Historical survey

The First Quarter Century

The Journal of Thermal Analysis (affectionately known as JTA) celebrated the 25th year of its publication in 1994 and it is therefore appropriate that the completion of that year be marked by this special issue containing invited papers. To readers who may wonder why this Preface is not being written by the Editors, who have laboured so long and lovingly for the journal, I must explain that the invitation to compose a historically oriented Preface was so charmingly and persuasively written that it would have been exceedingly churlish to refuse – even although it attributed to me qualities I do not possess!

The first discussion I recall on the possible establishment of an international journal for thermal analysis occurred at the First International Conference on Thermal Analysis (1st ICTA) in 1965. There it was suggested that the then Thermal Analysis Review (produced by John Redfern and distributed by Stanton Instruments) be converted to a journal, but this was decisively rejected on the grounds that (a) such a journal could not attract sufficient good-quality papers and would be of a low standard, (b) technique would be put before topic and (c) one commercial organization had already considered and turned down the idea (Minutes of Open Forum, 9 September 1965). Prof. László Erdey, the driving force behind JTA, could not attend that meeting but clearly did not (as it turned out, rightly) share these pessimistic sentiments with the result that, in 1967 or 1968, many of us received invitations to serve on the Editorial Advisory Board (EAB) of an international journal to be known as the Journal of Thermal Analysis, which would be published by Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, in collaboration with Heyden and Son, London. ICTA Council discussed this at their meeting at 2nd ICTA in 1968, deciding that they ‘could not support a journal on thermal analysis [and that] individual members of [Council] who had accepted invitations to join the Editorial Board ... should write to ... Prof. L. Erdey, stressing that their acceptance in no way implied official recognition of the journal by ICTA’ (Item 3.19, ICTA Council Minutes, 18–21 August 1968). That, despite this decision, all then Council members, including the President, did join the EAB must have given encouragement to Prof. Erdey and the first issue of JTA appeared in 1969.

Although Budapest, thanks to the efforts of Prof. Erdey and his colleagues, was internationally recognized as a centre of thermoanalytical excellence, it
must have required extreme faith even to consider establishing a new journal. One can well appreciate the difficulties encountered by Prof. Erdey and his staff in the process, yet one feels he must have been spurred on by his broad international outlook, which recognized that a journal based in Hungary (one of the most outward-looking of eastern European states) would attract material from both the East and the West. As Eastern scientists at that time sometimes found it difficult to get permission to publish in the West and many in the West were unaware of developments in the East, a much better two-way flow of ideas would inevitably result.

Although Prof. Erdey, very perspicaciously, selected Editors from his own staff – namely, E. Buzágh and J. Simon, Editors; F. Szabadváry, Consulting Editor; G. Liptay, Editor of Bibliography Section – the international nature of the journal was stressed not only by the use of two publishers but also by the appointment of Regional Editors, each with a specific geographical area to cover. For Vol. 1, these were, in order of appearance, J. F. Johnson, USA, J. P. Redfern, UK, F. Paulik, Hungary, M. Harmelin, France, H. Kambe, Japan, I. S. Rassonskaya, USSR and F. Freund, FRG. International aims were also emphasised by the acceptance of papers in English, French and German as well as by providing all papers with abstracts in English, French, German and Russian: French abstracts were, however, dropped in 1982 and Russian in 1990, so that only English and German now remain. The EAB for Vol. 1 consisted of, in addition to Prof. Erdey as Chairman, R. Barta, Czechoslovakia, L. G. Berg, USSR, S. K. Bhattacharyya, India, C. Duval, France, P. D. Garn, USA, G. Lombardi, Italy, R. C. Mackenzie, UK, C. B. Murphy, USA, A. V. Nikolaev, USSR and W. W. Wendlandt, USA. Although, remarkably, the Editorship has changed only by the introduction of B. Androsits in 1991 after the untimely death of Éva Buzágh (JTA 36(5) (1990) 1633–1634), the Regional Editors and the EAB have been subject to periodic change because of deaths (the first being that of Prof. Erdey himself – JTA 2(1) (1970) 3–9), retirements and additions of new blood (the first occurring in 1972). Of the original list, only Ferenc Paulik (still Regional Editor), John Redfern (now on the EAB) and the writer (still on the EAB) now remain. The present 13 Regional Editors and 27 EAB members indicate the increase in coverage and status of the journal. Judit Simon became Editor-in-Chief in 1993.

The volume structure of JTA has been somewhat complex. From one volume of 4 issues per year in 1969, the format changed to one volume of 6 issues per year in 1973, to two volumes of three issues each per year in 1975–1978 and to three volumes of two issues each per year in 1979–1982 before reverting to one volume of 6 issues per year in 1983. Vol. 35 (1989), which included a special issue celebrating 20 years of existence, extended to 7 issues and Vol. 36 (1990) to 8 issues: consequently, it was no surprise that, in 1991, JTA became a monthly publication. Ever since 1973, when papers from a symposium on the derivation of kinetic data from thermal curves appeared as a normal issue (Vol. 5, No. 2–3), special issues containing papers presented at important thermoanalytical meetings, whether national or international, have

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