

F. Victor Grignard



François Auguste Victor Grignard was born in Cherbourg, France, on May 6, 1871. In 1889, he won a scholarship to the École Normale Spécial at Cluny. After two years, it closed because of a dispute between supporters of the "classic" and "modern" methods of secondary education. He was transferred to the Faculté des Sciences of the University of Lyons. In 1892-3, he completed his military service and returned to Lyons receiving the degree Licencié ès Sciences Mathématiques in 1894. In December 1894, he accepted a junior post in the Faculté des Sciences; later, he was promoted to Préparateur. He then began his long association with Philippe Barbier. In 1898, he obtained the degree Licencié-ès-Sciences Physiques and became Chef des Travaux Pratiques. Three years later, he submitted a thesis on organic magnesium compounds, *Sur les Combinaisons organomagnésiennes mixtes*, and was awarded the degree Docteur ès Sciences de Lyons. For one year in 1905, he was Maître de Conférences at the University of Besançon returning to Lyons in the following year, occupying a similar position until his election as Professeur-adjoint de Chimie Générale in 1908. One year later, he took charge of the Department of Organic Chemistry at Nancy, and in the following year, he became Professor of Organic Chemistry. At the beginning of the First World War, he was mobilized in his former rank of corporal but soon was commissioned to study at Nancy the cracking of benzols and in Paris chemical warfare. He visited the United States during 1917-18 as the chemical representative on the Tardieu Committee. After the war, he returned to Nancy and became Professor of General Chemistry at Lyons. In 1921, he undertook an additional post as Director of l'École de Chimie Industrielle de Lyons, becoming a member of the University Council, and in 1929 becoming the Dean of the Faculty of Sciences.

His discovery of the classic preparation of magnesium alkyl halides was first communicated by Henri Moissan to the Académie des Sciences on May 11, 1900. He quickly developed the immediate applications of these elegant and simple reagents that were destined to play such an important part in organic synthesis. He was the author of some 170 publications on his researches and worked to fulfill his ambition of seeing a great chemical reference work in the French language. Two volumes of his *Traité de Chimie Organique* (Treatise on organic chemistry) had already been published, two more were ready for the press and the editorial work for another two was well advanced when he died. It was later to be finished by his collaborators. In 1937, two of his students, Jean Cologne and Roger Grignard, published *Précis de Chimie Organique* (Survey of organic chemistry), which was based on Grignard's lecture course in organic chemistry.

In 1901, he shared the Cahours Prize (Institut de France), won the Berthelot Medal in 1902, Prix Jecker in 1905, and the Lavoisier Medal in 1912. In 1912, he shared the Nobel Prize in Chemistry on account of his discovery of the so called Grignard reagent, sharing the prize with Paul Sabatier who received it because of his method of hydrogenating organic compounds by means of finely divided metals. In the same year, he was appointed Chevalier in the order of the Légion d'Honneur, Officier (1920), and Commandeur (1933) and was a Honorary Fellow of the Chemical Society (London) and foreign member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. He was also Honorary

Professor, University of Nancy (1931) and received honorary doctorates from the Universities of Brussels and Louvain,

He married Augustine Marie Boulant in 1910 and had a son, Roger, followed in the academic footsteps of his father, and a daughter. He died on December 13, 1935 when there were over 6,000 references to the Grignard reactions in the literature.

Description of Grignard reagent and reaction

<http://reference.allrefer.com/encyclopedia/G/Grignard-r.html>

Biographies:

<http://nobelprize.org/chemistry/laureates/1912/grignard-bio.html>

http://orac.sunderland.ac.uk/~hs0bcl/h_vg.htm

<http://isimabomba.free.fr/biographies/chimistes/grignard.htm> (Short Biography in French)

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