Foreword

The international conference *Shaping of Advanced Ceramics* was organised on April 25–27, 1995 by the 'Vlaamse Instelling voor Technologisch Onderzoek'. This conference was intended to provide a survey of the current scientific and technological issues of importance for the shaping of advanced ceramics. Held under the auspices of the Belgian Ceramic Society and of the European Ceramic Society, it brought together 120 participants from the academic, research and industrial ceramic community. Twenty-three countries were represented.

The 3-day meeting addressed in four sessions the major shaping routes for advanced ceramic components: powder processing and compaction, plastic forming, suspension processing and machining. A fifth session was devoted to emerging technologies. As will be shown from the following pages, both functional and structural applications of advanced ceramics were dealt with; adequate shaping technologies are equally critical in both fields.

A total of 85 scientific contributions including key-note lectures by recognised authorities in the ceramic community were presented. The quality and number of contributions gave clear evidence of the dynamism and relevance of research and development work in this field. Following full reviewing procedures, 54 contributions from the conference are published in the present 'Refereed Reports: Shaping of Advanced Ceramics' which form two issues of the *Journal of the European Ceramic Society*.

On behalf of the Organising Committee we gratefully acknowledge all those who have, by their presence, their enthusiasm and the scientific work they presented, undoubtedly contributed to the success of this conference. We finally wish to thank the staff of the group 'Structurele Materialen' from the VITO—Materials Division, and in particular our colleagues M. Dierckx, R. Gilissen and R. Persoons for their help in the organisation of this meeting.

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