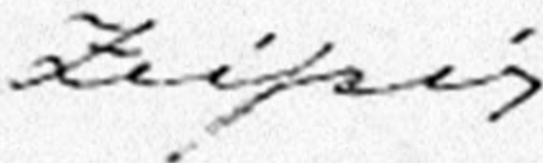


# CONRAD ZEISSIG



Co-Founder & Head of the Institute  
for Technical Physics in Darmstadt

1865 – 1943

Friedrich Conrad Zeissig was born in Leipzig on September 12, 1865. After graduating from school in 1885, he initially completed a three-year apprenticeship as a mechanic in Freiberg, Saxony. His great interest in mathematics, however, led him to study at the University of Göttingen, from which he graduated in 1893. In the same year he obtained a position at the Technical University in Darmstadt.

In Darmstadt, geophysics was already one of the most important study fields at that time, and thus Conrad Zeissig's interest in geophysical, in particular geomagnetic and seismological, issues was awakened. In 1894, for example, he published an article together with Karl Schering on photographic registrations of magnetometers in the journal *Annalen der Physik und Chemie*. In 1897, his professional career led him back to the University of Göttingen for a short time, where he received his doctorate on a topic from theoretical and experimental mechanics on transverse oscillations in a rectangular elastic plate. In 1901 he was then appointed associate professor in Darmstadt, where from 1907 he also taught Beno Gutenberg, another co-founder of the DGG, who later, on Zeissig's recommendation, moved to the University of Göttingen to continue his studies under the supervision of Emil Wiechert.

Due to his education in mechanics, Zeissig was also able to solve precision mechanical problems, which is why he also participated with great passion in the development of seismographs and field-capable magnetometers. For example, he installed a self-made horizontal seismograph in the basement of the Institute in Darmstadt, which from 1902 onwards was one of the main stations of the imperial earthquake observation network of Germany. Furthermore, he built a 1200kg horizontal seismograph in the basement of his home, which was transferred to the Bensberg Seismological Station near Cologne in the 1950s. In 1908, he also succeeded in carrying out registration with color lettering, which led to a better overview, more cleanliness and user comfort compared to classical registration on soot-paper. In addition to new measuring instruments, Zeissig also developed coordinate tables for the seismological station and tables and graphical methods for determination of epicenters. He also investigated earthquakes occurring in southern Germany. In 1920, together with Karl Schering, he carried out a magnetic national survey in Hesse, which later served as an example for other geomagnetic national surveys. In order to intensify his geomagnetic and seismology research, Zeissig had made it his goal to found his own research institute. He was able to fulfill this dream with the newly founded Institute for Technical Physics at the Technical University of Darmstadt in 1920. In March 1934 Conrad Zeissig retired and he died in Seeheim-Jugenheim on October 2, 1943.

*DGG PRO – Public Relations & Outreach, Hannover*

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