



Preface

The 10th European Symposium on Calcium-Binding Proteins in Normal and Transformed Cells

The 10th European Symposium on Calcium-Binding Proteins in Normal and Transformed Cells was held at K.U. Leuven, one of the oldest University in Europe, from 17th–20th of September 2008. The meeting was organized by our Belgian colleagues Humbert De Smedt, Philippe Gailly, Bernd Nilius, Jan Parys, Roland Pochet, Thomas Voets and Frank Wuytack. They put together such an attractive program that more than 300 scientists from 26 different countries attended the meeting including participants from Australia, Japan, and North- and South America. The scientific program was divided into 7 different symposia and 4 poster sessions with more than 150 posters with the consequence that the poster prizes were doubled! The meeting was opened with the first Sir Michael Berridge Lecture delivered by Chikashi Toyoshima and sponsored by Biochimica et Biophysica Acta. Toyoshima gave a fascinating in-depth view how the Ca^{2+} -ATPase pumps ions across the sarcoplasmic reticulum membrane.

The meeting spanned a wide range of calcium-signaling processes starting with a whole session on calcium channels which attract a more wide spread attention since an increasing number is characterized on the molecular level. Sessions on calcium-binding proteins with special emphasis on the interaction of various S100 proteins with their newly discovered target, the receptor for advanced glycation endproducts (RAGE), were followed by sessions on Ca^{2+} -dependent exocytosis and on various aspects of calcium pumps including the Golgi pump which can also transport Mn^{2+} as discovered in Leuven. Since Ca^{2+} -signaling also plays an important role in plants a session was devoted to those aspects including voltage-gated calcium channels of the vacuole and protein kinases interacting with calcineurin-B like calcium sensors. After a traditional session on different aspects of annexins several talks were given on the influence of calcium signaling on growth and differentiation, a topic of increasing importance and exciting new results. The meeting ended with the Pflügers Archive lecture delivered by Michael Berridge to celebrate the 25th anniversary of his seminal Nature paper in which he and his colleagues described for the first time the influence of IP_3 on calcium signaling, a discovery which turned out to be a break through of calcium signaling in general.

Several lectures pointed out a link between rare or common pathologies and a modification of the calcium signal or genetic defects of an element of the calcium signalosome. The importance of the

calcium signal in disease was the basis to establish this meeting 20 years ago. It is now a growing evidence.

An impressive highlight of the meeting was the enormous contribution of posters which were divided into 4 sessions and which demonstrated the wide range of topics influenced by calcium signaling. The more than 150 posters were divided under 4 headings: (1) Plasma membrane channels and calcium entry, (2) Ca^{2+} -binding proteins, (3) Ca^{2+} in growth, development and death, and (4) Intracellular Ca^{2+} stores and Ca^{2+} signaling. A committee had the difficult task to chose 1 poster out of each session for a poster prize, and the winners were: M. De Waard “The calcium channel $\text{Ca}_v\beta_4$ subunit acts as an independent transcription factor”, N. Raetscho “Expression of zebrafish NCS coincides with visual function in the larval retina”, M. Flourakis “Orai 1 downregulation: a missing link in understanding the prostate cancer apoptosis resistance”, and K. Rietdorf “Localisation of the putative NAADP-receptor”.

In summary, this was an excellent, well organized and well attended meeting and we are looking forward to the 11th ECS Calcium meeting which is going to be organized by Jacek Kuznicki and his colleagues at 5th–8th of September 2010 in Warsaw, Poland, the country of the late Witold Drabikowski who organized the first international meeting on calcium-binding proteins and calcium function back in 1973. Already in 2009, from 3rd till 6th of June, the second ECS Workshop will take place in Smolenice, Slovakia, dealing with some special aspects of different calcium-binding proteins.

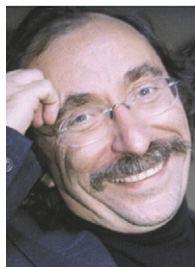
The ECS meeting in Leuven was mainly supported by the following sponsors: Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique, Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek Vlaanderen, Novartis, Step'in, and also by Agfa Health Care, Analis, Elsevier, Heka Electronic Invitrogen, K.U. Leuven, Laborimpex, Molecular Devices, Olympus, Perkin-Elmer, Portland Press, Sopachem, Springer Verlag, Tebu-Bio, VWR, and Zeiss.

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December 2008



Dr. Jacques Haiech is a professor at the School of Biotechnological Engineer of Strasbourg (FRANCE). He is also an expert in biotechnology and bioinformatics and acts as an expert counselor of the French Ministry of Research in life science domain. His main area of research is the role of calmodulin in deciphering calcium signal. He obtained his Master in mathematics in 1974 and his PhD in biochemistry in 1978. In 1987 and 1993, he was a visiting associate professor of the Pharmacology

Department of Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, and a visiting professor at Northwestern University in the Molecular Pharmacology Department, Chicago (USA). He is the author of more than 150 scientific publications and awarded 'Chevalier de l'Ordre du Mérite', a high French distinction for outstanding services to the country.



Dr. Claus W. Heizmann is Professor of Clinical Biochemistry at the University of Zurich in Switzerland. He received his Diploma in Chemistry from the University of Basel and his Ph.D. degree in 1970 from the University of Konstanz, Germany. Subsequently he was trained as a post-doctoral fellow in the laboratory of Dr. Edmond Fischer at the University of Washington, Seattle and at the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich. 1989-2007 he was Director of Clinical

Chemistry and Biochemistry at the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Zurich. His research focuses on the structure and functions of calcium-binding proteins and RAGE in health and disease.



Dr. Joachim Krebs has been working in the field of calcium-binding and calcium-transporting proteins for many years. After receiving his PhD from the University of Tübingen, Germany, he spent 2 years as a postdoctoral fellow in the Lab of Prof. R.J.P. Williams at the Institute of Inorganic Chemistry of the University of Oxford, UK. In 1977 he accepted a position at the Institute of Biochemistry at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich, Switzerland. He has authored, co-

authored, and edited numerous articles in international journals and books in the field of calcium biochemistry and calcium signaling. After his retirement from the ETH he continued his research at the Department of NMR based Structural Biology of the Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry in Göttingen, Germany. Recently, he edited together with Marek Michalak from the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada, the book "Calcium: A matter of life or death", published by Elsevier in 2007.