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AIG-9 IN TARRAGONA, SPAIN

The IAGC cosponsored the 9th International Symposium on Applied Isotope Geochemistry (AIG-9) in Tarragona, Spain, held on September 18–23, 2011. The organizing committee, chaired by Albert Soler and Neus Otero, and the local organizing committee from the University of Barcelona (Carme Audi, Raul Carrey, Albert Folch, Massimo Marchesi, Jordi Palau, Roger Puig, Monica Rossell, and Clara Torrento) invited isotopists from around the world working on the applied aspects of isotope science to convene at the Ciutat de Tarragona Hotel in historic downtown Tarragona. This small city in the heart of Catalunya, with its historic splendors and World Heritage status, served as the perfect backdrop for the week's scientific and social activities.

A total of 138 scientists from 24 countries participated in a plenary session lasting four days. The excellent scientific program centered on seven themes selected by the scientific committee composed of Ramon Aravena (University of Waterloo, Canada), Tom Bullen (USGS, USA), Isabel Cacho (University of Barcelona, Spain), Angels Canals (University of Barcelona, Spain), Ian Cartwright (Monash University, Australia), Matthew Fantla (Pennsylvania State University, USA), Neus Otero (University of Barcelona, Spain), Thomas Prohaska (Universität für Bodenkultur, Austria), Martine Savard (Geological Survey of Canada, Canada), and David Widory (BRGM, France). The seven themes were:

1. Advances in Isotope Techniques and Instrumentation (keynote: "Instrumental approaches to improve accuracy and precision of isotope ratio measurements with laser ablation-multicollector ICP-MS," by Bodo Hattendorf)
2. Isotope Signals of Climate Change (keynote: "Ventilation of the deep ocean since the last glacial period: Carbon cycle impacts," by Luke Skinner)
3. Isotopes in Environmental and Forensic Studies (keynote: "Current challenges in isotope studies of environmental contaminants: Multi-element isotope analysis and investigations of micropollutants," by Martin Elsner)
4. Using Isotopes to Unravel Biogeochemical Cycles (keynote: "Our current understanding of silicon isotope biogeochemistry and its relevance to reconstructions of the silica cycle," by Christina De La Rocha)
5. Isotope Hydrology (keynote: "The role of stable isotopes in tracing movement and reactions of CO₂ at geological CO₂ storage sites," by Bernhard Mayer)
6. Isotope Geology (keynote: "An overview of the energy–water quality nexus: using isotopic tools to elucidate the impact of energy production on water resources in the U.S.," by Avner Vengosh)
7. Isotopes in Biological Applications (keynote: "Exploration of human iron metabolism using stable isotope techniques," by Thomas Walczyk)

The wide range of oral and poster presentations illustrated the increasingly broad scope of applied isotope geochemistry and showed how isotopes are providing important new and unique information for unraveling scientific problems.

The IAGC Faure Award Committee for AIG-9 presented the award for the best oral presentation by a student to Geneviève Bordeleau, INRS-ETE, Canada ("The use of stable isotopes to assess natural attenuation of explosives and to distinguish nitrate sources in groundwater on military training ranges"), and the award for best student poster



IAGC Vice-President Richard Wanty congratulates Best Student Oral Presentation winner Geneviève Bordeleau and Best Student Poster Presentation winner Stefan Cretnik.

presentation to Stefan Cretnik, Helmholtz Center Munich, Germany ("Chlorine and carbon isotope measurements can help assess the effectiveness of a zero-valent iron barrier"). The awards include a \$250 cash prize and a one-year complimentary IAGC membership.



2000-year-old Roman amphitheatre in Tarragona, site of the conference icebreaker

2000 years ago. A mid-conference field trip took participants to the central part of Catalunya and included a visit to a medieval castle and the innards of an old potash mine. A large group of accompanying members had an exceptional time visiting a variety of cultural sites throughout the week.

AIG-9 was fortunate to have several government and corporate sponsors in addition to IAGC, including the Gobierno de Espana-Ministero de Educacion, Generalitat de Catalunya-Departament de Territori i Sostenibilitat, Agencia de Residus de Catalunya, Agencia de Gestio d'Ajuts Universitaris I de Recerca, Repsol, Thermo Scientific, Spectromat GMBH, Nu Instruments, Picarro Instruments, Elementar, and Vertex Technics. These sponsors were essential for increasing the involvement in the conference of students and participants from disadvantaged countries.



AIG-9 participants arriving at the Ciutat de Tarragona Hotel after a successful mid-conference field trip

Participants enjoyed a warm welcome by the local organizing committee, which deserves congratulations for its efforts to foster scientific communication and the development of new scientific collaborations in an exceptionally friendly atmosphere. Based on the success of this meeting, it is clear that AIG is an important conference opportunity that will continue long into the future. Planning has already begun for AIG-10 in 2013 near Budapest, Hungary!

On behalf of the organizing committee for AIG-9,

Thomas Bullen, U.S. Geological Survey