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## Preface

Drug Analysis 2002 (DA '02), a joint meeting of the 7th International Symposium on Drug Analysis and of the 13th International Symposium on Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Analysis, was held from 21 to 25 April 2002 in the beautiful city of Bruges. This meeting followed earlier successful meetings held in Brussels (1983, 1986, 1998), Antwerp (1989), Liège (1992) and Leuven (1995). The proceedings of these meetings all have been published in the *Journal of Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Analysis*.

Drug Analysis 2002 was held in the Congress Centre Oud Sint-Jan, located in renovated 19th century hospital wards, classified as a historical monument and situated in the famous “Golden Triangle” of Bruges. In the 9th century, the counts of Flanders built a stronghold on the square that is now called the “Burg”. In the 11th century, Bruges became an international trade center, the access to the sea being most important for the export of high quality clothes sold all over Europe. Bruges then became rich and prosperous and around 1350 there were almost 45,000 people living there, i.e. even more than today in the inner city. In the 15th century, Flanders became a part of the Burgundian state. Under the Dukes of Burgundy, famous painters, such as Jan van Eyck and Hans Memling had their atelier in Bruges. However, at the end of the 15th century, Bruges started losing its prosperity because of the silting up of the coastal area in the Zwin, still a natural park today near Knokke. In 1548 Bruges was conquered by the Spaniards and could never revive until Georges Rodenbach's novel “Bruges la Morte” put the city

back in the spotlight at the end of the 19th century. Bruges was reborn as an Art City, well preserved, never severely damaged. In 2002, Bruges was chosen as culture city of Europe, together with Salamanca in Spain.

The Symposium was again organized by the *Belgian Society of Pharmaceutical Sciences*, under the chairmanship of Professor Willy R.G. Baeyens, from the University of Ghent, and supported by the Fund for Scientific Research of Flanders (FWO), Belgium. Together with the International Scientific Committee, a high-quality and nicely balanced scientific programme was presented. In total 60 oral and about 270 posters presentations reflected the main scientific themes: microscale separations and assays, chemometrics in drug analysis, biosensors and bioassays, high throughput analyses, quality control of bulk drugs and dosage forms, new trends in sample preparation, analysis of proteins and other natural products, enantiomeric separations, hyphenated techniques, high sensitivity technologies for trace analysis, method validation and regulatory issues. These different themes are represented in the present special issue in which the majority of the ca. 70 submitted papers are brought together. The social programme was also highly enjoyable, including a very nice reception offered by the city of Bruges in the wonderful Gothic room of the Town Hall and a delicious dinner in the Georges Rodenbach Hall of the Belfry Tower.

It is our privilege, as two of the Editors of the *Journal of Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Analy-*

*sis*, to publish the papers presented at the Bruges meeting. The next Symposium in the Drug Analysis series will be held in Namur, Belgium, in April 2006 under the co-chairmanship of Professors Joelle Leclercq (Catholic University of Lou-

vain) and Bernard Masereel (University of Namur).

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