

This edition of HTC took place at the historic city of Ghent and was accommodated in “Het Pand”, an old Dominican monastery located in the heart of the city on the banks of the river Leie, near the medieval port, from January 27 until 29, 2016. Ghent offered the opportunity to combine a varied scientific programme with a rich social programme and tranquil sightseeing.

HTC is the premier platform for state-of-the-art developments in hyphenated separation techniques with a rich history of successful editions since its first instalment in 1990. Presentations by internationally renowned experts both from industry and academia combined with specific Ph.D. sessions are the ideal ingredients for a fruitful journey through the invigorating landscape of separation technology. As in previous editions, HTC-14 covered all fundamental aspects about instrumental developments and applications of hyphenated chromatographic techniques. These included hyphenation between chromatography and (new) detection systems, multi-column (multi-dimensional) chromatography, and the coupling between sample preparation and separation techniques. Many aspects of chromatography were addressed, including automation and robotization, miniaturization and microfabricated analytical devices, high-pressure and high-temperature LC.

Besides the core scientific programme, the symposium hosted an attractive technical exhibition where companies active in the field presented their last developments in instrumentation, software and applications related to the hyphenation of separation, detection and sample preparation techniques topped with technical seminars.

The first day of the symposium started with the opening ceremony and the warm welcome of the HTC-14 chairman, Prof. Frederic Lynen (Ghent University, Belgium). After that, two plenary lectures: the first one given by Prof. Gert Desment (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium) entitled “Building the ideal chromatography system: why, what and how”, and the second one presented by Dr. Koen Sandra (Research Institute for Chromatography, Kortrijk, Belgium) about “The power of LC-MS and LCxLC in the characterization of recombinant proteins, monoclonal antibodies and antibody-drug conjugates”.

Then, three parallel sessions were running full time over the day. A total of nine sessions with different topics: petrochemical and industrial analysis, high-performance separations, hyphenated approaches, ionization techniques and mass spectrometry, new method development strategies & chemometrics, emerging applications, emerging technologies for industry, on-line analyzers and GC, and new detection possibilities. In these sessions full of interesting lectures, it was possible to learn from recognised professors and members of the scientific committee to young emerging scientist. Moreover, ten poster flash presentations were carried out at the end of two of the speaker’s sessions. A number of posters had been previously selected for these flash presentations in order to give young researchers the opportunity to present their own research results and train their presentation skills.

To encourage scientific exchange and friendship building, the poster session was combined with a Belgian Beer tasting event at the end of the day.

The second day began with a plenary lecture: “SFC: No regrets” offered by Prof. Dr. Keith Bartle (University of Leeds, UK) that was, in addition, the Knox Award Lecture. Then, the conference “Selective ionisation with high resolution mass spectrometry? The future for hyphenation in the petrochemical industry?” given by Mr. Tom Lynch (BP Global lubricants technology, Reading, UK) was the second contribution for this second day.

To continue, a total of twelve sessions divided in four groups of three parallel sessions were running full time during the whole day. Also, other ten poster flash presentations given by young researchers took place at the end of two of the sessions. The topics of these sessions were as follows: LC-MS profiling and method development, the power of hyphenation, column technology, analysis of biopharmaceuticals, fundamentals in separation science, GC and GCxGC, biological sample preparation, food analysis, bioanalysis, new possibilities in separation science and detection, pushing detection limits in 2D-LC, and GC and SFC.

The day ended with an interesting event called "The battle of the Gurus". Three internationally renowned figures in chromatography reflected on past developments and future challenges in analytical chemistry and entered in a debate on the position of hyphenation in a changing analytical landscape. It was absolutely memorable to see Prof. Peter Schoenmakers (University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands), Prof. Alexander Makarov (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Bremen, Germany) and Dr. Pat Sandra (Research Institute for Chromatography, Kortrijk, Belgium) having this interesting discussion and defending three key aspects in analytical chemistry: efficiency, sensitivity and selectivity. At night, it was celebrated the HTC-14 conference dinner.

The third and last day of the symposium started with plenary lecture offered by Dr. Hernan Cortes (H. J. Cortes Consulting LLC/ Dow Chemical Ret., Midland, United States) entitled "An academic mentality in an industrial environment", recognized with the LCGC Lifetime Achievement Award.

After that, six sessions divided in three parallel sessions were running full time until lunch time. The topics of these last speaker's sessions were as follows: environmental/toxicology analysis, advances in column technology, novel separation systems, advances in SFC, multi-dimensional LC and GC-MS separations, and fundamentals.

Two brilliant plenary conferences were the best ending to the HTC-14. First of them about "Advances in LC and SFC analysis" given by Prof. Jean-Luc Veuthey (University of Geneva, Switzerland), and the second one entitled "Orbitrap mass spectrometry and chromatography: the road to a perfect marriage" offered by Prof. Alexander Makarov (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Bremen, Germany).

Finally, the HTC-Award was given to Prof. Paola Dugo (University of Messina, Italy) for her innovative contribution, and also three Poster Awards were given by the scientific committee. The symposium ended with the closure ceremony and a farewell drink.

To sum up, a total of 6 plenary lectures, 31 young emerging scientist contributions, 24 oral communications, 27 keynote lectures, 20 poster flash presentations, 113 poster presentations, 1 memorable battle of the gurus, vendor seminars, industry pitches, and the large number of participants from many different countries made possible this unforgettable HTC-14.

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