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Editorial

Christoph Elschenbroich: Over 40 years of organometallics

Understanding electronic properties and interactions of metal atoms in organometallics runs as the red thread through the scientific research areas of Christoph Elschenbroich over the last decades. Besides original and unique synthetic approaches to organo-transition metal complexes, meaningful physical characterisation was his key to the overall scientific goal of understanding and unravelling molecular mechanisms of electronic communication between metal centers. Several generations of doctoral students and post-docs have experienced this challenge. Often their dedicated work was rewarded by having the chance to synthesize one or the other prototype complex of organometallic chemistry. Examples of such complexes which originate from the 'Eb' laboratory are the first sandwich complexes of compressed and condensed aromatics like e.g. cyclophanes, naphthalin or pyridine to name a few. Another milestone is synthesis and studies of electronic coupling mechanisms in various multinuclear vanadium and chromium complexes by a variety of sophisticated spectroscopic methods.

His early dedication to organometallic chemistry was certainly inspired by the most lively and fruitful scientific environment of the Munich school of the later Nobel laureate Professor E.O. Fischer in the 1960s. After entering the Fischer group he received the diploma and a few years later the Dr. rer nat. degree from TU Munich in 1966. In the following years he pursued post-doctoral work with Professor M. Cais at the Technicon in Haifa, Israel. There, he developed a synthetic pathway into functionalisation of bis(η^6 -benzene)chromium(0), which allowed for the first time the directed lithiation of its aromatic rings, thus opening the route to study ring substituted members of bis(benzene)chromium and its vanadium analogue. Moving back to Europe, a short industrial stint at the Metallgesellschaft Frankfurt am Main followed which was superseded by his final transfer into academia. He joined the University of Basel, Switzerland, doing research in the scientific environment of Professor F. Gerson. In 1975, he completed his Habilitation in Basel and in 1978 he was appointed Professor for Inorganic Chemistry at the Philipps-University Marburg, an academic institution

with a long tradition in organometallic chemistry and at which Edward Frankland as one of its pioneers studied the first organo-zinc compounds already in 1855. During his career in Marburg, Chris Elschenbroich had longer research stays at the University of Zürich (with J. Ammeter), at Brookhaven National Laboratory (with N. Sutin) and at the ENSCP Paris, France.

Aside from his important contributions to research in organo-transition-metal chemistry his activities were equally devoted to teaching the broad field of organometallic chemistry. Out of this passion and the desperate need for a comprehensive textbook in German he developed *Organometallics, a concise Introduction* which appeared about 20 years ago, first as paper back in German, and later translated into several languages. Anyone having experienced Chris as researcher and teacher knew soon after the first appearance of *Organometallics* that the book's humorous subtitle 'a concise introduction' was not really meant as such: rather it paved the way to a long lasting challenge for him to steadily improve and widen the educational scope of this compendium. Now, after its sixth revised and substantially extended version, *Organometallics* has matured into the most complete textbook of the field and it serves as the standard in the area of organometallic chemistry worldwide.

On the occasion of his 70th birthday all contributors to this special issue of *Journal of Organometallic Chemistry* are proud to honour Chris by dedicating their scientific reports to him.

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