International Association of Geoanalysts

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IAG AWARDS AT GOLDSCHMIDT

The IAG presented its sixth Early Career Researcher Award at the Goldschmidt Conference in Prague (August 2011). Now a well-established annual event, this award is based on the abstracts submitted for presentation at either poster or oral sessions; this year the IAG's jury had a record 1150 contributions to consider. We report with great pleasure that the winner of the 2011 award is **Dr. Leah Morgan** from the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam for her abstract entitled "Improving the Accuracy of the $^{40}Ar/^{39}Ar$ Geochronometer." Leah's work was judged a significant advancement in improving data quality in the K/Ar radioactive decay system. Her work focuses on using metrologically rigorous methods for refining the decay parameters within the branched K/Ar and K/Ca decay chain. The panel of IAG judges and the IAG Governing Council recognize her work to be of key relevance to our Society's core goal of improved geochemical metrology.

Leah Morgan (left) and IAG Vice President Jacinta Enzweiler at the 2011 Goldschmidt awards ceremony

Wiley-Blackwell, publisher of the IAG's journal, *Geostandards and Geoanalytical Research*, again in 2011 sponsored awards for outstanding student contributions at Goldschmidt. These awards are based on the actual presentations made by young scientists at the meeting, with judging provided by the individual session chairs. In conjunction with the IAG, Wiley-Blackwell identified a small number of sessions of particular relevance to the journal, with the assessments based on the excellence of the scientific content and on the quality of the presentation. The winners of the Wiley-Blackwell prizes for 2011 and the titles of their work are:

Aude Coutaud (CNRS/UPS, Toulouse, France): "Copper and zinc isotope fractionation during their interaction with phototrophic biofilm"

Janne Koornneef (Institut für Geochemie und Petrologie, ETH-Zürich, Switzerland): "In situ analysis of U-Th disequilibria in titanite by fs-LA-MC-ICP-MS"

Christoph J. Sahle (Fakultät Physik, Universität Dortmund, Germany): "Studying soft X-ray absorption edges under extreme conditions"

The IAG wishes to congratulate all four of these winners and wishes them all a successful future in analytical geochemistry.

CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE

The IAG's Materials Certification Committee held its annual meeting in Prague immediately before the Goldschmidt Conference. The current work of the committee focuses on four bulk rock materials: a serpentinite, a harzburgite, a rhyolite, and a trachyandesite. Data for major and minor element concentrations have now been collected on each of these materials, and data evaluation is at an advanced stage. In the cases of the serpentinite and the harzburgite, a further round of data collection, employing expert laboratories identified by the IAG, will focus on the characterization of their platinum group element concentrations.

Members of the IAG's Certification Committee take a break during their annual meeting. From left to right: Thomas Meisel (committee chair), Davaasuren Begzsuren, Cornelia Kriete, Klaus Peter Jochum, and Paul Bédard

During this year's committee meeting, two specific issues came to light that will require future action. First, the data being reported by the IAG "qualified" laboratories have become overly dominated by two analytical techniques: X-ray fluorescence and inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry. The loss in diversity in the available techniques is making it difficult to assess method-specific biases that might impact results. The Certification Committee recognizes the need to recruit additional laboratories that still have expertise in other analytical methods. Second, the IAG certification protocol, which is the basis of all IAG certificates of analysis, requires updating in light of recent changes in metrology guidelines. Modifications to the protocol that are seen as necessary include the justification of outlier rejection based on geochemical criteria and the modification of terminology to bring it into compliance with VIM-3 guidelines.

MICROANALYTICAL METROLOGY

Microanalytical Reference Materials
MAY 15-17, 2012 • GOLDEN, CO

The popularity of microanalytical techniques and the diversity in their application continue to grow. The IAG and its membership are responding to this with two initiatives in 2012 specifically addressing challenges in microanalytical metrology. A conference entitled Microanalytical Reference Materials (www.csmspace.com/events/mas/) is to be held in Golden, Colorado, USA, from 15 to 17 May 2012. In collaboration with the Microanalysis Society, the IAG will be supporting this event, which is being organized by the U.S. Geological Survey. IAG has agreed to support the participation of internationally renowned keynote speakers and is also encouraging the submission of conference papers to *Geostandards and Geoanalytical Research*. Topics to be addressed during the conference include the synthesis of microanalytical reference materials (RMs), REE RMs, Ti in quartz and Ti in zircon RMs, atom probe standardization, and recent round-robin results.

A microanalytical-specific initiative is being headed by IAG members Paul Bédard (Université du Québec à Chicoutimi) and Kim Esbensen (Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland). They will organize a session at the 2012 Goldschmidt Conference devoted to issues affecting reference materials specifically intended for microbeam methods. The session entitled "Geochemical Heterogeneity – Definition, Detection and Characterization" will address the identification and characterization of heterogeneity in RMs when sampled at the low-nanogram to pictogram range. This new field of analytical metrology is growing in relevance as it has a major impact on data quality from analytical approaches such as EPMA, LA–ICP–MS, and µXRF.