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SEM 2009 ANNUAL MEETING

The 2009 annual meeting of the Mineralogical Society of Spain will take place at the University of Salamanca on 9–12 September. The meeting is being coordinated by Dr. Mercedes Ferrer, from the Department of Geology, with the assistance of other faculty members and researchers from the Geological Survey of Spain (IGME) and the Spanish National Research Council (IRNASA-CSIC). As in previous editions, the meeting is not restricted to national researchers, and foreign contributions (in Spanish or English) are welcomed. The deadline for abstract submission (a two-page document prepared with the MACLA-style template provided by the organizers) is **May 15**. Abstracts will be reviewed, accepted (or rejected), and assigned for presentation orally or as a poster by the scientific committee. An interesting field trip (including visits to mineral prospects and active mines in the area), the General Assembly of the Society, and a banquet (where the 2009 Young Scientist Award recipients will be presented) will complete the activities of the congress.

The scheduled thematic seminar will be devoted to the applications of synchrotron radiation in mineralogy. Particularly interesting will be a talk delivered by Dr. Salvador Ferrer on the status and potential of the new Spanish synchrotron light source project, ALBA.



The Escuelas Mayores historic building and statue of the 16th-century verse writer and professor Fray Luis de León. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SALAMANCA



The University of Salamanca library dates back to 1214, when the first librarian was appointed. At present, it holds 2700 manuscripts and incunables (books printed before 1501) and nearly 62,000 works printed before the 19th century.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SALAMANCA

Salamanca is an exciting tourist destination. It holds the oldest existing university in Spain, founded in 1218 by King Alfonso IX. Outstanding among the legislation founding the University of Salamanca is its Charter, granted by King Alfonso X and dated 8 May 1254, which established the rules for organization and financial endowment. Also important are the Papal Bulls of Alexander IV, issued in 1255, which confirmed the founding of the university, recognized the universal validity of the degrees awarded by it, and granted it the privilege of having its own seal. At present, the University of Salamanca has about 30,000 students. The scientific sessions of the meeting will take place in the so-called Escuelas Mayores, a historic building by an unknown architect dating back to 1411.

Information on the meeting and related activities will be periodically updated on the official website, www.usal.es/~sem09/.

CELLS-ALBA SYNCHROTRON LIGHT SOURCE

The synchrotron light source ALBA is the largest scientific/technological facility in Spain. When fully operational, it will compete with state-of-the-art light sources in Europe. It is located in Cerdanyola del Vallès, near Barcelona, and it is expected that the first experiments in the beamlines already constructed will take place in 2010. This third-generation light source is being constructed and will be operated by CELLS (Consortium for the Exploitation of the Synchrotron Light Laboratory). Its 3 GeV storage ring (268.8 m) has capacity for up to 30 beamlines, seven of which are being implemented at present: X-ray microscopy (270–2600 eV), X-ray absorption spectroscopy (2.4–65 keV), materials science and powder diffraction (8–50 keV), macromolecular crystallography (5–21 keV), noncrystalline diffraction (6.5–13 keV), photoemission spectroscopy and microscopy (100–2000 eV), and variable polarization soft X-rays (80–4000 eV). A call for a second phase of beamlines is now under way, and these are scheduled for approval by the end of 2009. The cost of the project, so far, exceeds 200 million euros and is cofinanced (50:50) by the Spanish and Catalan governments. ALBA is generating great expectations within the Earth sciences and related fields in Spain, especially among those competing for beam time in the European Synchrotron Radiation Facility (ERSF). Further information is available at www.cells.es.



The ALBA synchrotron light source, located in Cerdanyola del Vallès, Barcelona. PHOTO COURTESY OF CELLS