

JEAN-LOUIS CHERMANT

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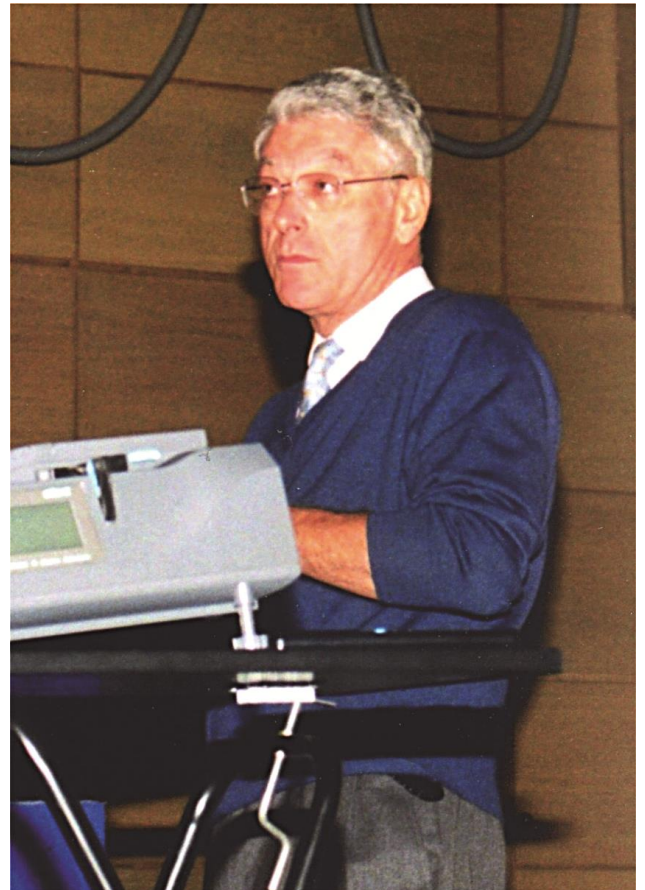
LESZEK KAROL WOJNAR

Institute of Applied Informatics Cracow University of Technology, Poland
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Jean-Louis Chermant was widely known within the scientific community focused on image analysis and stereology, especially in materials science applications. He served as Vice President for Europe (1984-1988) and President of the International Society of Stereology (1988-1991). His engaging personality, coupled with his vast scientific knowledge, made him an outstanding manager and even a visionary.

A couple of examples highlight his contributions: At CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), he was a member of a select twelve-member committee responsible for supporting and allocating financial resources for French scientific research. He also managed the LERMAT Laboratory (Laboratoire d'Études et de Recherches sur les Matériaux) at the ENSICAEN, Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Ingénieurs de Caen. His official title was *Maître de Recherche*. The laboratory, under his leadership, was involved in cutting-edge research on ceramic matrix composites used in aeronautics and aerospace structures. The laboratory's budget was sourced from three entities: CNRS, the university, and the local government of Normandy. Scientific equipment was shared with two other laboratories, a collaborative approach that enabled access to world-class equipment and fostered top-level research.

For many years, Jean-Louis argued that the complicated stereological theory, based on high-level mathematics, would lead to its marginalization. In his view, only joint research on image analysis and stereology could lead to a better understanding of the relationship between microstructure and the properties of materials. It is noteworthy that, already in 2000, under the influence of discussions with Jean-Louis, the 6th STERMAT conference held in Krakow, Poland, was entitled the International Conference on Stereology and Image Analysis in Materials Science. In 2017, the International Society for Stereology (ISS) also changed its name to the International Society for Stereology & Image Analysis.



Jean-Louis Chermant during 6th STERMAT in Krakow 2000

His renowned book, co-authored with Michel Coster, *Précis d'analyse d'images* (1985), accelerated the growth of applications in image analysis, although it was unfortunate that there was no English version. Jean-Louis knew that his ideas would remain unfulfilled without wide access to image analysis equipment. Thanks to his initiative and support, ADCIS, a company based in Caen, was founded in July 1995, with Bruno Lay as CEO. Aphelion software, developed by ADCIS, combined the experience of the *Centre de Morphologie Mathématique* from École des Mines de Paris and Amerinex Applied Imaging. Since

image analysis software had primarily been developed for Unix workstations, ADCIS made the innovative decision to provide software specifically for PCs running Windows OS.

While these achievements are important and well-known, they only offer a glimpse into Jean-Louis Chermant as a person. My close contact with him began during the International Congress on Stereology held in Caen, France, from September 2-9, 1987. Jean-Louis, who was chairman of the congress, asked me for a cartoon I had used during my lecture. Grateful for the help of French colleagues who had assisted with my luggage lost at the airport, I decided to prepare a series of cartoons for the congress overnight. To my surprise, they were used as illustrations during the closing session. This event revealed Jean-Louis's great sense of humour and marked the beginning of nearly 20 years of collaboration, resulting in numerous cartoons used at conferences, lectures, and in personal interactions.

I particularly remember the large STEReology in MATerials (STERMAT) conference held in Szczyrk, Poland, in September 1990. Foreign guests arrived from Czechoslovakia, France, Japan, Switzerland, the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and both the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany. Coincidentally, the German reunification occurred on the second day of the conference. Our German guests were understandably jubilant and decided to invite everyone to celebrate with champagne. Unfortunately, many participants recalled the tensions of World War II, and the atmosphere at the conference became quite tense. Jean-Louis Chermant, who was then President of the ISS, asked for my help. I created a series of cartoons illustrating the reunification of Germany as typical image analysis operations. For example, the division between the eastern and western blocs was referred to as SKIZ, an abbreviation of Skeleton by Influence Zone, a term familiar to those in the field of image analysis. The audience immediately understood the allusion. The round of applause that followed

signalled the resolution of the tension, and soon after, champagne was served, and a friendly atmosphere prevailed until the end of the conference.

Three years after the Caen congress, I was preparing my habilitation monograph on quantitative fractography. After serious discussions with Ervin E. Underwood on tools for quantitatively assessing fracture surfaces, I needed a professional reviewer. Jean-Louis kindly agreed to provide an opinion, which was crucial in defending my work at the university. This is just one example of the many ways he helped me.

Jean-Louis was born in Tours and remembered his early childhood as being marked by the tragic events of World War II. Some members of his family perished in the Auschwitz concentration camp, making it an essential stop for him during his first visit to Poland. He visited Poland several times, and I had the pleasure of being his guest on some occasions. I remember his house with its large fireplace, where we spent delightful hours with Jean-Louis and his wife, Liliane. Jean-Louis was also an excellent guide, with deep knowledge of Normandy, showing me sites like Omaha Beach, the famous Pointe du Hoc, the Bayeux Tapestry, and the charming town of Honfleur. It was always a great pleasure to spend time with him.

I must also mention that Jean-Louis helped many people, not just me, to join the international scientific community. In the late 1980s, East European countries were still isolated from the rest of the world, and financial problems were only one of the many challenges people faced.

In summary, Jean-Louis Chermant was not only a scientist with a profound impact on the development of stereology and image analysis applications, but also, for over 35 years, a true friend who greatly influenced my career and my life. The news of his passing was an immense loss. However, I will always keep his memory alive.