

Editorial

The year 2004 was a vintage year. At least for wine. Was 2004 also an exceptional year for the European Journal of Mineralogy? Indeed it was! It was the first year of publication after the Sociedad Española de Mineralogía (SEM) joined the French/German/Italian group of owner societies. Our new fifth chief editor Fernando Nieto, representing SEM, has seen his work load smoothly and inexorably increasing during this year and is now working in harmony with his colleagues Rainer Altherr, Bertrand Fritz, Annibale Mottana and Ekkehart Tillmanns. In short, this has been a successful extension. In terms of transitions, we welcome Patrick Cordier as SFMC representative in the EJM managing committee, after Michel Guiraud has had to step down due to other urgent duties. A matter of concern to all of us was the serious heart surgery that Rainer Altherr went through during the summer, but Rainer fortunately was able to resume his activities as early as September. The disruption of editorial handling was largely mitigated by the devoted commitment of Dominique Lattard, who worked as in-house deputy chief editor during that critical period. We are indebted to her and to the whole editorial board for their dedicated work, and we offer our apologies to those authors whose publications have had to contend with some delay.

On the purely positive side we can report that during 2004 the average delay between the final acceptance of a manuscript and its publication reached a historical low of 4.3 months. The ceaseless efforts of editorial secretary Michèle Canaple as well as the excellent coordination with the publisher and the printer, on the one hand, and the chief editors on the other, are the keys to this success. This makes EJM an increasingly appealing publication medium, and it definitely signals a promising period for authors!

Several of our associate editors are leaving the board, namely Maria Luce Frezzotti, Tom Andersen, Ulrich Bismayer, Michel Guiraud, Eugen Libowitzky and Franck Poitrasson, after three to eight years of dedicated service towards the scientific quality of EJM. The newcomers are Carlos Ayora, Sandro Conticelli, Giuseppe Cruciani, Reiner Klemd, Ken Livi, Guillaume Morin, Alessandro Pavese, Francisco Velasco, Manfred Wildner and Björn Winkler. Welcome on board!

We editors are often confronted with remarks on the over- or underrepresentation of one or the other field in the geosciences in EJM. This is an endless debate, and it calls for two basic comments:

- the scientific quality of a manuscript is the sole criterion for its acceptance; there is no editorial bias or policy for favouring one or the other mineralogical field;

- the authors themselves shape the image of a journal, because they determine its content and strengths through their submissions. In this respect it is useful to consider the journal content in the years 1998-2004 and to compare the results to a similar survey made for the early years of the journal by Walter Maresch (Plinius, 12, 163-176, 1994), as shown in the following table.

1989-92	1993-95	1998-2001	2002-04	
20	14	17	23	% mineral physics, incl. mechanics and crystal growth
16	12	12	8	% experimental petrology
23	22	19	20	% petrology: igneous, metamorphic, sedimentary, ores
15	15	10	6	% geochemistry, including dating, analytical techniques
5	12	15	15	% crystallography
6	11	14	12	% crystal chemistry
12	11	8	11	% systematic mineralogy
4	3	7	6	% environmental considerations, cultural heritage, industry
100	100	100	100	

In spite of its inherent shortcomings, this survey reveals that, not surprisingly, the "pillars" of EJM remain mineral physics, petrology and problems of crystal structure, the latter since the early nineties at the expense of geochemical subjects. This pattern has been quite stable over the past seven years, which tends to confirm that a journal acquires its image quite early on in its existence. The reshuffled editorial board for 2005 clearly shows a contribution to the journal image. The list of new editors reflects classical strengths of this European journal on the one hand, but on the other also highlights emergent or underrepresented fields like environmental mineralogy and geochemistry, ore deposits and low-grade metamorphism. We call upon authors in these fields for support, in order for EJM to be a faithful picture of the many facets of mineral sciences and their increasing societal role.

A final note on another aspect of this European journal: the managing committee firmly believes that journals of learned societies play a vital role in scientific publishing as a true, honest and inexpensive alternative to the monopolistic trends of a market dominated by a few private publishers dedicated more to their shareholders than to the actual contents of the products they are selling. The subscription price of EJM has increased by only 3.2 % from 2001 to 2005! Compare this to the annual price increase of the commercial publishers! As authors submitting your best papers to this, our society journal, or as subscribers providing crucial funds for independent publication, you, with the continued financial support of the French Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, help to maintain an alternative to the financial strangulation of the independent scientific publishing community.

*On behalf of the editorial board
Christian Chopin*