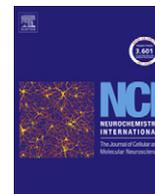


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Editorial

The Glutamatergic Synapse in Aghia Pelagia: The spirit of Wierzba moves south

The present issue of *Neurochemistry International* includes articles written by the speakers of the Symposium entitled: “The Glutamatergic Synapse”, held on 2–5 September, 2011 in Aghia Pelagia, Crete. The detailed contents of most of the articles rarely match the original presentations, this volume therefore cannot be strictly defined as “Proceedings”. Nonetheless, the sum of information about the various facets of the “glutamatergic synapse” included in this issue genuinely reflects the abundance of knowledge that has emerged from the presentations and discussions at the Symposium.

The range of topics touched upon during the sessions is best expressed by their titles. As presented in the chronological sequence these were:

- Glutamate metabolism: Neuron-glia interaction
- The tripartite synapse
- Membrane and vesicular transporters for glutamate
- Glutamate receptor structure, pharmacology and electrophysiology
- Metabotropic glutamate receptors
- Glutamatergic transmission and diseases

Invited lectures in each of the sessions were followed by a few short oral presentations, often given by the collaborators of the main speakers. Close to 50 scientists from several countries participated in the symposium, delivering a total of 35 lectures. The authors of the Editorial have chosen to refrain from relating the wealth of information included in so many lectures, but also from giving an account of a selection of papers, which could unjustly prejudice the readers. However, the two “stage-setting” plenary lectures truly deserve breaking the silence at this point. Dr. Mary McKenna from the University of Maryland School of Medicine (Baltimore, MD) gave an excellent opening lecture entitled: “Current understanding of the metabolic reactions essential for glutamate neurotransmission in the tripartite synapse”. As can easily be concluded from the title, this was a true “starter” talk designed to pave the way to a smooth perception of all the forthcoming sessions. The treat of the 2nd day of the Symposium was a lecture by Dr. David Lodge from MRC Centre for Synaptic Plasticity, Department of Anatomy, University of Bristol (UK), one of the pioneers in the area of pharmacology and cloning of ionotropic glu-

tamate receptors, who gave a personalized, vivid and witty overview of the past and presence of research in this field.

The sessions were held in the Capsis Elite Resort, located in a picturesque place just a few meters from the seashore (almost “between the salt water and the sea strand”). Owing to the location, the mood of the participants was tuned every morning by the beauty of the sun emerging from the sea, to be seasoned later during the day by the warmth of the climate. Somehow and very fortunately, ambient conditions rather stimulated than limited the enthusiasm of the participants for science. A lot is to be owed to the host (AP), the co-ordinating secretary Dr. Ioannis Zaganas and the supporting personnel from the University of Crete.

The leitmotif (“glutamate”), many of the specific themes and subjects dealt with during the sessions, the atmosphere, but also a discernable proportion of the list of participants tempts one to consider the Meeting as an extension of “Wierzba Conferences” a cyclic event invented by two of the authors of this Editorial (JA, AS), and held in the forest-shielded Mazurian Lakes region in Poland, in the summer time of 1999, 2002, 2005 and 2008, respectively. The proceedings of the Wierzba meetings have appeared in volumes 37, 43, 48 and 55 of this journal, respectively, and were also co-edited by JA and AS. In September 2011, the spirit of Wierzba moved south to gain new strength and attractiveness.

Jan Albrecht*

*Mossakowski Medical Research Centre, Polish Academy of Sciences,
Warsaw, Poland*

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: jalb@cmdik.pan.pl

Arne Schousboe

*Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, University of Copenhagen,
Denmark*

E-mail address: as@farma.ku.dk

Andreas Plaitakis

School of Health Sciences, University of Crete, Heraklion, Greece

E-mail address: plaitakis@yahoo.com