

Foreword

The *Ninth International Meeting or Recent Developments in Pharmaceutical Analysis (RDPA '01)* was held in the island of Lipari (Sicily, Italy) from 3 to 8 June 2001.

The Aeolian Islands, located at one of the historical cross-roads of the Mediterranean, add to the spell of their uncontaminated nature an environment that is the result of an age-old culture. No other place on earth includes, over such a relatively small area, so much variety and alternation of colours. The yellow and red of the sulphur in vulcano, the white of the pumice and the black of the obsidian in Lipari, the green of the woods in Salina and the violet heather in Alicudi, the yellow of the gorse in Filicudi, the white chalk in Panarea, the red of fire and the black of the sandy beaches in Stromboli and, as a crowning element to complete this extraordinary palette of colours, the cobalt-blue, light-blue and green of the beautiful and clear sea all around. Lipari, the antique Meligunis, is the largest island of the Archipelago and geologically and volcanologically the most complex one; its most ancient part made up of stratum volcanoes is to be found to the west of the island. Intense eruptions followed by long breaks in volcanic activity have alternated successively, giving rise to lava streams of obsidian and pumice cupolas; the latest eruption took place around 700 AD.

The *Ninth International Meeting on Recent Developments in Pharmaceutical Analysis* was organized for the first time in Sicily under the auspices

of the *Dipartimento Farmaco-Chimico dell'Università di Messina* and the *Divisione Chimica Farmaceutica della Società Chimica Italiana (Gruppo Analisi Farmaceutica)* and was co-chaired by Prof. P. Ficarra (Messina) and Prof. S. Pinzauti (Firenze).

The aim of this meeting was to provide a forum of high-level scientific exchanges between analytically oriented scientists from industry and universities, working in different fields of pharmaceutical and biomedical sciences and coming from all over the world.

Around 140 delegates from 18 countries gathered to discuss recent advances and future trends in pharmaceutical and biomedical analysis; 12 invited plenary lectures, 13 oral communications and 74 posters were presented. Moreover, 6 Ph.D. students were able to present their research work.

The scientific sessions included topics like advances in separation science (LC, CE, CEC, SFC and GC), hyphenated techniques, with special emphasis on MS coupling; new trends in spectroscopy, electroanalysis and immunoassays; automation and miniaturization in sample preparation; analysis of bulk drugs and pharmaceutical formulations; advances in chiral analysis; analytical biotechnology; drug analysis in biological fluids and in food; therapeutic drug monitoring; environmental and forensic toxicology; chemometrics and method validation. The majority of these topics are discussed in a number of papers gathered in the present Special Issue of the *Journal of Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Analysis*.

The working sessions were held in St. Catherine's Church by the ancient XVI^o century Castle.

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In addition to the scientific programme, a guided visit to the Archaeological Museum, a sightseeing tour of the island by coach and a boat-trip to the white pumice beaches were offered to the participants. During coffee-breaks, it was possible to admire a very suggestive scenery in bright sunshine just by looking at the black lavish rocks. A welcome party was organized at the marvelous cloister of the ancient Norman Abbey by St. Bartholomew's Cathedral (inside the Castle), accompanied by the enchanting notes of a traditional choral concert.

The *Tenth International Meeting on Recent Developments in Pharmaceutical Analysis (RDPA '03)* will be organized in Cogne, Valle d'Aosta, Italy, at the end of June 2003 and chaired by Gabriele Caccialanza from University of Pavia. The proceedings of this meeting will also be published in the *Journal of Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Analysis*.

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