

Foreword

The 25th International Symposium on Chromatography (ISC'04) was held from 4 to 8 October 2004 in the Palais des Congrès, Paris, France. This volume comprises all papers which were submitted and accepted after going through the regular peer-review process of *Journal of Chromatography A*.

About 700 delegates from more than 40 countries came to Paris to participate in the scientific events of ISC'04. The symposium was organised under the auspices of the Association Francophone des Sciences Séparatives (afSep) and is part of the well known series conducted with our partners, the Chromatographic Society in UK and the Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker-Arbeitskreits Chromatographie der Fachgruppe Analytische Chemie, in Germany. At the meeting 91 lectures and more than 400 posters were presented. An exhibition with the participation of 32 companies was located between the lecture and poster halls. It was well attended since lunches were organized all around the exhibition hall. On Monday 4 October three short courses were given. Several vendor seminars took place during the lunch break and after the lecture.

The organisation committee received many contributions from young scientists and we would like to take the opportunity to thank Wiley and Elsevier for their financial support, thus allowing us to provide numerous free registrations for them. Two parallel sessions highlighting 16 oral contributions from very young scientists (Ph.D. or post-doc) occurred for the first time and the best two lectures (S. Eeltink and I. Feuerstein) were awarded €1000 each, sponsored by the EuSSS. These sessions were well attended and everyone agreed to share their enthusiasm. In addition, two poster prizes of €500 each were also given to young scientists (M. Blas and H. Schwartz) by the afSep.

One reason for the recognized good outcome of ICS'04 is also due to the high quality of the scientific program and I would like to thank all those who made presentations and the contributing authors as well as my colleagues of the International Scientific Committee (C. Bevan, B. Buzewski, J. Crommen, W. Engewald, H. Frank, P. Gareil, M. Martin, S. Nyiredy, J.-L. Rocca, D. Thiébaud, J.-L. Veuthey and I. Wilson) who had the difficult task of selecting the contributed papers.

The symposium started on Tuesday morning with a plenary session in memoriam of Cs. Horvath with lectures given by M. Martin, W.S. Hancock, I.A. Wilson, E.S. Yeung, G. Guiochon, F. Dondi and B. Buszewski. Then there were 14 parallel sessions covering all the branches of chromatography and related separation techniques. The symposium ended with a plenary session on miniaturization in separation sciences with key lectures given by E. Veerporte, M. Riekkola, F. Svec and G. Hopfgartner. An interesting closure lecture, "From separation to comprehension", was given by H. Frank.

The continuous success of the ISC symposium series proves that there is a need for a general meeting where all the chromatograph and related separation techniques such as fundamentals, electrically driven separations, field flow fractionation techniques, planar and preparative techniques, multidimensional separations, up-to-date detection methods, etc. The importance of separation science is growing in our modern society. Almost all scientific, social, cultural or socio-economic fields rely on a wide range of chemical analyses that require separation, identification and quantification of chemical, biochemical or biological compounds in various media or matrixes. There is an important demand for more rapid, cost-effective, high-throughput analyses, with smaller quantities of complex samples, and often ultra-trace analyses in very complex matrixes. We heard interesting answers dealing for example with new stationary phases and hyphenated techniques for proteomics, two-dimensional comprehensive GC for petroleum and environmental samples, new ideas for sample pretreatment and the advantages of miniaturisation in every field.

As with other meetings, the core of the symposium was the poster session. The 400 posters were on board during the first three days, so that each one, including the poster authors, had the time for visiting all of them. The scientific committee had the difficult task of selecting three poster awards which were kindly offered by the CIFL, the French Interprofessional Committee of Laboratory Supplier.

I would like to thank all those who worked hard to make this symposium successful: the Scientific and the Organizing Committees, my colleagues from the afSep, the MCI Organization and our sponsors.

Separation science is an exciting and fast changing area. We look to seeing you at ISC'06, which will take place in Copenhagen, 21–25 August 2006.

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