

Preface

This issue contains a selection of refereed papers that have been presented at the 8th International Conference on Electronic Ceramics and their Applications, ELEC-TROCERAMICS VIII—2002. The conference took place on 25–28 August 2002 at the Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis in Rome, “La Città Eterna”, Italy. The Conference was organized by the University of Rome Tor Vergata with the help of the Italian Consortium for Science and Technology of Materials (INSTM) for the administrative side, under the patronage of the European Ceramic Society (ECerS), and the endorsement of the Ceramic Society of Japan (CSJ), the American Ceramic Society (ACerS), and the Materials Research Society (MRS). All together, 396 scientists from 36 countries from the five continents attended the conference.

The meeting was organized in 3 days of intense discussions, divided into five plenary sessions, three parallel oral sessions divided in 18 blocks, and a poster session. One of the plenary sessions was dedicated to four speakers coming from industry. There were 12 plenary lectures, 17 invited, 102 oral and 256 poster contributions, a total of 387. Two oral sessions were organized under the auspices of the EU COST Action 525 “Advanced Electroceramics: Grain Boundary Engineering”.

The Electroceramics series of Conferences, now in its eighth edition, has grown with time and become one of the main scientific and technological event in the field of electroceramics. The multidisciplinary character of this field is a pole of attraction for researchers from academy and research centers but also from industry, from all over the world. The aim of the Conference was to be a forum for discussing the latest developments in the electroceramics field, covering basic science to industrial applications of the very wide range of materials that are named “electroceramics”. The applications of these materials are now very wide, including clean energy production and storage, environmental applications, and development of improved components for computers and telecommunication systems. The use of electroceramics is becoming diffuse in the real life of common people, and we all hope that the studies here

presented will contribute to a future further improvement of the quality of life of human beings. The broad range of research activities presented at the Conference is well reflected in the content of this issue of proceedings.

Apart from the scientific side of the conference, social activities were organized, including lunches and a gala dinner, to foster relationships between the delegates. Even though the climate of Rome was unusually rainy for the season, the weather was not so bad as to spoil these activities. Thanks are due to the main organizers of the social activities, Isabella Colace and Liù Catena. In particular, the gala dinner marked the closure of the Conference at Villa Mondragone, a beautiful Renaissance villa in Monteporzio Catone, which is a property and a cultural asset of the University of Rome Tor Vergata. In fact, it is in Villa Mondragone that the Gregorian Calendar was established.

Thanks are due to all the participants at the conference, invited speakers, oral and poster contributors, and session chairs, who have guaranteed the success of the conference. All the participants of the International Advisory Board and Local Steering Committee have given their help for the success of the meeting and we are indebted to them for this. The organization of the Conference was hard and we want to thank all our co-workers at the University of Rome Tor Vergata, cited in the Organizing Committee, and the other participants of the Organizing Committee. We would like to mention especially Silvia Ferrari, who took on the duty of Editorial Assistant for the publication of these proceedings. Unfortunately, she fell seriously ill during their preparation, but luckily she is now recovering and we look forward to her soon working with us again.

Special thanks to the sponsors of the conference: the University of Rome Tor Vergata, the Italian Consortium for Science and Technology of Materials (INSTM), the EU COST Action 525 “Advanced Electroceramics: Grain Boundary Engineering”, Siemens AG, the National Research Council of Italy (CNR)—Progetto Finalizzato “Materiali Speciali per Tecnologie

Avanzate 2" (PF MSTA2), and the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR).

A final dedication of these proceedings to Lorenzo, the baby boy of Elisabetta, who will be born soon, and to Amel, the 7 month-old niece of Enrico: for a peaceful and bright future.

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