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Editorial

Special Issue Devoted to the XIV ELAFOT Conference (*XIV Encuentro Latinoamericano de Fotoquímica y Fotobiología*)

ELAFOT is a Latin American meeting of scientists and students studying the interaction of light and matter with a wide range of applications. It was founded in 1982 by Professor Eduardo Lissi from Universidad de Santiago de Chile with the collaboration of Elsa Abuin, Maria Victoria Encinas and colleagues from several countries including J. C. Scaiano (Toronto, Canada), Miguel Neumann (Sao Carlos, Brazil), Carlos Previtali (Río Cuarto, Argentina) and Silvia Braslavsky (Mülheim/Ruhr, Germany).

The meeting takes place every 2–3 years and has alternated continuously between Argentina, Brazil and Chile. The Latin American photochemical community has growin with current connections to many countries in Latin America, North America and Europe, including Venezuela, Mexico, Cuba, Panama, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, Canada, United States of America, France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Italy, Sweden and Denmark among others.

The most recent ELAFOT XIV took place from November 11th to 14th, 2019, in Viña del Mar, Chile. The conference was organized by Chilean photochemists Denis Fuentealba (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile), Nancy Pizarro (Universidad Andrés Bello), Carolina Aliaga (Universidad de Santiago de Chile) and Germán Günther (Universidad de Chile). Despite the complex political climate in Chile at the time, 106 attendees participated, including 42 PhD students and postdocs. The event schedule consisted of 9 Plenary talks, 6 Invited talks, 9 Oral communications, 3 Short talks by students and 70 poster presentations. Participants came mainly from Argentina, Brazil and Chile, with participations from United States, Canada, Spain, Germany, Uruguay and Panama.

The program included sessions on basic and applied Photosciences, covering critically important topics such as photocatalysis, photosensitization, advanced light spectroscopy and microscopy, single-molecule photochemistry, luminescent nanoparticles, photoactive materials and polymers, together with sustainable technologies among other related fields. Several students received awards for their poster presentations thanks to a panel of judges from different countries. A special session was dedicated to the memory of Professor Enrique San Román from Argentina, who has continuoulsy participated in the ELAFOT meeting from the beginning and has trained numerous young researchers in photochemistry. Prof. San Román was a founding researcher of INQUIMAE (UBA), developing the photochemistry group, and contributed to the training of numerous photochemists. Unfortunately, Enrique passed away suddenly on July 17, 2019 at the age of 73. As a tribute, a session was organized in his honor with Silvia Braslavsky offering a few words of remembrance, followed by three oral presentations.

Figure 1. All together photo at the Sporting Club in Viña del Mar City, Chile, November 2019.

The conference dinner was held at the Sporting Club in Viña del Mar, where we shared excellent Chilean food and wine, accompanied by music and dancing as is customary in Latin American meetings.

This special issue of the Journal includes a total of 12 contributions based on results presented at the XIII ELAFOT as peer-reviewed full articles. Andrés H. Thomas, Carolina Lorente and Denis Fuentealba acted as guest editors of the Special Issue.

The organizers thank the participants, especially the speakers and poster authors for their work and for their active contribution to the meeting. We also thank the journal Photochemistry and Photobiology, represented by its editor Prof. Jean Cadet, for the opportunity to report some of the latest photochemical/photobiological findings from the Latin American community in the Special Issue.

The next ELAFOT is scheduled to take place in Brazil in 2022, preceded by the Meeting of the Inter-American Photochemical Society (I-APS) in Foz do Iguaçu (Brasil) in 2021 (Fig. 1).

Carolina Lorente[1]*, *Andrés H. Thomas*[1] and *Denis Fuentealba*[2]

[1]Instituto de Investigaciones Fisicoquímicas Teóricas y Aplicadas (INIFTA), Universidad Nacional de La Plata (UNLP), CCT La Plata-CONICET, La Plata, Argentina
[2]Laboratorio de Química Biosupramolecular, Facultad de Química y de Farmacia, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago de Chile, Chile

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