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# Journal of Molecular Catalysis B: Enzymatic

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## Editorial

The '6th International Conference on Mechanisms and Physiology of Thiamine' took place in the historical old German city Wittenberg, hometown of Martin Luther, from 29th of May until 1st of June 2008. This conference is part of an established series of conferences which are organized approximately every six years since the first 'Thiamine Conference' held in New York in 1981.

- 1981 New York, USA.
- 1984 Wernigerode, Germany.
- 1990 Blaubeuren, Germany.
- 1996 Blaubeuren, Germany.
- 2002 Newark, USA.
- 2008 Wittenberg, Germany.

Lutherstadt Wittenberg is located on the banks of the River Elbe, birthplace of the Reformation, the town where Martin Luther and his wife Katharina von Bora, Lucas Cranach, and Philipp Melancthon lived and worked. The Old Town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site: Schlosskirche – or Castle Church – with the door to which Luther is said to have nailed his 95 Theses, St. Mary's Church where Martin Luther preached, the Luther memorials, the historic market square. . . The 2008 conference took place at the famous Leucorea University that was founded in 1502. This location gave a respectable surrounding for the 33 lectures representing the progress in the field of 'Chemical Biology of Thiamine'. The scientific presentations were subdivided in the four sections 'Structure and Reaction Mechanism', 'Biocatalysis and Reaction Engineering', 'Physiology and Biomedical Aspects', and 'Chemistry and Analogs of Thiamine'. The Scientific Board members (D. Chipman, F. Jordan, R. Kluger, M. Patel, R. Perham, G. Schneider and R.L. Schowen) together with the organizers provided a lecture program where both the state of the art and future developments in each section were represented.

A special highlight of the conference was the lecture given by Ronald Breslow, Columbia University, who 50 years after his seminal achievements in the field of thiamine catalysis provided an overview on the ancient and recent history of the thiamine mechanism. This, as well as many other superb contributions by the 78 participants from 11 nations (Europe, India, Israel, Canada, USA), made this conference a real success story.

In this special issue of the Journal of Molecular Catalysis B: Enzymatic 17 contributions from this stimulating conference are presented. A comprehensive overview on recent exciting developments in the field covering reaction mechanisms and structures of thiamine diphosphate-dependent enzymes and of thiazolium model systems, their application in chemo-enzymatic/organic synthesis and reaction engineering, and physiological and biomedical aspects of thiamine are provided.

Finally, we would like to thank all participants for their contributions and acknowledge DECHEMA for invaluable help in organizing this meeting.

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Available online 6 August 2009