Creation of a promontory window according to Plester, on the basis of anatomic studies.
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Preface

Prof. Dietrich Plester, MD, was born in 1922 in Essen, Westfalia, where his schooling took place. After studying medicine at the universities of Wurzburg and Berlin, he served in the military with an ensuing period as prisoner of war. Thereupon he received his academic research training at the Departments of Pathology and Pharmacology of the University of Dusseldorf, Medical School. During this time, he conducted experimental
investigations into the action of pharmaceuticals on the autonomic nervous system. Between 1951 and 1954, he served as ENT resident under the guidance of Prof. H.L. Wullstein, who was then in Siegen, Westfalia. Since then his special attention has been focussed on the surgical improvement of hearing deficits. In 1955, he became first senior resident and later associate professor in the Department of Otorhinolaryngology of Düsseldorf, for Prof. Meyer zum Gottesberge, whose understanding and stimulating leadership made it possible to intensively take part in the tempestuous development of middle ear surgery. Soon a pioneer himself, Prof. Plester was honored on numerous occasions. He became a Honorable member of the British Royal Society of Medicine, as well as of Societies of Oto-Rhino-Laryngology on all continents. In addition he is a member of the Collegium otorhinolaryngologicum amicitiae sacrum and a member of the Leopoldina, Halle/Saale, the oldest German academy of nature sciences and medicine. Aside from his clinical and surgical activities, Prof. Plester conducted research into the metabolism of the inner ear with the use of radioisotopes. Between 1954 and 1963, he visited southern Sudan, together with Dr. Rosen and other colleagues from different countries, to study the hearing of native populations. Compared with data from populations of different life-styles (Egypt, Germany, USA), important conclusions as to the etiology and pathogenesis of presbyacusis could be made.

Prof. Dietrich Plester was installed as head of the Department of Otorhinolaryngology, University of Tübingen, in November 1966. Here he founded his own 'school' in otologic surgery. The hearing-impaired patient always remained in the foreground, and was treated with incomparable empathy and care. In this vein, and with utmost attention to surgical and technical detail, he trained many colleagues in the art of microsurgery of the ear. Together with them, to date he has conducted 20 courses on microsurgical technique in Tübingen, which were attended by nearly 1,000 ENT surgeons most of whom come from German-speaking countries. An even greater stream of visitors from the whole world denotes the immense influence Prof. Plester has gained by his operative demonstrations. This has made its mark on contemporary middle ear surgery. In addition, he has held many lectures and has written multiple publications, along with those of his students. His criticism has always been of utmost value in questions concerning clinical and research investigations. As impetus for histologic studies of the middle ear, the use of new biomaterials in reconstructive surgery and the immunology of the inner ear, he has played an important role. The same applies for other clinical aspects of our field, as in tumor,
reconstructive plastic and emergency surgery, which he supported with his wide scientific and clinical experience. As a result, the contributions in this book offer a wide spectrum, and are presented in thanks from his students and friends for his decades of long activity as surgeon, teacher and scientist.
Klaus Jahnke

Foreword

At the end of January, 1987, a symposium was held at the University of Tbingen in honour of Prof. Dr. Dietrich Plester, chairman of the Department of Otorhinolaryngology, on the occasion of his 65th birthday. A symposium of this kind may become either a scientifically embellished distinction of the person who is celebrating his jubilee; or - as in the present case - it becomes a state-of-the-art review of the scientific and clinical progress in a medical field to which the honoured person has made substantial contributions during his active years as head of the department. D. Plester belongs to the generation of ORL surgeons who - entering their specialty shortly after the war - have witnessed the enormous and rapid development of surgical management of ENT diseases, in particular microsurgery of the ear. In the early 1950s a hitherto inaccessible, vast dimension of surgery was opened, inaugurating a new era of surgical knowledge and treatment. With the advent of antibiotics ORL surgery became more and more function-orientated because preoperative infections could be cured and postoperative infective complications prevented. Reconstructive surgery of the middle ear became the primary goal; in cases of chronic otitis media and cholesteatoma not only could the disease be eradicated in the majority of cases but also auditory function preserved or even improved. In otosclerosis or malformations of the middle ear cleft it became possible to restore a socially adequate hearing. Moritz, Wullstein and Zoellner on the one hand and Lempert, Rosen, Shea and Portmann on the other, were some of the promotors of these new techniques, providing the fundamental knowledge which later became the solid basis for the further development of tympanoplasty, ossiculoplasty and stapedectomy.

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D. Plester had the opportunity to experience at first hand the rapidly developing techniques of modern ear surgery. Rather soon he innovated his own methods and gradually became one of the leading personalities in this field. However, in contrast to other successful ear surgeons he never considered reconstructive surgery of the ear a merely technical problem. His academic background - basic training in pharmacology and physiology
- had formed his scientific mind so strongly that - as a surgeon - he always considered the pathophysiological problem the most important one, determining the performance of his surgical technique. He never accepted or developed new methods - even if they became or were 'fashionable' at a certain period - which were not consistent with his strict prerequisites concerning the indication, the pathophysiological basis and the eventual short or longstanding risk of an operation. This may explain why he has been so successful.

As department head he felt not only responsible of the subspecialty of otology but of the whole field of oto-rhino-laryngology. This attitude is reflected by the various contributions made at the Tbingen Symposium by friends and pupils. They cover the whole field of ORL - from basic research in inner ear biology and physiology to laser surgery many important scientific and clinical problems are discussed. They will not only interest the clinician but also the practicing ENT specialist, according to the rules of Dietrich Plester's school that scientific activities should never become a performance of 'l'art pour l'art' but should always be clinically relevant.

C.R. Pfaltz

Laudatio
On the Occasion of the 65th Birthday of Prof. Plester, Tbingen

Adolf Miehlke, Gttingen

Ladies and Gentlemen,
rather than enumerating the vast number of Honorary Memberships of National ENT Societies held by Prof. Plester in about 90 countries, I shall go about my task in a different way.

Dietrich Plester was born January 23, 1922 in Essen. His birthplace is of importance since it lies in a former province of Prussia, called 'Westfalen'. This land stands for willpower, tenacity, firmness of attitude and other virtues which have become all but extinct nowadays in many persons of public standing. It was D. Plester's good fortune that Westfalen had become Prussian, imbuing him with basic principles that are increasingly acknowledged once again in both parts of Germany.

Genealogically the name Plester is derived from a mill, the socalled Pleister mill in southern Westfalen. No wonder he and I should become friends as my name, Miehlke, also derives from mill, meaning 'little mill'.

The idea of what Prussia stood for is being revived at both sides of the Iron Curtain, not the deprecatory, negative image of the 'bad junker' but
the positive traits summarized as follows by Friedrich Christoph Dettinger (1702-1782): (1) Sense of duty; (2) loyalty; (3) pleasure in one's work for its own sake; (4) honesty of thinking; (5) devotion to the common welfare; (6) steadfastness.

I shall proceed to illustrate these traits as evidenced by Dietrich Plester's career.

(1) Duty: By faithfully serving in his various offices and in his attitude towards his patients and students, he has shown himself as an example of a person living for his duties.

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(2) Loyalty: His former teacher, Prof. Meyer zum Gottesberge, is attesting D. Plester a high sense of loyalty of which he gave ample proof through the years of his apprenticeship and later on.

(3) Work for its own sake: An outline is given of the many scientific accomplishments in clinical medicine, especially in ENT but also in pharmacology. Moreover, as a young man he conducted important ethnographic studies, discovering a hitherto unknown African people, the Pre-Nilotes who live on the Upper Nile. This was not without danger as illustrated by his near fatal encounter with a most unscientifically-minded lion.

(4) Honest thinking: There is perfect frankness in the way he leads his clinic and discusses problems with his staff, with no immovable preformed opinions adhered to.

(5) Common welfare: In his truly international clinic he has given his unique professional skill to innumerable patients and strives to extend and spread his knowledge also for the benefit of his colleagues who come to learn from him in courses held in Tbingen and during demonstrations on all continents.

(6) Steadfastness: In his lifetime he has shown himself to be able to face and master the most difficult situations. He is a staunch friend as is his wife, Lore Plester.