

## Guest Editorial

The fourth International Conference on Shaping of Advanced Ceramics, “Shaping 4”, was held in Madrid, Spain, on November 15–18, 2009, under the auspices of the Spanish Ceramic and Glass Society (SECV) and the European Ceramic Society (ECerS). The two first editions of this conference were organised by the Flemish Institute for Technological Research (VITO) in Belgium (1995 in Mol, and 2002 in Ghent) under the auspices of the Belgian Ceramic Society. The third edition was organised by the French Group of Ceramics in Limoges (France) in 2006. During Shaping 4 it was announced that the next edition of Shaping, Shaping 5, will take place in Belgium, organised by the Belgium Ceramic Research Centre, under the auspices of the Belgian Ceramic Society.

The main topics of the conference dealt with the manufacture of advanced ceramics for any applications, since all of them share identical issues and problems with regard to shaping processes. Special attention was paid to the relationships between shaping and micro- and nanostructure, and the production of multimaterials and/or multifunctional systems. The following topics were included:

- Beneficiation, conminution and granulation.
- Dry powder processing.
- Colloidal dispersion and surface modification.
- Shaping of ceramic suspensions.
- Plastic forming.
- Shaping thin and thick films and coatings.
- Solid freeform manufacturing.
- Shaping of complex micro- and nanostructures.
- Shaping porous materials.

The conference consisted of the following contributions:

1 Plenary lecture given by Prof. Fred F. Lange, from UCSB, USA.

12 Invited lectures.

8 oral sessions, with a total of 49 communications.

2 poster sessions, with a total of 48 communications.

2 oral-poster sessions, within the Student Contest with 21 communications.

It should be remarked the oral-poster format given to the student contest. The students presented briefly (3 min) their poster previously to further discussion during a conventional display and discussion poster session. A jury composed by 5 members (Prof. F.F. Lange, Prof. G.L. Messing, Prof. R. Todd, Prof. J. Heinrich and Prof. F. Cambier) was committed to judge the presentations by filling up a score table for each of them. It was decided to give three prizes due to the quality of the presentations. The prizes were announced during the conference dinner by J. Heinrich and R. Todd as representatives of the JECerS Trust. The winners were:

1st prize: M. Verde, ICV-CSIC, Spain.

2nd prize: F. Pishbin, Imperial College, UK.

3rd prize: A.B. Haugen, University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway.

The conference was attended by a total of 140 participants, from 28 countries. From these participants, 38 were students, from 15 countries. 21 students from 10 different countries participated in the Student Contest. All 21 students participating in the Student Contest were supported by the JECerS Trust.

I am gratefully acknowledged to the members of the Organising Committee, and the National and International Advisory Boards, the chairmen of the sessions, and the authors, who made possible a successful meeting.

The present issue of the *Journal of the European Ceramic Society* contains a representative selection of papers presented at the Shaping-4 conference, and gives a nice overview about the research being carried out worldwide in the field.

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