

Tribology in Metalworking

Friction, Lubrication and Wear

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AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR METALS
Metals Park, Ohio 44073

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Library of Congress Catalog Card No.: 82-73612

ISBN: 0-87170-155-3

SAN: 204-7586

Editorial and production coordination by
Carnes Publication Services, Inc.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Preface

Some thirteen years ago, Professor S. Kalpakjian and Drs. J.A. Newnham and C.H. Riesz cooperated with me in producing a reference book on "Metal Deformation Processes: Friction and Lubrication," published by Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York (1970). The intervening years have seen a veritable explosion of information in the field that meanwhile has come to be described as "tribology," a term encompassing the science and technology of friction, lubrication, and wear. Knowledge pertaining to metalworking tribology has also increased greatly. Contacts with colleagues in industry and research have impressed upon me the need for a book that would serve better as a self-learning text. Therefore, when the American Society for Metals expressed interest in an updated version, I decided to write an essentially new research monograph, which, hopefully, will be found more useful as an introduction to the subject while serving also as a reference source. In view of its importance, the tribology of machining processes is now also included.

I could have chosen to limit the scope of this volume strictly to metalworking, and to direct the reader to the vast literature from which the necessary background could be acquired. Such an approach would have been patently unfair to the majority of readers, who may be specialists in one field but not in others, or who may be newcomers to the entire subject. Tribology itself is a truly interdisciplinary discipline, drawing on various aspects of physics, chemistry, mechanical engineering, and materials science. Metalworking tribology is yet further broadened by the inclusion of the mechanics and metallurgy of metalworking processes. Therefore, I have endeavored to give a brief but comprehensive account of the essential background material, so that the volume can stand on its own, and so that the reader need delve into the literature only if interested in following up specific aspects.

The material relevant to metalworking tribology would easily fill several monographs of this size. Complete coverage thus not only was an unrealistic goal but also would have made the volume virtually indigestible, with a quite unreasonable number of references. Therefore, some selection had to be exercised, and this necessarily involved personal judgments of what is most important and what can be readily followed up on elsewhere. In making such judgments, I have endeavored to keep in mind the varied background of the readership: what is trivial to a chemist may be new to a mechanical engineer, and *vice versa*. The emphasis here is on physical observations and their interpretation; details of analysis, for the interested reader, can be found in the references given. I hope that this volume, as a result of the selections made, will provide adequate information for the novice without boring the expert.

In writing the text I had to venture into areas beyond my immediate expertise. To ensure accuracy of treatment, I imposed on friends for advice. I am greatly indebted to

Donald H. Buckley, Bernard J. Hamrock, John Hickman, J. Brian Peace, Clyde A. Sluhan, Joseph L. Tevaarwerk, Joseph Wright, and several graduate students for their valuable remarks on Chapters 2 to 5; to Ranga Komanduri, Milton C. Shaw, and Paul K. Wright for their suggestions regarding Chapter 11; and to George E. Dieter for the enormous task of reviewing all but Chapter 11. For any remaining errors, I alone am responsible.

An operating grant from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada allowed me to explore topics that were in need of clarification, and I made extensive use of the library facilities and services of the University of Waterloo.

There are many friends and colleagues without whose help this undertaking would have been impossible. Kurt Lange provided me with the opportunity to search the German literature in his Institut für Umformtechnik, and his co-worker Th. Gräbener made available his collection of references. Bruce Uttley and Marjorie Kohli of the University of Waterloo found solutions to the many problems of transferring the text from word processor to phototypesetter; Beryl Hultin, together with others, helped in correcting the text on the word processor. I enjoyed working with Timothy L. Gall of ASM and with William J. Carnes in the preparation of this volume. The brunt of the task was carried by my wife, Gitta, who for three years spent endless hours working on references, typing drafts, and typing the text for the OCR transfer; to her I dedicate this volume.

It is neither likely nor necessary that anyone should read this volume from cover to cover as a continuum. Cross references are included to facilitate reading on individual topics and processes. I should be most grateful to have readers' reactions and suggestions regarding the treatment and any errors that may be found.

John A. Schey
Waterloo, Ontario
February, 1983

Contents

1 Background and Method of Treatment 1

- 1.1 Historical background 1
 - 1.1.1 Forging 1
 - 1.1.2 Wiredrawing 2
 - 1.1.3 Rolling 3
 - 1.1.4 Extrusion and Other Processes 4
 - 1.1.5 Metal Cutting 5
 - 1.1.6 Theory 5
 - 1.1.7 Tribology 5
 - 1.1.8 Summary 6
- 1.2 Method of Treatment 6
- 1.3 Literature Sources 7
 - 1.3.1 Sources 7
 - 1.3.2 Selection and Styling of References 7
- References 8

2 Friction in Metalworking 11

- 2.1 Plastic Deformation 11
 - 2.1.1 Plastic Flow 11
 - 2.1.2 Yield Criteria 11
 - 2.1.3 The Flow Stress 13
- 2.2 The Die-Workpiece Interface 14
 - 2.2.1 Coefficient of Friction 14
 - 2.2.2 Interface Shear Factor 16
 - 2.2.3 Variable Friction 16
- 2.3 Effects of Friction 16
 - 2.3.1 Pressures and Forces 17
 - 2.3.2 The Effects of Friction 17
 - 2.3.3 Temperature Rise 19
 - 2.3.4 Strain Distribution 20
- 2.4 Classification of Processes 21
- 2.5 Summary 23
- References 24

3 Fundamentals of Tribology in Metalworking 27

- 3.1 Real Interfaces 27
 - 3.1.1 Macroscopic View 28
 - 3.1.2 Microscopic View 28
 - 3.1.3 Process Environment 29
- 3.2 Surface Contact and Friction Theories 30
 - 3.2.1 Contact Area 30
 - 3.2.2 Interface Pressures 32
 - 3.2.3 Elastically Loaded Workpiece, Normal Contact 33
 - 3.2.4 Sliding and the Sources of Friction 34
 - 3.2.5 Plastically Deforming Workpiece 36
- 3.3 Solid-Film Lubrication 39
 - 3.3.1 Oxide Films 40
 - 3.3.2 Metal Films 42
 - 3.3.3 Polymer Films 43
 - 3.3.4 Layer-Lattice Compounds 46
- 3.4 E.P. Lubrication 50
 - 3.4.1 Mechanism of Action 50
 - 3.4.2 Complex Additives and Additive Interactions 53
 - 3.4.3 Modeling of E.P. films 54
- 3.5 Boundary Lubrication 54
 - 3.5.1 Lubrication Mechanisms 54
 - 3.5.2 Lubricant Interactions 58
 - 3.5.3 Shear Properties of Boundary Films 60
- 3.6 Fluid-Film Lubrication 60
 - 3.6.1 Thick-Film (Full-Fluid-Film) Lubrication 61
 - 3.6.2 EHD Lubrication 63
 - 3.6.3 Lubricant Rheology 64
 - 3.6.4 Elastohydrodynamic Lubrication 68
- 3.7 Mixed-Film Lubrication 72
 - 3.7.1 Lubrication Mechanisms 73
 - 3.7.2 Modeling of Mixed Films 76
 - 3.7.3 Regimes of Lubrication Mechanisms 77
- 3.8 Surface Roughness Effects 80
 - 3.8.1 Characterization of Surface Roughness 80
 - 3.8.2 Types of Surfaces 83
 - 3.8.3 Roughening of Free Surfaces 84
 - 3.8.4 Roughening of Lubricated Surfaces 84
 - 3.8.5 Effects of Workpiece Surface Roughness 86
 - 3.8.6 Effects of Die Surface Roughness 88
- 3.9 Frictional Instabilities 92
 - 3.9.1 Stick-Slip Motion 92
 - 3.9.2 Ultrasonic Vibration 93
- 3.10 Wear 94
 - 3.10.1 Adhesive Wear 95
 - 3.10.2 Abrasive Wear 96
 - 3.10.3 Fatigue Wear 98
 - 3.10.4 Chemical Wear 99
 - 3.10.5 Mixed Wear Mechanisms 99
 - 3.10.6 Quantification of Wear 100
- 3.11 Material Effects 102

3.11.1	Adhesion of Similar Metals	102
3.11.2	Adhesion of Dissimilar Materials	104
3.11.3	Attributes of Tool Materials	110
3.11.4	Tool Materials	110
3.11.5	Surface Coatings for Tools	113
3.11.6	Material-Lubricant Interactions	115
3.12	Summary	119
	References	120

4 Metalworking Lubricants 131

4.1	Attributes of Metalworking Lubricants	131
4.2	Mineral Oils	133
4.2.1	Effects of Chain Length	133
4.2.2	Effects of Structure	134
4.2.3	Effects of Purity	136
4.2.4	Mineral Waxes	136
4.3	Natural Oils, Fats, and Derivatives	136
4.3.1	Natural Fats	136
4.3.2	Natural Waxes	139
4.3.3	Fatty-Oil Derivatives	140
4.3.4	Soaps	141
4.4	Synthetic Fluids	142
4.4.1	Synthetic Mineral Oils and Derivatives	142
4.4.2	Synthetic Esters	143
4.4.3	Silicon Compounds	144
4.4.4	Polyphenyl Ethers	146
4.5	Compounded Lubricants	146
4.5.1	Compounded Oils	146
4.5.2	Compounded Fats, Waxes, and Soaps	148
4.5.3	Greases	148
4.6	Aqueous Lubricants	149
4.6.1	Classification	149
4.6.2	Emulsions	150
4.6.3	Synthetics	155
4.6.4	Corrosion and Equipment Damage	156
4.6.5	Biological Control	157
4.6.6	Lubricant Control	159
4.7	Coatings and Carriers	161
4.7.1	Metal Coatings	161
4.7.2	Polymer Coatings	164
4.7.3	Bonded Coatings	166
4.7.4	Lubricants Deposited In Situ	167
4.7.5	Fusible Coatings	168
4.7.6	Glasses	169
4.7.7	Conversion Coatings	173
4.7.8	Phosphate Coatings	175
4.8	Lubricant Application, Maintenance, and Removal	179
4.8.1	Surface Preparation	179
4.8.2	Lubricant Storage and Application	180
4.8.3	Lubricant Treatment	180
4.8.4	Lubricant Removal	184

4.8.5	Disposal of Lubricants	185
4.9	Health Aspects	186
4.9.1	Skin Diseases	187
4.9.2	Inhalation	187
4.9.3	Other Toxic Agents	188
4.10	Summary	188
	References	189

5 Measurement Techniques 197

5.1	Principles of Simulation Testing	197
5.2	Reduced-Scale Metalworking Processes	200
5.3	Transfer from One Process to Another	201
5.4	Simulation tests	204
5.4.1	Tests Involving Bulk Plastic Deformation	204
5.4.2	Tests Involving Partial Plastic Deformation	207
5.4.3	Tests Involving Localized Deformation	213
5.4.4	Bench Tests	215
5.4.5	Assessment of Test Results	217
5.4.6	Validity of Simulation	218
5.4.7	Choice of Simulation Tests	220
5.5	Evaluation of Friction in Metalworking	220
5.5.1	Total Force or Energy	220
5.5.2	Frictional Force	221
5.5.3	Stress Distribution	221
5.5.4	Deformation Patterns	224
5.5.5	Metallurgical Changes	225
5.6	Interface Temperature	225
5.6.1	Dynamic Thermocouple	225
5.6.2	Thermocouples	226
5.6.3	Surface Temperature	227
5.6.4	Material Changes	228
5.7	Surface Characterization	228
5.7.1	Surface Topography	228
5.7.2	Surface Analysis	232
5.7.3	Surface Preparation	233
5.8	Measurement of Film Thickness	235
5.9	Measurement of Wear	236
5.9.1	Sampling for Wear Studies	236
5.9.2	Qualitative Wear Analysis	237
5.9.3	Quantitative Wear Analysis	237
5.10	Staining Propensity and Corrosion	238
5.11	Lubricant Composition and Technological Properties	240
5.12	Summary	241
	References	242

6 Rolling 249

6.1	The Rolling Process	249
6.2	Flat Rolling	250
6.2.1	Entry of Workpiece	250

6.2.2	Speed and Stress Distributions	252
6.2.3	Roll Force	255
6.2.4	Torque and Power	258
6.2.5	Heat Generation	259
6.2.6	Relative Slip	260
6.2.7	Strain Distribution	263
6.2.8	Powder Rolling	268
6.3	Lubrication and Wear in Cold Rolling	268
6.3.1	Full-Fluid-Film Lubrication	268
6.3.2	Mixed-Film Lubrication	274
6.3.3	Dry Rolling	290
6.3.4	Effects of Surface Roughness	291
6.3.5	Surface Defects	296
6.3.6	Lubricant Evaluation	298
6.3.7	Lubricant Application and Treatment	300
6.3.8	Roll Wear	303
6.4	Lubrication and Wear in Hot Rolling	305
6.4.1	Process Conditions	305
6.4.2	Lubrication Mechanisms	306
6.4.3	Lubricant Application and Disposal	309
6.4.4	Surface Finish	310
6.4.5	Roll Wear	311
6.5	Rolling of Shapes and Tubes	313
6.5.1	The Shape Rolling Process	313
6.5.2	Lubrication	314
6.5.3	Wear	314
6.5.4	Tube Rolling	315
6.6	Lubrication for Iron-Base and Nickel-Base Materials	315
6.6.1	Hot Rolling Lubrication	315
6.6.2	Cold Rolling Lubrication	316
6.6.3	Alloy and Stainless Steels	321
6.7	Lubrication of Light Metals	321
6.7.1	Hot Rolling Lubrication	322
6.7.2	Cold Rolling Lubrication	325
6.7.3	Lubrication of Magnesium and Beryllium Alloys	328
6.8	Lubrication of Copper-Base Alloys	328
6.9	Lubrication of Titanium Alloys	329
6.10	Lubrication of Other Metals	330
6.11	Summary	330
	References	333

7 Drawing 343

7.1	Drawing of Bar and Wire	343
7.1.1	The Drawing Process	344
7.1.2	Stresses and Forces	345
7.1.3	Heat Generation	348
7.1.4	Strain Distribution	350
7.1.5	Drawing of Profiles	352
7.1.6	Roller Dies and Rolling	352
7.2	Tube Drawing	353

7.3	Lubrication and Wear	355
7.3.1	Full-Fluid-Film Lubrication	355
7.3.2	Mixed-Film Lubrication	366
7.3.3	Solid-Film Lubrication	372
7.3.4	Lubrication Breakdown	373
7.3.5	Instabilities and the Application of Vibration	374
7.3.6	Surface Characteristics	376
7.3.7	Lubricant Selection and Evaluation	378
7.3.8	Lubricant Application and Treatment	378
7.3.9	Wear	382
7.4	Lubrication of Iron- and Nickel-Base Alloys	385
7.4.1	Steels	385
7.4.2	Stainless Steels	387
7.4.3	Nickel-Base Alloys	387
7.5	Lubrication of Light Metals	388
7.5.1	Aluminum Alloys	388
7.5.2	Beryllium	389
7.6	Lubrication of Copper-Base Alloys	389
7.7	Lubrication of Titanium and Zirconium Alloys	390
7.8	Lubrication of Refractory Metals	391
7.9	Summary	392
	References	393

8 Extrusion of Semifabricated Products 403

8.1	The Extrusion Process	403
8.1.1	Strain	403
8.1.2	Extrusion Pressure	404
8.1.3	Extrusion Force	406
8.1.4	Heat Generation	407
8.1.5	Extrusion of Shapes	407
8.1.6	Container Friction	408
8.2	Direct Extrusion	408
8.2.1	Material Flow	408
8.2.2	Effects on Forces	410
8.2.3	Tube Extrusion	411
8.2.4	Hydrostatic Extrusion	412
8.2.5	Friction-Assisted Extrusion	414
8.3	Indirect Extrusion	415
8.3.1	Material Flow and Forces	415
8.3.2	Friction-Assisted Extrusion	416
8.4	Non-Steady-State Effects and Defects	416
8.5	Lubrication and Wear	418
8.5.1	Attributes of Extrusion Lubricants	418
8.5.2	Full-Fluid-Film and Mixed-Film Lubrication	418
8.5.3	Phase-Change Lubrication	423
8.5.4	Solid-Film Lubrication	425
8.5.5	Application of Ultrasonics	427
8.5.6	Die Wear	427
8.6	Lubrication of Iron- and Nickel-Base Alloys	428
8.7	Lubrication of Light Metals	429

8.7.1	Aluminum Alloys	429
8.7.2	Magnesium and Beryllium Alloys	431
8.8	Lubrication of Copper-Base Alloys	432
8.9	Lubrication of Titanium, Zirconium, and Uranium Alloys	433
8.10	Lubrication of Refractory Metals	434
8.11	Lubrication of Lead	434
8.12	Summary	435
	References	436

9 Forging 443

9.1	Upsetting	443
9.1.1	Upsetting of a Cylinder	444
9.1.2	Ring Compression	450
9.1.3	Upsetting of Slabs	452
9.1.4	Plane-Strain Compression	453
9.1.5	Inclined Die Faces	456
9.2	Back Extrusion and Piercing	457
9.2.1	Back Extrusion	457
9.2.2	Piercing	459
9.2.3	Indentation	459
9.3	Impression-Die Forging	460
9.3.1	Die Filling	460
9.3.2	Forging and Ejection Forces	461
9.4	Closed-Die Forging and Extrusion	462
9.4.1	Processes	462
9.4.2	Practices	463
9.5	Lubrication and Wear	464
9.5.1	Cold Forging and Extrusion	465
9.5.2	Warm Forging and Extrusion	473
9.5.3	Hot Forging	476
9.6	Lubrication of Iron- and Nickel-Base Alloys	487
9.6.1	Cold Forging and Extrusion	487
9.6.2	Warm Forging and Extrusion	491
9.6.3	Hot Forging	491
9.7	Lubrication of Light Metals	494
9.7.1	Cold Forging and Extrusion	494
9.7.2	Warm and Hot Working	495
9.8	Lubrication of Copper and Other Nonferrous Metals	498
9.9	Lubrication of Titanium and Zirconium Alloys	499
9.10	Lubrication of Refractory Metals	501
9.11	Summary	501
	References	502

10 Sheet Metalworking 511

10.1	Shearing	511
10.1.1	The Shearing Process	511
10.1.2	Wear	512
10.1.3	Wear Control	515
10.2	Bending and Spinning	517

10.2.1	Bending	517
10.2.2	Spinning	518
10.3	Stretching, Deep Drawing, and Ironing	519
10.3.1	Material Properties	519
10.3.2	Stretching	520
10.3.3	Deep Drawing	524
10.3.4	Combined Stretching and Drawing	530
10.3.5	Special Processes	532
10.3.6	Ironing and Necking	534
10.4	Lubrication and Wear	536
10.4.1	Process Conditions	536
10.4.2	Lubrication Mechanisms	538
10.4.3	Effects of Surface Roughness	546
10.4.4	Lubricant Breakdown and Galling	549
10.4.5	Die Materials	554
10.4.6	Lubricant Selection, Application, and Testing	555
10.5	Lubrication of Iron- and Nickel-Base Alloys	558
10.5.1	Steels	558
10.5.2	Stainless Steels and Nickel-Base Alloys	559
10.6	Lubrication of Light Metals	559
10.6.1	Aluminum Alloys	559
10.6.2	Magnesium Alloys	561
10.7	Lubrication of Copper-Base Alloys	561
10.8	Lubrication of Titanium Alloys	561
10.9	Lubrication of Refractory Metals	562
10.10	Summary	562
	References	564

11 Metal Removal 573

11.1	Cutting	573
11.1.1	Ideal Orthogonal Cutting	574
11.1.2	Realistic Orthogonal Cutting	576
11.1.3	Chip Formation	578
11.1.4	Effects of Process Geometry	588
11.1.5	Temperature	592
11.1.6	Stress Distribution	593
11.1.7	Machining Theories	594
11.1.8	Other Cutting Processes	596
11.2	Wear in Cutting Processes	597
11.2.1	Wear Phenomena	598
11.2.2	Influencing Factors	602
11.2.3	Prediction of Tool Life	604
11.3	Materials for Cutting Tools	607
11.3.1	High Speed Steels (HSS)	608
11.3.2	Cemented Carbides	609
11.3.3	Coated Carbides	611
11.3.4	Ceramics	613
11.3.5	Cubic Boron Nitride (CBN)	615
11.3.6	Diamond	616

11.4	Cutting Fluids	616
11.4.1	Process Conditions	617
11.4.2	Effects of Fluid Application	618
11.4.3	Effects of Speed and Feed	621
11.4.4	Lubricating/Cooling Mechanisms	623
11.4.5	Application of Cutting Fluids	632
11.4.6	Selection and Treatment of Fluids	634
11.5	Testing	636
11.5.1	Principles of Testing	636
11.5.2	Test Methods	641
11.6	Abrasive Machining	647
11.6.1	The Abrasion Process	647
11.6.2	Bonded Abrasives	651
11.6.3	Loose Abrasives	657
11.6.4	Surface Quality	658
11.6.5	Abrasives	658
11.6.6	Grinding Fluids	662
11.7	Cutting and Grinding Fluids for Specific Metals	667
11.7.1	Iron- and Nickel-Base Alloys	668
11.7.2	Light Metals	669
11.7.3	Copper-Base Alloys	670
11.7.4	Titanium Alloys	670
11.7.5	Other Metals	671
11.8	Summary	671
	References	673

Appendix 689

List of Standards Applicable to Metalworking	689
Approximate Conversion Factors	690
List of Recurrent Symbols	691
Viscosity Conversion Nomograph	693

Index of Authors Named in References in This Book 695

Subject Index 715

1

Background and Method of Treatment

The history of tribology, set against the broader background of industrial and social development, is the subject of a recent and thoroughly enjoyable book by Dowson [1]. Regrettably, it contains but few references to metalworking; therefore, a brief account based on the earlier review of Schey [2] is given here, followed by some remarks on the method of treatment adopted in the present book.

1.1 Historical Background

Metalworking is probably the earliest technological occupation known to mankind; native metals were forged and shaped more than 7000 years ago. Considering the importance of lubricants in deformation processes, it is rather amazing that no account of their use can be found until relatively recent times.

There are, perhaps, three main reasons for this anomaly. First, the composition, manufacture, and use of lubricants were—and to some extent, still are—the most closely guarded secrets of the whole operation. Second, nature very kindly provided some of the best lubricants known today, so that the artisan engaged in metalworking did not have to rely on the skills and knowledge of other crafts, arts, or sciences; he was not compelled to reveal his practices, and the nonexpert observers reporting on metalworking processes failed to grasp the significance of the little they may have been allowed to see. Third, lubricants assumed a vital role only at a relatively late stage of development.

1.1.1 Forging

There is little doubt that forging was the first, and for a long time the only, bulk deformation technique. Native gold, silver, and copper were hammered into thin sheets and then shaped into jewelry and household utensils as early as 5000 B.C. [3]. These metals, and, later, copper reduced from ores, were readily cold worked without a lubricant. Some unintentional lubrication may have occurred, for instance, when sheet was driven into asphalt for shaping, or was placed between animal skins for thinning down to metal (gold) leaf. Copper was annealed well before 4000 B.C., and hot forging must have soon followed. Copper oxide is a good parting agent, as is the oxide of iron, a metal which was worked with great skill under the Hittites in the 13th century B.C.

Iron became the dominant material for weapons, tools, and agricultural implements from 800 B.C. on, replacing the cast and also wrought bronze that dominated earlier centuries [4]. This marks the ascendancy of the blacksmith, with his Greek god Hephaistos [5]. The cold forming of metals, nevertheless, continued uninterrupted. Cast bronze forms were used for hammering decorative parts from sheet, and the first known

coin was driven into a die with several punch strokes in the 7th century B.C. Again, no reference to lubricants is known and it is probable that natural contaminants, even if only from greasy fingers, provided all that was needed.

One must not forget, though, that seed oils, animal oils, tallow, and waxes were available in early antiquity [6]. In the 5th century B.C. Herodotus wrote about the extraction of bitumen and light oil from petroleum, and in about 60 A.D. Pliny the elder described the manufacture of soap [7]. Thus, at whatever point of development the first lubricant may have been used, a variety of eminently suitable substances certainly must have been available.

Forging continued to be the dominant metalworking process for many centuries. Coin pressing achieved high standards under the Romans, who drove the blank with a hand punch of suitable profile into a counterforming die [4]. The first forgings made in closed dies were produced in the northern Germanic areas, where local iron ores yielded higher-carbon iron and, therefore, better weapons. Chain mail was probably first made there and, while the starting material would ideally have been drawn wire, it is now generally conceded that this wire was actually forged in swaging dies. Cast bronze anvils survive from the Bronze Age with indentations that probably served for the forging of needles, and the goldsmiths and silversmiths had no problem in shaping their precious metals into decorative wire.

Forging is, nevertheless, the only hot working process that can claim a long history of lubrication. Steel rifle parts were forged in die impressions for interchangeability as early as the 18th century [4]; lubrication practices were probably not too different from those found some fifty years ago, with sawdust, a thin smear of a heavy oil, or oil mixed with graphite serving as a lubricant.

1.1.2 Wiredrawing

The argument on the earliest date of wiredrawing is still not settled. Theophilus, the German monk writing in the early 12th century, treats wiredrawing as an established art [8]. He refers to steel dies used for drawing a tin-lead alloy, and to oak dies for smoothing hammered gold and silver wire. Iron and steel plates bearing a number of holes, connected with a surface channel, have been identified by many researchers as drawing dies, on the assumption that the surface channel served for retaining the lubricant [9]. The earliest such finds date back to the first century A.D. and, if the interpretation of the channels is correct, these would provide circumstantial evidence of the use of metalworking lubricants for two millenia.

Guilds of wiredrawers were registered and regulated as early as the 13th century [10], and water power was introduced in the 14th [11]. Yet, the first written reference to wiredrawing lubrication is of much later date. Biringuccio [12], writing of the drawing of gold and silver wire, admonishes to "remember that while you are working it you must always keep it greased with new wax, for besides easing its passage through the holes, this also keeps its color yellow and beautiful." Rather casual references to oil-soaked rags, applied to the iron wire before it entered the drawing die, were made by early 18th century observers [8]. It is likely that the lubricant was a locally available product—probably lard oil in the north, and vegetable oils in the south, of Europe [6]. Records show that olive oil was imported into Altena, the center of the German steel wiredrawing industry, far in excess of any conceivable household needs, and it is reasonable to assume that this was used for drawing the highest grades of iron and, later, steel wires [10].

It was in Altena that the first surface treatment was discovered. For many centuries the wire had been prepared for drawing by hand scouring it with bricks or sand,

and it was only in the 17th century that bundles were mechanically threshed with a waterwheel, with frequent dashes of water and sand [10]. With the usual grease or oil lubrication, it was possible to draw the clean rod, but only if made of the softest, best quality Osmund iron. Steel, while known to be superior for many applications, including needles, fish hooks, and the like, could not be drawn, presumably because high friction caused the wire to break. It remained for one Johann Gerdes to discover the value of a surface treatment around 1650, the story being recorded by a wandering minstrel only a few years later. As related by Lewis [10], after an unsuccessful effort, Gerdes threw the steel rods out of the window, into the area where "men came to cast their water." After a while, he retrieved the rods and—without bothering to remove the soft, brown film that had formed on them—found that they now drew with great ease. This original suloating technique was used for almost 150 years. Then dilute sour beer was found just as effective, and in another 50 years it was recognized that plain water would serve equally well, although the original technique has survived in some places until this century.

Prior to the introduction of sulfuric and hydrochloric acids, light scale was removed or softened on the wire surface by lengthy immersion in weak solutions of tartaric acid, brewers' yeast, or similar organic liquids. Acid cleaning was first used for iron sheet in the early 19th century. Pickling, lime coating, and baking were developed for steel wire in the middle of the 19th century when large quantities of signal wire were demanded by the expanding railroad networks.

Wet drawing practices employing oils, emulsions, or greases as lubricants remained dominant in Europe until recent years, and were often aided by the deposition of a thin copper or copper-tin coat on the steel wire by drawing from baths containing copper sulfate. Like so many innovations, this too was a result of accident; the coating was observed to develop when hot brass ingots were used for warming up an acid pickling bath [13]. While thin steel wire was drawn wet with a copper-tin coat, dry drawing with a soap was the main production technique for heavier gages in the U.S. [8] but found general acceptance in Europe only in the last few decades. The latest change affecting lubrication in wiredrawing came with the introduction of the sintered tungsten carbide die in 1923 [11] and phosphate coating of steel in 1934 [14].

1.1.3 Rolling

Rolling lubricants, which now occupy such an important position, have a much shorter history. Rolling itself was first applied to metals in the cold working of lead and gold in the 15th century [5], and for narrow strips of coinage alloys in the 16th century [15]. The first sketch of a mill is due to Leonardo da Vinci. The 17th century saw the appearance of slitting mills in which forged flats were split with collared rolls, then rounded by forging, and finally drawn into wire. Grooved rolls were used in 1728 in France by M. Fleuer some 60 years before they were patented by Henry Cort in England. To quote Lewis [16], "these early ironmasters never scrupled to make use of a process many years before it had been invented." Nevertheless, it was another hundred years before wire rod was regularly rolled, and Bedson's continuous mill appeared in Manchester in 1862 [17]. Rounds and sections, however, were and still are often rolled without any lubricant, and we must look to the rolling of sheet to trace the development of lubricants.

Sheet was traditionally hammered from a cast ingot, with up to 50 layers forged in a pack for tinplate [5]; rolling had to wait until rolls could be turned accurately. Wide lead sheet was rolled in the 18th century, and nonferrous metal sheets were soon cold rolled in gradually increasing widths. However, lubrication requirements of copper and