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## Preface

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This special issue of *Thermochimica Acta* contains a selection of the contributions presented at the 'XVIII National Meeting of Calorimetry and Thermal Analysis' promoted by AICAT and GICAT which took place at the University of Pavia, Italy, on 16–19 December, 1996, and at the 'Satellite Symposium on Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage: Chemical, Physical, and Biological Methods of Investigation and Intervention' which was held at the University of Torino on 20–21 December, 1996.

The scientific programme included a variety of areas of interest for researchers active in thermal analysis and calorimetry, thus contributing to the fair success of the meetings. There were about 140 participants at the meeting in Pavia, and about 130 at the satellite symposium in Torino. Among them, foreign scientists representing 10 different countries gave an international character to the scientific discussions in both meetings.

In Pavia, about 60 oral and 40 poster communications were presented in the following five sections: Biothermodynamics, Environment and Cultural Heritage, Materials, Methods, Solutions and liquid mixtures. Four plenary lectures were given by Guido Barone ('Federico II' University of Naples), Riccardo Ferro (University of Genova), Eberhard Gmelin (Max

Planck Institut für Festkörperforschung, Stuttgart, Germany), and Gert Wolf (Bergakademie Freiberg, Germany).

Scientific discussions were particularly alive in the two workshops organised on the 19th December, concerning 'Methodologies of thermal analysis in pharmaceutical studies' and 'Chemical problems in the protection of the environment'. An exhibition of scientific equipment was also displayed during the whole meeting.

At the Symposium in Torino, 14 oral and 13 poster communications were presented. A plenary lecture on 'Science on behalf of preservation of cultural heritage' was given by Prof. F. Piacenti (University of Florence). A round-table with the participation of some Directors of Museums of Torino was held on 'Cooperation Opportunities between Scientific Research Bodies and Public Administration for Cultural Heritage Protection and Restoration'. Moreover, on the 20th December 1996, a visit to some recently restored monuments and works of art was organised.

The guest-editors of this special issue wish to express their sincere thanks to all the participants at both meetings for their excellent contributions, which made these meetings so successful.

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