

The Journal of the International Society fo Plastination: Assessment and Future Prospects

Regis Olry

Departement de chimie-biologie, Universite du Quebec a Trois-Rivieres, Trois-Rivieres, Quebec, Canada

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Abstract

The Journal of the International Society for Plastination was founded twelve years ago by Harmon Bickley. The aim of this study was to assess its evolution through its first seventeen issues by analyzing different data of the full-length papers.

Introduction

The Journal of the International Society for Plastination (JISP) was founded in 1987 by Harmon Bickley. Since that date, it went through 13 volumes, for a total of 17 issues. Four editors have followed one another: Harmon Bickley, USA (Vols. 1-2), Robert W. Henry, USA (Vols. 3-7), Dale Ulmer, USA (Vols. 8-11), and Gilles Grondin, Canada (Vols. 12 and following ones). Wayne Lyons, Canada, was assistant editor for vols. 9-11.

Methodology

This study intended assessing the first seventeen issues of the journal (Vol. 1, number 1 to Vol. 13, number 2), and bringing out some future prospects. In that aim, only the full-length papers published in the JISP were taken into account. All other content was excluded from this study (editor's notes, presidential letters, minutes and abstracts of the biennial meetings or international conferences, editorials, announcements, thesis reviews, exhibition reports, letters to the editor, short communications). The data analyzed in each issue were the number of pages, the number of full-length papers, their average number of pages, of authors, of bibliographical references and the number of them taken from the JISP, and finally their geographical origin (continent and country).

Results

Owing to the variable number of issues per volume (2 issues for vols. 1-2, and 12-13; one issue for all other volumes), the results of this study have been expressed per issue and not per volume.

The average number of pages per issue is 39.6 (31-49). However, it has to be pointed out that the size of characters used by the editors changed as the years went. Moreover, the first issue of Vol. 1 was the only one to be printed in one column (all following issues were printed in two columns). These parameters explain the relative disparity from the average.

The average number of full-length publications per issue is 6.7 (5-11). However, it was sometimes difficult to acknowledge some articles as full-length publications in some issues. Aside from Vol. 10, number one, the number of full-length papers varies between 5 and 8.

The average number of pages per publication is 4.1 (1.6-7.4). As for the first section of the results, the size of characters may have influenced this parameter.

The number of authors per publication is 2.2 on average (1.4-3.6). It becomes stabilized between 2 and 2.6 since Vol. 11, number 1.

The average number of bibliographical references per publication is 5.8 (1.0-13.0), including 1.2 (0.0-3.8) references taken from previous issues of our journal (figure 1).

The geographical origin of the full-length papers is summarized on Table 1. The total number of publications in this table (128) is higher than the real total number of full-length papers published in the journal (114) as some publications were written by two (or more) authors from different countries. However, it is much more interesting to analyze the chronology of the distribution (figure 2). From 1987 to 1992 (Vol. 1, number 1 to Vol. 6, number 1), all the papers published were written by European or American authors. In 1993 (Vol. 7, number 1) was published the first article from Africa. In the following issues appeared the first publications of Oceanian and Asian origins, in 1994 (Vol. 8, number 1) and 1996 (Vol. 11, number 1), respectively. If we analyze the geographical origin of the last four issues of the JISP, we can see that about 50% of the publications were written by non-American non-European authors.

Table 1. Geographical origins (continent and country) of the 114 full-length papers published in the JISP from Vol. 1, number 1 to Vol. 13, number 2.

Continent	Country	Number of publications
Africa	South Africa	9
America	Brasil Canada USA	1 12 40
Asia	China Iran Japan Malaysia Thailand	3 1 2 1 2
Europe	Austria Bulgaria Germany Italy The Netherlands Norway Sweden Switzerland	7 1 196 6 1 1 1
Oceania	Australia New Zealand	3 8

Discussion

This paper aimed at analyzing the content (full-length papers) of the first seventeen issues of the JISP.

The number of papers is scarcely sufficient to publish two issues a year. Each member of the society should plan at least one manuscript every two or three years (this is a standard for some other international journals). This would lead every one to take advantage of the experience of his (her) colleagues and relieve the stress of the editors.

As can be seen on figure 1, the papers published since Vol. 12, number 1 are more well-documented in the general and specific literatures. This trend seems to be related to the publication of the Current Plastination Index in 1996. It is obvious that this bibliography on plastination, though rarely cited in the publications (3 times, including 1 editorial), proved very helpful to researchers.

In conclusion, the Journal of the International Society for Plastination is establishing its pedigree slowly but surely. This trend is the fruit of the editors' labour, and has to be supported by each member of the society.

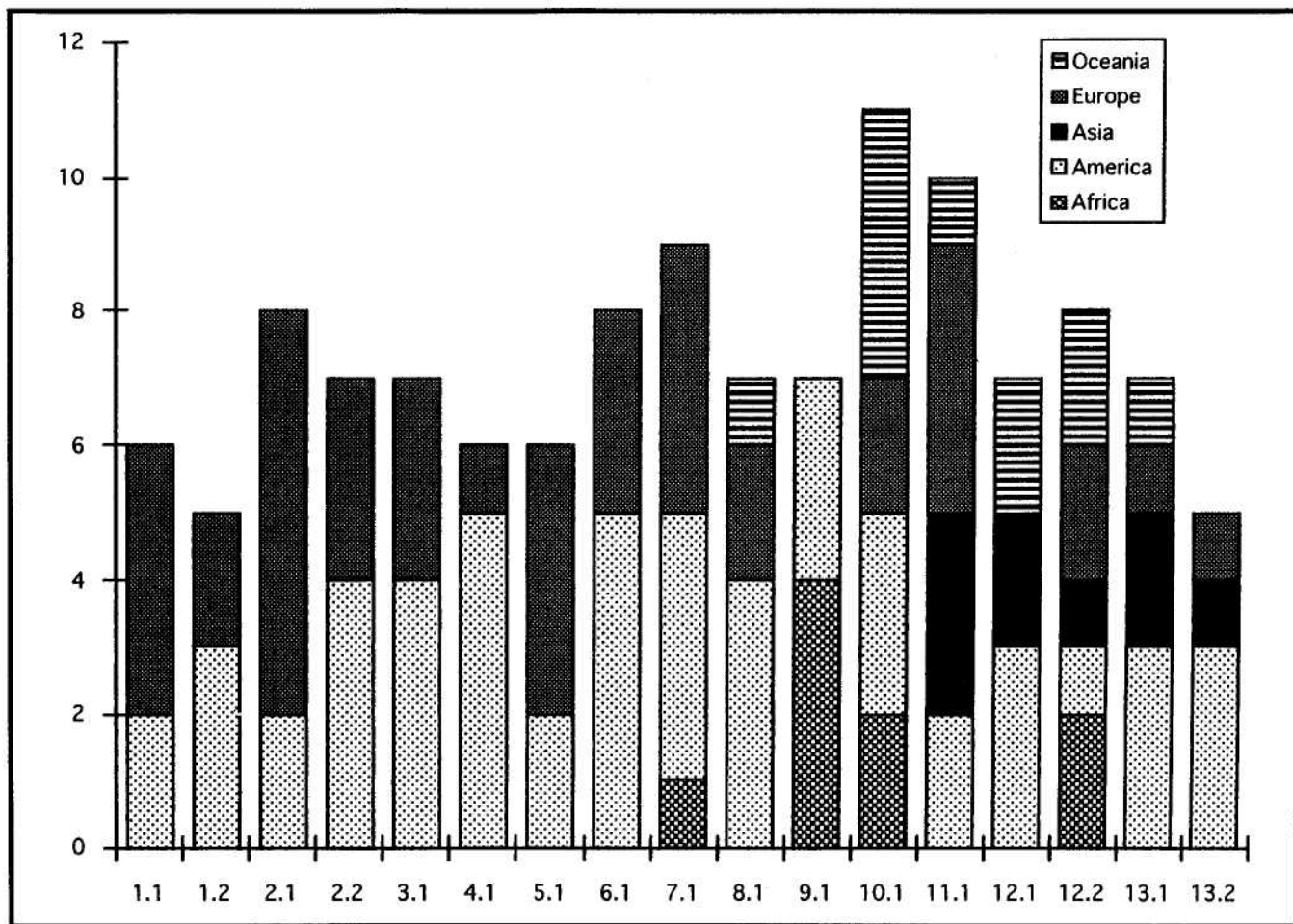


Figure 1. Number of publications per continent in each issue of our journal. Internationalization of the articles is obvious in the last 6 issues.

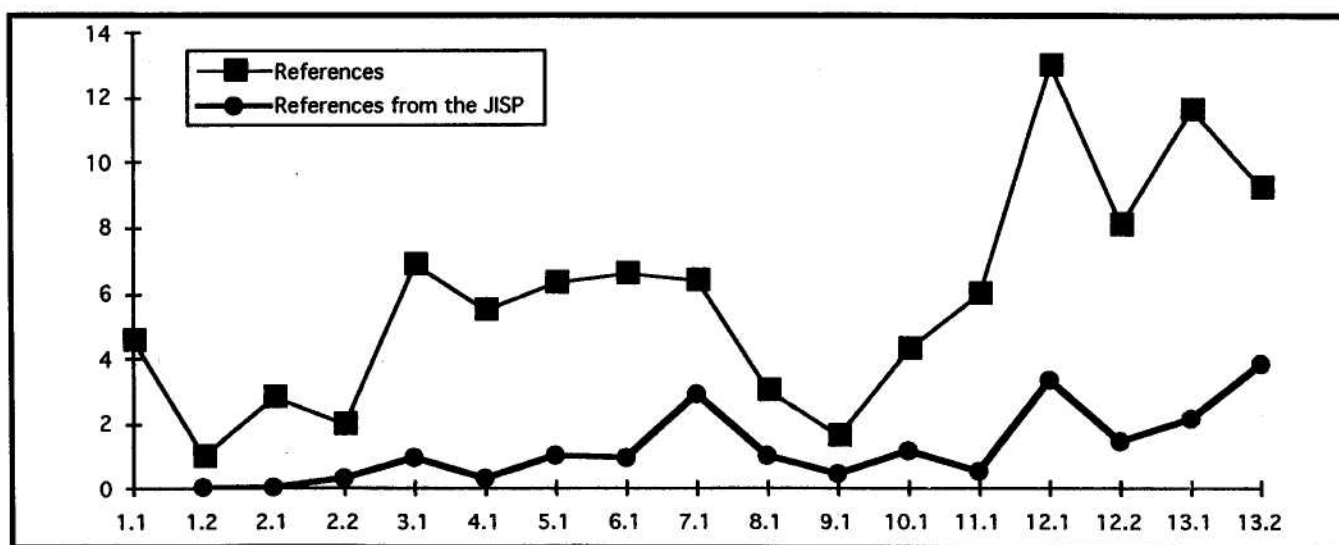


Figure 2. Evolution of the bibliographical references cited in the full-length papers: average number per publication (black squares) and average number of them taken from our journal (black disks). The Current Plastination Index was made available to plastinators between Vols. 11 and 12.