

Preface: 7th International Conference on Environmental and Biological Aspects of Main-Group Organometals (ICEBAMO), Heraklion, Crete, Greece, 2006

This special issue of Applied Organometallic Chemistry (AOC) brings together papers based on work presented at the 7th International Conference on Environmental and Biological Aspects of Main-Group Organometals (ICEBAMO), held at Candia Maries Hotel near Heraklion, Crete, Greece, 10–12 October 2006. The positive emails we have received after the conference indicate that this ICEBAMO meeting again succeeded in being a very enjoyable small dynamic meeting with a warm atmosphere and fruitful discussions.

The series of ICEBAMO meetings started in the 1980's with the aim to bring together the various disciplines (e.g. inorganic and analytical chemists, biologists, toxicologists) to discuss speciation aspects. Prof. Kevin A. Francesconi opened up the meeting with an enjoyable and gentle talk (with various photo documentation) covering the developments and changing emphases in the field speciation research over the last 20 year as reflected in the content of the ICEBAMO meetings. Focus was next directed onto the present and future term; "metallomics" and it was emphasised that species of interest for "metallomics" both include covalent and coordination complexes of elements with biomolecules. Thus, discussions followed regarding the benefit of replacing the word "Organometals" in the conference title, so also talks focused on metal-complexes are included. The necessity of including metal-complexes is evident by the fact, that following the session "Analytical Advances and Challenges in Metal Speciation Analysis" a whole session was dedicated to "Interactions of Metal(-oid)s with biomolecules".

A double session was dedicated to "Metalloids and Dietary Exposure" (mainly research on selenium and arsenic was presented, but, also one lecture on the presence of tin in Greek seafood) and one session was dedicated "arsenic" on its own ("Arsenic Exposure"). In agreement with earlier attempts to get synthetic chemists and synthetic chemistry involved in the ICEBAMO meeting, a session was dedicated to "New Synthetic Challenges". Work on the synthesis of anti-cancer selenium compounds, a novel seleno-arsenic compound, pentavalent thioarsenicals and a metalloprotein standard containing an enriched isotope was presented. Further topics covered at the meeting were "Metal(-loid)s in Biological Systems" (arsenic-phytochelatin, thio and oxo arsenic species and lipophilic selenium species), "Metal(-loid)s in the Terrestrial Environment" (monosodium methylarsonate in pest-control, the detection of methylated metal(loid) compounds in compost and of arsenic in sewage sludge) and finally, "Metal(-loid)s in the Aquatic Environment" (methylated arsenic-sulfur species, disposition of arsenobetaine in fish and general arsenic speciation in marine biota).

In addition to all the high standard oral presentations, posters presenting high quality work were presented. Two poster prizes and a prize for the best oral contribution from a young speaker were kindly donated from Wiley InterScience. The first poster prize was awarded Mirko Peitzsch from University of Mainz, Germany and the second poster prize was awarded Edmunds Lukevics from Riga Technical University, Latvia.

Hopefully, this short summary of the 7th ICEBAMO meeting, despite having even mentioned the social program (and all its last "kampais"), together with the papers published in this special issue of AOC, gives everyone a chance to recall the meeting and the quality of work presented at this meeting. As members of the organizing committee we wish to take the opportunity to thank all that helped organizing this event and all of the participants for their contribution to make the 7th ICEBAMO meeting another success.

Spiros A. Pergantis and Helle R. Hansen
Environmental Chemical Processes Laboratory
University of Crete
(Organizers of 7th ICEBAMO)