

Highly Cited Articles. 36.
Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics Papers
Published in the 1940s

Number 10, March 7, 1977

Recently we published a list of the biochemical classics of the 1940s.¹ Here is a list of highly cited articles published in the 1940s in physics, physical and synthetic chemistry, and mathematics.

While the 101 articles on the list were published in 32 different journals, only six journals account for half of the articles. Twenty of the articles listed in Figure 1 were published in *Journal of Chemical Physics*; 14 in *Physical Review*; 12 in *Journal of the American Chemical Society*; and 5 articles each in *Bell System Technical Journal*, *Reviews of Modern Physics*, and *Transactions of the Faraday Society (Journal of the Chemical Society Faraday)*.

Other journals which published more than one article on this list are *Proceedings of the Physical Society of London* (4 articles), *Analytical Chemistry* (3), *Journal of the Chemical Society* (3), *Journal of Physics USSR* (3), *Industrial and Engineering Chemistry Analytical Edition* (2), *Journal de Chimie Physique* (2), *Nature* (2), *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A* (2), and *Proceedings of the Royal Society London A* (2). *Science* is notably absent from the list.

Most of the articles were published in English. Three were in French, two in German, and 96 in what was, as early as the 1940's, the world language of the physical sciences--English. The articles are listed alphabetically by author in Figure 2.

According to C.W. Ufford, professor emeritus of physics at the University of Pennsylvania, one-third of these articles deal with molecular and chemical structure. Eleven deal with solutions, 6 with crystals, 5 with chemical analysis, 5 with ferromagnetism, 4 with x-rays, 3 with plasmas, and 2 each with chemical bonds, dipole movement, Brownian motion, metals, and nuclear magnetic resonance. Overall, Dr. Ufford notes that the articles on the list are heavily chemical in nature.

Several of the papers on this list have amassed a remarkable number of citations. The paper by N. Bloembergen et al. (1), for example, was cited 1145 times in the period 1961-1975. It concerns nuclear magnetic resonance, a powerful tool for the study of chemical structure. Also, the paper by K. Bowden et al. (12), a methods paper in chemical preparation, was cited 1127

Figure 1. Journals that published the highly cited 1940s articles listed in Figure 2. A = number of articles. B = 1975 impact factor. (Present titles of journals are given in parentheses.)

| A | B | Journal |
|----|--------|---|
| 1 | 1.357 | Acta Crystallographica |
| 1 | -- | Acta Physicochemica URSS (disc.) |
| 3 | 2.416 | Analytical Chemistry |
| 1 | 1.764 | Annals of Mathematics |
| 1 | 0.592 | Annals Math. Statistics (Ann. Statistics) |
| 1 | 0.641 | Annalen der Physik |
| 1 | 2.600 | Annales de Physique |
| 5 | 2.021 | Bell Syst. Techn. J. |
| 1 | 10.392 | Chemical Reviews |
| 1 | 0.465 | Industr. Eng. Chem. (Chemical Technology) |
| 2 | 2.416 | Ind. Eng. Chem. Anal. Ed. (Analytical Chemistry) |
| 12 | 4.671 | J. Amer. Chem. Soc. |
| 20 | 2.931 | J. Chemical Physics |
| 3 | 1.713 | J. Chem. Soc. |
| 2 | 0.780 | J. Chimie Physique |
| 1 | 1.881 | J. Opt. Soc. America |
| 1 | 2.171 | J. Phys. Chemistry |
| 3 | -- | J. Physics USSR (disc.) |
| 1 | 2.171 | J. Phys. Colloid Chem. (J. Phys. Chemistry) |
| 1 | 0.604 | J. Sci. Instruments (J. Physics E Sci. Instr.) |
| 1 | 0.109 | Kolloid Zschr. |
| 2 | 3.737 | Nature |
| 1 | 1.800 | Philosophical Magazine |
| 2 | 1.353 | Phil. Trans. Roy. Soc. A |
| 14 | 2.490 | Physical Review |
| 1 | 7.876 | Proc. Nat. Acad. Sci. USA |
| 4 | 1.767 | Proc. Phys. Soc. London (J. Physics A, B, C, D, E, F) |
| 2 | 1.737 | Proc. Roy. Soc. London A |
| 5 | 15.841 | Rev. Mod. Physics |
| 1 | -- | Trans. Amer. Inst. Min. Engrs (Mining Engineering) |
| 1 | 1.204 | Trans. Electrochem. Soc. (J. Electrochem. Soc.) |
| 5 | 1.720 | Trans. Faraday Soc. (J. Chem. Soc. Faraday) |

times in the same period. Other papers on this list with remarkable citation records include those by S. Chandrasekhar (15), J.B. Martin et al. (61), J.H. VanVleck (91)--also dealing with magnetic resonance--and A.J.C. Wilson (96).

Some of the articles listed here (numbers 8, 11, 13, 23, 27, 28, 29, 36, 37, 41, and 62) are still on the ascendancy, since their citation rate in 1974 exceeds their average yearly citation rate for the years 1961-1975--and their 1975 citation rate is higher than that for 1974. It will be interesting to see if the number of citations these articles receive continues to increase in the future.

The significance of this group of articles is indicated by the fact that one fifth of them were written by Nobel Prize winners. Two fundamental papers on nuclear magnetic resonance helped F. Bloch (1) and E.M. Purcell (10), win the Nobel Prize for physics in 1952. R.P. Feynman, whose fundamental paper on quantum mechanics is on the list (27), won the Nobel Prize for physics in 1965. D. Gabor (32), who helped improve the microscope in the 1940s and later invented holography, won the Nobel for physics in 1971. W. Shockley (84), who developed the transistor, won the Nobel for physics in 1956. In recent years he has unfortunately involved himself in discussions of the genetics of intelligence. I do not agree with Shockley's theories, but I do defend at least his right to expound them.

My good friend Harold C. Urey, whose paper (90) on the thermodynamic properties of isotopic substances appears on this list, is best known for the discovery of deuterium, for which he won the Nobel Prize for chemistry in 1934. The public also knows him for his interest in the origin of the solar system. Professor Urey still serves as a member of ISI® 's board of directors.

Other Nobel winners whose names appear on this list include E.P. Wigner (7), physics in 1963; M. Calvin (13), chemistry in 1961; P. Debye (23), chemistry in 1936; L.D. Landau (25, 55 and 56), physics in 1962; P.J. Flory (28), chemistry in 1974; R.S. Mulliken (65, 66, and 67), chemistry in 1966; L. Neel (68), physics in 1970; L. Onsager (70), chemistry in 1968; J. Schwinger (77), physics in 1965; and C.H. Townes (89), physics in 1964.

Of these 101 articles of the 1940s, only 30 were published in the years 1940 to 1944--6 in 1940, 8 in 1941, 9 in 1942, 2 in 1943 and 5 in 1944. The remaining 70 were published in the latter half of the decade. Six appeared in 1945, the last year of World War II. Eight were published in 1946, 11 in 1947, 24 in 1948, and 22 in 1949. This chronological distribution follows remarkably well the size of the literature during those years. An examination of

the statistical data for any annual *Science Citation Index*® reflects the size of the literature for earlier years.

The data in columns D and E show the degree of current interest in the subjects represented by these papers. However, to obtain a more complete picture of what these data indicate one would have to examine the cluster maps in which these papers occur.²

The small number of papers in mathematics should be interpreted carefully. On average, math papers are not cited as heavily as others, because of the low average number of references in math papers.

Several of the journals in Figure 1 are no longer published or have changed title. One curiosity is the paper by L.S. Darken (21) on the interrelation of diffusion and mobility through free energy in binary metallic systems. I wonder why he published in a journal of mining engineers.

As a final personal note I was pleased to see a paper (38) by Professor Ralph Halford of Columbia University. He was one of my professors in undergraduate physical chemistry. Later when I became a graduate student, he helped me through the personal crisis that made me realize experimental physical chemistry was not my career bag.

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Figure 2. Highly cited articles in physics, physical and synthetic chemistry, and mathematics published in the 1940s. A = item number. B = total citations 1961-1975. C = average yearly citations 1961-1975. D = citations in 1974. E = citations in 1975. Articles are listed alphabetically by first author.

| A | B | C | D | E | Bibliographic Data |
|-----|------|----|----|----|---|
| 1. | 201 | 13 | 13 | 9 | Albert A. Goldacre R & Phillips J. The strength of heterocyclic bases. <i>J. Chem. Soc.</i> p. 2240-49, 1948. |
| 2. | 347 | 23 | 31 | 38 | Anderson P W. Pressure broadening in the microwave and infra-red regions. <i>Physical Review</i> 76:647-61, 1949. |
| 3. | 415 | 27 | 16 | 10 | Archibald W J. A demonstration of some new methods of determining molecular weights from the data of the ultracentrifuge. <i>J. Phys. Coll. Chem.</i> 51:1204-14, 1947. |
| 4. | 256 | 17 | 24 | 21 | Avrami M. Kinetics of phase change. 2. Transformation-time relations for random distribution of nuclei. <i>J. Chem. Physics</i> 8:212-24, 1940. |
| 5. | 174 | 11 | 21 | 16 | Avrami M. Kinetics of phase change. 3. Granulation, phase change, and microstructure. <i>J. Chem. Physics</i> 9:177-84, 1941. |
| 6. | 201 | 13 | 13 | 10 | Bargmann V. Irreducible unitary representations of the Lorentz group. <i>Annals Math.</i> 48:568-640, 1947. |
| 7. | 198 | 13 | 9 | 13 | Bargmann V & Wigner E P. Group theoretical discussion of relativistic equations. <i>Proc. Nat. Acad. Sci. USA</i> 34:211-23, 1948. |
| 8. | 416 | 27 | 33 | 45 | Bates D R & Damgaard A. The calculation of the absolute strengths of spectral lines. <i>Phil. Trans. Roy. Soc. A</i> 242:101-22, 1949. |
| 9. | 374 | 24 | 22 | 27 | Bloch F. Nuclear induction. <i>Physical Review</i> 70:460-74, 1946. |
| 10. | 1145 | 76 | 72 | 68 | Bloembergen N, Purcell E M & Pound R V. Relaxation effects in nuclear magnetic resonance absorption. <i>Physical Review</i> 73:679-712, 1948. |
| 11. | 203 | 13 | 19 | 20 | Bogolyubov N N. On the theory of superfluidity. <i>J. Physics USSR</i> 11:23-32, 1947. |
| 12. | 1127 | 75 | 45 | 63 | Bowden K, Heilbron I M, Jones E R H & Weedon B C L. Researches on acetylenic compounds. 1. The preparation of acetylenic ketones by oxidation of acetylenic carbinols and glycols. <i>J. Chem. Soc.</i> p.38-45, 1946 |
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| 16. | 595 | 39 | 48 | 37 | Cole D S & Cole R H. Dispersion and absorption in dielectrics. 1. Alternating current characteristics. <i>J. Chem. Physics</i> 9:341-51, 1941. |
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| 19. | 204 | 13 | 19 | 10 | Coulson C A & Moffitt W E. The properties of certain strained hydrocarbons. <i>Philosophical Mag.</i> 40:1-35, 1949. |
| 20. | 384 | 25 | 7 | 7 | Cruickshank D W J. The accuracy of electron-density maps in x-ray analysis with special reference to dibenzyl. <i>Acta Crystallogr.</i> 2:65-82, 1949. |
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Figure 2 (cont.)

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Figure 2 (cont.)

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