

Conference Report

The International Symposium on Reactive Intermediates and Unusual Molecules (ISRIUM)

Monte Verità, July 15th – 20th, 2018

Renana Gershoni-Poranne* and Peter Chen*

*Correspondence: Dr. R. Gershoni-Poranne, Prof. Dr. P. Chen, Laboratorium für Organische Chemie, ETH Zurich, Vladimir-Prelog-Weg 2, Zurich CH-8093; E-mail: renana.poranne@org.chem.ethz.ch; peter.chen@org.chem.ethz.ch

The 2018 edition of the International Symposium on Reactive Intermediates and Unusual Molecules (ISRIUM) was held on July 15–20 at the beautiful Congressi Stefano Franscini site on the Monte Verità in Ascona, Ticino.

The distinctiveness of the ISRIUM series lies in its wide scope; it brings together scientists from different fields in chemistry and adjoining disciplines – from molecular physics to molecular biochemistry – who share a common interest in understanding reaction mechanisms and the reactive intermediates that are formed in the course of a chemical transformation.

Organizers Professors **Thomas Bally** (University of Fribourg) and **Peter Chen** (ETH Zurich), for whom this was the fifth such collaboration, have a unique approach to putting together the program: they try to invite speakers who would otherwise never come to an ISRIUM meeting. This ensures that the ISRIUM series continues its tradition of broadness and diversity, and that the community embraces cutting-edge concepts from all fields of chemistry. The recent edition continued this tradition and upheld the high levels of science and range that have become the hallmark of the series. During the week, many attendees expressed their appreciation for the special nature of the meeting, and perhaps the best testimonial was the comment by Professor **Scott Denmark**, who said “I have never learned so much in so few days at a conference”.

This is the fifth time the ISRIUM meeting has been held at Monte Verità, and, as before, the return has been due to popular demand. The unique backdrop of the CSF site and the relaxed atmosphere it promotes were conducive to the many stimulating discussions on new concepts and methods that took place during the six days of the meeting, and encouraged intermingling of junior scientists with senior colleagues, which is key to strengthening the future of this community and to forming new scientific collaborations.

This year’s meeting featured 13 sessions, dedicated to 11 different topics. Of the 66 participants from 15 different countries, 22 were PhD students, postdoctoral fellows or early-career scientists and 13 were female. In the 2 poster sessions, 29 posters were displayed by junior and senior scientists.

The list of sessions and speakers is given below.

Transition Metal Chemistry

Konrad Koszinowski (Universität Göttingen)

Alois Fürstner (MPI Mülheim/Ruhr)

Jana Roithová (Radboud University)

Juan M. Sarria Toro (ICIQ)

Solvent Effects

Scott Cockroft (University of Edinburgh)

René Riedel (Imperial College London)

Photochemistry

Tehshik P. Yoon (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Ruth M. Gschwind (University of Regensburg)

Mechanistic Biochemistry

Tadhg P. Begley (Texas A&M University)

David B. Berkowitz (University of Nebraska, Lincoln)

Qiang Cui (Boston University)

Paul Rablen (Swarthmore College)

Catalysis

Koop Lammertsma (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

Nina Griksan (Novosibirsk State University)

Richard S. Glass (University of Arizona, Tucson)

Robert Kretschmer (University of Regensburg)

Reactive Intermediates and Mechanisms

Scott E. Denmark (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign)

Igor V. Alabugin (Florida State University)

AnnMarie C. O’Donoghue (Durham University)

Michal Juriček (University of Zürich)

Stephen E. Bradforth (University of Southern California)

Computational Chemistry

Clémence Corminboeuf (EPFL)

Renana Gershoni-Poranne (ETH Zürich)

Synthesis

Nuno Maulide (Universität Wien)

Tomás Šolomek (University of Basel)

Physical Chemistry

Gary E. Douberly (University of Georgia, Athens)

Sason Shaik (Hebrew University)

Thermochemistry

Branko Ruscic (Argonne National Laboratory)

Robert Pollice (ETH Zürich)

Hendrik Zipse (LMU München)

Nanostructures

Josef Michl (University of Colorado, Boulder)

Harry L. Anderson (Oxford)

The organizers gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Swiss National Science Foundation, the Swiss Chemical Society, and the Congressi Stefano Franscini, as well as the Swiss Industrial Science Fonds of the Swiss Chemical Industry, which is supported by BASF, Novartis, Syngenta, and Hoffmann-La Roche.

