
EDITORIAL



Why Organocatalysis?

Organocatalysis is a topic that can be called «very hot» nowadays (see, for example, the home page of *Angewandte Chemie*). The definition corresponds to an organic molecule, of small molecular weight, acting as catalyst, without any metal. The success of this word is due to the notion of 'green chemistry' as opposed to 'dirty' organometallic chemistry, thus defining a politically correct aspect of chemistry.

In fact, the renewal of proline-catalyzed transformations in early 2000 ... by Barbas III, List and MacMillan was the starting point of the word 'Organocatalysis'. An explosion of articles in this area occurred within two to three years. In addition to the initial proline-catalyzed reactions, the word 'Organocatalysis' covers nowadays many other well-known reactions such as Baylis-Hilman, Stetter, Knoevenagel *etc.* ... Even phase-transfer catalysis falls, now, into this category!

It is quite significant that the first efficient organocatalyzed asymmetric reactions were described by Hajos and Parrish, and by Eder, Sauer and Wiechert, both teams from pharmaceutical companies (Hoffmann-la-Roche and Schering). It is clear that there is a lot of interest in organocatalysis not only from academia but also from industry.

Whatever the definitions, the fact is that this aspect of catalysis, particularly its asymmetric version, is the fastest growing field of synthetic organic chemistry, with fierce competition all over the world. This issue of CHIMIA brings many outstanding actors together, and shows the vitality of this chemistry through several aspects.

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