

The OMCOS Continuation : Second Symposium Held in Dijon on 28 August – 1 September 1983



The first OMCOS meeting was held from 2 to 6 August 1981 in Fort Collins under the chairmanship of John Stille. It was overshadowed by the aftermath of a political clash. The powerful Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization went on strike because their demand for another pay raise and a shortening of their duty hours was not integrally fulfilled. This strike was formally illegal. Ronald Reagan, freshly in office, warned the trade union he would terminate all employments if work was not resumed within 48 hours. He carried out his threat. The leadership demonstrated throughout the conflict made him promptly very popular.

In summer 1981 I stayed as a visiting scientist at the IBM Research Center in San Jose. Despite an efficient contingency plan of the Federal Aviation Administration still many flights were cancelled or rerouted by the end of July. Luckily I managed to board a flight to Denver and to take a coach to Fort Collins from there.

Though of moderate size, Stille's symposium was perfectly prepared and arranged. Students being on vacation, we had most of the campus at our disposal. Not only the lecture program but also the social events were opulent. The landscape of Colorado is captivating. One afternoon we left on an excursion to Estes Park, the entrance door to the Rocky Mountains National Park. When we got off the bus at an altitude of 2300 m, I immediately began to run up the trail to Long's Peak, as one of the higher elevations in the Rockies rising to 4250 m. After a while I realized that the two hours we were allowed to stay were not enough for such a venture, not even if I had practiced this kind of sport ever before.

Every evening we were invited to a barbecue. Two or three times it was held at John Stille's splendid place. From his garden we overlooked a valley where his neighbor's bison herd grazed. At the last of those events John approached me asking whether I find the OMCOS idea worthwhile to be perpetuated and, if yes, whether I would mind to host a

follow-up meeting in 1983. "Somewhere in Europe", as he added with – in the United States – unusual geographical accuracy.

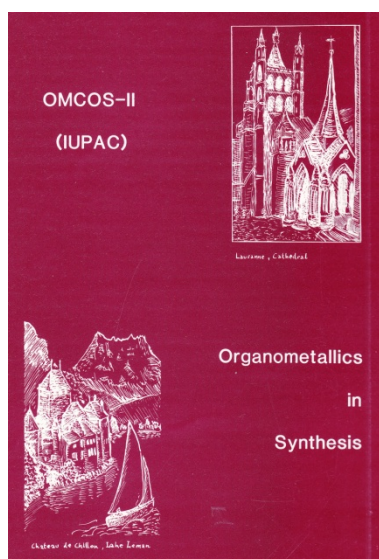
A few phone calls sufficed to clarify the situation. At that time the hotel capacity in Lausanne was too scarce to cope with hundreds of OMCOS participants in the peak season. Moreover, none of our academic institutions was able to provide inexpensive accommodation of young researchers in vacant student dormitories. However, excellent facilities in this respect existed at our partner university in Dijon as I happened to know. Dijon is located in France at only 200 km distance from Lausanne, approximately halfway to Paris. I contacted my colleague Jean Tirouflet there, an extremely charming and practically minded person whom I always remember with profound sympathy and gratitude. To my great delight he agreed to team up with me to jointly organize OMCOS-II.

In hindsight it is amusing to recall the first obstacle we encountered. Although Charles de Gaulle had passed away long ago, his spirit was still virulent. We had regularly to negotiate with official watchdogs about what language to be used on what occasion. The Opening Ceremony was to be celebrated in French exclusively, of course. Lectures were allowed to be pronounced in English whereas the Poster idiom was left to the choice of the author. The three circulars announcing the meeting and summarizing the program had to be edited bilingually, and Air France had to be named "official carrier" for the symposium.

Meanwhile we deployed all forces to bring the project in scientific and organizational shape. To save money we declined all help offered by travel and tourist offices. We rather preferred to rely on our collaborators. Fortunately, the staff in both Dijon and Lausanne was animated by the same enthusiasm and desire to deliver. Sometimes we even resorted to the habits of a family enterprise. My wife acted as the main secretary, my elder daughter prepared pastry and decorations for our Sunday opening mixer, a Swiss folkloric party, my younger daughter composed by hand (no computers yet !) the name tags and my son illustrated the congress booklet. The result of the never ceasing effort in both departments was respectable. Supported in addition by industrial sponsors we were able to reimburse the local and travel expenses of all speakers (including an APEX fare for intercontinental flights) without overcharging our audience. The registration fees for active participants amounted to 650 FF (100 €; 135 \$) and for accompanying persons 150 FF (25 €; 30\$); graduate students, post-doctorals and other young researchers were free. Those who did not want to be accommodated in one of the fashionable downtown hotels had the possibility to rent a single bed-room in a University dormitory for 50 FF (7.50 €; 10 \$) per night. The University restaurant charged 6 FF (0.90 €; 1.25 \$) for breakfast and 25 FF (3.75 €; 5 \$) for lunch and for dinner as well, but 30 FF on Sunday.

The scientific program was intentionally widely varied. To avoid the odor of a palladium festival only three speakers focused on that catalytically most versatile element. The remaining thirteen lectures featured copper (Normant), iron (Franck-Neumann; Pearson),

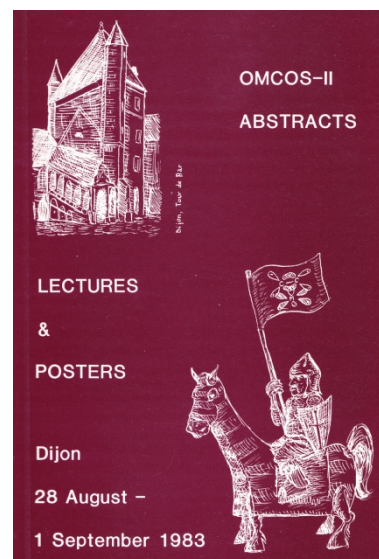
cobalt (Scheffold), chromium (Dötz; Hegedus), titanium (Grubbs; Seebach; Sharpless), aluminum (Casnati; Yamamoto), tin (Mukaiyama), silicon (Corriu; Fleming) and lithium (Lehn; Schöllkopf).



congress booklet : back cover



third circular and final program



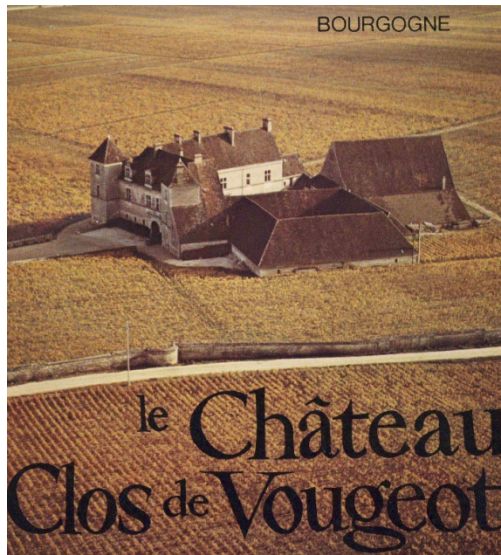
congress booklet : front cover

We were spoiled as scientists and at the same time as tourists. Dijon was a focal point of European history from its early beginnings. After the death of Charles the Great (814) his only surviving son Louis the Pious succeeded him. When the latter deceased (in 840) his three sons distributed the Empire of the Franks among themselves. Charles the Bold, the youngest, took the western part, the future French kingdom, Ludovic the German the eastern part, the future Holy Roman Empire of German Nation, and Lothair, the elder one, choose the middle part and inherited the emperor's title. His territory was a long corridor extending from the North Sea down to central Italy. It was soon occupied and divided up by its neighbors. However, Bourgogne and its capital recovered some independence if, formally at least, as a feudal tenure of the French and German Kingdoms. The farsighted and ambitious dukes Philip the Bold (1363 – 1404), John the Fearless (1404 – 1419), Philip the Good (1419 – 1467) and Charles the Bold (1467 – 1477) acquired large areas mostly as marriage dots or as a pledge, in particular Flanders, Brabant (including Brussels) and Luxemburg. Thus they succeeded in restoring most of the upper half of the short-lived Lothairian empire. The immense wealth created in the sea trading northern provinces, Germanic in language and style of life, spilled over to the Romanic southern districts where commerce, fashion and art began to bloom. In fact, Dijon became one of the most splendid courts in Europe, marking whole an epoch by a display of exuberant splendor. This glorious past is still nowadays incrustated in all ancient objects and monuments. Any visitor of the superb Musée des Beaux-Art felt this immediately. And our excursions to jewels such as the basilica in Veseley or the Cistercian abbey at Fontanay left indelible impressions.

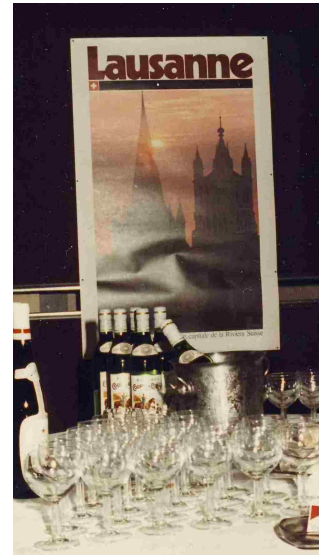
To some extent the medieval sumptuousness has survived in Burgundy. The region has duly conserved its fame for wines and gastronomy. The OMCOS-II participants could hardly contradict this claim. A first reception was given on Monday evening in the impressive *Salle de Flore* of the *Palais des Ducs et des Etats de Bourgogne*. Announced as a "rural buffet meal", this label soon became the understatement of the decade. An incredible variety of delicious food put all guests in a regretful embarrassment of choice. In addition, more than a dozen of tables were loaded with prestigious French crus and, in addition, an equally much appraised selection of Swiss wines. Occupying four full hours, the congress dinner took place in the *Clos de Vougeot* Castle some 20 km south of Dijon. Its vineyards were legendary already at the time of Napoleon, whose general and friend Baptiste Pierre François Jean-Gaspard comte Bisson ordered his soldiers to line up and present arms when they happened to pass the castle.



French wines at the "buffet campagnard"



the legendary vineyards of Clos de Vougeot



Swiss wines at the "buffet campagnard"

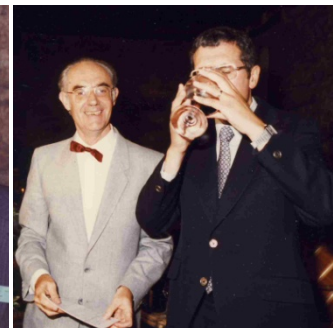


Jean Tiroufflet talking to me



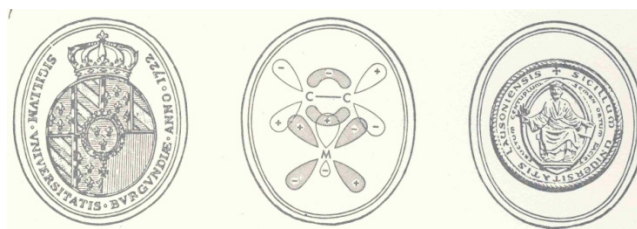
climpses of the dinner party at Clos de Vougeot

Yoko Nozaki, Elsbeth Schlosser and Hitosi Nozaki



Burgundy version of knighting: drinking a jumbo glass of wine

When OMCOS-II ended on the evening of Thursday, 1 September 1983, with an organ concert in the Notre Dame church of Dijon the organizers and their numerous helpers began to relax. Their symposium had obviously been a success. Whereas OMCOS-I was conceived as a workshop – and this made its charm and strength - the numbers of active participants had exploded to 385 in Dijon. The increase in numbers was absorbed without loss of quality or inspiration. This conclusion was also shared by those friends who were destined to assume the responsibility for the future. In the closing session Jean Tirouflet and myself were delighted to proclaim Hitosi Nozaki as the organizer of OMCOS-III, held in Kyoto in June 1985. Moreover, Giuseppe ("Peppino") Casnati, Alfredo Ricci and Piero Salvadori – all of them had given brilliant oral contributions in Dijon – declared their willingness to take care of OMCOS-V, and this event indeed took place in Florence in 1989. Meanwhile we are heading for OMCOS-XVI to be celebrated this summer in Shanghai. May the coming symposium and all following ones proceed to the full satisfaction of the organometallic community.



Logos of the Universities of Dijon (left) and Lausanne (right) and of OMCOS-I

Acknowledgement. It remains to express gratitude once again. I still feel deeply indebted to all those who, in Lausanne and Dijon, contributed to make the magnificent event of OMCOS-II possible. The support offered by numerous sponsors was a crucial encouragement and will for ever be remembered with gratitude and sympathy. I finally wish to thank Donald Zbinden, Luc Patiny and, in particular, Patrick Favre, all in Lausanne, for valuable technical help in the preparation of this little manuscript.

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