

Preface

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BioMetals 2014 was held on the campus of Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, USA in July, 2014. Participants from 25 countries on 5 continents totaled 196, comprised of one-third senior scientists from academic, commercial and government laboratories, one-third early career and postdoctoral scientists, and one-third students. Laurie Patton, Duke University Dean of Arts & Sciences and Durden Professor of Religion welcomed participants to the conference with an entertaining and insightful commentary on the cultural relevance of the biometals field, citing references from the Hebrew Bible, the Roman writer Pliny the Elder, the sixteenth century theologian and philosopher Georgius Agricola and twenty first century science fiction.

The conference format consisted of 27 invited lectures, 34 contributed short talks, and over 120 posters. As always in the BioMetals conference series, our interdisciplinary theme was the exploration of metals in biology, medicine and the environment, with the following session topics:

- metal cofactors
- environmental biology of trace metals
- metals at the host-pathogen interface
- metal homeostasis in plants
- metals in health and disease
- metal dependent signaling
- metals in biotechnology
- mechanisms for metal acquisition

Here in this special volume of *BioMetals* we present a group of 13 review articles and original research papers that are representative of the breadth of research presented at the BioMetals 2014 Conference. We hope you enjoy these manuscripts and continue the conversation in Dresden, Germany for BioMetals 2016.

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