleral conjunctiva at the rabbit's inferior palpebral cul-de-sac. *Fick* noted that this construction created a significant space between the cornea and the contact shell and that it was necessary to fill this space with a large volume of liquid.

In the course of his experiments on the rabbit, *Fick* observed signs of intolerance after 6 to 8 hours of wearing time. He observed three types of disturbance: clouding of the liquid, clouding of the cornea, and conjunctival redness. He attempted to link these signs partly to the liquid and partly to the lens: “*There still remained the division of the responsibility for three difficulties - clouding of the liquid, clouding of the cornea, and injection of the conjunctiva - between the two exciting factors - glass and liquid.*” (60)

The presence of epithelial cells in the liquid showed that epithelial corneal and conjunctival desquamation was occurring. Using the argument that a “Contactbrille”, placed without liquid, produced no signs of desquamation and that the metabolic substances were recovered only in the liquid, *Fick* did not consider the device to be responsible. However, it is evident to us that the blockage of the liquid by pressure from the edge of the shell prevented the evacuation of desquamated cells, secretions and metabolites.

Fick attributed these pathological signs to a bad choice of liquid. We know today that this argument is without merit. The liquid, which had been placed there intentionally or which derived from tears or condensation of moisture, gathered up the desquamations and the metabolites. The presence of detritus in the liquid was *evidence* of poor evacuation of this and *not the cause* of the metabolic cloudiness.

Human Experiments

The contact lenses were worn for two hours by *Fick* himself and then by the laboratory assistant (Institutdiener) of the *University Institute of Physiology*. *Fick* confirmed the satisfactory wearing of the shell “without any other subjective symptoms”, aside from “some flow of tears, not, however, over the cheeks, but only into the nose” and a moderate ciliary injection that quickly diminished. It is very likely, but not proven, that the placement of the contact lens was performed under local anesthesia. He did not indicate that he had repeated the instillations of topical anesthesia while he was wearing his “Contactbrille”.

2.4 - Optical Aspects

Glass Shells

This is an account “of a thin glass shell, bounded by concentric and parallel spherical

segments.” No transparent material, other than glass, was available at the time, and the same situation would persist until the introduction of plastic materials. As its walls were concentric and parallel, the shell did not have any specific refractive power and was therefore approximately afocal.

Shell Creating a Space Anterior to Cornea.

Fick thus envisaged a shell without refractive effect placed at a distance anterior to the cornea. Its front curvature replaced the front curvature of the anterior surface of the irregular cornea and maintained a space between itself and the ocular globe: “*The interspace between it and the eyeball is filled with a liquid having the same refractive index as the cornea [...] thus the irregularities in the passage of rays of light from the air into the cornea, which were previously produced, must be lost.*” (61)

Liquid creating Optical Effect

The liquid maintained between the eye and the contact lens, aside from the neutralization of the corneal irregularity, would create a liquid lens with optical effect, the front surface of which would be regularly curved, for which *Fick* predicted clinical indications.

2.5 – Indications for Contact Lenses

Fick considered several possible indications for the use of the “Contactbrille”: these included neutralization of corneal irregularities, errors of refraction, astigmatism, myopia, aphakia hyperopia, and their use with stenopaic hole or painted iris.

Neutralization of Corneal Irregularities

The neutralization of the irregularities of the corneal surface due to astigmatism and keratoconus is achieved by means of a liquid maintained in position by the contact lens, with the reservation that the cornea must be transparent. This modality was also indicated for the correction of patients with post-cicatricial irregular astigmatism following cataract surgery: “*Besides the numerous cases in which the corneal cicatrices diminish the acuteness of vision by irregular refraction and dazzling, there are, though less frequently, cases of irregular astigmatism with clear corneæ. To this class, cases of keratoconus belong, also those cases in which peripherally situated cicatrices, as, for instance, cicatrices as a result of cataract operations, have caused distortion of the cornea. Assuming that there is no impediment to rays of light beyond the cornea, there is no doubt that the optical defect can be fully corrected by the contact lens. At the same time, the high degree of hypermetropia in aphakia could be diminished by increased curvature of the glass cornea.*” (62)

Elimination of Diffracted Light by Blackening of the Contact Lens

The elimination of diffracted light secondary to corneal opacities is accomplished by means of blackening the contact lens, replacing corneal tattooing, and creating artificial pupils, or a stenopaic pinhole: “*If, however, such a patient be provided with a contact-lens which has been rendered opaque, except the location or area opposite to the artificial pupil, the various optical defects will be corrected with the single exception of the defect due to the peripheral situation of the pupil.*” (63)

The letter dated August 20, 1887, confirms *Fick*'s intention and provides details on the magnitude and positioning of the artificial pupil. *Fick* designed this transparent zone as

a "Guckloch" (a peephole). This non-tinted opening part had to have a diameter of 3.00 mm. The experiments were to be conducted with models of "Contactbrille" with their back surfaces blackened and of which the artificial pupil was to be positioned 2.00, 4.00 and 6.00 mm from the center of the "Glasscornea".

Post-operative Aphakia

The reference to post-operative aphakia associated with cicatricial astigmatism is interesting. At the time in history when *Fick* was active, the cataract operation effectively caused a major handicap because patients had to wear inconveniently thick and heavy glasses with strong convex lenses. Furthermore, the generous corneal incision, involving two thirds of the corneal periphery, caused a cicatricial astigmatism, which was optically irremediable in the majority of patients.

Correction of High Myopia

Correction of high myopia is obtained by a liquid lens of adequately thick and curved layer: *"Finally, we might also consider the advisability of allowing myopes of high degrees, whom we do not dare to give correcting glasses, to wear contact-lenses whose glass cornea would naturally want to be correspondingly less curved than those heretofore used by me."* (64)

Hide Esthetic Defects

The creation of a drawing on the contact lens in order to hide esthetic corneal defects relates more to the ocularist's technical skill than to optical correction. It is possible that this request may have been at the origin of the discontinuation of the deliveries of the lens models requested at the time of *Abbe's* visit to Zurich in September 1887.

3 – Fick, Neutralization of Corneal Refractive Power, and Contact Lenses

A Premature Publication

It seems that *Fick's* publication was, if not precipitous, at least a trifle premature, because this event occurred before the contact lens experiments had been carried out to their completion. Numerous questions remained unanswered. *Fick* justified the publication of his partially completed trials by the hope that other clinics throughout the German-speaking world would provide a sufficient supply of patients more suitable for the contact lens trials and more likely to produce good visual results than those obtained so far by *Fick* at the Zurich Eye Clinic. (65)

The Primordial Role of the Liquid

In the memorandum dated June 25 1887 and sent to the Saxon Academy of Science, *Fick* attributes a fundamental or primordial role to the liquid: *"The space between the lens and the cornea is filled with a liquid that has the same refractive index as the cornea. The incident rays of light passing across the parallel surfaces of the small glass plate towards the liquid thus undergo the same refractive change that they would have if the glass were not present, or, to express it more accurately, just as if the glass were composed of the identical liquid. The surface of the glass thus plays the role of the cornea and, taking into account the similarity of the two different refractive powers, no refractive change occurs when the rays of light pass from the liquid to the deformed cornea."* (66)

In his letter dated July 5 1887, *Fick* provides a new clue to his concept of neutralizing the corneal refractive power by a compatible liquid and of using the contact lens only as a small spectacle lens, to be placed at a distance anterior to the eye. The "Contactbrille" was to maintain the liquid in place in order to neutralize the corneal refractive power and to replace the deformed cornea with a surface of regular curvature. Trials with various liquids were to have allowed him to find the liquid that was best tolerated by the rabbit corneal epithelium: *"My repeated experiments on animals have convinced me more and more that the 'Contactbrille' were viable: as of now and after several attempts, I have found a liquid that can be tolerated for 6 to 8 hours by the rabbit cornea without either liquid or epithelium becoming cloudy."* (67)

After the setbacks in the trials on the contact lenses received in July, *Fick* insisted in his letters of July 26 and August 20, 1887, on obtaining lenses that, thanks to a conical haptic portion, would pass as a bridge above the ocular globe and there produce a significant space filled with compatible liquid. This clearance would be sufficiently capacious so as to avoid even the irritation caused by the ridge at the junction of the corneal and scleral parts, for which blending would not become necessary: *"Taking into account that this angle is separated from the globe by liquid, it cannot have any irritating effect."* (68)

The principal mistake *Fick* made was to attribute too great an importance to the nature of the liquid. In making this liquid responsible for assuring the correction of corneal irregularities, he attributed to it not only the role of the neutralization of corneal refractive power, but also that of a liquid-lens to correct errors of refraction. He also attributed to it a role in the occurrence of metabolic, corneal, and conjunctival complications, without, however, any self-questioning on the need to exchange and

replace the liquid in order to remove the metabolites and to bring in fresh nutritive substances. The choice of grape sugar could be justified by its nutritional qualities, but the 2% concentration was not appropriate. (69)

Fick's Ignorance regarding Corneal Metabolism

It is hard to understand why *Fick* attributed intolerance to the nature of the liquid and to possible toxic effects on the ocular tissues, without asking himself questions regarding the disturbances induced by the presence of the contact lens. He was preoccupied in his search for an ideal liquid and did not reckon with the fact that the intolerance he observed was related to metabolic asphyxia, which resulted from the inclusion of this liquid beneath the contact lens.

The Blackened Contact Lens

The blackened contact lens intended to rectify the dazzling and diffraction of light caused by corneal opacities did not give the expected results because the stabilization of the so-called "artificial pupil" anterior to that portion of cornea remaining transparent, was too unpredictable.

Failure of Clinical Trials

The clinical observations presented in *Fick's* paper are far from encouraging. The visual acuities of the patients studied were not significantly improved. Those patients with astigmatism, cicatricial corneal irregularities, or keratoconus did not experience the expected optical correction. Although *Fick* mentioned optical correction of the high hyperopia in aphakia "by increased curvature of the glass cornea" and of high myopia in patients "whose glass cornea would naturally want to be correspondingly less curved", he did not carry out trials of either modality. However, patients with such conditions must have been plentiful and should have been even more common than those with cicatricial astigmatism and corneal scars.

Absence of Ground Optical Power

Surprisingly, *Fick* did not envisage management of refractive errors by grinding an optical correction onto the anterior surface of the contact lens. He conceived of such a correction only by means of an adequate liquid film captured between the front surface of the cornea and the back optic zone of the contact lens, the front curvature of which was destined to furnish the actual correction.

A Classical or Even Traditional Outlook

As far as his research was concerned, *Fick* bore the typical outlook of an ophthalmologist trained by the teachers of his era. He possessed a sound histological and anatomical background, but he was too close to the problem under consideration to be able to obtain a good overall view and had neither the confidence nor the courage to stand back from an assessment and reject those aspects that were not supportable. His respect for the eye and his fear of provoking irreversible lesions in it by too close a contact with the contact lens forced him to distance the central zone of the lens as far as possible from the cornea and to direct his research to finding a scleral support as wide as possible.

Fick was also the author of a treatise on hygiene (70). He emphasized the sterility of contact lenses, the liquid used, and cleanliness of the hands. He tested the liquid for the presence of bacteria. He was in the forefront of a move to introduce hygienic measures

into ophthalmology. However, *Fick* was unaware of the nutritional role of tears. It is astonishing that he did not attribute more importance to their renewal while looking for an *ideal glass* and that he recommended the liquid in relation to its refractive index rather than for its metabolic value.

To the difficulties associated with lack of information on lacrimal and corneal metabolism around the year 1887, was added *Fick's* handicap of an underlying conflict with Professor *Haab*, director of the Zurich Ophthalmologic Clinic. *Fick* was of German origin (71), with the result that he was unable to fit into the Eye Clinic team, whose staff members had been trained in the Swiss medical tradition. *Fick* evidently felt more comfortable in the Institute of Physiology, where he held the same rank of "Privatdozent", and, furthermore, Professor *Gaule*, the Director of that Institute and also of German origin, had welcomed him on the recommendation of *Fick's* uncle, the famous physiologist *Adolf Fick*. (72)

Poor Collaboration of the Optical Industry

Fick appeared to be on a collision course due to the almost complete lack of understanding between him and the optical industry. He engaged in a dialogue of the deaf with *Abbe*, who sent him blown contact lenses without warning him that he had been unable to carry out his order for ground lenses and also did not answer his further solicitations. *Fick's* preliminary studies on the rabbit's, and on his own, eye were in fact carried out with contact lenses similar to that which *Abbe* had provided.

Nevertheless, *Fick* had the courage to publish his work, and he justified this publication by arguing, in his introduction, that his new method of refractive correction should be tried out and completed by his colleagues. He was sure that he was opening up a new direction for the optical correction of refractive errors by substituting ocular contact devices for the glasses placed on the nose, or, as he very precisely named them, "Contactbrille".

Fick's letters to *Abbe* show that, after a period of close collaboration between June and September 1887, all contact appears to have been lost after *Abbe's* visit to Zurich in the course of which the latter had, by the same token, assured him that he would forward new lens models. After a final letter of 1887, *Fick* appears to have interrupted his orders, in so far as one can judge from the absence of documents in the *Zeiss* Archives. The reason for this brutal interruption in the relations between *Fick* and *Abbe* is unknown.

What Became of Fick's Contact Lenses?

The fate of *Fick's* original contact lenses is not known at the present time. A mention of "Fick's original contact lenses" is found on July 2, 1930, at the time of a meeting held in Jena, when *Erggelet* reported that they had been forwarded to *von Rohr*: "Some of Fick's original contact lenses can be exhibited thanks to the kindness of Professor von Rohr. The inventor of contact lenses recently made a gift of them to Professor M. von Rohr." (73)

In fact, this textual statement is only partially true because *Erggelet* had not properly understood *von Rohr's* comments. Several letters exchanged between *Fick* and *von Rohr* are preserved in the *Zeiss* archives in Jena. Thus, in a letter dated June 24, 1930, *Fick* writes: "I could forward three 'Haftgläser' (adhesion-glasses) to you [...]. The three little glass lenses originate from *Strübin* in Basle, if I am not mistaken, demonstrate to

you how much trouble I took." (74) The letter from *von Rohr* acknowledging reception of the three *Strübin* contact lenses carries the date of June 26, 1930. This proves that the contact lenses demonstrated by Erggelet at the July congress in Jena were not "Fick's original contact lenses", as he might have believed.

The exchange of mail between *Fick* and *von Rohr* includes another passage, which allows us to make a new observation in regard to the behavior of *Abbe*. In fact, *von Rohr* makes the following judgment on his predecessor and on the circumstances of the delivery of blown contact shells instead of the ground lenses that *Fick* requested: "*Whereas we have undertaken the production of spectacle lenses since 1910, now we are also dealing better with adherent lenses.*" (75) We can conclude from the above that the *Zeiss* firm did not have any experience in grinding spectacle lenses when *Fick* approached them in 1887. This means that *Abbe* did not have any facilities at his disposal or any motivation to manufacture ground contact lenses.

4 – Fick's Priorities and Historical Standing

4.1 – Fick's Priorities

We must attribute to *Fick* a significant deal of preeminence:
he is undoubtedly the inventor of the idea of contact shells and lenses for the replacement of spectacle glasses,
he is also the first to wear a contact lens/shell,
he is the first to have carried out impressions and casts of animal and human cadaver eyes in order to determine the curvatures of the ocular globe with a view to manufacturing contact lenses,
he is the first to have placed a contact lens onto an animal's eye for an experimental reason,
he is the first to have neutralized and corrected pathological corneal irregularities by means of the tear film,
he is the first to have insisted on the importance of hygiene for contact-lens and shell users,
he is author of the first publication relating to contact lenses/shells.

4.2 – A Short History on the Citations, the Omissions, and the Misinterpretations

The historians of contact lenses regularly cite *Fick*. Although his article has been translated into English from as early as 1888 and reproduced on numerous occasions (76), there are unexpected and sometimes astonishing interpretations, nevertheless. The most widely disseminated mistake consists of claiming that *Fick* used contact lenses of corneal diameter, having had these made from blown glass in Wiesbaden, or, alternatively, that he had had them ground in Jena and invented the term "corneal contact lens".

Concerning the Nature of Fick's Contact Lenses

It is common to read that *Fick* fitted contact lenses with today's characteristics of corneal contact lenses for his patients, i.e., small diameter lenses. It is a fact that Fick used moncurve shells for his first experiments on rabbits' eyes. The plaster casts showed him that the ocular globes of rabbits were spherical, and he used glass-blown shells of scleral diameter. It is a major error to have obscured these facts and to have asserted that these moncurve glasses were of corneal diameter and were placed on human eyes (77). The origin of this mistake of omitting to mention the use of contact lenses in rabbits goes back to an ambiguous and confusing description by *F.E. Müller* in 1929: "*The 'Contactbrille' consists of a thin portion of a glass sphere of about 8 mm radius of curvature with parallel sides and a basal diameter equal to that of a normal cornea.*" (78)

In 1959, *Graham* deduced a far-fetched interpretation of the above that he illustrated with a diagram of a moncurve contact lenses, which certain historians attributed to *Fick's* hand: "*A bowl bounded by concentric and parallel sphere segments can only have the simple form characteristic of corneal lenses. [...] Here it is unmistakably clear that many of the structures, which Fick used in his early investigation, were simple segments of hollow glass spheres.*" (79) These mistakes were repeated by the majority of historians, for example: "*Fick had already described over the course of these years*

different types of corneal lenses that were unproved and passed again into oblivion.” (80) Or: *“These original contact lenses consisted of a thin glass of about 8 mm radius of curvature, with the anterior and posterior surfaces being parallel. The diameter was about that of the cornea. Fick used these lenses quite successfully in treating patients with keratoconus.”* (81)

An excellent study correcting these errors and written by *Sabell* received little attention: *“Fick had begun by describing the contact lens as ‘a thin glass shell bounded by concentric and parallel spherical segments.’ Graham (1959) contends that this description can only be interpreted as ‘the simple form characteristic of corneal lenses.’ Fick, in fact, goes on to describe his initial experiment using large rabbits and from his plaster cast of these animals’ eye he concluded that ‘the radius of curvature of the cornea did not differ materially from that of the sclera, and the eyeball of the rabbit is petty nearly a sphere’ [...] It would seem, therefore, that his first human lenses were of scleral form and that single segment type were, in fact, scleral lenses for rabbits and not corneal lenses for human eye.”* (82)

Concerning the Use of Contact Lenses by Fick

By the same token, it is erroneous to maintain that *Fick* corrected his own astigmatism: *“The Zurich ophthalmologist Fick corrected his own defects of vision that were due to an irregular corneal curvature (astigmatism).”* (83) It is true that *Fick* himself wore a contact lens for two hours in his left eye. The correction of irregular astigmatism in his own eye was, however, never mentioned in his published work. (84)

Concerning the Manufacturer of Fick’s Contact Lenses

It is also repeated that *Fick* collaborated closely with *Abbe* of *Zeiss* : *“As a result of the collaboration with Abbe, he later prepared better blown contact glasses provided from Jena.”* (85) This statement is erroneous, for, as we have seen, *Fick* ordered ground contact lenses from *Abbe*, and the latter furnished him with blown contact lenses without any warning or explanation. Beginning in September 1887, all later orders from *Fick* remained unacknowledged.

It was also claimed that *Fick* had collaborated with the ocularists *Müller* of *Wiesbaden*: *“Not having believed that he would be able to obtain the lenses corresponding to his requirements from Jena, as he had requested, Fick applied to the ocularists Müller of Wiesbaden.”* (86) Or: *“Fick used the Mullers [sic] to make some of his lenses and describes corneal lenses made of glass and scleral lenses.”* (87) Or, that he had used the contact lenses of these two manufacturers, one after the other: *“He first tried out the blown shells from the firm of Müller, then he turned to Abbe in Jena and obtained ground glasses from there.”* (88)

Concerning Terminology

Fick used the term “Contactbrille” in his original work, which *May* as translator of the American edition interpreted by “contact-lens”. In 1916, *Siegrist* attributes incorrectly to *Fick* the invention of the term “Kontaktglas” (contact-glass) (89). In 1941, *Pascal* (90) maintained that it was *Fick* who “in fact coined the term ‘contact lens’ (Contactbrille in German).” *Graham* has drawn attention to this error and to his agreement with the expression, “contact spectacles”. *Pearson & Efron* used “a pair of contact glasses” and *Mackie*, in *Duke-Elder’s System of Ophthalmology*, “contact lens” (thus, *“Fick introduced the term contact lens (Kontaktbrille).”* (91) Since which time, the mistake has become a reference for numerous authors who consult only *May’s* translation or, more often, secondary sources. (92)

Notes

- 1 "Privatdozent", the equivalent of a Clinical Assistant Professor; but unsalaried, at a University in North America. The British equivalent would be "honorary clinical lecturer" or "reader" (unsalaried).
- 2 In this chapter, I often use the terms "contact lens" and "contact shell" as generic synonyms for Fick's "Contactbrille". (ISO 8320: Contact lens: a generic term including any lens designed to be worn on the front surface of the eyeball.) see Appendix 10-1). According to current terminology, the essential difference between a contact lens and a contact shell is that the former has a specified front or back vertex power. Although a rigid contact shell has no specified power; it does allow the formation of a liquid lens that will correct regular or irregular astigmatism and also may correct part of the spherical component of a refractive error. Thus, an afocal contact shell is capable of providing a reasonable visual acuity especially in a condition such as keratoconus.
- 3 It gives me great pleasure to thank Dr. Wolfgang Wimmer, archivist of Carl Zeiss Jena Company, for responding to my questions, advising me and assisting me in my research on these documents of such great historical interest.
- 4 Fick 1888/a, p. 279 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 215.
- 5 Fick 1888/a, p. 280 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 216.
- 6 Fick 1888/a, p. 280-281 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 216-217.
- 7 Fick 1888/a, p. 281 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 217.
- 8 Fick carried out these experiments at the Institute of Physiology of Professor Gaule, where he was also "Privatdozent" (see note 1). He did not communicate his results to Professor Haab at the Ophthalmology Clinic until such time as his experiments were at quite an advanced stage and after he had assured his priority by submitting a memo to the Academy of Sciences of Saxony (June 1887).
- 9 Vivisection was not then restricted by laws such as we have today. However, there already was an anti-vivisectionist movement afoot, which proposed terms of imprisonment for those who contravened. Fick was cynical about the opponents of vivisection and proposed that professors at the end of their careers should have themselves imprisoned as punishment for their publications, thus vacating job positions and facilitating promotion for their younger colleagues.
- 10 Fick 1888/a, p. 281 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 217.
- 11 Fick 1888/a, p. 282 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 218.
- 12 Fick 1888/a, p. 283 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 219.
- 13 Fick 1888/a, p. 283 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 220.
- 14 The 2% glucose solution is not the most suitable solution, if we judge this in the light of the criteria used nowadays for the composition of contact lens products.
- 15 Fick 1888/a, p. 283 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 220.
- 16 Fick 1888/a, p. 284 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 220.
- 17 Fick 1888/a, p. 284 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 221.
- 18 Fick failed to indicate whether he used a topical anesthetic. It should be noted that he placed the contact lens in his left eye. In his unpublished autobiography, which included details drafted for the benefit of those close to him, he recorded an episode of diplopia when he was very young, following which he became amblyopic in the left eye, to be precise (Fick, 1926). Apparently, he tried out the contact shell in his amblyopic eye. This amblyopia may explain why Fick did not provide any visual acuity data.
- 19 Fick 1888/a, p. 284-285 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 221. We should note that these experiments on the human eye were carried out at the Institute of Physiology under Professor Gaule and not at Professor Haab's Eye Clinic. This explains the absence of slit-lamp biomicroscopy of the ocular media.
- 20 In a letter dated 25th June 1887 (cited below), Fick indicated that the contact lens had been worn by the "Institutdiener", the servant of the Institute of Physiology, where the trials had been carried out.
- 21 Fick 1888/a, p. 285 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 221.
- 22 Fick 1888/a, p. 285 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 222.
- 23 Fick 1888/a, p. 286 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 222.
- 24 Fick 1888/a, p. 286-287 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 223. In a letter dated July 26, 1887, analyzed later, Fick indicated that he had a talk with Professor Haab, director of the Ophthalmological Clinic for the first time the previous evening, in order to tell him about contact lenses. Up to that time, Fick had kept quiet about his experiments that he carried out at Professor Gaule's Institute of Physiology.
- 25 Fick 1888/a, p. 287 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 223-224.
- 26 Efron & Pearson (1988, p. 1377 note v) comments as follows: "Visual acuity is expressed here according to the Donders notation, whereby $S = d/N$. The symbol S is derived from the German word *Sehschärfe*, d is the testing distance in Paris feet, and N is the distance in Paris feet at which the character read subtends five minutes of arc. Typical values for N include 20, 30, or 40 Paris feet, for which the corresponding meter values, as used by Fick, are 6,5, 9,75, and 13 m. (Conversion: 1 Paris foot = 0.325 m.)"
- 27 Fick 1888/a, p. 287 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 224.
- 28 Fick 1888/a, p. 288 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 225.
- 29 Fick 1888/a, p. 288 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 226.
- 30 Fick 1888/a, p. 289 & May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 226.
- 31 These authors were, of course, unaware of the warning of Hirschberg, who was for several years the publisher for the German edition of the *Archiv*: "Occasionally, I too found inaccuracies in the translations. These are virtually unavoidable. For this reason, anyone wishing to consult originals must always consult the original texts." ("Gelegentlich fand ich auch Ungenauigkeiten in den Übersetzungen. Diese sind ja fast unvermeidlich. Wer also wirklich die Originalien einsehen will, möge stets den Urtext nachschlagen") (Hirschberg 1915, §761, p. 135, note 2).
- 32 "Ein solches Glasplättchen nenne ich Contactbrille"
- 33 "dass der untere Saum der Contactbrille etwas schmaler ausfällt als der obere."
- 34 The word "Saum", which has been translated as "band", refers to the scleral zone.
- 35 It is clear from Fick's diagram that the dimension that he described as "width" was the length of a tangent to the back scleral radius.
- 36 For analysis, details and bibliographical references of the controversy of 1896-97 between Sulzer and Fick, see chapter XIII: The Decades after the Invention.
- 37 For in-depth analysis of the controversy with Lohnstein, see chapter XIV: The Era of the Hydrodiscopes.
- 38 Fick 1897, p. 131.
- 39 Fick 1897, p. 131-132, see also chapter XIII: The Decades after the Invention. Note that in 1896, Fick no longer uses the term "Contactbrille", but that of "Contactglass".
- 40 For analysis, details and bibliographical references of the controversy of 1896-97 between Sulzer and Fick, see chapter XIII: The Decades after the Invention.
- 41 This is a reference to August Müller who was born in Mönchengladbach, Germany; see chapter XII: August Müllers' "Hornhautlinse"
- 42 This is a typographic error; the company's name was "Benoist Berthiot & Cie".
- 43 Fick 1930/a, p. 495.
- 44 Letter of the June 24, 1930, from Adolf Eugen Fick to Moritz von Rohr, Zeiss Archives # 1051.
- 45 Letter of the June 18, 1930, from Moritz von Rohr to Adolf Eugen Fick, Zeiss Archives # 1051.
- 46 spectacle (sing.): something presented to the sight or view, a public display.

spectacles (pl.): eyeglasses.

In French, the same difference in meaning occurs between singular and plural:

Lunette (sing.): telescope, field glass, also toilet seat (!).

Lunettes (pl.): spectacles, (pair of) glasses, eyeglasses.

47 For example, in German, "zahlreiche Patienten, denen weder mit hyperbolischen noch konischen noch stenopäischen Brillen wesentlich genützt werden kann" is translated by May (p. 216) as "there are undoubtedly many patients whom neither hyperbolic, conical, nor stenopaic glasses help." It is evident that it is not "Brillen" (spectacles), but "glasses", as May correctly translated, which are hyperbolic, conical or stenopaic. (Translator's note: There really is no difference between spectacles and glasses in modern English).

48 The evolution of terminology is also described in chapter XIII: The Decades after the Invention.

49 The translation by May of "Eine Contactbrille" as "A Contact-lens" introduces the notion of physical contact between the lens, on the one hand, and the eye or even the cornea, on the other hand that was neither used nor claimed by Fick. This incorrect interpretation by the translator is at the root of the errors in English-speaking publications, in which the invention of such expressions as "corneal contact lens" and "contact lens" is attributed to Fick (notably by Graham, 1959).

50 May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 216 - Original: "dass es mir gelungen ist, die fehlerhafte Hornhaut durch ein Glaschälchen vom gesammten dioptrischen Effekte auszuschliessen." (Fick 1888/a, p. 280).

51 Fick 1888/a, p. 281: "Die Contactbrille besteht in einem dünnen Glasschälchen" & in May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 217: "The contact-lens consists of a thin glass shell".

52 Some authors have erroneously compared the mono-curved contact lenses used for rabbit experiments to single curvature contact lenses used in trials on humans.

53 "Glasblasen [...] dessen Basis vom Mittelpunkt der Kugel nur wenige Millimeter Abstand hatten." (Fick 1888/a, p. 281).

54 May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 222. - Original: "eine Glasblase welche auf die Peripherie des Gypsabgusses passte." (Fick 1888/a, p. 284).

55 Fick indicated that as the total diameter is reduced, the back scleral radius must be made correspondingly steeper. Thus, it appears that he recognized that the sclera is not spherical but flattens progressively from the limbus.

56 "Die Sache hängt folgendermaassen zusammen. Natürlich habe ich nie daran gedacht, durch geblasene Contactbrillen etwas zu erreichen (siehe Seite 285 meines Aufsatzes). Durch die Güte des Herrn Professors Abbe in Jena erhielt ich, ohne briefliche Mitteilung, vier Gläschen, mit denen ich die von Sulzer erwähnten Ergebnisse erzielte, nämlich eine Steigerung der Sehschärfe von 1/10 auf 1/6 und von 1/30 auf 1/6. Da ich von Jena keine weiteren Gläschen, auch keine Auskunft erhielt, so wandte ich mich an eine Reihe von Optikern mit der Bitte, mir Contactbrillen zu schleifen." (Fick 1892, p. 307).

This passage is quoted from a 1892 letter addressed by Fick to the Klinische Monatsblätter für Augenheilkunde at the time of the controversy with Sulzer. Detailed discussion occurs in chapter XIII: The Decades after the Invention.

57 It is claimed that there existed a certain rivalry at the Zurich Eye Clinic between Professor Haab and his Privatdozent Fick. The latter had carried out trials on rabbits, on himself, and on a volunteer at Professor Gaule's Institute of Physiology. He had informed Haab only at the time when he decided to transfer his trials to patients at the Ophthalmology Clinic. It is possible that Haab may not have encouraged Abbe to provide new consignments of contact lenses to be used in trials on clinic patients.

58 "Die Recipe würde jetzt also lauten: Cornea wie bisher; nämlich 8 mm Krümmungsradius; Basis der Cornea ist ein Kreis von 7 mm Radius; Sclera 3 mm breit u. Stück einer Kugelschale von 14 mm Krümmungsradius, Basis der Sclera ist ein Kreis von 19 mm Durchmesser." (Fick's letter of August 20, 1887).

59 Fick's diagram shows only the back surface construction. The dimension that he described as "diameter" and illustrated as 19.00 would now be described as "back scleral size".

60 May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 219 - Original: "Es wäre nun festzustellen, wie sich die drei Störungen, Trübung der Flüssigkeit, Trübung der Hornhaut und Injection der Conjunctiva, auf die beiden schädlichen Factoren, nämlich Gläschen und Flüssigkeit, vertheilen." (Fick 1888/a, p. 282).

61 May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 217 - Original: "der Zwischenraum zwischen Gläschen und Augapfel [wird] mit einer Flüssigkeit gefüllt, welche denselben Brechungsexponenten hat wie die Cornea [...] und es müssen folglich auch die Unregelmässigkeiten wegfallen, die vorher beim Uebergang der Lichtstrahlen aus Luft in die Cornea zu stande kamen." (Fick 1888/a, p. 281).

62 May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 223 - Original: "Ausser den zahlreichen Fällen, bei denen Hornhautnarben durch unregelmässige Strahlenbrechung und Blendung die Sehschärfe herabsetzen, gibt es, wenn auch seltener, irregulären Astigmatismus bei ungetrübter Cornea. Hierher gehören die Fälle von Keratoconus, ferner die Fälle, bei denen peripher gelegene Narben, z. B. Narben, die von Cataractoperationen herrühren, Verzerrung der Cornea bewirkt haben. Vorausgesetzt, dass nicht jenseits der Cornea noch ein Hinderniss für die Lichtstrahlen liegt, wird sich ohne Zweifel der optische Fehler durch die Contactbrille vollständig corrigiren lassen. Zugleich könnte die hochgradige Hypermetropie des Aphakischen durch stärkere Krümmung der Glascornea ausgeglichen werden." (Fick 1888/a, p. 286).

63 May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 222 - Original: "Wenn man dagegen einem solchen Patienten eine Contactbrille aufsetzt, die bis auf eine der künstlichen Pupille gegenüberliegende Stelle bezw. Zone undurchsichtig ist, so sind sämtliche optische Fehler corrigirt, mit einziger Ausnahme des Fehlers, welcher auf der peripherischen Lage des Sehloches beruht." (Fick 1888/a, p. 286).

64 May's translation of Fick 1888/b, p. 223 - Original: "Endlich konnte man wohl daran denken, hochgradige Myopen denen man corrigirende Brillen nicht zu geben wagt, Contactbrillen tragen zu lassen, deren Glascornea natürlich in entsprechendem Masse schwächer gekrümmt sein müsste, als die bisher von mir verwendeten." (Fick 1888/a, p. 287).

65 This would be to make up for the lack of support that Fick obtained at Professor Haab's Clinic.

66 "Ein Zwischenraum zwischen dem Glas und der Cornea wird mit einer Flüssigkeit gefüllt, die denselben Brechungsexponenten hat wie die Hornhaut. Die einfallenden Lichtstrahlen erleiden nun beim Durchtritt durch das parallelwandige Glasplättchen in die Flüssigkeit dieselbe Brechung wie wenn das Glas gar nicht vorhanden wäre, oder exacter ausgedrückt, als ob das Glas gleichfalls aus jener Flüssigkeit bestände. Die Oberfläche des Glases spielt also jetzt die Rolle der Cornea, und beim Übertritt der Lichtstrahlen aus der Flüssigkeit in die unregelmässig verzerrte Hornhaut findet wegen der Gleichheit des Brennungsvermögens eine neue Brechung überhaupt nicht statt." Fick's Memorandum of June 25, 1887, to Saxon Academy of Sciences. (Archives Zeiss/Jena, # BALZ 12311).

67 "Meine fortgesetzten Thierversuche überzeugen mich mehr u. mehr, dass die Contactbrille lebensfähig sein wird; bereits habe ich nach einigem herumprobieren eine Flüssigkeit gefunden, die 6 bis 8 Stunden von der Kaninchencornea vertragen wird, ohne dass die Flüssigkeit oder das Hornhautepithel trüb würde." Letter from Fick to Abbe, dated July 26, 1887. (Archives Zeiss/Jena # BALZ 12311).

68 "da diese Kante vom Bulbus durch Flüssigkeit getrennt ist, so kann sie nicht reizend wirken." Letter from Fick to Abbe dated July 26, 1887. (Archives Zeiss/Jena # BALZ 12311).

69 Efron and Pearson (1988, p. 1375 note p) comment as follows: "Grape sugar is dextrose (C₆H₁₂O₆), which presumably was used because of its nutritional value. A 2% solution of anhydrous dextrose has an osmolarity of 115 mOsm/kg, which would be considerably hypotonic with respect to the tears the osmolarity of which is 310 mOsm/kg. Such a solution would accordingly be expected to produce a 6% increase in corneal thickness, which Fick would have been unable to discern in human eyes with the clinical instrumentation then available. Furthermore, a 2% solution of anhydrous dextrose would be expected to induce marked ocular irritation, which is curious since Fick found this solution '... to answer all requirements.' One benefit of the use of a 2% solution of anhydrous dextrose is that it has a refractive index of 1.3358, which is similar to that of the tears (1.3370). To fulfil the requirement of isotonicity, it would have been necessary to use a dextrose solution of approximately 5.25%."

70 "Ueber Mikroorganismen im Conjunctivalsack" (1887) and "Gesundheitspflege des Auges" (1899, in Handbuch der Augenheilkunde 2.ed, 10, 19, 1-184).

- 71 Fick campaigned for the Germanisation of German-speaking Switzerland, an attitude that signified a rejection of the traditional milieus of Zurich and of Switzerland in general.
- 72 The famous physiologist Adolf Fick was Gaule's predecessor at the Institute of Physiology in Zurich, which he directed from 1861 to 1868. (See Adolf Eugen Fick's biography and the biography of his uncle).
- 73 "Einige der Ursprünglichen Fick'sschen Gläser können Dank der Güte von Rohr vorgezeigt werden. Vom Erfinder [...] sind sie vor kurzem Herrn Professor M. v. Rohr überlassen worden." (Ergeget 1930, p. 1955. Meeting of the Jena Medical Society (Medizinische Gesellschaft zu Jena), session of July 2, 1930).
- 74 "Ich könnte Ihnen drei Hafiglässchen schicken [...] Die Gläschen stammen, wenn ich mich nicht irre, von Strübin in Basel und zeigen Ihnen, mit was ich mich abmühte" (Zeiss Archive, Jena # 1051. Letter of June 24, 1930, from Fick to Rohr).
- 75 "Jetzt, wo wir seit etwa 1910 die Herstellung von Brillengläser aufgenommen haben, werden auch die Hafigläser besser behandelt." (Zeiss Archive, Jena # 1051. Letter of June 18, 1930, from von Rohr to Fick).
- 76 Notably by Lebensohn 1961, p. 694-697.
- 77 This interpretation was illustrated by a diagram, which certain historians attributed to the hand of Fick.
- 78 "Die Kontaktbrille stellt eine dünne Kugelkalotte aus Glas von etwa 8 mm Krümmungsradius mit parallelen Flächen und einem basalen Durchmesser gleich dem einer natürlichen Kornea dar." (Müller 1920, p. 6). Friedrich E. Müller, son and nephew of the glass-blowers for ocular prostheses Müller Brothers in Wiesbaden, had presented in 1920 a "Inaugural-Dissertation" for M.D. on contact lenses (see the analysis, specially of the multiple errors in chapter XV: Early Blown Contact Lenses).
- 79 Graham 1959, p. 57-58.
- 80 "Fick beschrieb in diesen Jahren bereits corneale Linsentypen - die sich nicht bewährten und wieder in Vergessenheit gerieten." (Roth 1978, p. 29). This author mistakenly dated Fick's 1888 publication as having been published in 1880.
- 81 Hales 1978, p. 4.
- 82 Sabell 1972, p. 16-17.
- 83 "Der Züricher Augenarzt Fick korrigierte seine durch eine ungleichmäßige Hornhautkrümmung (Astigmatismus) bedingte Sehfehler." (Geyer 1979, p. 9).
- 84 Fick had tried out one of his lenses in his left eye. This, however, was an amblyopic eye which had become so following an episode of strabismus as indicated in his autobiography, which is preserved in the hands of the Fick family.
- 85 "In Zusammenarbeit mit Abbe liess er später in Jena bessere - geblasene - Kontaktgläser herstellen." (Györfy 1987, p. 1).
- 86 "N'ayant pas cru obtenir de la Firme Zeiss à Léna les verres correspondant aux conditions demandées, Fick s'adressa à l'oculariste Müller de Wiesbaden." (Haas 1937, p. LXXIV).
- 87 Ruben 1975 p. 2, 1978, p. 2. This error is often repeated, for example: "He next moulded the eyes of corpses and Müller of Wiesbaden blew lenses to match these impressions." (Jenkin et al. 1969, p. 2).
- 88 "Zuerst probierte er geblasene Schalen der Firma Müller aus, dann wandte et sich an Abbe in Jena und erhielt von dort geschliffene Gläser." (Münchow 1984, p. 656).
- 89 Siegrist, 1916, p. 405: "Fick names this spectacle-glass 'contact-glass'" (Fick nennt dieses Brillenglas 'Kontaktglas').
- 90 Pascal 1941, p. 57-59, textual quotation by Albert 1996, p. 121.
- 91 Graham 1959, p. 57, but historians rarely quote this precise terminology. Pearson & Efron 1989, p. 133. Mackie in Duke-Elder 1970, p. 715: Surprisingly, Mackie indicated, in parentheses and as a reference, the correct term "Contactbrille" (contact-spectacles). See also: Fischer in Rosenthal 1996, p. 371: "Fick deserves the first use of the term contact lens (Contactbrille). [...] It was reported later by Friedrich Müller of Wiesbaden (who made the lenses) that Fick fitted a large number of keratoconus patients."
- 92 Dabezies 1998, p. 24 refers to May's first translation of Fick but claims "Fick further coined the term 'contact glass'."

Appendix 10 – 1

Glossary of any terms relating to contact lenses and contact shells

(The reader is advised to refer to the least valuable ISO 8320 standard for details on today valid terminology)

Remark

In this tome of the *History of Contact Lenses*, we often use the terms “contact lens” and “contact shell” as generic terms. According to current terminology, the essential difference between a contact *lens* and a contact *shell* is that the former has a specified front or back vertex power. Although a rigid contact shell has no specified power, it does allow the formation of a *liquid lens* that will correct regular or irregular astigmatism and may correct part of the spherical component of a refractive error. Thus, an afocal contact shell is capable of providing a reasonable visual acuity especially in a condition such as keratoconus.

Back optic zone: Back surface of a contact lens which has a optical effect.

Back optic zone diameter: diameter of the back optic zone on a surface with a single optical component.

Back optic zone radius: radius of curvature of the back optic zone of a surface with a single refractive element.

Back scleral zone: Zone of a scleral lens (or shell) designed to lie in front of the sclera

Back scleral zone radius: radius of curvature of the back scleral zone.

Back vertex power: Reciprocal of the focal length, in meters, of the optic zone(s) of the lens, measured in air, or calculated for the lens, from the back vertex of the lens (*ISO 8320*).

Blend: Smooth area at the transition, the junction zone of the optic zone and the peripheral curve

Blending: process of forming a polished transition (*ISO 8320*).

Channel or grooves: depression ground into the material of the lens to form a liquid channel between the lens and the eye.

Clearance : Space between the contact lens and the cornea or limbus maintained to prevent touching.

Contact lens: *A generic term including any lens designed to be worn on the front surface of the eyeball. (ISO 8320)*

Contact shell: *Appliance similar in form to a contact lens but not designed to correct vision (ISO 8320)*

In this tome of the *History of Contact Lenses*, we often use the term “contact shell” as generic terms for (often blown) contact lenses without a specified front or vertex power.

A contact shell has not a specified front or back vertex power. Although, it does allow the formation of a liquid lens that will correct regular or irregular astigmatism and also may correct part of the spherical component of a refractive error. Thus, an afocal contact shell is capable of providing a reasonable visual acuity especially in a condition such as keratoconus.

Corneal lens: Contact lens designed to be worn in its entirety on the cornea (*ISO 8320*)

Cosmetic lens: Contact lens having refractive effect, but specifically designed to change or mask the appearance of the eye. - Cosmetic lenses are devices which may also be used for therapeutic purpose (*ISO 8320*).

Cosmetic shell: Contact shells having no refractive effect, but specifically designed to change the appearance of the eye (*ISO 8320*).

Diameter: see primary optic diameter

Edge: Part of a contact lens (or contact shell) joining the front and back surfaces (*ISO 8320*).

Front optic zone: Front surface of a contact lens, which has an optical effect.

Front optic zone diameter: Diameter of the front optic zone.

Front optic zone radius: Radius of curvature of the front optic zone.

Front vertex power: Reciprocal of the focal length, in meters, of the optic zone(s) of the lens measured in air, or calculated for the lens from the front vertex of the lens (*ISO 8320*)

Ground contact lens = Contact lens manufactured by removal of material by grinding

Lens axis: a line passing through the geometric center, perpendicular to a plane containing the edge of the lens.

Lens: see contact lens, scleral lens, cosmetic lens, liquid lens.

Liquid lens: Lens formed by the liquid between the back optic surface of the contact lens (or contact shell) and the cornea. – This liquid lens is usually formed by tears. (*ISO 8320*)

Mould: negative impression of the eyeball.

Moulded lens: Contact lens (or shell) manufactured primarily in a mould. (*ISO 8320*)

Optic zone: Zone of a contact lens that has a prescribed optical effect. – The term may be qualified by either the prefix “back” or “front” in the case of a surface with a single optical component (*ISO 8320*).

Optic zone diameter: Diameter of a specified optic zone, measured to the surrounding junction. If the latter is not circular, the major and minor diameter define the size. – The term may be qualified, for example “back central optic zone diameter” (*ISO 8320*)

Optic: see primary optic diameter, primary optic plane

Overall diameter: see total diameter

Preformed scleral lens: Scleral lens, not an impression lens, the back surface of which is of a

predetermined form (*ISO 8320*).

Primary optic diameter: (of a scleral lens or shell) The diameter of the optic zone before any transition is added

Rigid lens, Hard lens: Contact lens which, in its final form and under normal conditions, retains its form without support (*ISO 8320*).

Sagitta, sagittal depth, sagittal height: The maximum distance from a chord, which is perpendicular to the axis of rotation of a surface, to the curved surface.

Scleral lens: Contact lens designed to be worn in front of the cornea and on most of the bulbar conjunctiva (*ISO 8320*).

Scleral shell: Contact shell with a scleral zone (*ISO 8320*)

Scleral zone: That zone of a scleral lens (or shell) designed to lie in front of the sclera (*ISO 8320*).

Shell: see contact shell

Therapeutic lens (shell): A contact lens (or shell) used to maintain or restore the integrity of ocular tissue – some therapeutic lenses are used to deliver drugs to ocular tissues

Total diameter: Maximum external dimension of the finished lens or shell. (*ISO 8320*)

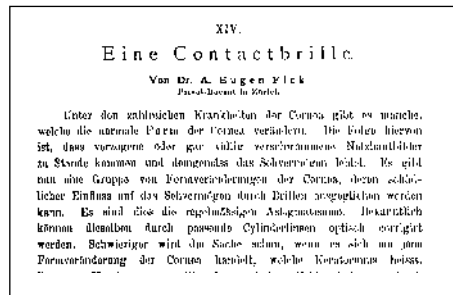
Transition : Junction modified by blending to smooth the change between adjacent curvatures (*ISO 8320*).

Vertex power: see Back vertex power, front vertex power

Zone see scleral zone, optic zone, front optic zone, back optic zone

Appendix X – 2

Transcription of
Archiv für Augenheilkunde, 18, 1888, 279-289
 Eine Contactbrille
 Von Dr. A. Eugen Fick
 Privat-Dozent in Zürich



Unter den zahlreichen Krankheiten der Cornea gibt es manche, welche die normale Form der Cornea verändern. Die Folge hiervon ist, dass verzogene oder gar völlig verschwommene Netzhautbilder zu Stande kommen und demgemäss das Sehvermögen leidet. Es gibt nun eine Gruppe von Formveränderungen der Cornea, deren schädlicher Einfluss auf das Sehvermögen durch Brillen ausgeglichen werden kann. Es sind dies die regelmässigen Astigmatismen. Bekanntlich können dieselben durch passende Cylinderlinsen optisch corrigirt werden. Schwieriger wird die Sache schon, wenn es sich um jene Formveränderung der Cornea handelt,

welche Keratoconus heisst. Den aus Keratoconus resultirenden optischen Fehler hat man durch hyperbolische¹ und durch conische² Brillen zu corrigiren versucht. Selbst wenn mathematisch hiergegen nichts einzuwenden wäre, bleibe doch noch die von Rählmann selbst schon beobachtete Thatsache, dass die etwa erzielte Verbesserung der Sehschärfe sofort wieder verloren geht, wenn das Auge und die hyperbolische Brille aufhören, genau centrirt zu sein; die Bewegungen der Augen müssen also unterdrückt und durch Kopfbewegungen ersetzt werden; es bliebe ferner die Thatsache, dass die praktisch erzielte Verbesserung der Sehschärfe häufig eine nur geringe oder gar Null ist, was nach Angelucci auf der Abweichung der Hornhautachse von der Gesichtslinie beruhen soll.

Ganz ungenügend werden aber die Resultate der optischen Correction, wenn es sich um Sehstörung durch unregelmässigen Hornhautastigmatismus handelt. Donders schlug vor, denselben durch stenopäische Brillen zu corrigieren. Er³ und sein Schüler von Wijngarden⁴ wiesen nach, dass die durch stenopäische Brillen erzielte Verbesserung des Sehvermögens oft eine geradezu erstaunliche ist, und dass die Einschränkung des Gesichtsfeldes für das Nahesehen z.B. beim Lesen und Schreiben noch keinerlei Störung verursacht. Zum Sehen in die Ferne können stenopäische Brillen allerdings nicht verwendet werden, da ein Patient mit stark eingeengtem Gesichtsfeld und gutem centralem Sehen viel schlimmer daran sein würde, als mit schlechteter Sehschärfe und normal weitem Gesichtsfeld. Merkwürdigerweise scheint der Donder'sche Vorschlag keine praktische Verwerthung gefunden zu haben, ein Umstand, der wie mir scheint durch die Nutzlosigkeit der stenopäischen Brille für die Ferne keineswegs befriedigend erklärt wird. Wie dem auch sei, zweifellos ist, dass es zahlreiche Patienten gibt, denen weder mit hyperbolischen noch conischen noch stenopäischen Brillen wesentlich genützt werden kann

Bei dieser Sachlage ist es gewiss nicht überflüssig, nach einem anderen Mittel zur Correction der verschiedenen Arten von irregulärem Astigmatismus zu suchen. Das radikalste Mittel wäre offenbar, die Hornhaut durch eine andere, regelmässig gekrümmte Fläche zu ersetzen. Die kann nun wirklich geschehen, und ich werde in diesen Blättern zeigen, dass es mir gelungen ist, die fehlerhafte Hornhaut durch ein Glasschälchen vom gesammten dioptrischen Effecte auszuschliessen und hierdurch ohne Einschränkung der Gesichtsfeldes oder des Blickfeldes die minime Sehschärfe eines Auges von 1/30 auf 1/6 zu steigern. Dem Individuum, welchem das Auge angehörte, konnte man freilich das von mir ersonnene Hilfsmittel, welches ich "Contactbrille" nenne, zu dauernder Benutzung nicht empfehlen, da jenes Individuum neben dem fehlerhaften noch ein annähernd normales Auge besitzt. Wenn ich gleichwohl schon jetzt, noch ehe ein Patient die Contactbrille trägt, meinen Gedanken publicire, so geschieht dies 1) weil ich mir sagen darf, dass durch meine bisherigen Untersuchungen das Problem der Contactbrille prinzipiell gelöst ist, und 2) weil für die Contactbrille in jeder Hinsicht geeignete Fälle sehr viel schneller sich finden werden, wenn auch andere Ophthalmologen der Sache ihre Aufmerksamkeit schenken, als wenn ich, wie bisher, unter einer beschränkten Zahl von Augenkranken nach geeigneten Fällen suche.

Die Contactbrille besteht in einem dünnen, von concentrischen und parallelen Kugelsegmenten begrenzten Glasschälchen. Dasselbe wird auf das Auge gelegt und der Zwischenraum zwischen Glässchen und Augapfel mit einer Flüssigkeit gefüllt, welche denselben Brechungsexponenten hat wie die Cornea. Es werden dann die Lichtstrahlen beim Eintritt in die Flüssigkeit, welche man bis an die vordere Glasfläche reichend denken darf, eine bestimmte Brechung erfahren, beim Uebergang aus der Flüssigkeit in die Cornea jedoch keinerlei Aenderung ihres Ganges erleiden, und es müssen folglich auch die Unregelmässigkeiten wegfallen, die vorher beim Uebergang der Lichtstrahlen aus Luft in die Cornea zu Stande kamen.

Selbstverständlich begann ich meine Untersuchung damit, durch Thierexperimente festzustellen, ob und wie lange man eine Contactbrille auf den Bulbus legen darf, ohne dass derselbe Schaden nimmt. Als Versuchsthiere zeigten sich grosse Kaninchen vortrefflich geeignet. Einem solchen Thiere zog ich Lider und Nickhaut vom Bulbus ab und füllte die hierdurch entstehende Tasche mit Gypsbrei. Nach eingetretener Erstarrung zeigte ein solcher Abguss des Augapfels, dass der Krümmungsradius der Cornea von dem der Sclera nicht wesentlich verschieden, dass der Bulbus des Kaninchens eine ziemlich vollkommene Kugel ist. Nach derartigen Gypsformen liess ich nun Glasschüsselchen blasen, deren Form immer einfacher wurde, bis ich schliesslich nach vielfachem Probiren die Abgüsse ganz verliess, und mich damit begnügte, Glasblasen von 21, 20 und 19 Mm. Durchmesser herstellen und ein Segment absprenge zu lassen, dessen Basis vom Mittelpunkt der Kugel nur wenige Millimeter Abstand hatte. Aus einer grösseren Zahl solcher Schälchen suchte ich dann für jedes einzelne Kaninchen die am besten passenden heraus. Die Einführung der Gläschen unter Lider und Nickhaut gelingt leicht, wenn man den Canthus internus mit flach aufgesetztem Daumen so kräftig nach vorne zieht, dass die Nickhaut vom Bulbus sich abhebt. Den Zwischenraum zwischen Cornea und Glas füllt man mit Flüssigkeit, indem man mit einem Häkchen den obersten Rand des Glases vom Bulbus abzieht und in den nun klaffenden Spalt aus einer Pipette die nöthige Anzahl von Tropfen zufließen lässt.

Nach einer Reihe zum Theil misslungener Versuche stellte sich nun heraus, dass gut passende Gläschen gar nicht einmal von den Lidern festgehalten werden müssen, da sie am Bulbus adhären. Hieraus folgt schon, dass die Gläschen unter den Lidern alle Bewegungen des Bulbus mitmachen und dass kein Tropfen der Füllungsflüssigkeit abfließt. Da das Auge sich auch nicht injicirt und die natürliche Cornea unsichtbar wird, so ist es ohne genaues Zusehen nicht möglich, ein mit dem Gläschen versehenes Auge von einem unbewaffneten zu unterscheiden. Nach 6 bis 8 Stunden ist nun freilich das Bild nicht unwesentlich verändert, und zwar durch milchige Trübung der Füllungsflüssigkeit. Entfernt man Gläschen und Flüssigkeit, so bemerkt man ferner, dass das Epithel der Hornhaut nicht ganz glatt ist; die Hornhaut sieht leicht getrübt aus und die Conjunctiva zeigt sich mässig injicirt.

Die Trübung der Flüssigkeit rührt, wie das Mikroskop lehrt, von zahllosen Fetttröpfchen her; dieselben sind theils von etwa Blutkörperchengrösse, theils kleinste in heftiger Molecularbewegung begriffene Körnchen. Lässt man einen Tropfen jener getrühten Flüssigkeit auf dem Objectträger festtrocknen und behandelt dies Präparat mit Aether, darauf mit Farblösungen, so gelingt es, Rundzellen und Epithelien zur Anschauung zu bringen, die zwischen der Unzahl von Fetttröpfchen des frischen Präparates leicht übersehen werden. Die Rundzellen sind meist zu kleinen Häufchen zusammengebacken. Die Epithelien enthalten vielfach im Kern sowohl, als auch im Zelleib grössere und kleinere Fetttröpfchen. Bacterien finden sich in weitaus den meisten Fällen nicht und wenn sie sich finden, so sind es nur vereinzelte Gruppen von wenigen Bacillen oder Coccen. Es versteht sich von selbst, dass ich die Glasschälchen vor dem Gebrauche gründlich desinficirt und die Flüssigkeit durch kochen sterilisirt hatte.

Die Trübung der Hornhaut hat ihren Sitz im Epithel. Schabt man vor dem getrühten Epithel etwas ab und untersucht die Partikelchen nach vorausgeschickter Färbung, so findet man in jeder Zelle bald mehr bald weniger, bald grössere bald kleinere Fetttröpfchen; nach einigem Zuwarten sind auch zahlreiche freie Fetttröpfchen zwischen den Epithelien zu sehen. Weniger deutlich war das Resultat, das ich durch Schneiden der conservirten Hornhäute erhielt. Jedenfalls darf ich sagen, dass an dem Epithel in situ fettiger Zerfall nur selten oder gar nicht nachzuweisen war, dass in der Hornhaut selbst die bekannte entzündliche Infiltration mit Rundzellen vollkommen fehlte und dass ein etwas reichliches Vorhandensein von fixen Hornhautzellen das einzigste gewesen ist, worin die untersuchten Hornhäute vom normalen Verhalten abzuweichen scheinen.

Die Injection des Bulbus verschwindet nach Entfernung des Gläschens ungemein schnell. Sie ist sehr verschieden stark ausgesprochen und pflegte bei denjenigen Kaninchen ganz zu fehlen, deren Augen schon zu einer längeren Reihe von Versuchen gedient hatten. Es tritt also offenbar sehr bald eine Art Gewöhnung ein.

Es wäre nun festzustellen, wie sich die drei Störungen, Trübung der Flüssigkeit, Trübung der Hornhaut und Injection der Conjunctiva, auf die beiden schädlichen Factoren, nämlich Gläschen und Flüssigkeit, vertheilen. Bezüglich der Hornhauttrübung konnte leicht constatirt werden, dass sie lediglich durch die Flüssigkeit hervorgebracht wird. Denn wenn man ein Gläschen einlegt, ohne es mit Flüssigkeit zu füllen, so bleibt die Hornhaut klar es sei denn, dass das Gläschen die Cornea an irgend einer Stelle berührt, oder es sei, dass sich ein Tropfen Flüssigkeit gebildet und zwischen Glas und Cornea Berührung vermittelt hat; in diesen Fällen reicht die Trübung der Hornhaut genau so weit, wie die Berührung.

Dass die Trübung der Flüssigkeit zum Theile von dem fettig zerfallenden Hornhautepithel herrührt, ist aus dem Vorstehenden bereits klar. Indessen scheinen auch an der Berührungstelle des Gläschens mit der Conjunctiva bulbi Prozesse vor sich zu gehen, welche der Füllungsflüssigkeit Epithelien, Rundzellen und deren Zerfallsprodukte zuführen. Denn an der Innenwand eines ungefüllt applicirten Gläschens schlagen sich zunächst klare Wassertröpfchen nieder, sammeln sich an der tiefsten Stelle und sind nach 6 bis 8 Stunden reichlich an Fett und zelligen Elementen versehen und getrübt, obgleich am Hornhautepithel

durchaus keine Veränderung nachzuweisen ist. Ferner konnte ich wiederholt constatiren, dass die Füllungsflüssigkeit in der Peripherie des Glases rundum getrübt, im Centrum desselben aber völlig klar geblieben war.

Was endlich die Injection der Conjunctiva betrifft, so ist selbstverständlich dass beide Faktoren Glas sowohl als auch die Flüssigkeit beschuldigt werden müssen. Da aber die Injection stets gering, selbst Null war, wenn Gläschen ohne Füllung eingelegt wurden, so bin ich geneigt, der Flüssigkeit den grössten Theil der Schuld zuzuschreiben. Es trat also die Aufgabe an mich heran, eine Flüssigkeit ausfindig zu machen, welche die Hornhaut möglichst wenig reizt und zugleich mit ihr den nämlichen Brechungsexponenten hat. Natürlich konnte das nur durch vielfaches Herumprobieren geschehen. Kochsalzlösungen mit verschiedenen organischen Zusätzen, Alcohol- und Glycerinlösungen in verschiedenen Concentrationen wurden ohne befriedigendes Resultat versucht. Schliesslich fand sich in einer 2%iger Traubenzuckerlösung eine Flüssigkeit, die den gestellten Anforderungen vollständig entspricht. Ein gut passendes Gläschen, mit 2%iger sterilisirter Traubenzuckerlösung gefüllt wird vom Kaninchenauge 8 bis 10 Stunden vertragen, ohne dass es zu merklicher Trübung der Flüssigkeit oder gar Trübung der Hornhaut und Injection der Conjunctiva käme. Sollten aber jene Störungen doch auftreten, so braucht man nur das Einlegen der Gläser eine Zeit lang täglich zu wiederholen, um das Auge zu gewöhnen und dann sicher das gewünschte reine Resultat zu erhalten. Ich bemerke noch, dass eine etwaige Injection der Conjunctiva binnen einer halben Stunde und Hornhauttrübungen über Nacht verschwinden.

Darf man nun annehmen, dass das menschliche Auge der Contactbrille gegenüber sich ebenso verhalten wird, wie dies vorstehend vom Kaninchenauge geschildert ist? In diesem Falle wäre die praktische Verwendbarkeit derselben ausser Frage! Um eine auf das menschliche Auge passende Contactbrille herzustellen, nahm ich zunächst wieder Gypsabgüsse, natürlich vom Leichenauge. Der Abguss eines menschlichen Auges zeigt sehr deutlich, dass die Hornhaut ein Kugelsegment von kleinerem Krümmungsradius ist als der Rest des Bulbus. Der Abguss zeigt ferner, wenn auch weniger deutlich, dass der Krümmungsradius der Conjunctiva von vorne nach hinten stetig zunimmt, was man selbstverständlich finden wird, wenn man sich daran erinnert, dass nur in unmittelbarer Nähe der Hornhaut die Conjunctiva direct auf dem Bulbus aufliegt, weiter hinten dagegen durch eine stetig dicker werdende Schicht von Sehnen, Bindegewebe, Fett, und Muskeln von dem Bulbus getrennt ist. Ich liess nun zunächst eine Glasblase herstellen, welche auf die Peripherie des Gypsabgusses passte; dann wurde eine Stelle dieser Glasblase von Neuem erhitzt und eine Vorbauchung ausgeblasen, die Vorbauchung nach dem Erkalten mit einer ovalen Linie umzeichnet und auf dieser Linie abgesprengt, schliesslich der abgesprengte Rand rund geschmolzen. Ein solches, begreiflicherweise noch sehr unvollkommenes Gläschen legte Herr Prof. Gaule, in dessen Institut ich diese Untersuchung machte, in den Conjunctivalsack meines linken Auges ein, und ich trug es 2 Stunden lang ohne andere subjective Beschwerde als etwas Thränenfluss, wohlverstanden nicht Thränenfluss über die Wange, sondern nur in die Nase. Objectiv wurde eine mässige Injection constatirt, die zu Anfang des Versuches stärker war als zu Ende desselben und nach Herausnahme des Gläschens ausserordentlich schnell verschwand. Die Flüssigkeit zwischen Cornea und Glas war völlig klar geblieben und enthielt, wie das Mikroskop zeigte, nur sehr wenig geformte Elemente, nämlich einige Epithelien, Rundzellen und Fetttropfen. Nun gaben sich auch noch andere Personen zu den Versuchen her, und da die weiteren Versuche hinsichtlich der subjectiven und objectiven Störungen noch günstiger ausfielen als der erste, da auch constatirt werden konnte, dass die Contactbrille dem Bulbus adhärirt, demgemäss die Flüssigkeit vortrefflich festhält und allen Bewegungen des Bulbus folgt, ohne selber andere Bewegungen auszuführen als gelegentlich etwas Drehung um die Längsachse des Bulbus, so beschloss ich die Contactbrille in optisch brauchbarer Form herstellen, d. h. also schleifen zu lassen. Leider fehlten dazu hier in Zürich alle Voraussetzungen und ich wandte mich daher brieflich an Herrn Prof. Abbe in Jena mit der Bitte, mir einige Contactbrillen herstellen zu lassen. Derselbe war gütig genug, meine Bitte zu erfüllen. Die bis jetzt als zweckmässigst befundene Vorschrift für Herstellung einer Contactbrille lautet folgendermassen.

Eine Glascornea von 8,0 Mm. Krümmungsradius sitzt mit einer Basis von 7 Mm. Radius auf der Glassclera; die letztere ist 3 Mm. breit und entspricht einer Kugel von 15 Mm. Krümmungsradius; die Glascornea ist parallelwandig, aussen und innen geschliffen und polirt; desgleichen ist der freie Rand der Glassclera geschliffen und polirt: Gewicht einer Contactbrille etwa 0,5 Gramm.

Wenn man nun unter den Patienten mit irregulärem Astigmatismus Umschau hält, so wird man die Bemerkung machen, dass die weitaus grösste Zahl derselben mit Hornhautnarben behaftet ist. Die Hornhautnarbe verändert aber nicht bloss die Form, den Krümmungsradius verschiedener Hornhautstückchen, sondern auch die Dichtigkeit des Gewebes selbst und es ist also anzunehmen, dass die Lichtstrahlen nicht bloss bei Ihrem Eintritt in die Cornea, sondern auch im Hornhautgewebe noch Ablenkungen vom regelmässigen Gang erleiden. Bekanntlich versucht man daher in Fällen von centralen dichten Hornhautnarben durch eine Iridectomy Hülfe zu schaffen. Allein diese Hülfe fällt nur zu oft ungenügend aus, weil man erstens nicht im Stande ist, der künstlichen Pupille genau diejenige Grösse und Gestalt zu geben, die den Verhältnissen am besten entspricht, und weil zweitens die Hornhautnarbe durch das einfallende Licht selbst leuchtend wird und die Netzhaut mit einem diffusen, sehr störendem

Lichtschimmer überfluthet. Diesem letzteren Zustand hat man durch Tätowirung der Leucome abzuhelpen gesucht, zuweilen mit eclatantem Erfolge. Allein die zahlreichen Vorsichtsmassregeln und Containdicationen, die selbst von eifrigen Anhängern der Tätowirung hervorgehoben werden, deuten schon darauf hin, dass das Tätowiren manchmal recht fatale Folgen, sogar gänzliche Vereiterungen des Bulbus hervorbringt. Wenn man dagegen einem solchen Patienten eine Contactbrille aufsetzt, die bis auf eine der künstlichen Pupille gegenüberliegende Stelle bezw. Zone undurchsichtig ist, so sind sämtliche optische Fehler corrigirt, mit einziger Ausnahme des Fehlers, welcher auf der peripherischen Lage des Sehloches beruht. Dass dieser Fehler nicht gross ist, wenigstens so weit es sich um die optische Wirkung der Cornea handelt, kann man auf folgende Weise zeigen :

Auf der vordersten Glasplatte eines Hermann'schen Hämatinometers wird eine Contactbrille gekittet, die bis auf eine sehr peripher liegende runde Stelle geschwärzt ist ; der Zwischenraum zwischen Contactbrille und der vordere Glasplatte wird mit Wasse gefüllt, desgleichen das Hämatinometer selbst, und hierauf wird die hintere Glasplatte des Apparates mit einem Stückchen Seidenpapier beklebt ; dem so hergerichteten Apparate gegenüber stellt man eine Flamme auf, welche bei richtig gewählter Entfernung vom Apparate, bezw. bei richtiger Verschiebung der Röhren gegeneinander, auf dem Papierblättchen ein scharfes umgekehrtes Flammenbildchen erzeugt. Vorausgesetzt, die Flamme befand sich bei Einstellung des Apparates auf der verlängerten Verbindungslinie des Centrum der Contactbrille mit dem Sehloche, also seitlich von der Achse des Hämatinometers, so ist die Deutlichkeit des Flammenbildchens am vollkommensten ; dieselbe wird aber nicht wesentlich geändert, wenn man die Flamme an die Achse heranrückt ; erst wenn die Achse überschritten ist und die Flamme sich auf der entgegengesetzten Seite der Achse befindet wie das Sehloch, fängt das Bildchen an undeutlich zu werden, natürlich um so mehr, je weiter wir die Flamme von der Achse entfernen.

Ausser den zahlreichen Fällen, bei denen Hornhautnarben durch unregelmässige Strahlenbrechung und Blendung die Sehschärfe herabsetzen, gibt es, wenn auch seltener, irregulären Astigmatismus bei ungetrübter Cornea. Hierher gehören die Fälle von Keratoconus, ferner die Fälle, bei denen peripher gelegene Narben, z. B. Narben, die von Cataractoperationen herrühren, Verzerrung der Cornea bewirkt haben. Vorausgesetzt, dass nicht jenseits der Cornea noch ein Hinderniss für die Lichtstrahlen liegt, wird sich ohne Zweifel der optische Fehler durch die Contactbrille vollständig corrigiren lassen. Zugleich könnte die hochgradige Hypermetropie des Aphakischen durch stärkere Krümmung der Glascornea ausgeglichen werden.

Endlich konnte man wohl daran denken, hochgradige Myopen denen man corrigirende Brillen nicht zu geben wagt, Contactbrillen tragen zu lassen, deren Glascornea natürlich in entsprechendem Maasse schwächer gekrümmt sein müsste, als die bisher von mir verwendeten.

Es galt jetzt Patient zu finden, an denen die Probe auf die vorstehenden Betrachtungen gemacht werden konnte. Herr Prof. Haab hatte die Güte, mir das Material der ophthalmologischen Poliklinik zur Verfügung zu stellen. Ich suchte nun in den Journalen diejenige Fälle, die zu einem Versuche mit der Contactbrille geeignet schienen. Von diesen mussten vorläufig alle Auswärtigen ausser Betracht bleiben, da es zu grosse Kosten gemacht hätte, sie nach Zürich kommen zu lassen. So blieben mir 17 Patienten. Auch diese Zahl schmolz noch bedeutend zusammen, da einige nicht zu finden, andere gestorben waren, und wieder andere der Aufforderung sich in der Klinik vorzustellen keine Folge leisteten, weil sie sich mit ihrem Zustande ausgesöhnt hatten. So kamen im Ganzen 10 Patienten zur Untersuchung, von denen wiederum 4 als ganz ungeeignet weggeschickt werden mussten. Bei den 6 Uebrigbleibenden ergab der Versuch folgendes Resultat :

No. 1. J. U., beiderseits centrale Maculae corneae, vordere Polarcataract, etwas Nystagmus. Links: zählt Finger in 1 Meter, nach Erweiterung der Pupille nur in 3/4 Meter. Mit Contactbrille, seitliches Sehloch, Finger in 2 Meter. Rechts: S nahezu 2/18, nach Erweiterung der Pupille nur 1/60. Contactbrille bessert nicht.

No. 2. Frau L., beiderseits centrale Maculae corneae. Rechts: S kaum 6/24; mit Contactbrille, deren Centrum geschwärzt, S = 6/18 gut.

No. 3. Schreiner K., Keratoconus beiderseits. Links: S = 6/60, mit Contactbrille S = 6/36 gut, von der 24 noch einzelne Buchstaben.

No. 4. P. H., links Anophthalmus, rechts Maculae corneae centrales. S = 4/13; mit Contactbrille, Centrum geschwärzt, S = 4/9,75.

No. 5. O. M., rechts normal, links Leucoma adhaerens nach unten, Pupille senkrecht oval, S = 4/36, mit Contactbrille S = 4/24, einzelne Buchstaben¹.

No. 6. A. G., rechts normal, links Maculae corneae, zählt Finger in 2 Meter; nach Erweiterung der Pupille S = 1/30; mit Contactbrille, geschwärzt bis auf einen Sector, S = 2/12.

Von den vorstehenden sechs Fällen hat also nur einer, der letzte, eine so beträchtliche Verbesserung der Sehschärfe erfahren, daß es sich gelohnt hätte, diese vorläufigen Versuche fortzusetzen, um durch grössere Aehnlichkeit zwischen den Maculae und der geschwärzten Stelle der Contactbrille die Sehschärfe noch

weiter zu bessern, das Auge an die Contactbrille systematisch zu gewöhnen, und den Angehörigen des Mädchens das Einfahren und Füllen der Contactbrille allmählig zu lehren. Ich hätte mich dieser Mühe natürlich sehr gern unterzogen, allein da das andere Auge des Mädchens ziemlich normal war, so hielt ich mich nicht für berechtigt, die Versuche weiter fortzusetzen, die ja ein für das Mädchen verwendbares Resultat doch nicht erwarten liessen. Immerhin hatte mich dieser Fall gelehrt, dass unter den so ungemein zahlreichen Kranken mit Hornhauttrübungen jedenfalls auch solche sind, denen durch die Contactbrille wesentlich genützt werden kann, vorausgesetzt natürlich, dass das durch Contactbrille corrigierte Auge das bessere, nicht wie im Falle N°6 das schlechtere ist.

In der Hoffnung, dass auch andere Augenärzte versuchen werden die Contactbrille in Anwendung zu bringen, will ich noch einige Technica mittheilen.

Die Einführung geschieht am besten so, dass man das Gläschen zwischen Zeigefinger und Daumen der rechten Hand fasst, mit der linken Hand das obere Lid des Kranken hebt und denselben auffordert, nach unten zu blicken; nun schiebt man das Gläschen unter das obere Lid, und während der Kranke jetzt nach oben blickt und dabei die Contactbrille mit nach oben führt, zieht man das untere Lid etwas ab und adjustirt die Contactbrille auf dem Bulbus. Um die Flüssigkeit einzufüllen, lässt man durch einen Assistenten bezw. durch den Patienten selbst das obere Lid heben, zieht mit einem Schielhaken den oberen Rand der Brille vom Bulbus ein wenig ab und lässt aus einer mit der anderen Hand geführten, am Ende winkelig abgebogenen Pipette die wohl erwärmte Zuckerlösung auf den Bulbus tropfen. Um die Brille wieder zu entfernen, genügt es, während der Patient nach oben blickt, den unteren Rand der Brille mit dem Schielhaken zu lüften und hierauf nach unten blicken zu lassen; bei der Bewegung des Bulbus nach unten fliegt das Gläschen heraus und wird in einem vom Patienten gehaltenen Handtuche aufgefangen. Zuweilen geht es leichter auf dem umgekehrten Wege: Blick nach unten, Lüften des oberen Randes und darauf Blick nach oben. Dass Hände und Gläschen aseptisch und die Zuckerlösung sterilisiert sein müssen, versteht sich von selbst. Wenn die Brille gut sitzt, so führt der Patient keinerlei Klage, er hat keinen Thränenfluss und entweder gar keine oder nur äusserst wenig Injection der Conjunctiva bulbi. Stellen sich Reizerscheinungen ein, so muss man die Brille herausnehmen. Nach meinen Erfahrungen wird die Reizung gewöhnlich dadurch verursacht, dass der Rand der gläsernen Sclera an irgend einer Stelle vom Bulbus etwas absteht und hierdurch bei Bewegungen des Auges an dem Lide scheuert. Merkwürdigerweise pflegt in einem solchen Falle die Füllungsflüssigkeit keineswegs immer abzufließen. Verletzung des Hornhautepithels ist trotz ungeschickten Benehmens der Patienten kein einziges Mal vorgekommen.

Einer der Patienten brachte mich durch eine Frage auf den Gedanken, dass die Contactbrille vielleicht öfters aus lediglich kosmetischen Gründen getragen werden wird. Diejenigen Augen, welche durch Leucome auf das Abschreckendste entstellt sind und doch nicht enucleirt werden dürfen, weil noch ein Rest von Sehvermögen vorhanden ist, der nach etwaigem Verluste des anderen Auges einen hohen Werth bekommen würde, kann man durch eine mit Iris und schwarzer Pupille bemalte Contactbrille dem Anblick der übrigen Menschen entziehen. Man hat also kosmetisch denselben, bezüglich der Bewegungen sogar ungleich vollkommeneren Erfolg wie von einem « künstlichen Auge » und braucht nicht einmal, wie für das letztere, den Bulbus erst zu opfern.

Zum Schluß genüge ich gern der angenehmen Pflicht, Herrn Prof. Gaule in Zürich, Herrn Prof. Abbe in Jena und Herrn Prof. Haab in Zürich für die mir gewährte Hülfe meinen aufrichtigsten Dank auszusprechen.

Zürich, September 1887

¹ Rähmann, *Gläsercorrection bei Keratoconus. Bericht der ophth. Gesellsch. Zu Heidelberg 1879, und Ueber die Verwendung der hyperbolischen Gläser zur Correction des Keratoconus und des unregelmässigen Astigmatismus. Bericht der Dorpater Universitäts-Augenklinik 1881-1882.*

² Angelucci, *Sulla refrazione e correzione delle cornee coniche e ectatiche. Annali di Ottalm. Bd. XIII, 1884.*

³ Nederl. *Lancet* 1854, D.III, S.538.

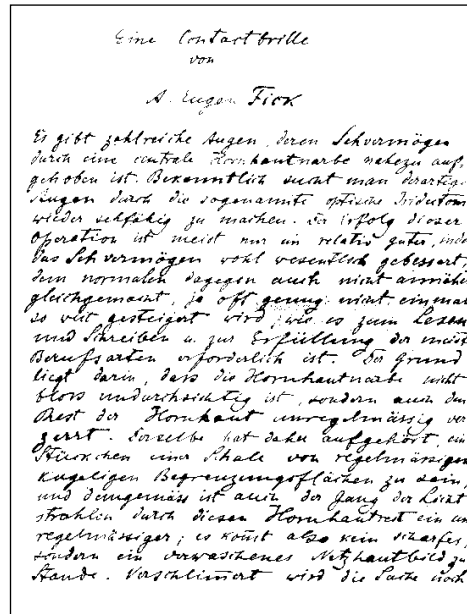
⁴ v. Gräfe's *Archiv f. Ophth.* Bd. I, S.251.

¹ Dies Auge war offenbar amblyopisch, da dioptrisch Sehschärfe nahezu = 1 zu erwarten gewesen wäre.

Appendix 10 – 3

Transcription of
 Archives of Ophthalmology 17, 1888, 215-226
 A CONTACT - LENS
 By Dr. A. Eugen Fick, Privat-Docent in Zurich.
 Translated by Dr. Charles H. May, New York.

Among the numerous diseases of the cornea, there are many which change its normal form; this results in the production of distorted or even completely blurred retinal images and accordingly vision suffers. Now there is a group of alterations in the form of the cornea, of which the bad effects upon vision may be removed by the use of glasses; these are cases of regular astigmatism. As is well known, they can be optically corrected with appropriate cylindrical lenses. The matter begins to be more difficult, however, when we deal with the alteration in the form of the cornea known as keratoconus. Attempts have been made to correct the optical error due to keratoconus by hyperbolic¹ and by conical² glasses. Even though there were no mathematical objection to this, the fact remains, as Rähmann himself observed, that whatever improvement is obtained in acuteness of vision is lost again, as soon as the eye and the hyperbolic lens are no longer accurately centred; therefore movements of the eye must be suppressed and replaced by movements of the head; it is also a fact, that the practical improvement obtained in acuteness of vision is often very insignificant or even nil; this is due, according to Angelucci, to the deviation of the corneal axis from the visual fine.



The results of optical correction are, however, entirely unsatisfactory in cases in which defects of vision are due to irregular corneal astigmatism. Donders recommended the correction of such cases by stenopæic glasses. He³ and his pupil, von Wijngarden⁴, demonstrated that the improvement of vision resulting from the use of stenopæic glasses was often really astonishing, and that the narrowing of the visual field did not occasion disturbance of any kind in near vision, as, for instance, in reading and writing. For distant vision, stenopæic glasses cannot be used at all, since a patient with a greatly contracted field and good central vision would be much worse off than one with poor vision and a field of normal extent. Strange to say, it seems that Donders' proposition found no practical application - a circumstance which to me seems by no means satisfactorily explained by the uselessness of the stenopæic glasses for distant vision. Be this as it may, there are undoubtedly many patients to whom neither hyperbolic, conical, nor stenopæic glasses are of service.

Under these circumstances, searching for another means of correcting the different forms of irregular corneal astigmatism cannot be regarded as superfluous. Obviously, the most radical means would be to replace the cornea by another surface of regular curvature. This can actually be done; and I shall demonstrate in these pages that I have succeeded in excluding the defective cornea from all dioptric influences by a small glass shell, and thus, without narrowing the field of vision or the field of fixation, have increased the minimum acuteness of vision from 1/30 to 1/6. As a master of fact, I could not advise the possessor of this eye to use the remedy devised by me, and which I call "a contact - lens", continually, because the fellow of her imperfect eye was approximately normal. If, nevertheless, I publish my views before any patient is wearing the "contact - lens", it is because, in the first place, I am justified in stating that, as the result of my studies already engaged in, I have solved the principle of the problem of the "contact - lens", and, secondly, because cases suitable in every respect for the contact - lens will be found much more rapidly if other ophthalmologists give the master their attention, than if, as heretofore, I continue to search for proper cases among a limited number of eye - patients.

The "contact - lens" consists of a thin glass shell, bounded by concentric and parallel spherical segments. It is placed upon the eye, and the interspace between it and the eyeball is filled with a liquid having the same refractive index as the cornea. Rays of light then undergo a certain amount of refraction upon entering the liquid, which may be considered as extending forward to the anterior surface of the glass shell; but they suffer no deviation in their course whilst passing from the liquid into the cornea; and thus the irregularities in the passage of rays of light from the air into the cornea, which were previously produced, must be lost.

Of course, I began my observations with experiments upon animals, in order to ascertain whether and how long the eyeball would suffer a contact - lens to be placed upon it without suffering injury. Large rabbits proved to be admirably adapted for these experiments. In one of these animals I drew the lids and the nictitating membrane from the eyeball and filled the resulting sac with plaster-of-Paris of fluid

consistence. After hardening, such a cast of the eyeball showed that the radius of curvature of the cornea did not differ materially from that of the sclera, and that the eyeball of the rabbit is pretty nearly a perfect sphere. Then I had small glass globes blown after these plastercasts, constantly simplifying the form, until finally after many trials I abandoned the use of the casts and satisfied myself with obtaining glass vesicles, 21, 20, and 19 mm in diameter, and with having a segment separated from these, the base of which was distant but a few millimetres from the equator of the sphere. From a large number of such small glass shells I selected the best-fitting one for each individual rabbit. The introduction of the glass shells beneath the lids and nictitating membrane is easily accomplished, if the internal canthus be drawn forward with sufficient force by means of the thumb placed flat upon it, so that the membrane is lifted from the eyeball. The interspace between the cornea and glass is filled with liquid by drawing the upper margin of the glass away from the eyeball with a small hook, and allowing the requisite number of drops to flow from a pipette into the space thus formed.

After a series of partially unsuccessful attempts, it was found that well - fitting glasses need not be held in place by the lids at all, since they adhered to the globe. Hence it follows, that the glass accompanies the eyeball in all its movements beneath the lids, and that not a drop of the liquid escapes. As the eye does not become injected and the natural cornea is rendered invisible, it is impossible to distinguish an eye supplied with the glass from the naked eye, unless a careful examination be made. After six or eight hours there is quite a change in the picture, owing to milky clouding of the liquid. If the glass and the liquid be removed it will be also seen that the epithelium of the cornea appears slightly clouded and the conjunctiva shows moderate injection.

The microscope demonstrates that the clouding of the liquid depends upon the presence of innumerable fat - globules; these are in part of about the size of blood corpuscles, in part, minute nuclei in rapid molecular motion. If a drop of the clouded liquid be allowed to dry upon a slide and be treated with ether, and then with a staining fluid, round cells and epithelial cells, which were easily overlooked among the numerous fat - globules of the fresh preparation, come into view. The round cells are usually collected into small groups. The epithelium contains many large and small fat-globules, within the nucleus and in the cell - body. Bacteria are absent in the great majority of cases, and when present, there are only isolated groups of a few bacilli or micrococci. As a matter of course, I disinfected the small glass shells thoroughly, and sterilised the liquid by boiling before use.

The cause of the clouding of the cornea is found in its epithelium. If a little of the clouded epithelium be scraped off and the particles be examined after staining, the cells show fat - globules in greater or less quantity of larger or smaller size; and after a little while, numerous free fat - globules can be seen between the epithelium. The result which I obtained with sections of the prepared cornea was less pronounced. But at any rate I may say that fatty degeneration was seldom or never found in the epithelium in situ, that in the cornea itself, the well-known inflammatory infiltration with round cells was wholly absent, and that a somewhat abundant presence of the fixed corneal cells was the only point wherein the cornea which I examined seemed to differ from the normal.

The injection of the eyeball disappears with extraordinary rapidity after removal of the glass. The degree of injection which manifests itself varies greatly, and is apt to be absent entirely in those rabbits the eyes of which have already been utilised in a long series of experiments. Apparently, therefore, a sort of toleration is established very soon.

There still remained the division of the responsibility for the three difficulties - clouding of the liquid, clouding of the cornea, and injection of the conjunctiva, - between the two exciting factors - glass and liquid. Concerning the clouding of the cornea, it was easily demonstrated that it was produced solely by the liquid. For if a glass be applied without filling it with liquid, the cornea will remain clear; but if the glass touch the cornea at any point, or if the formation of a drop of liquid causes connection between cornea and glass, the clouding of the cornea in such cases extends exactly as far as the area of contact.

That clouding of the liquid is partly due to corneal epithelium in a state of fatty degeneration, is evident from what has been stated above. At the same time, processes, seem to be set up at the points of contact between the glass and the conjunctiva of the eyeball, which result in the addition of epithelium, round cells, and the products of disorganisation of these; for drops of clear serum soon form upon the inner surface of a glass applied empty, collect at the most dependent portion, and at the end of six or eight hours, are mixed and clouded with fat and cellular elements, although no change can be demonstrated in the corneal epithelium. Furthermore, I was able to demonstrate repeatedly that the filling - liquid at the periphery of the glass was clouded, whilst corresponding to the centre, it remained perfectly clear.

Finally, as to the injection of the conjunctiva, it is evident that both factors, glass and liquid, must be concerned in the cause. But since the injection was always slight, and, if glasses without filling - liquid were applied, even absent, I am inclined to charge the greater part of the responsibility to the liquid.

The problem, therefore, which presented itself to me, was to find a liquid which would cause as little irritation as possible to the cornea. Naturally this could only be discovered by numerous trials. Salt solutions, with various organic additions, alcohol solutions and glycerine solutions of different strengths, were tried without any satisfactory result. Finally a two-per-cent solution of grape sugar was found to answer all requirements. A well-fitting glass filled with sterilised two-per-cent solution of grape sugar is borne by the rabbit's eye for eight or ten hours without the production of any apparent clouding of the liquid, and with no clouding of the cornea or injection of the conjunctiva. However, even should these disturbances take place, it is only necessary to repeat the application of the glasses for a while daily, in

order to get the eye accustomed to it, and then the desired result will surely be obtained. I would also say that any possible injection of the conjunctiva will disappear within half an hour, and any corneal clouding in the course of the night.

Are we then justified in assuming that the human eye will behave toward the "contact lens," just as we have seen that the rabbit's eye does? If this were the case, its practical applicability would be beyond question. In order to obtain properly fitting contact-lenses for the human eye, I resorted to taking plaster-casts again—naturally of the eye of the cadaver. The cast of a human eye shows very plainly that the cornea is the segment of a sphere of smaller radius of curvature than the rest of the globe. In addition, the cast showed, though less clearly, that the radius of curvature of the conjunctiva increases steadily from before backward, as we would naturally expect when we consider that only in the immediate neighbourhood of the cornea does the conjunctiva lie directly upon the globe, while farther back it is separated from this by a constantly thickening layer of tendons, connective tissue, fat, and muscles. The next step was to have a glass vesicle made which fitted upon the periphery of the plaster cast; then a portion of this small glass globe was heated and a protrusion blown out, which was marked by an oval line after cooling; along this line the segment was separated, and the broken edge was made smooth by melting. Such a glass, naturally still very imperfect, was placed in the conjunctival sac of my left eye by Prof. Gaule, in whose institute I conducted these investigations; I wore it for two hours without any other subjective symptoms, except some flow of tears, not, however, over the cheeks, but only into the nose. Objectively, a moderate injection, more marked at the beginning than at the end of the experiment, and which disappeared with extraordinary rapidity after removal of the glass, was observed. The liquid between the cornea and the glass remained perfectly clear, and contained, as the microscope showed, only very few organised elements—a few epithelial cells, round cells, and fat-globules. Other persons now subjected themselves to the experiment; and as subsequent trials proved still more satisfactory in relation to the subjective and objective disturbances than the first had, and since it could be demonstrated that the contact-lens adhered to the globe and held its fluid well and followed all the movements of the eyeball, without any movement of its own, except gradually a slight rotation around the long axis of the globe, I concluded to have the contact - lens made in an optically applicable form—that is, to have it ground. Unfortunately, all requisites for this were lacking here in Zurich, and therefore I wrote to Prof. Abbe, in Jena, requesting him to have several contact - lenses made for me; he was kind enough to fulfil my request. The formula which has thus far been found to be the most satisfactory in the construction of a contact-lens is the following:

A glass cornea, having a radius of curvature of 8.0 mm, rests with a base of 7 mm radius upon the glass sclera; the latter has a breadth of 3 mm, and corresponds to a sphere whose radius of curvature is 15 mm, the glass cornea has parallel surfaces, both of which are ground and polished; in the same way, the free edge of the glass sclera is ground and polished; the weight of a contact-lens is about 0.5 grammes.

If we look around among patients with irregular astigmatism, we will observe that by far the greater numbers of these are afflicted with corneal cicatrices. The corneal cicatrix not only alters the form,—the radius of curvature of different segments of the cornea,—but also the density of the tissue itself; and it may be assumed that the rays of light suffer deviation from their regular course, not only when entering the cornea, but also within its substance. On this account, as is known, we endeavour to relieve cases of dense central corneal cicatrices by means of an iridectomy. But this assistance is only too often insufficient, because, in the first place, it is not possible to give the artificial pupil exactly the size and shape which would correspond best to circumstances, and, secondly, because the corneal cicatrix is itself rendered luminous by the incident light, and casts over the retina a diffuse and very annoying glimmer. It has been attempted to remove the latter difficulty by tattooing leucomata; occasionally this has been followed by brilliant results. Yet the numerous precautionary measures and contra-indications that are urged by even enthusiastic adherents of tattooing, would indicate that tattooing sometimes results in very serious consequences, and even in panophthalmitis. If, however, such a patient be provided with a contact-lens which has been rendered opaque, except opposite the artificial pupil, the various optical defects will be corrected with the single exception of the defect due to the peripheric situation of the pupil; that the latter defect is not a great one, at least as far as the optical effects of the cornea are concerned, can be shown in the following manner.

A contact-lens, blackened except at a round spot placed very peripherically, is cemented upon the front glass-plate of one of Herman's hæmatinometers; the interspace between the contact-Lens and the front glass-plate is filled with water, as is also the hæmatinometer; then a piece of tissue paper is pasted upon the rear glass-plate. A flame is so placed, opposite to and at a properly selected distance from the apparatus, - by a proper approximation of the tubes toward each other, - that a sharply-defined inverted image is seen upon the piece of paper. Suppose the flame to have been placed on the prolongation of the fine connecting the centre of the contact-Lens with the aperture - that is, to the side of the axis of the hæmatinometer, after arranging the apparatus, then the image of the flame will be found the most distinct; but it will not become materially altered, if the flame be brought nearer the axis. Not until the flame passes the axis and is placed upon the opposite side of it from the aperture does the image begin to become indistinct; naturally this becomes more so the farther the flame is removed from the axis.

Besides the numerous cases in which the corneal cicatrices diminish the acuteness of vision by irregular refraction and dazzling, there are, though less frequently, cases of irregular astigmatism with clear corneæ. To this class, cases of keratoconus belong; also those cases in which peripherally situated cicatrices, as,

for instance, cicatrices as a result of cataract operations, have caused distortion of the cornea. Assuming that there is no impediment to rays of light beyond the cornea, there is no doubt that the optical defect can be fully corrected by the contact-lens. At the same time the high degree of hypermetropia in aphakia could be diminished by increased curvature of the glass cornea.

Finally, we might also consider the advisability of allowing myopias of high degrees, whom we do not dare to give correcting glasses, to wear contact-lenses whose glass corneae would naturally want to be correspondingly less curved than those heretofore used by me.

It was now important to secure patients upon whom tests based upon the preceding observations could be made. Professor Haab was kind enough to place the material of the Ophthalmological Poliklinik at my disposal. I then searched the records for those cases which seemed suitable for trial of the contact-lenses. Among these had to be excluded all out-of-town patients, because the expense of having them come to Zurich would have been too great. Thus there were seventeen patients left, and this number dwindled considerably, since a few could not be found, others had died, and still others did not respond to a request to present themselves at the clinic because they had become reconciled to their condition. Thus there were altogether ten patients for examination among which there were four again who had to be send away because they proved entirely unsuitable. The experiment applied to the remaining six gave the following results:

No. 1. - J. U. Both sides, central macula corneae, anterior polar cataract, and some nystagmus. Left: counts fingers at one metre; after dilating pupil only at three quarters of a metre; with contact-lens, lateral aperture, fingers at two metres. Right: S almost $2/18$; after dilating pupil, only $1/60$; with contact-lens, no improvement.

No. 2. - Mrs. L. Maculae corneae of both sides. Right: S = $6/24$; with contact-lens with blackened center, S = $6/18$.

No 3. - K. carpenter, keratoconus on both sides. Left: S = $6/60$, with contact-lens, S = $6/36$ (also a few letters of 24).

No 4. - P. H. Left: anophthalmus. Right: central maculae corneae; S = $4/13$; with contact-lens, blackened centre. S = $4/9.75$.

No 5 - O. M. Right: normal. Left: leucoma adhaerens, below; pupil oval, vertically; S = $4/36$; with contact-lens, S = $4/24$, some letters.⁵

No 6. - A. G. Right: normal. Left: maculae corneae; counts fingers at two metres; after dilating pupil, S = $1/30$; with contact-lens, entirely blackened except one sector. S = $2/12$.

It will be seen, that among the preceding cases, only one was benefited sufficiently in acuteness of vision to have made it worth while to continue these preliminary experiments, in order to increase the acuteness of vision still more by obtaining a greater correspondence between the maculae and the blackened portions of the contact-lens, to have justified proceeding systematically to accustom the eye to the glass, and to have the girl's folks gradually taught how to fill and apply the contact-lens. I would naturally have been very glad to have taken this trouble, but since the other eye of the girl was almost normal, I did not consider myself justified in continuing the experiment, since I could not expect a result which would have been of practical value to the girl. Nevertheless, this case taught me that, among the exceedingly numerous patients with opacities of the cornea, there are certainly those who can be benefited by the use of the contact-lens, provided, naturally, the eye corrected by the contact-lens is the better and not the worse one, as in Case 6.

Hoping that other oculists will also endeavour to employ the contact - lens, I will communicate several matters of technique:

Introduction is best accomplished by seizing the small glass between the index finger and the thumb of the right hand, at the same time lifting the upper lid of the patient's eye with the left, and requesting him to look down; now the glass is pushed beneath the upper lid, and whilst the patient looks up and thus carries the contact-lens upward, the lower lid is drawn forward somewhat, and the contact-lens adjusted to the eyeball. In order to supply the liquid: While an assistant or the patient himself lifts the upper lid, the upper portion of the margin of the lens is slightly drawn from the eyeball by means of a squint-hook, and with the unemployed hand the sugar solution, well warmed, is allowed to drop upon the eyeball from a pipette with bent extremity. To remove the lens again, it is only necessary to lift the longer portion of the margin of the glass with a squint-hook, while the patient is looking up, and then to have the patient look down; during the downward movement the lens becomes detached and is caught in the patient's handkerchief. Occasionally, removal is easier if the proceeding be reversed: Have the patient look clown, separate the upper margin, and then look up. That the hand and the glass must be aseptic, and the sugar-solution sterilized, is a matter of course. If the lens fits well, the patient does not complain, has no flow of tears, and either has no injection of the ocular conjunctiva, or very little. If symptoms of irritation show themselves, the glass must be removed. My experience indicates that the irritation is usually produced by some part of the margin of the glass sclera becoming somewhat separated from the eyeball, and in this way rubbing against the lid during movements of the eyeball. Strange to say, the filling-liquid does not necessarily escape in such cases. Despite clumsy manipulation on the part of the patients, injury to the corneal epithelium did not occur in a single case.

An inquiry from one of the patients led me to believe that possibly contact-lenses will be often worn for purely cosmetic reasons. Those eyes which are terribly deformed by leucomata and yet should not be enucleated while some vision remains, since they would be quite valuable should the fellow eye be lost,

can be changed so that they no longer attract the attention of other persons, by the use of a contact-lens upon which the iris and a black pupil is painted. So that there would be the same result, respecting movement, as from an artificial eye, with the additional advantage that the eyeball would not need to be sacrificed as in the former case.

In conclusion, it gives me pleasure to express my most sincere thanks to Prof. Gaule of Zurich, Prof. Abbe of Jena, and to Prof. Haab of Zurich, for assistance given me.

ZURICH, September, 1887

¹ Rähmann, *Gläsercorrection bei Keratoconus. Bericht der ophth. Gesellschaft zu Heidelberg. 1879, und Ueber die Verwendung der hyperbolischen Gläser zur Correction des Keratoconus und des unregelmässigen Astigmatismus. Bericht der Dorpater Universitäts-Augenklinik, 1881-1882.*

² Angelucci, *Sulla refrazione e correzione delle cornee coniche e ectatiche. Annali di Ottalm., Bd xiii., 1884.*

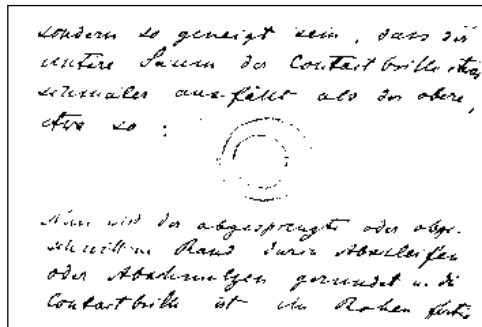
³ *Nederl. Lancet, 1854, D. iii., S.538.*

⁴ *Gräfe's Archiv f. Ophth., Bd.1, S.251.*

⁵ *This eye was evidently amblyopic, since a dioptric acuteness of vision almost = 1 might have expected.*

Appendix 10 – 4

Transcription of
Fick' Memoir of June 25, 1887
 deposit in the Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften in Leipzig
 (A copy sendet to Professor Abbe in Jena is refered in the Archiv-Zeiss, Jena as # BALZ 12311)
 Eine Contactbrille
 von
 A. Eugen Fick



Es gibt zahlreiche Augen, deren Sehvermögen durch eine centrale Hornhautnarbe nahezu aufgehoben ist. Bekanntlich sucht man derartige Augen durch die sogenannte optische Iridectomy wieder sehfähig zu machen. Der Erfolg dieser Operation ist meist nur ein relativ guter, indem das Sehvermögen wohl wesentlich gebessert, dem normalen dagegen auch nicht annähernd gleichgemacht, ja oft genug nicht einmal so weit gesteigert wird, wie es zum Lesen und Schreiben u. zur Erfüllung der meisten Berufsarten erforderlich ist. Der Grund liegt darin, dass die Hornhautnarbe nicht bloss undurchsichtig ist, sondern auch den Rest der Hornhaut unregelmässig verzerrt. Derselbe hat

daher aufgehört ein Stückchen einer Schale von regelmässigen kugeligen Begrenzungsflächen zu sein und demgemäss ist auch der Gang der Lichtstrahlen durch diesen Hornhautrest ein unregelmässiger; es kommt also kein scharfes sondern ein verwaschenes Netzhautbild zu Stande. Verschlimmert wird die Sache noch durch den Umstand, dass die künstliche Pupille gewöhnlich zu gross ausfällt. Man bemüht sich zwar bei der sogenannten optischen Iridectomy ein recht kleines Stückchen Iris zu excidiren allein da die Iris zum Theil aus muskulären Elementen besteht, so findet Retraction der Schnittränder statt, deren Ausgiebigkeit sich schwer vorhersehen lässt. Bedenkt man endlich noch, dass der Gang der Lichtstrahlen durch die seitlichen Theile der Cornea ohnehin den gewöhnlichen einfachen Brechungsgesetzen nicht genau entspricht wegen zu bedeutender Grösse des Einfallswinkels, so ist es begreiflich, dass mehr als 1/10 Sehschärfe durch die optischen Iridectomy häufig nicht erzielt wird. An der Kleinheit dieses Erfolges ist der Umstand mitschuldig dass die undurchsichtige Hornhautnarbe durch das von aussen auffallende Licht selbst leuchtend wird und die Netzhaut des betreffenden Auges mit einem diffusen und sehr störenden Lichtschimmer überflutet. Alle diese durch pathologische Veränderungen bedingte Übelstände würden nun wegfallen, wenn es möglich wäre, die Brechung der Lichtstrahlen beim Durchtritt durch die Hornhaut ganz auszuschalten und gleichzeitig das auf die Hornhautnarbe fallende Licht abzublenden. Dieses Ziel lässt sich durch ein Glasschälchen erreichen, das ich Contactbrille nennen will. Dieses Glasschälchen ist der Bulbusoberfläche entsprechend gekrümmt. Ein Zwischenraum zwischen dem Glas und der Cornea wird mit einer Flüssigkeit gefüllt, die denselben Brechungsexponenten hat wie die Hornhaut. Die einfallenden Lichtstrahlen erleiden nun beim Durchtritt durch das parallelwandige Glasplättchen in die Flüssigkeit dieselbe Brechung wie wenn das Glas gar nicht vorhanden wäre, oder exacter ausgedrückt, als ob das Glas gleichfalls aus jener Flüssigkeit bestände. Die Oberfläche des Glases spielt also jetzt die Rolle der Cornea, und beim Übertritt der Lichtstrahlen aus der Flüssigkeit in die unregelmässig verzerrte Hornhaut findet wegen der Gleichheit des Brechungsvermögens eine neue Brechung überhaupt nicht statt. Sie gehen, da das Brechungsvermögen der Hornhaut auch mit dem des Humor aqueus practisch als identisch betrachtet werden darf, in unveränderter Richtung bis zur vorderen Linsenfläche u. werden hier in der bekannten Weise weiter convergent gemacht. Vorausgesetzt dass das Auge emmetropisch gebaut ist, werden die Lichtstrahlen in dem mit Contactbrille bewaffneten Auge etwas vor der Netzhaut zur Vereinigung kommen, mit anderen Worten, das emmetropische Auge ist durch die Verlegung der ersten Brechung vor die natürliche Cornea zu einem schwach kurzsichtigen geworden. Wenn man nun ausserdem das Glasplättchen bis auf eine kleine der künstliche Pupille gegenüberliegenden Stelle undurchsichtig macht, so sind in der That alle durch pathologische Veränderungen bedingte Fehler des optischen Systems ausgeschaltet und es wird nur der Rest von Schädigung des normalen Sehens übrig bleiben, welcher auf Reihung des grossen Einfallswinkels kommt.

Es fragt sich nun:

1. ob derartige Glasschälchen in der für optische Zwecke nothwendigen Genauigkeit sich herstellen lassen;
2. ob es eine verwendbare Flüssigkeit vom Brechungsexponenten der Cornea und des Kammerwassers gibt;
3. ob das menschliche Auge eine solche Contactbrille sich gefallen lässt.

Es ist klar, dass die dritte Frage die eigentliche Cardinalfrage ist, und ich habe mich daher vorläufig nur mit ihr beschäftigt.

Die Versuche machte ich an Kaninchen. Ich fixierte ein solches Thierchen dergestalt, dass der Bulbus nach oben sah, zog die Lider u. Nickhaut durch Fäden vom Bulbus ab und füllte den so gebildeten Sack mit Gypsbrei. Nach dem erstarrten Abguss des Auges liess ich ein Glasschälchen blasen; dieselben waren Segmente einer hohlen Glaskugel; der Krümmungshalbmesser der Kaninchencornea unterscheidet sich eben von dem des Bulbus so gut wie nicht. Solche Glasschälchen führte ich den Kaninchen unter Lider u. Nickhaut ein u. füllte den Zwischenraum zwischen Cornea u. Glas mit Flüssigkeit. Es ergab sich nun:

- 1, dass gut passende Gläschen vom Kaninchenauge ertragen werden, ohne dass es zu stärkerer Injection oder gar Sekretion käme; und zwar darf die Einführung täglich und je 6 Stunden lang stattfinden;
- 2, dass die Gläschen durch Adhäsion festgehalten werden, was man daran erkennt, dass sie auch beim Abziehen der Lider nicht nur nicht abfallen, sondern sogar sehr fest haften;
- 3, dass die Gläschen die Bulbusbewegungen mitmachen;
- 4, dass die Flüssigkeit nach 6 bis 7 Stunden bald mehr, bald weniger Trüb wird; wie das Mikroskop lehrt, rührt die Trübung von zahllosen feinen Fetttröpfchen her; fettig degenerierte Epithelzellen finden sich stets in mässiger Menge, Bacterien dagegen nicht.

Nach diesen Vorversuchen ging ich dazu über, das Problem der Contactbrille am Menschen zu studieren. In der oben beschriebenen Weise stellte ich Gypsabgüsse des menschlichen (Leichen-) Auges her. Dieselben sehen natürlich ganz anders aus, wie beim Kaninchen gewonnene Gypsschalen. Denn beim Menschen ist ja die Cornea ein Kugelsegment von weit kleinerem Krümmungsradius als der Rest des Bulbus. Ich musste also dem Glasbläser eine neue u. weit schwierigere Aufgabe stellen. Ich liess ihm eine Glasblase von etwa 30 mm Durchmesser ausblasen u. aus dieser Glasblase eine Stelle von der Grösse der Hornhaut vorblasen; dann wurde eine ovale Linie, etwa wie der Contour eines künstlichen Auges, um die Glascornea gezeichnet u. auf dieser Linie abgesprengt; der abgesprengte Rand endlich wurde rund geschmolzen. Da ich Niemanden zumuten konnte, sich zum ersten Versuch herzugeben, so bat ich Herrn Professor Gaule mir selber das Gläschen einzuführen. Der Erfolg war ein über Erwarten günstiger. Die der ersten, nicht ganz glatten, Einführung entstandene Reizung steigerte sich nicht nur nicht, sondern ging sogar bald zurück, und ich trug die Contactbrille zwei Stunden ohne andere subjective Beschwerden als etwas Thränenfluss, wohlverstanden nicht über die Wangen sondern in die Nase, und ohne andere objective Veränderung als etwas Hyperämie der Conjunctiva, die in der zweiten Stunde geringer war, als in der ersten! Nach 2 Stunden wurde der Versuch abgebrochen. Die zwischen Hornhaut u. Glas befindliche Flüssigkeit war völlig klar; sie enthielt einige Epithelien, Fetttröpfchen u. andere zellige Elemente in sehr geringer Menge. Nach diesem ersten Versuche stand meine Überzeugung fest: das Problem der Contactbrille ist lösbar! Hierin wurde ich bestärkt durch die Thatsache, dass die Hyperämie der Conjunctiva binnen einer halben Stunde u. am folgenden Tag nach Wiederholen des Versuches mit einem zweiten schlechter passendem Gläschen sogar noch schnelle verschwand.

Verwendbar würde die Contactbrille sein bei allen Fällen von irregulärem Hornhautastigmatismus, so z.B. bei der grossen Zahl jener Cataractoperirten, bei denen die erzielte Sehschärfe nicht wegen Nachstares, sondern wegen Verzerrung der Hornhaut ungenügend ist. Dazu könnte die hochgradige Hypermetropie der Cataractoperirten durch eine geeignet gewählte Krümmung der Contactbrille ganz oder Theilweise ausgeglichen werden. Es wird sich eben nur fragen, ob die erzielte Steigerung der Sehschärfe dem Patienten mit den Unbequemlichkeiten der Contactbrille nicht zu Theuer erkauft scheint. Meinem subjectiven Empfinden nach sind dieselben so unbedeutend, dass man sie mindestens in allen den Fällen gern in den Kauf nehmen wird wo die Sehschärfe von 1/10 bis auf die zum Lesen u. Schreiben ausreichende Sehschärfe von 1/5 bis $\frac{1}{4}$ sich steigern lässt.

Ich bin nun damit beschäftigt:

- 1, die Contactbrille, die ich bis jetzt nur vom Glasbläser in sehr unvollkommener Form erhalten habe, vom Glasschleifer exacter herstellen zu lassen;
- 2, einen Patienten zu finden, dessen Sehvermögen durch eine Contactbrille von 1/10 oder weniger auf 1/5 oder mehr gebracht wird;
- 3, Studien zu machen über die Verwendung verschiedener wässriger Lösungen auf das Epithel der Cornea.

Zürich 25. Juni 1887.

Appendix 10 – 5

Transcription of
Fick's four letters send to Professor Abbe in Jena (June to October 1887)
 (referend in the Archiv-Zeiss, Jena as: # BALZ 12311)

Letter of June 25, 1887

Zürich 25.VI.87
 Schanzenberg N°9

Hochgeehrter Herr Professor !

Ich nehme mir die Freiheit, Sie in einer Frage der Glastechnik um Rat und wenn möglich um einiges Interesse für die Frage selbst ganz ergebenst zu bitten. Die Angelegenheit ist folgende :

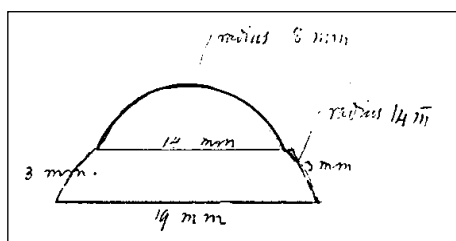
Es gibt zahlreiche Augen, deren Sehen ein sehr ungenügendes ist, weil ihre Cornea die normale regelmässige Form verloren hat und, folgetlich die Lichtstrahlen auf ihrem Weg zur Retina unregelmässig gebrochen werden (irregulärer Hornhautastigmatismus). Offenbar könnte diesen Augen geholfen werden, wenn es gelänge, die Hornhaut u. ihren Einfluss auf den Gang der Lichtstrahlen ganz zu eliminieren. Dies Ziel würde sich erreichen lassen durch eine Wasserschicht vor der Cornea, die durch ein parallelwandiges Glasschälchen gegen die Luft hin abgegrenzt wäre, indem der Brechungsexponent des Wassers mit dem der Cornea und dem des Humor aqueus als praktisch gleich angenommen werden darf. Ein solches Glasplättchen nenne ich Contactbrille. Natürlich ist Cordialfrage die, ob sich ein so empfindliches Organ wie das Auge eine Contactbrille gefallen lässt. Ich experimentirte zuerst an Kaninchen, und als meine Versuche ermutigend ausfielen, liess ich mir nach Gypsabgüssen des menschlichen Conjunctivalsackes Glasplättchen anfertigen und unter meine eigenen Lider legen. Zu meiner nicht geringen Überraschung liess sich gleich beim ersten Versuch mein linkes Auge die Contactbrille 2 Stunden lang gefallen, ohne dass auch nur eine Träne über meine Wange gerollt wäre ! ! Die Hyperämie des Auges war in der zweiten Stunde des Versuches geringer als in der ersten und verschwand nach Herausnahme des Glasplättchens sofort. Weitere Versuche u. zwar bei einem anderen Manne brachten ein ähnliches Resultat. Ich darf daher das Problem der Contactbrille als ein höchst wahrscheinlich lösbares bezeichnen.

Es handelt sich nun darum die Contactbrille in solcher Vollkommenheit herzustellen, dass sie die Strahlen auch wirklich so bricht, wie es von regelmässigen Flächen theoretisch zu erwarten ist. Nach viel verllorener Zeit habe ich die Überzeugung gewonnene, dass unser Züricher Glaskünstler (Glasbläser) einer solchen Leistung nicht fähig ist. Vielleicht lässt sich die Contactbrille durch Glasblasen überhaupt nicht herstellen ; vielleicht müssen die Flächen geschliffen werden, um hinlänglich regelmässig auszufallen.

Meine ergebenste Bitte an Sie geht nun dahin, unter den Jenaer Glaskünstlern denjenigen für das Problem der Contactbrille zu gewinnen, der über die nötigen Apparate u. Fertigkeiten verfügt.

Mit gleicher Post sende ich Ihnen einige Glasplättchen und Gypsabgüsse, um Ihnen bezw., dem von Ihnen eventuell zu wählenden Glastechniker das Verstehen der folgenden Bemerkungen zu erleichtern.

Der erste Schritt zur Anfertigung einer Contactbrille bestand hier im Blasen einer Glaskugel von 31 bis 32 mm Durchmesser. Hierauf wurde eine Stelle der Glaskugel erhitzt und eine Vorbauchung ausgeblasen, die der Vorwölbung der Cornea entsprechen soll; dieser Theil der Contactbrille will ich die künstliche Cornea nennen. Die Basis der künstlichen Cornea muss ein Kreis von etwa 12 mm im Lichten sein, der Krümmungsradius der künstlichen Cornea etwa (8 bis) 8,5 bis 9 mm. Man stellt sich nun diese Glaskugel als Augapfel vor und denkt sich durch den Scheitel der künstlichen Hornhaut einen horizontalen Meridian. Auf demselben markiert man 2 Punkte, einen der inneren Augapfelhälfte entsprechend 3 mm vom Hornhautrand entfernt, den zweiten auf die äusseren Hälfte des Augapfels 6 mm vom Hornhautrande. Durch diese beiden Punkte geht die Ebene, in der die Contactbrille von der primären Glasblase abgesprengt wird; diese Ebene soll übrigens nicht senkrecht zum Horizont (frontal), sondern so geneigt sein, dass der untere Saum der Contactbrille etwas schmaler ausfällt als der obere, etwa so:
 Nun wird der abgesprengte oder abgeschnittene Rand durch Abschleifen oder Abschmelzen gerundet u. die Contactbrille ist im Rohen fertig.



Bei Betrachtung der Ihnen zugeschickten Exemplare werden Sie nun sofort sehen, dass dieselben den mässigsten Ansprüchen an Exaktheit bei weitem nicht entsprechen. Die künstliche Hornhaut zeigt die grössten Unregelmässigkeiten im Glas, die Absprengungslinie ist nicht entfernt von regelmässiger, kreisförmiger Gestalt und beim Abschmelzen, ist die Fläche der primären Glasblase vielfältig verschoben

ausgebuchtet u. eingeknickt.

Lassen sich diese Fehler vermeiden? Kann man die künstliche Cornea schleifen ? Kann man ihr jeden gewünschten Krümmungsradius geben? Kann man das Ganze so dünn herstellen, dass das Gewicht nicht wesentlich grösser wird als bei den beifolgeden Mustern ?

Auf alle diese Fragen hat mir der hiesige Glaskünstler keine Antwort geben können u. mich hierdurch veranlasst Ihre Güte in Anspruch zu nehmen.

Sollten Sie eine mündliche Besprechung mit mir über den Gegenstand für wünschenswert oder gar für nothwendig halten, so würde ich ohne weiteres nach Jena kommen.

In den ich Sie, hochgeehrter Herr Professor, bitte, mir gütigst sagen zu wollen, ob und was Sie in dieser Angelegenheit für mich thun können und wollen zeichne ich

Hochachtungsvoll u. ergebenst

Dr. A. Eugen Fick
aus Marburg

Augenarzt u. Privatdozent in Zurich

29.VI.87. Ich sende separat:

1. Einen Gypsabguss eines Leichenauges
2. Glasplättchen M, von mir selber ohne besondere Beschwerde getragen.
3. Gläschen G, vom Institutsdiener getragen, Klagen über Kitzeln.
4. Gläschen H vom Institutsdiener getragen, keine Klagen, aber Flüssigkeit zwischen Auge u. Glas floss zum Theil ab.

Letter of July 5, 1887

Zürich 5.VII.87
Schanzenberg Nr 7

Hochgeehrter Herr Professor !

Ihrer Antwort auf meinen Brief vom 25 Juni sah ich mit einer Art Bangigkeit entgegen und bin nun nicht wenig erfreut zu hören, dass Sie die Güte haben wollen, die Contactbrille herstellen zu lassen, eine Sache die mir ja hier in Zürich ganz unmöglich gewesen wäre. Die Muster brauchen Sie übrigens durchaus nicht zurück zu senden da ich sie jederzeit hier haben bezw. Neu herstellen kann, falls ich sie brauchte. Vielleicht ist es sogar zwecksmässig wenn ich Ihnen noch einige Gypsabgüsse des menschlichen Auges (Leiche) zusende ? Ferner möchte ich Sie fragen, ist es nöthig, dass ich Geld schicke, um Dr. Zeiss bezw. den von Ihnen erwähnte Glasbläser sicher zu stellen ?

Für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit, meine Mitteilung vorläufig als ganz vertraulich behandeln zu wollen, bin ich Ihnen zu besonderem Dank verpflichtet. Allerdings kann ich die Sache, wenigstens hier in Zürich nicht geheim halten. Ich habe daher, um mir die Priorität des Gedankens auf aller Fälle zu sichern, einen kurzen Aufsatz über die Contactbrille autographiren lassen u. an meine besten Freunde versendet, mit der Instruktion, einstweilen von meiner Idee nichts verlauten zu lassen. Ausserdem habe ich ein Exemplar nach Leipzig geschickt, um es bei der Sächs. Academie der Wissenschaften versiegelt deponieren zu lassen. Ich erlaube mir, mit gleicher Post Ihnen ein Exemplar besagten Aufsatzes zuzusenden.

Meine fortgesetzten Thierversuche überzeugen mich mehr u. mehr, dass die Contactbrille lebensfähig sein wird; bereits habe ich nach einigem herumprobieren eine Flüssigkeit gefunden, die 6 bis 8 Stunden von der Kaninchencornea vertragen wird, ohne dass die Flüssigkeit oder das Hornhautepithel trüb würde.

Indem ich Ihnen für Ihre Bereitwilligkeit aufs wärmste danke, bleibe ich

Hochachtungsvoll
u. ergebenst
A. Eugen Fick

Letter of July 26, 1887Zürich 26. VII. 87
Schanzenberg Nr 7

Hochgeehrter Herr Professor !

Die Exaktheit der mir übersandten Proben ist in optischer Hinsicht offenbar genügend da feinsten Druck per Contactbrille ohne Schwierigkeit gelesen wurde. Dagegen zeigt es sich, dass der Rand der Contactbrille zum Theil vom Bulbus abstand und infolgedessen an den Liderrand schabte. Der Grund liegt wohl im Folgendem: Hart am Hornhautrand hat die Sklera einen Krümmungsradius von etwa 12 mm, in der folgenden Zone wird die Krümmung allmählig flacher, weil da Muskelansätze sich unter die Conjunctiva bulbi schieben, weil also in der folgenden Zone nicht mehr der Bulbus allein, sondern Bulbus plus Muskeln von der Conjunctiva bedeckt sind. Da nun die beiden Jenaer Contactbrillen im ganzen kleiner sind, als die hier angefertigten Rohgläser, so ist es begreiflich, dass der Rand der neuen Contactbrillen den Bulbus an einer Stelle traf, wo der Krümmungsradius noch nicht 15 mm gross war. Gerade auf genaue Berührung von Rand der Contactbrille mit dem Bulbus kommt es aber an, weil schon 1 oder 2 mm vom Glasrand entfernt das Glas den Bulbus überhaupt nicht mehr berührt, sondern durch Flüssigkeit vom Bulbus getrennt wird. Hiermit beantwortet sich auch Ihre Frage, ob es nöthig sei diejenige Kante abzuschleifen, in welcher "Glascornea" u. "Glassclera" aneinander stossen; da diese Kante vom Bulbus durch Flüssigkeit getrennt ist, so kann sie nicht reizend wirken. Übrigens habe ich Ihnen die Basis der "Glascornea" mit 12 mm Durchmesser entschieden zu klein angegeben. Da ein "zu gross" hier kaum schaden kann, so dürfte es sich empfehlen als Basis der "Glascornea" einen Kreis von 7 mm Radius zu nehmen. Ich möchte Ihnen ferner vorschlagen, im Interesse eines genaueren Anschlusses des Glasscleralrandes an den Bulbus, einstweilen auf verschiedene Breite der Aussen- und Innenhälfte der Glassclera ganz zu verzichten. Das Recipe würde demnach folgendermassen lauten: Glascornea von 8 mm Krümmungsradius, Basis der Glascornea ist ein Kreis von 7 mm Radius; Glassclera hat 15 mm Krümmungsradius u. bildet um die Glascornea einen Saum von 5 mm (überall gleicher) Breite, Glascornea von innen und aussen geschliffen und poliert, desgleichen Rand der Glassclera; auf Schliff u. Politur der Glassclerafläche kann wohl einstweilen verzichtet werden.

Mit dem hiesigen Professor der Ophthalmologie Dr. Haab habe ich gestern über die Contactbrille Rücksprache genommen u. ihm die beiden Jenaer Probebrillen gezeigt. Prof. Haab interessiert sich für die Sache und hat mir versprochen, eine Anzahl von geeigneten Patienten in den Journalen suchen u. hercitiren zu lassen. Es steht also auch die so schwierige Beschaffung von "Krankenmaterial" in naher Aussicht.

Indem ich mich der Hoffnung hingebende, dass Ihre Güte gross genug ist, die verschiedenen Änderungen mit Nachsicht aufzunehmen u. die Geduld mit mir nicht zu verlieren, verbleibe ich Hohachtungsvoll Ihr ergebenster u. dankbarer

A. Fick

Letter of August 20, 1887Zürich 20 VIII. 87
Schanzenberg Nr 7

Hochgeehrter Herr Professor !

Nachdem ich nicht ohne grosse Schwierigkeit und Hülfe von Poliklinikjournalen einige für die Contactbrille geeignete Patienten aufgetrieben und mit ihnen Versuche angestellt habe, bin ich zu der Überzeugung gelangt, dass in der That, vielleicht nicht einmal besonders selten, Fälle vorkommen in denen sich per Contactbrille eine wesentliche Besserung des Sehvermögens erzielen lässt, dass aber andererseits nur selten alle die Eigenschaften bei einem Patienten zusammen vorkommen werden, ohne die an eine Verwendung der Contactbrille nicht gedacht werden kann; zu diesen Eigenschaften gehört z. B. dass das andere Auge wesentlich schlechter sieht als das per Contactbrille corrigirte, dass der Patient eine verständige u. in einigem Wohlstand lebende Person ist, und endlich dass er an der Besserung seines Sehvermögens ein wesentliches Interesse hat. Da nun das Aufsuchen u. Herbeischaffen der Patienten immer schwieriger u. kostspieliger wird, je weiter entfernt sie wohnen und je weiter ich in den Journalen zurück gehen muss, da ich ferner trotz aller Opfer an Zeit Geld u. Mühe keine Sicherheit, habe dass mir nun wirklich einmal der Beste in die Hände fällt, so habe ich mich entschlossen die Contactbrille zu publiciren indem ich voraussetze, dass binnen Jahresfrist in den zahlreichen u. mit riesigem Material ausgestatteten Kliniken Deutschlands schon Fälle auftauchen werden, die in jeder Hinsicht geeignet sind.

Das Maximum der von mir bis jetzt erzielten Steigerung des Sehvermögens war von 1/30 auf 1/6 des Normalen. Ohne Zweifel ist das aber noch lange nicht das Maximum, das erreicht werden kann, denn die geschwärzte Stelle der Contactbrille entsprach nur ganz ungefähr der narbig veränderten u. darum zu

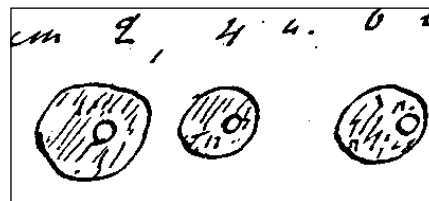
deckende Hornhautstelle. Übrigens würde selbst diese Verbesserung für die Patientin, ein Schulmädchen, genügen um die Brille zu tragen, wenn das Mädchen nicht zufällig auf dem anderen Auge noch ein sehr gutes, annähernd normales Sehvermögen hätte.

Bei den Versuchen der letzten beiden Wochen habe ich nun noch folgendes bemerkt:

- 1, dass es gleichgültig ist, ob die gläserne Sclera (der 4 mm breite Saum) ein Stück Kugelschale oder eine Zone von einem Konus ist;
- 2, dass der Rand mit 4 mm für die meisten Augen zu breit und lieber nur 3 mm breit sein sollte;
- 3, damit bei Verschmälerung des 4 mm breiten Saumes der gläsernen Sclera der Rand derselben vom Bulbus nicht absteht, sondern in einer Kreislinie den Bulbus berührt, muss man den Krümmungsradius der Kugelschale verkleinern, bzw. die Basis des Conus etwas kleiner nehmen als die Basis der bisherigen künstlichen Sclera.

Die Recipe würde jetzt also lauten: Cornea wie bisher, nämlich 8 mm Krümmungsradius; Basis der Cornea ist ein Kreis von 7 mm Radius; Sclera 3 mm breit u. Stück einer Kugelschale von 14 mm Krümmungsradius, Basis der Sclera ist ein Kreis von 19 mm Durchmesser. Die innere Fläche der Glascornea wäre dann der Hornhautnarbe entsprechend zu schwärzen, bzw. in der Farbe u. Zeichnung der Iris undurchsichtig zu machen, natürlich für jeden speziellen Fall in besonderer Weise. Einige Gläschen könnte man auch so herstellen, dass die ganze innere Fläche der Glascornea zu schwärzen wäre mit Ausnahme eines Guckloches von etwa 3 mm Durchmesser, dies Guckloch hätte excentrisch zu liegen und zwar mit seiner Mitte in 2, 4 u. 6 mm beziehungsweise.

Ich bemerkte noch, dass nach ausgeführter Schwärzung bezw. Bemahlung der Innenfläche der Glascornea wieder nachpoliert werden muss. Es scheinen nämlich doch Berührungen der Cornea, vielleicht am Rande, vorzukommen; jedenfalls habe ich wiederholt beobachtet, dass die von meinem hiesigen Glaskünstler geschwärzte u. dadurch innen rau gewordenen Contactbrillen die Augen der Patientin zu heftigem Tränenfluss reizten, was die polierte Contactbrillen aber nicht thut.



Einer der Patienten hat durch eine an mich gestellte Frage die Vermutung bei mir herbeigerufen, dass die Contactbrille wohl zugleich häufig aus kosmetischen Gründen getragen werden wird. Es gibt nämlich viele, durch weisse Hornhautnarben entstellte Augen, zu deren Herausnahme weder Patient noch Arzt sich entschliessen können, weil noch ein Rest des Sehvermögens vorhanden ist, der bei etwaigem Verlust des andern Auges wertvoll sein würde. Das Tragen künstlicher Augen auf einem unverkleinerten Bulbus gilt aber bis jetzt für unthunlich. Wenn man nun für solche Patienten die Contactbrille mit Iris u. schwarzer Pupille bemahlt u. die Flüssigkeitsschicht zwischen Augenstern u. Glasplättchen bringt, so haben sie kosmetisch den selben u. bezüglich der Bewegungen weit besseren Erfolg als durch ein künstliches Auge, und sie behalten ihr Reserveauge nicht desto weniger.

Darf ich Sie hochgeehrter Herr Professor, zum Schluss bitten, mir zur Fortsetzung meiner Versuche noch 5 Contactbrillen anfertigen zu lassen? Zwei möchte ich ungeschwärzt haben u. drei mit Schwärzungen u. excentrischen Gucklöchern, wie ich es oben beschrieb.

Mit ausgezeichneter Hochachtung bleibe ich Ihr ergebenster

A.Fick

Letter of October 30, 1887
Zürich 30.X.87
Schanzenberg Nr 7

Hochgeehrter Herr Professor !

Als Sie im September hier in Zürich waren, hatten Sie die grosse Güte mir weitere Contactbrillen zur Fortsetzung meiner Versuche in Aussicht zu stellen. Da ich nun seither eine Mitteilung von Ihnen nicht erhalten habe, so fange ich an zu fürchten, dass irgend ein Umstand die Fortsetzung der Schleifversuche verhindert haben oder dass vielleicht ein Brief von Ihnen an mich verloren gegangen sein könnte. Ich nehme mir daher die Freiheit, diese Zeilen an Sie zu richten, in der Hoffnung dass dieselben von Ihnen nicht als eine Unbescheidenheit aufgenommen werden möchten.

Mit hochachtungsvollstem Gruss bleibe ich Ihr ergebenster

A. Fick