

Introduction

This issue of *Microscopy and Microanalysis* contains selected papers from the fifth Regional Workshop of the European Microbeam Analysis Society (EMAS) on Electron Probe Microanalysis—Practical Aspects that took place May 22–25, 2002 at Szczyrk, Poland. The meeting was organized by the Polish National Branch of EMAS in collaboration with the Silesian University of Technology (Faculty of Materials Engineering and Metallurgy) and the Polish Academy of Science (Institute of Metallurgy and Materials Science).

The primary aim of the EMAS Regional Workshops is to assess the capabilities and limitations of microbeam analysis techniques and to provide an overview of the latest developments. They also provide a forum where students and young scientists can meet and discuss with the established experts. The workshops have a very distinct format comprising invited lectures delivered by eminent scientists, poster presentations by the participants, and roundtable discussions on the key topics led by experts in the field. For this meeting, EMAS invited speakers on the following topics: electron-specimen interaction, wavelength dispersive and energy dispersive X-ray spectrometry, quantitative electron probe microanalysis, chemical bonding effects in X-ray microanalysis, quantitative microanalysis of thin films and small inclusions, analytical electron microscopy, and electron diffraction. Previous workshops in the series were held in Finland (1994), Hungary (1996), Spain (1998), and the Czech Republic (2000).

The Szczyrk Workshop attracted 69 participants from 14 different countries. Forty posters covering a diverse range of microbeam analysis applications, including pollution investigations, characterization of thin films and nanocrystalline materials, phase identification in super alloys, and the composition of minerals and rocks, were displayed at the meeting. This issue of *Microscopy and Microanalysis* contains the full text of four papers originating from the posters presented at the Workshop. All the papers have been subjected to the rigorous reviewing procedure of *Microscopy and Microanalysis*.

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