

STI - Institut des Matériaux

LABORATOIRE DE MATÉRIAUX DE CONSTRUCTION

1918 - 2018



Jean -Pierre DAXELHOFER

Directeur du laboratoire des matériaux pierreux de 1949 à 1972

BIOGRAPHIE

1907 Naissance à Aubonne.

Collège à Vevey et Gymnase Scientifique à Lausanne.

1929 Diplôme d'ingénieur-constructeur. Étude à l'Ecole d'ingénieurs de Lausanne.

1930-1945 Employé à la Société Giovanni RODIO & C. Spa (I).

D'une notoriété mondialement reconnue dans le domaine de la géotechnique, il a participé à l'étude des fondations de plusieurs barrages en Tunisie, en Algérie, au Zaïre, en Bulgarie, en Argentine, au Brésil.

Professeur au Laboratoire central des routes, canaux et ports à Madrid

1946 Membre fondateur de la Geotechnical society qui par la suite éditera la revue La Géotechnique.

1949 Directeur de la société SOLEXPERT fondée en 1947 par G. RODIO à Zurich. Société d'ingénieurs-consultants pour le groupe Rodio Solétanche avec un laboratoire de mécanique des sols.

Il est expert pour la conception du barrage de Serre-Poncon (F) avec le prof. TERZAGHI.

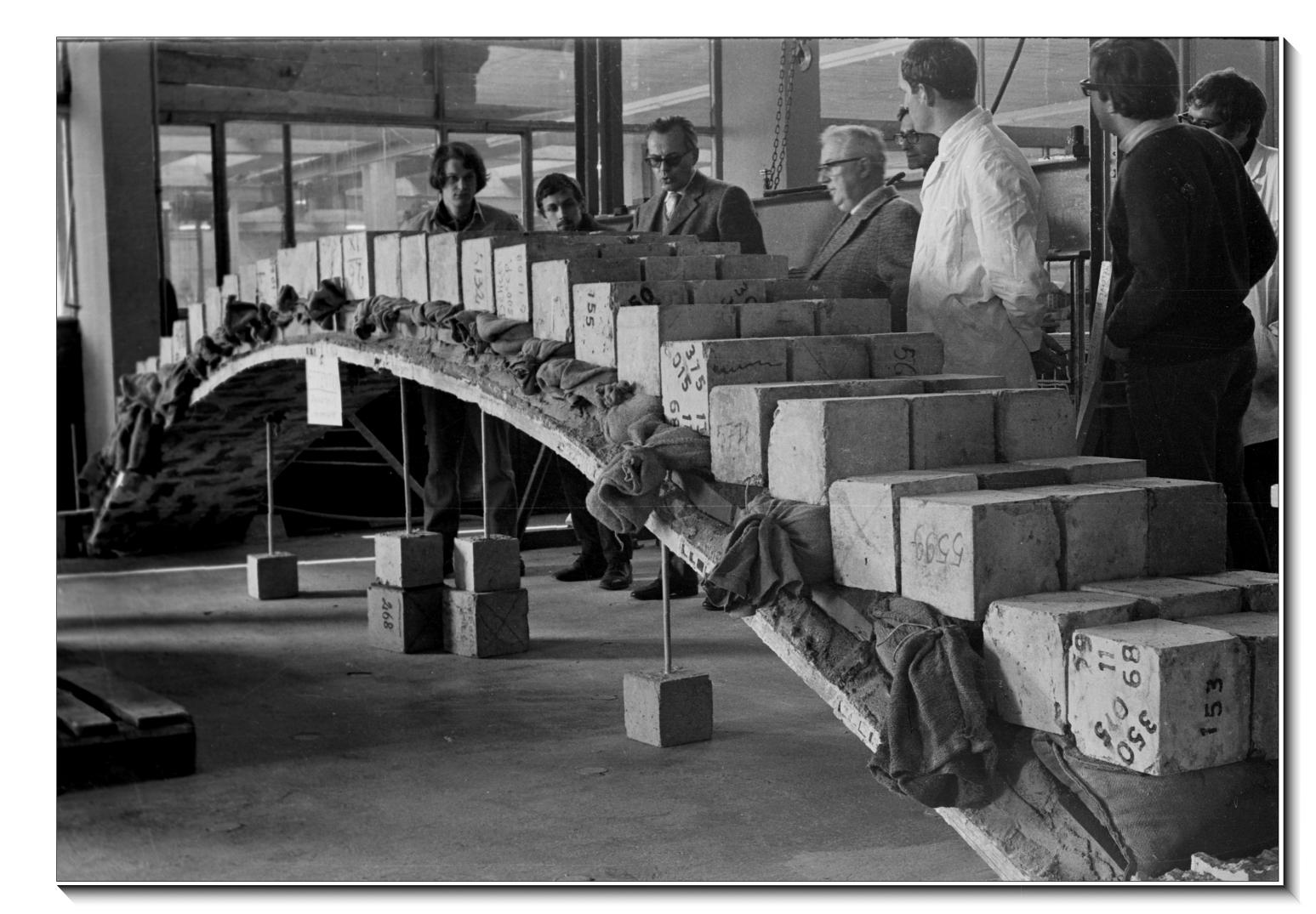
Il reprend la direction du Laboratoire des matériaux de l'EPUL

1951 Nommé professeur extraordinaire de technologie des matériaux pierreux, et chef de la section des matériaux pierreux du laboratoire d'essais des matériaux.

1969 Nommé professeur ordinaire

1972 Atteint par la limite d'âge, il prend sa retraite

1998 Décès à Lonay



Prof. J. P. Daxelhofer inspectant un travail d'étudiants (à sa droite le Professeur de béton armé F. Panchaud)





The founders of GEOTECHNIQUE par J. B. BURLAND Imperial College London, UK

'The Geo- technical Society' was formed with Golder as Secretary and Glossop as Treasurer. A letter dated 7 July 1947 was widely circulated in English and French to every western European country where contact had been made. This letter is repro- duced in the paper by Brown (1982) and suggests the formation of a European Society with two objects: (a) to found a journal for circulation in Western Europe; and (b) to hold a conference once a year in rotation in various western European capitals. Listed at the bottom of this letter are three Patrons (Dr K. Terzaghi, Ir T. K. Huizinga and Sir G. M. Burt) and 11 'Founders' (L. F. Cooling, J. P. Daxelhofer, E. E. De Beer, J. Florentin, E. C. W. A. Geuze, R. Glossop, H. Q. Golder, R. Haefeli, A. W. Skempton, A. von Moos and W. H. Ward).

Jean-Pierre Daxelhofer (1907 – 1998)

Professor J. P. Daxelhofer (Fig. 6) played a prominent role in the naming of Géotechnique. Golder (1969) relates that one of his suggestions was the Greek word for soil ($\varepsilon\delta\alpha\phi\sigma$). Brown (1982, 2008) reports that it was Daxelhofer who made the suggestion that the name should be La Géotechnique.

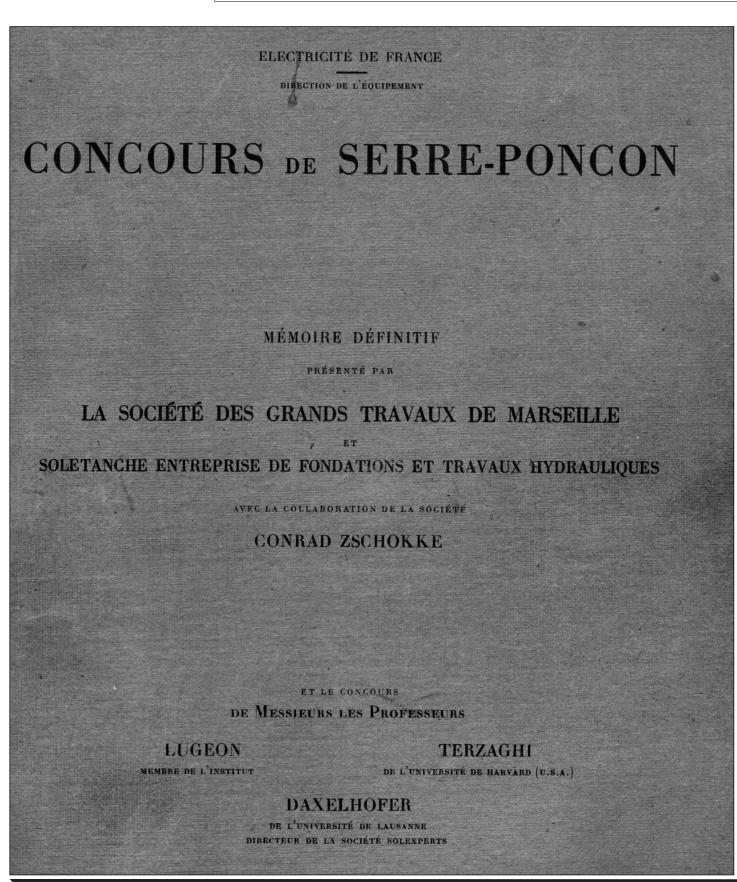
Born on 20 April 1907, Jean-Pierre Daxelhofer obtained the Diploma in Civil Engineering from l'Ecole Polytechnique de l'Université de Lausanne (EPUL) in 1929. He joined the Italian contractor Rodio working in Paris, and then Milan and Rome, as an expert in geotechnical engineering, and gaining wide and varied practical experience. In 1945 he returned to Switzerland, where he was appointed director of research at the geotechnical laboratory of EPUL. He was made Professor Extraordinaire in 1949, directing his expertise towards rock mechanics and construction materials. In 1963 he was promoted to full professor, and taught construction materials, particularly in relation to water-retaining structures. He retired in 1972, and died on 8 June 1998.

Professor François Descoeudres remembers Daxelhofer as a remarkable engineer with a broad knowledge of civil engineering, materials science, chemistry and mechanics. Undoubtedly he made important contributions to the development of geotechnics, but he published very little. Known as having a sharp temper, he also seems to have been something of a perfectionist, always pushing on to the next development and unwilling to commit himself to print. His move from geotechnics to construction materials in 1949 took place fortuitously. The Ecole d'Ingénieurs de Lausanne was looking for a concrete specialist to advise on the construction of concrete and arch dams in Switzerland, there being something of a construction boom of these at that time. He was nominated because of his wide knowledge and experience of geotechnical and construction materials.

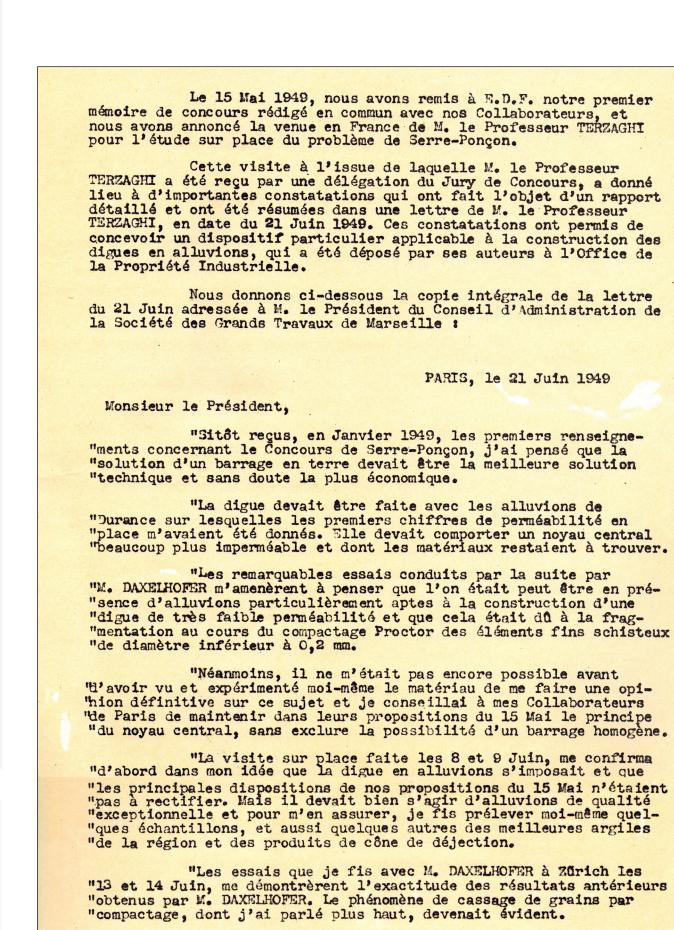
A notable exception to his lack of publications was a major paper that he published in 1944 on the shearing resistance of soils, with examples of its importance (Daxelhofer, 1944). In this report he describes a variety of shearing apparatus, distinguishing clearly between undrained and drained conditions. He discusses a number of practical examples of stability, including Fort Peck dam. Many of his recommendations are applicable today: for example, laboratory results should indicate the apparatus used to obtain them; do not expect the laboratory to provide all the answers; minor geological features can dominate behaviour; the formation of plastic zones can be dangerous as they have a tendency to propagate; field measurements are essential, but are difficult to carry out in geotechnics because they must be made over a number of years and require collaboration between contractor, designer and laboratory. In 1995 Daxelhofer donated to the 'Archives de la Construction Moderne EPFL' 367 reports covering the period 1943 to 1989, which deal mainly with accounts of failures of foundations and damage to buildings.

Extrait de Burland, J. B. (2008). Géotechnique 58, No. 5, 327–341 [doi: 10.1680/geot.2008.58.5.327]

Les fondateurs de la revue La Géotechnique







"Rien ne s'opposait plus à la conception d'un barrage "de type homogène en alluvions de Durance, solution particulièrement

"Si l'on désire, mais cela est à mon avis superflu, dé-"penser des sommes d'argent supplémentaires pour augmenter encore la "sécurité, il faudrait je pense les consacrer plutôt à une augmenta-

"tion de cube de la digue par adoucissement des talus qu'à la confec-"tion d'un noyau inutile, en argile ou en béton armé. Tout au plus,

"peut-on prévoir d'ajouter aux alluvions de la Durance, dans la par-"tie centrale, l à 2 % de bentonite d'argile, par voie liquide par

"Au moment de repartir pour l'Amérique, je suis persuadé
"que les essais qui sont à poursuivre dans les Laboratoires de
"M. DAXELHOFER, conformément à mes directives, doivent permettre la
"mise au point définitive du type d'ouvrage auquel nous sommes arrivés,
"mais cela exige un minimum de prospections complémentaires que j'ai
"mentionnées dans mon rapport.

"de vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur le Président, mes meil-

Professeur K. TERZAGHI

"Le noyau devient inutile.

'exemple.

"leures salutations."