

## PREFACE

The conference “Geometric Combinatorics” was organized, as a satellite conference of the International Congress of Mathematicians in Berlin (ICM '98). It took place from August 28 to September 2, 1998 in Kotor (Yugoslavia), a beautiful old Mediterranean town deep inside a large bay surrounded by Montenegrin mountains. At the conference 12 invited talks and 27 contributed talks were presented. The list of talks and e-mail addresses of participants can be found at pages 186–189.

The papers in this special issue of “Publications de l’Institut Mathématique de Belgrade” represent a careful selection of some of the papers presented on the conference or other papers started and finished during the conference or immediately after its conclusion.

The conference emphasized the interplay between geometry (algebraic, discrete, computational, convexity), topology (combinatorial aspects, combinatorial invariants), combinatorics (algebraic, geometric, graph theory) and many other related fields. In this respect the conference was planned to continue the tradition of the meetings in Stockholm 1989, Jerusalem 1993, Oberwolfach 1995, Berkeley (MSRI) 1997, Barcelona 1997. The logo of the conference (see the front page) was an image of the permuto-associahedron, courtesy of Günter Ziegler and Jürgen Richter-Gebert, which hopefully captures some of the multidisciplinary spirit of the meeting.

The conference was organized by the Faculty of Mathematics of Belgrade University and the Mathematical Institute of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and supported by the Federal Ministry for Development, Science and Environment, the Ministry for Science and Education of Montenegro and the Ministry for Science and Technology of Serbia. The sponsors of the conference were the Yugoslav Airlines (JAT) and Informatika d.d., Belgrade. We also acknowledge the encouragement and friendly support from the Faculty of Mathematics of the University of Podgorica and the Institute of Mathematics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

The members of the organizing committee were Imre Bárány (Budapest), Siniša Vrećica (Belgrade) and Rade Živaljević (Belgrade). Two half-day excursions were organized, one to the neighboring town of Cetinje and the Njegoš mausoleum on mount Lovćen and the other a boat tour in the bay of Kotor with a visit to Perast and the islands of Gospa od Škrpjela and Sveti Đorđe. It is a pleasure to acknowledge the hospitality accorded to the conference by the town of Kotor, whose representatives organized numerous cultural events and sightseeing tours.

As organizers of the conference and editors of this issue of the journal, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to all who contributed to this project, especially to the participants of the conference, and above all to the invited speakers and the authors of the papers appearing in this volume.

An alert reader may find it difficult to believe that the proceedings of the conference in Kotor are published at all, knowing that the year 1999 will be remembered, not only in Serbia and Montenegro, as a year of war and destruction, a year of blockade, a year of lost lives and lost illusions. We hope that the publication of this volume affirms the noble principle of international cooperation, a principle in sharp contrast with everything we all experienced in the recent past.

Belgrade, January 2000.

Siniša Vrećica and Rade Živaljević