

Editorial

Preface

The Rio Symposium was founded in 1988 with the idea to invite renowned scientists from the rest of the world to Brazil in order to give an as large as possible number of Latin American scientists, including students, a chance to participate in a high-level international conference. There has been an obvious need for such a step because, due to financial restrictions, usually only a few elite scientists from Latin America could participate in international events in Europe or North America. Hence there has been a notorious lack of scientific communication between Latin America and the rest of the world. This idea has been extremely well received [1], and after the first two Symposia were organized in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, other Latin American scientists were offering to host the ‘Rio Symposium’ in their countries. And in the following years, Rio Symposia were very successfully organized in Venezuela, Argentina, Mexico and Chile. During those years, the conference, because of its high scientific level and its special character, also succeeded to attract an increasing number of participants from North America and Europe. In 2002, the Rio Symposium returned to Brazil and was organized in Florianópolis, SC. In spite of the difficult times, particularly in Argentina and Venezuela, the Seventh Rio Symposium could attract the largest number of participants ever [2].

After this great success, it was not easy to find a volunteer to organize the Eighth Rio Symposium on Atomic Spectrometry, particularly in view of the economic difficulties in several Latin American countries. It was Prof. Reinaldo Calixto Campos from the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio) who decided that the idea of the conference has to be carried on, and he took the torch and decided that the Rio Symposium has to return to Rio de Janeiro, 16 years after its inauguration. But, although PUC-Rio would have been an ideal environment for the Eighth Rio Symposium, a metropolis, such as Rio de Janeiro was not, considering prices and security. Hence an appropriate place within the State of Rio de Janeiro had to be found that would combine with the spirit and tradition of the Rio Symposium. It did not take too long until we found out about Paraty, a small historical town

that perfectly combined natural beauty, medieval architecture, as shown in Fig. 1, and the necessary tourist infrastructure.

Paraty, about half way between Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, originally a settlement of the Goianás Indians, was discovered by the Portuguese in 1596, and became one of the most important harbors of Brazil, during the gold rush in the 18th century. The gold was transported from Minas Gerais over more than 500 km on the ‘Caminho do Ouro’, the gold trail, to Paraty, from where it was shipped to Portugal. With the end of the gold rush, and particularly after the inauguration of the railway Rio de Janeiro–São Paulo in 1870, which took the easier way on the plateau, away from the coast, Paraty became isolated and forgotten until the coastal road Rio–Santos was opened in 1970. This way the historic center with its cobblestone pavement, which was founded in 1726, remained unchanged for more than 200 years, and is now Cultural Heritage under the protection of UNESCO. The historic center of Paraty is a fantastic trip back into the past.

Located at one of the most beautiful coastal areas of Brazil with a wealth of little islands in the quiet blue sea, at the foot of the Serra do Mar, which rises up to 1600 m



Fig. 1. Historical center of Paraty, RJ at the foot of the Serra do Mar.

above sea level, covered by Atlantic rain forest, Paraty also offers unique landscape, which the participants could enjoy during the free day of the conference. It also has plenty of restaurants and bars, and offers a variety of art craft—and it is famous for its more than 300 brands of ‘Pinga’, the locally manufactured sugar cane brandy. Last not least, Paraty is the home of the world famous ‘Teatro de Bonecos’, a puppet theater for adult, a cultural gem that the participants could also enjoy on one of the evenings.

However, in spite of its tourist infrastructure, Paraty could not offer any conference room that would accommodate the expected number of participants and the exhibition together with the posters. And although the local authorities were offering a quick solution, this part became the major challenge for the organizers. At this point, I have to extend my sincere gratitude to my friend Reinaldo Campos and his charming wife Teresa (Fig. 2), who had to solve a thousand details, including the construction of a conference and exhibition center with the entire necessary infrastructure. Reinaldo and Teresa had to pay countless visits to Paraty and had to solve ever new problems. But they not only solved all problems, they never ever complained or lost their patience. It is their merit, obviously supported by a staff of co-workers, that the 8th Rio Symposium on Atomic Spectrometry could open its doors in a tailor-made tent (Fig. 3) on 1st August 2004, and that the entire conference worked perfectly without a single technical problem.

The efforts of the organizers were honored by roughly the same record number of participants as in the 7th Rio Symposium, and both, the Pre-symposium Course on Basic Statistics and Quality Assurance in Atomic Spectrometry, and the Symposium Course on Sampling and Coupling



Fig. 2. Prof. Dr. Reinaldo C. Campos and his wife Teresa during the 8th Rio Symposium.



Fig. 3. The tailor-made tent, built for the 8th Rio Symposium.

Techniques in Atomic Spectrometry, were very well attended. The list of invited speakers, which included Gary M. Hieftje, D. Conrad Gregoire, Patrick J. Parsons, Matthias Otto, James A. Holcombe, Uwe Heitmann, Gerhard Schlemmer, Klaus G. Heumann, Viliam Krivan, Dirk Schaumlöffel, Ramon Barnes, Jörg Feldmann, Mabel Tudino, Érico M.M. Flores, Ralph Sturgeon, Alessandro D’Ulivo, Jiří Dědina, Dmitri Katskov and Gerd Herrmann, demonstrates the high scientific level of the conference, which is further underlined by the more than 200 submitted oral and poster presentations. A record number of 63 manuscripts have been submitted for this *Special Issue of Spectrochimica Acta Part B*, and 28 of them are included in this issue. The fact that 26 of them are from Latin American authors clearly underlines the increasing contribution of Latin American teams to research in atomic spectrometry.

The 9th Rio Symposium on Atomic Spectrometry will be jointly organized by Profa. Marinela Colina (mcolina@luz.edu.ve), Profa. Lué-Merú Marcó P. (mparra@ucla.edu.ve), and this author at the University of Barquisimeto, Venezuela, in 5–10 November 2006. We are looking forward to seeing even more participants and more scientific contributions, more international collaboration, more stimulation from outside, and an increasing international acceptance of the research done in Latin America.

References

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