This is to announce the 2003 Elsevier/Spectrochimica Acta Award, the annual award honoring the most significant article(s) published in a volume. Elsevier makes this award on behalf of Spectrochimica Acta, Part B, to encourage the publication of top articles in this journal. All papers published during one year are considered for this award and the Editorial Advisory Board and the Spectrochimica Acta Electronica Editorial Team are responsible for the selection. The award consists of a monetary prize of $1000 together with a presentation certificate.

We have the pleasure to announce the 2003 Award for the articles published in Spectrochimica Acta Part B, Volume 58. The votes of the jury accumulated for a paper describing the usefulness of modeling the process of laser ablation when the laser is used as sampling tool. The work is the result of a collaboration effort between the University of Antwerp (Belgium) and the George Washington University in Washington D.C. (USA). The paper selected for the Award is the following:

Annemie Bogaerts, Zhaoyang Chen, Renaat Gijbels and Akos Vertes
Laser ablation for analytical sampling: what can we learn from modeling?

The above paper was followed by a group of two papers resulting from a collaboration between the Department of Applied Physics in Eindhoven (The Netherlands) and the Departamento de Fisica of the Universidad de Cordoba in Cordoba (Spain). These papers deal with time resolved diagnostics (temperature and electron number density) measurements in an inductively coupled argon plasma using the power interruption technique and with a discussion of the additional electron loss process occurring at the edge of the plasma. These papers are:

M.J. van de Sande, P. van Eck, A. Sola, A. Gamero, J.J.A.M. van der Mullen
Electron production and loss processes in a spectrochemical inductively coupled argon plasma.

As usual, since the introduction of the award, many other papers scored high on the jury’s list. For the 2003 volume, this list, in alphabetical order of the first authors, looks as follows:

Jorgen Gustafsson, Nikolai Chekalin and Ove Axner
Improved detectability of wavelength modulation diode laser absorption spectrometry applied to window-equipped graphite furnaces by 4th and 6th harmonic detection.

Jorgen Gustafsson, Nikolai Chekalin and Ove Axner
Characterization of 2f-, 4f-, and 6f-background signals in wavelength modulation diode laser absorption spectrometry in graphite furnaces.

Bodo Hattendorf and Detlef Günther
Strategies for method development for an inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometer with bandpass reaction cell. Approaches with different reaction gases for the determination of selenium.

Glen P. Jackson and Fred L. King
Probing excitation and ionization processes in millisecond-pulsed glow discharges in argon through the addition of nitrogen.

Glen P. Jackson and Fred L. King
Bulk plasma properties in the pulsed glow discharge.

Scott A. Lehn, Mao Huang, Kelly A. Warner, Gerardo Gamez and Gary M. Hieftje
Spatially resolved ground-state number densities of calcium and strontium ion in an inductively coupled plasma in contact with an inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry sampling interface.
The majority of the papers considered for the Award address fundamental aspects of the most common atomization/excitation sources used in analytical spectroscopy. Such papers do indeed constitute the fingerprint of the journal, which maintains its characteristic of being the most appropriate forum for these type of articles, in addition to other contributions of more applied nature. The editors would like to reiterate the well-known concept that there could be no new development in the instrumentation if it were not for a better understanding of the underlying fundamental principles of the technique. This is true in general and even more so in spectrochemical analysis.

Nicòlo Omenetto
Greet de Loos