



Nr 1/2015 (33)

# LET'S MEET *in Wrocław*

*Spotkajmy się we Wrocławiu*



ISSN 1644-1524

## 70 YEARS OF WROCLAW CHEMISTRY



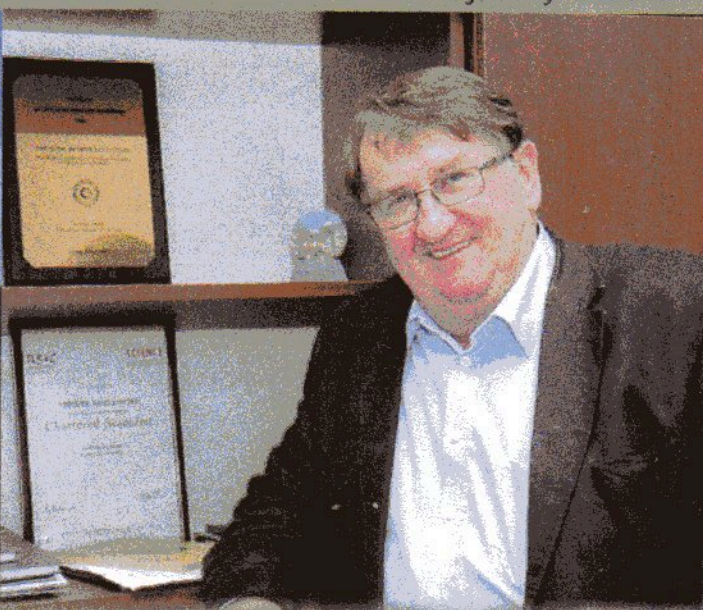
*Prof. Bogusława Jeżowska-Trzebiatowska (1908-1991)  
and Prof. Włodzimierz Trzebiatowski (1906-1982)*



*Włodzimierz Trzebiatowski Institute  
of Low Temperature and Structure Research PAS*

*Faculty of Chemistry, University of Wrocław*

*Prof. Henryk Kozłowski*



### THEIR MISSION WAS TO BUILD



*The Team of Bioinorganic and Biomedical Chemistry with its BOSS, 2013*

## **SOME FRAGMENTARY REFLECTIONS ABOUT PROFESSOR HENRYK KOZŁOWSKI AND HIS MENTOR PROFESSOR BOGUSŁAWA JEŻOWSKA-TRZEBIATOWSKA**

**I**t is a great honor to be invited to contribute some "reflections" to this issue of 'Let's meet in Wrocław' – and I do it with great pleasure. The word "reflections" already indicates that I must have passed my first youth. Indeed, I would like to begin this short essay with the year 1970, when several of my today's young and close friends in the Chemistry Department of this University were not even born.

Why "1970"? Well, this issue is devoted to the memory of Professor Bogusława Jeżowska-Trzebiatowska and her husband, Professor Trzebiatowski, with a tribute to Professor Henryk Kozłowski. Without Madame BJT, as Professor Jeżowska-Trzebiatowska is often called by those having difficulties to pronounce her name (which includes myself), Professor Henryk Kozłowski would not be in the position where he is today and Bioinorganic Chemistry would not be such a strong topic at the University of Wrocław. Therefore, it is appropriate to devote a few sentences to Madame BJT, who was the teacher of Henryk and with whom I came in contact for the first time in 1970.

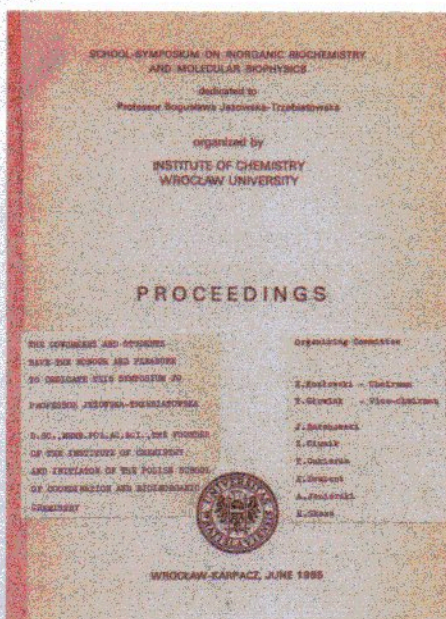
In September 1970 Professor Jeżowska-Trzebiatowska organized the 13th International Conference on Coordination Chemistry (ICCC-13) in Cracow and Zakopane. This ICCC was the first one to be held in an Eastern country behind the "Iron Curtain" and my wife Astrid and I were lucky enough to be able to attend this large meeting and it was at this occasion when I first met Madame BJT. She was already known worldwide for her studies in Coordination Chemistry and the Abstract Book of ICCC-13 lists 11 Abstracts from her laboratory that carry her name. On two of these Abstracts also the name of one of her Ph.D. students, that is, Henryk Kozłowski, appears as a coauthor, and remarkably, one of these is entitled "Studies of the Structure of Some Copper(II) Amino Acid and Peptide Complexes" – and thus, we are already in the middle of Bioinorganic Chemistry.

Four years later Professor Jeżowska-Trzebiatowska participated at ICCC-16, held in August 1974 in Dublin (Ireland), with four Abstracts, one of these carrying also the name of Henryk Kozłowski. The Book of Abstracts of ICCC-17, held in Hamburg (FRG) in September 1976, lists five titles with her name, two of them coauthored by Henryk, one in the context of metal ion-glutathione interactions. More remarkable, in Hamburg I had the honor to chair the Session Lecture of Professor Jeżowska-Trzebiatowska, which was entitled "Ligand and Medium Influence on the Activity of Oxygen Carriers" and which focused on Co(II) complexes and the  $\mu$ peroxo bridged  $[\text{Co(III)}-\text{O}_2-\text{Co(III)}]$  species, touching also on related natural systems. Madame BJT was so enthusiastic about her results, which were impressive indeed, that she lost all feeling for time and it was very difficult to stop her.

We saw each other again at ICCC-18 in São Paulo (Brazil) in July 1977, and more important, at ICCC-19, held in Prague (Czechoslovakia) in September 1978. At that occasion 13 presentations came from the laboratory of Madame BJT, but only one of these was together with Henryk Kozłowski. In fact, he had another five studies listed in the Book of Abstracts; all of them dealing with bioinorganic topics indicating that he had by now his own sub-group, evidently being supported by his mentor Professor Jeżowska-Trzebiatowska, who had recognized the importance of Bioinorganic Chemistry. Further ICCCs followed at which Madame BJT and I participated, namely at ICCC-20 in Calcutta (India; December 1979) and also at ICCC-21 in Toulouse (France; July 1980).

In the same year, i.e., 1980, prior to the ICCC in Toulouse, Professor Jeżowska-Trzebiatowska and I had already met in early June in Florence (Italy), where Professor Ivano Bertini had organized the 5th

International Symposium on Solute-Solute-Solvent Interactions. At this conference Madame BJT presented two studies and so did Professor Henryk Kozłowski, who had become Associate Professor in 1979 at the University of Wrocław. I believe to remember that it was at this occasion in Florence that Henryk and I talked for the first time intensely together. However, so did Madame BJT and Ivano Bertini; she was not afraid at all to argue with the gigantic Organizer – and he respected her, as is evident from the fact that he invited Professor Jeżowska-Trzebiatowska to attend the 1st International Conference on Bioinorganic Chemistry (ICBIC-1) that was held in 1983 in Florence.



In April 1983 Henryk visited the University of Basel lecturing about "Donation of Thioether Sulfur in Bioinorganic Chemistry" and stayed with Astrid and myself for several days in our home in Biel-Benken – we had become friends and hence, it was natural that he visited us on his way to Lille in France. In these years Henryk had tied up several international collaborations and this is strongly reflected in his scientific contributions for ICBIC-1, held, as indicated above, in Florence in June 1983. There are four Abstracts from his laboratory; two of these carry also the name of Brigitte Decock-Le Reverend from the Technical University of Lille (France); one study was done together with Leslie D. Pettit from the University of Leeds (UK) and another one with Mario Gosálvez from the National Center of Medical Research in Madrid (Spain).

Thanks to these international links, and despite facing many difficulties, Henryk was able to organize in June 1985 in Karpacz the "School-Symposium on Inorganic Biochemistry and Molecular Biophysics dedicated to Professor Bogusława Jeżowska-Trzebiatowska". Poland was at that time still behind the "Iron Curtain" and it was not trivial to travel from the West to the East and vice versa, of course. This symposium was an outstanding success and I was very fortunate to have been invited to this event. In fact, over the years I participated at six out of the twelve International Symposia on Inorganic Biochemistry (ISIB) held up to now. This series of conferences organized by Henryk Kozłowski always focused on international contacts and collaborations and gave especially young people a platform to present their results and to enter the scientific community. Naturally, Astrid and I are much looking forward to ISIB-13 celebrating the 30th jubilee anniversary of these events in early September of this year, again in Karpacz – and to meeting there again many old friends.

Needless to emphasize that Henryk, together with friends as coauthors, contributed twice to our book series Metal Ions in Life Sciences (MILS): Once to MILS-1 with a chapter entitled "Metal Ion Binding Properties of Proteins Related to Neurodegeneration" and once to MILS-2 with "Nickel Ion Complexes of Amino Acids and Peptides".

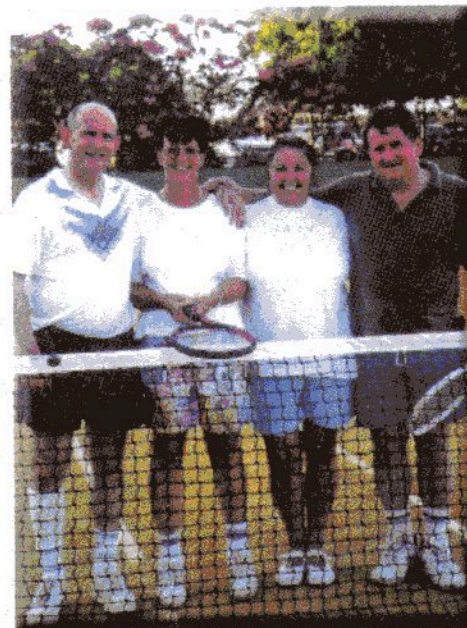
Of course, over the years Henryk, Astrid, and I participated at many conferences all over the globe, like ICCCs and ICBICs, including the European Biological Inorganic Chemistry Conferences (EuroBICs), with EuroBIC-8 being held in 2008 in Wrocław, organized by



Henryk and his crew... plus many other meetings like the International Symposia on Metal Complexes (ISMECs), which deepened our friendship... and strengthened Henryk's links to Italy (Siena, Sardinia, etc.). An early example of these links is provided by his Abstract for ICBIC-3 (held in 1987 in Noordwijkerhout, The Netherlands) which lists (in alphabetical order!) next to his name, Ivano Bertini, Claudio Luchinat, Luigi Messori, Mario Piccioli, and Andrea Scozzafava – the "crème de la crème" from Florence – plus Junzo Hirose from Nagoya (Japan).

However, one more event deserves special mentioning and this is the "International Symposium on Bioinorganic Chemistry of the New Age" which was held in October 2006 in honor of Professor Osamu Yamauchi at Kansai University (Japan) on the occasion of his 70th birthday. This was scientifically an outstanding meeting with intense discussions as seen on the picture between Henryk and Osamu. It was not only scientific-wise a success (because we wrote a common paper at this occasion), but at the same time it allowed us deep insights into the Japanese culture with a visit to the Todaiji Temple in Nara, the largest wooden building in the World.

Next to excellent food and a good glass of wine, which one may enjoy with Henryk and which most of us are taking for granted, he has a not so evident passion: Henryk likes to play tennis! Together with Jan Reedijk and Astrid he has played tennis all over Europe. For example, at EuroBIC-4 in Seville in 1998 Professor Roberta Ward from the Université de Louvain (Belgium) joined forces with him (at 40°C!) – Astrid and I are now looking forward to ISIB-13 to be held in September in Karpacz to celebrate Henryk's 70th anniversary... we are wishing him and his beloved wife Jola good health, many more walks with their dogs and last but by no means least continued satisfaction with his not so secret love "Bioinorganic Chemistry"! We are certainly open also in the future to his sometimes rather unconventional but always fruitful ideas.



*Professor Helmut Sigel, University of Basel*