

Preface

Much thought, work, and effort was involved in the many inventions and developments of instruments and procedures, of both the scientific world as well as the everyday life which we take for granted and do not spare a thought about. The German word “Sternstunde”¹ is a good expression which characterizes “the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity some people have of being able to provide a lasting contribution to the evolution of mankind” [1]. Many people fail in utilizing this moment, this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

László Zechmeister was for sure not one of them. He recognized the potential of the chromatographic method and made extensive use of it for his research about natural products. Zechmeister promoted the use and success of chromatography in chemistry by citing the technique in many of his papers and by additionally providing monographs about this analytical method. His work represents “the fundamentals on which the development of modern chromatography was based” [2].

This genius, however, will not only be remembered for his achievements in the field of chromatography, but also for the foundation of the series *Progress in the Chemistry of Organic Natural Products*, a journal including articles on contemporary research by masters in their fields of expertise. The aim of this thesis is to cast light on Zechmeister’s life and his pioneering role in chromatography, and to provide a more detailed insight on the aforementioned journal series.

The accomplishment and the successful conclusion of this work would not have been possible without the support and the contributions of a number of people and institutions. I would especially like to thank Univ.-Doz. Dr. Rudolf Werner Soukup for his guidance and suggestions. Special thanks also go to the library staff of archives of the *Eidgenössische Universität Zürich* and the *California Institute of Technology, Pasadena*. Their assistance in the acquisition of archive material has been essential to this work.

¹ Engl.: moment of glory.

References

1. Ettre LS (1979) 75 years of chromatography: a glimpse behind the scene. *J High Resolut Chromatogr Chromatogr Commun* 2:506
2. Ettre LS (1972) In memoriam László Zechmeister 1889–1972. *Chromatographia* 5/5:317. <http://resources.metapress.com/pdf-preview.axd?code=p6811478246530vp&size=largest>. Accessed 30 June 2011

László Zechmeister

His Life and Pioneering Work in Chromatography

Wirth, M.

2013, VIII, 61 p., Softcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-00641-3