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Fortunate circumstances were largely responsible for the scheduling of the First International Porphyrin Meeting on Porphyrins in Human Diseases, May 1st to 4th, 1975, held in Freiburg im Breisgau so unexpectedly soon after the International Research Conference on Regulation of Porphyrin and Heme Biosynthesis in Summer of 1973 in Marburg an der Lahn. The present Meeting, whose scientific preparation and organization were again in the hands of the Clinical Biochemistry Research Unit of the Faculty of Medicine of the Philipps University in Marburg, blossomed like the one in Marburg into a scientific event worthy of the name through the active cooperation and participation of a large group of well-known scientists from all over the world.

Whereas the conference in Marburg in 1973 was devoted mainly to basic research on porphyrin and heme biosynthesis, the Freiburg Meeting centered around the clinical biochemistry of the porphyrias, including diagnosis and treatment. Papers on porphyrin metabolism under experimental conditions, on synopsis and interdependence of porphyrin synthesis and heme catabolism, contributions to clinical pharmacology and hepatology, enzymology and analytical biochemistry were oriented around the central topic of the meeting.

The Proceedings of the Freiburg Meeting can be regarded with justification complementing the Proceedings of the Marburg Conference, which appeared in 1974 with the same publishers, for the basic research reported in Freiburg was focused largely on topics of direct pathobiochemical and clinical relevance. Both the Marburg Conference in 1973 and the Freiburg Meeting in 1975 demonstrate convincingly the intensive pace with which porphyrin research is moving ahead. Some aspects of great importance in environmental research, such as the study of the effects of lead and of various organic noxae on porphyrin and heme formation, have barely been scratched on the surface.

It was a major goal of this Meeting to crystallize out the quintessence of the achievements of experimental and clinical medicine in understanding porphyrias. In spite of the expansion of the scope of porphyria research through the intensification of Clinical Biochemistry, providing essential new information, new challenges are provided by the unresolved problems of
enzymology and biochemical genetics of porphyrias, necessitating fresh approaches.

The contents of the Proceedings are arranged in accordance with the twelve sessions which formed the backbone of the conference. For technical reasons, the discussions of the individual sessions and the general open discussion (Session XII), as well as several short communications, most of which originated during the discussion itself, appear in a supplementary volume through the cooperation of Dr. Dr. Herbert Falk. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Session Chairmen for their excellent cooperation: Dr. T. R. Tephly, USA (I. Porphyrin Biosynthesis and Drug Action), Dr. Rudi Schmid, USA (II. Regulation of Hepatic Heme Metabolism), Dr. R. J. Porra, Australia (III. Enzymes of the Heme Pathway), Dr. I. A. Magnus, UK (IV. Clinical Biochemistry of Protoporphyria), Dr. U. A. Meyer, Switzerland (V. Pharmacology and Neurochemistry of Porphyrin Precursors), Dr. M. R. Moore, Scotland (VI. Pathological Biochemistry of Hepatic Porphyrias), Dr. L. Wetterberg, Sweden (VII. Diagnosis and Therapy of Acute Intermittent Porphyria), Dr. R. McEwin, Australia and Dr. N. R. Pimstone, South Africa (VIII. Clinical Biochemistry and Therapy of Chronic Hepatic Porphyrias), Dr. R. F. Labbe, USA (IX. Porphyrin Metabolism in Various Experimental Porphyrias), Dr. G. S. Marks, Canada (X. Experimental Chronic Hepatic Porphyria), and Dr. S. Schwartz, USA (XI. Analytical Biochemistry of Porphyrins).

The prerequisites for initiating and stimulating would not have been met without the continuous support of our work in Marburg by the German Research Society (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) over the past several years. For this reason I find it appropriate to express my gratitude to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft here for its faithful and continuous support


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of the scientific program of our Research Unit. On the same note, this conference, let alone this Proceedings volume (including the supplement with the Reports of the Discussions), would never have come to be without the generous organization of the Meeting in Freiburg by Dr. Herbert Falk.

I am convinced that he has provided a resonant accent for the further ‘induction’ of porphyrin research. In the name of all participants I wish to express my sincere thanks for his sponsoring this meeting and for the personal attention which he has given all the scientific contributions and the publication of the Proceedings.