Foreword

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This Special Issue of the *Journal of Radioanalytical and Nuclear Chemistry* (JRNC) contains the Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Nuclear Analytical Methods in the Life Sciences—NAMLS-9, held in Lisboa, Portugal, 7 through 12 September, 2008. NAMLS is the brand acronym of a continuing series of international conferences, organised to promote the development and application of nuclear and related analytical methods in the life sciences. Previous events were held in Amsterdam (The Netherlands; 1967), Bled (Slovenia; 1972), Vienna (Austria; 1978), Gaithersburg, MD (USA; 1989), Prague (Czech Republic; 1993), Beijing (China; 1998), Antalya (Turkey; 2002), and Rio de Janeiro (Brazil; 2005). The next instalment is expected to take place in the autumn of 2012 or the spring of 2013, probably in a far-east country.

The numbers of NAMLS-9 were quite impressive, especially when accounting for the scientific competition from two other major events in the same year, both on nuclear-related subjects. A total of 220 abstracts were tentatively submitted to the Conference, of which 71 and 118 were eventually scheduled for oral and poster sessions, respectively. The oral part of the program was convened around the following topics (in alphabetical order): Agriculture, Biomonitoring, Environment, Human Health, Methodologies, Natural Medicines, Nutrition, QA/QC, and Speciation. The former topics were clustered to yield four

poster sessions: Biomonitoring, Archaeology and Agriculture; Environmental and QA/QC; Human Health, Nutrition and Natural Medicines; and Methodologies and Speciation.

The Young Scientist Award (YSA-2008) was granted to Raghunath Acharya (India); three Student Best Oral (2) and Poster (1) Presentation Awards were also handed over at the Conference, to Sabrina Metairon (Brazil), Mohammed Alkhorayef (United Kingdom) and Tatyana Baptista (Brazil), respectively. Besides, a conspicuous presence of young researchers was a staple of the Conference, and the best sign of continuity for years to come.

Submission of Conference papers for the corresponding Proceedings was, of course, voluntary. There were 95 manuscripts originally offered for consideration and tentative inclusion in the Proceedings, and every one of them has been assessed by a minimum of two independent, highly-qualified individuals. After a stringent peer-reviewing process, 62 papers eventually made their way into this Special Issue, which corresponds to an acceptance rate of 65%, well within the common range of similar figures for major international journals.

Browsing through the papers herein, the interested reader will find the latest progresses not only in methodological developments and selected applications of core techniques—such as instrumental and radiochemical neutron activation analysis (INAA, RNAA)—but also relevant applications of related analytical techniques that fall within the conference scope, and are increasingly used in the life sciences—particle-induced X-ray emission (PIXE), energy-dispersive X-ray fluorescence (EDXRF), inductively-coupled plasma mass-spectrometry (ICP-MS) or nuclear-imaging methods, to name just a few. People whose interests are driven by more practical aspects will certainly find exciting applications of nuclear and related analytical methods in agriculture, biomonitoring, geochemistry, health

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and nutrition, QA/QC, waste disposal, and environmental issues at large.

Many people have put their best efforts into making possible this Special Issue, starting with everyone involved in planning, organising, supporting and running the Conference itself. No way could we acknowledge them all lest anyone be forgotten. Still, the Guest Editors cannot possibly pass without expressing truthful appreciation to the present Authors, who managed to make their research findings into high-quality articles; to the paper Reviewers, whose constructive criticism and helpful comments were

invaluable for ensuring that every accepted manuscript would measure up to the JRNC's high standards; and last, yet by no means least, to Springer and Akadémiai Kiadó for agreeing to publish the Proceedings under their prestigious imprint.

Adriano M. G. Pacheco, Executive Editor

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