Editorial

Prof. Christian G. Bochet

Photochemistry is the science dealing with changes in matter induced by light. Like most other scientific fields, it has had its ups and downs. In the particular case of organic photochemistry, periods of enthusiasm (starting with Ciamician's dream in 1912: "*On the arid lands there will spring up industrial colonies without smoke and without smokestacks; forests of glass tubes will extend over the plants and glass buildings will rise everywhere*") alternated with periods of pessimism ("*it will never work at industrial scale*"). The current trend is back to optimism, with the advent of new concepts such as photoredox catalysis, and the emergence of several industrial processes in the past few years. There are few doubts that these cycles will continue to oscillate, but it is a fact that Switzerland and its neighbouring countries have played a continuing role in establishing the theoretical and experimental basis of today's photochemistry. In this special issue, after a historical perspective (Fiat Lux!, by Ed Constable), cutting-edge research in inorganic photochemistry (Zobi and Schindler, Gasser *et al.*), physical chemistry (Vauthey *et al.*, Banerji and Shivhare) and organic chemistry (Griesbeck and Bozkus, Štacko and Šolomek) is discussed.

But introducing this issue from a purely thematic point of view would miss the important necessity of maintaining a vibrant research activity: the drive and passion of people! It is remarkable to notice that most aspects of photochemistry (and all the authors of this issue) had a close link to a single person: the late Prof. Thomas Bally, who passed away exactly two years ago. With his extraordinary enthusiasm and open mind, Thomas was always able to interact with any colleague, even working in a distant field. He would find a connection with his own knowledge (quite encyclopaedic; perhaps a consequence of his initial training in physical chemistry and a postdoctoral stay in organic chemistry with Satoru Masamune at the MIT), and suggest a new angle. On a personal note, Thomas was a true mentor, and I would never send a daring research proposal or submit a provocative article without hour-long discussions, never far away from my coffee machine (an alternative was day-long excursions to wineries!). This is thus with genuine emotion that CHIMIA dedicates this special issue to his memory.

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It is with great pleasure that the Editorial Board of CHIMIA thanks the guest editor Prof. Dr. Christian Bochet for the successful realisation of this special issue on Photochemistry; a lively subject with continuing potential for the future.